

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LINK STEWARDSHIP GROUP
Held in the Conference Room HQ Building,
26th August 2010 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Barry Lucas (Vice Chair)
Peter Woodley
Gennifer Paul-Gomez
Geoff Marks
Joe Dunn
John Miskelly
Dan Spry
Fred Morton
Julie Paget
Dot Throssell
Vicky Shipway (LINK Support Team Manager)
Christine Breckell (Minutes)
Claire Hendy (LINK Support Team)

Apologies:

Chris Boote
Jake Paget
Lois Lloyd
Althea Morgan
Asha Muglu

Agenda Items

1. Farewell & Staff update

Vicky informed the Stewardship Group that Claire was leaving the organisation. Barry thanked Claire for all of her work, and wished her success in her new job on behalf of all the group members. Vicky then informed the group that an internal replacement had been found, Karen Morse, who will be introduced to the Stewardship group members when she takes up her new position. Karen's start date is to be confirmed. Claire then left the meeting. The new Stewardship group members were then formally introduced to those members they had not met as yet.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 21st July 2010 were unanimously agreed.

3. Matters Arising

- ★ Vicky attended the Strategic Consultation & Engagement Group of NHS Plymouth. LINK exposure should be increased and improved as LINK is to be provided with a calendar of events to be held by various agencies operating under the NHS Plymouth umbrella. LINK's involvement in outside events should be increased by this. This will also give LINK an opportunity to influence the planning of city strategies.

- ★ Barry informed the meeting that due to other commitments he is unable to attend the Cornwall PCT meeting on 25th October as arranged – Joe Dunn volunteered to attend instead.
- ★ Geoff reported back on the learning disability review group meeting which he attended. He found the experience very rewarding
- ★ Vicky had had a positive contract meeting with Chris Dorain re the future of LINKs. It is thought that it would be unwise for the local authority to close LINK as it is programmed to become Healthwatch. It is unlikely that the LINK funding will be decreased as it is a statutory body, although we do not know for sure until after the spending review.

4. Incoming Requests

- ★ The CQC has asked Plymouth LINK, together with nine other LINKs to join with them as part of the 'Learning Set Project'. The CQC requested that a named person be designated to attend quarterly meetings in London together with Vicky Shipway – Fred, Barry, Dan and John all expressed an interest. Vicky suggested that a task group be set up, and whoever can attend the meetings in London as they occur accompany her. Vicky will liaise with the interested stewards and set up a planning meeting.
- ★ On the 9th September the next southwest LINKs network meeting is taking place; the main focus of the meeting will be the future of LINKs – Vicky, Chris Boote, Joe Dunn, Gennifer Gomez and Geoff Marks are to attend.
- ★ Vicky thanked all those people who had offered to assist with the Older Person's Day event- Dan Spry, Lois Lloyd and Asha Muglu.
- ★ Members were also referred to the information resources for people aged 50+ available at the Waves Café, which is holding an open day shortly.
- ★ LINK has been invited to be part of a group with care home managers to assess how the new tool to assist in the transfer of elderly patients from hospitals to care homes is working. The invitation is for two LINK representatives to be part of the group. Fred expressed an interest, but would like to have more details – a meeting is to be set up by Vicky to discuss further.

5. Healthwatch Update

- ★ Vicky gave an overview re: the creation of Healthwatch. The White Paper is currently being circulated for discussion, together with the Local Democratic Legitimacy document, which asks key questions regarding the future of LINKs.
- ★ The CQC will form an umbrella organisation, with LINKs having a formal role within the NHS constitution to monitor that patients are receiving the services they require. GP commissioners are to assess how GP's can best involve patients, Healthwatch, and seldom heard voices, and there is a proposal for LINK to take on a patient advocacy role and the complaints procedure from ICAS. These proposals have massive implications for LINK, and the stewards expressed concerns about training requirements for members and the scope of the change proposed – there are huge implications for the responsibilities expected of volunteers. Concerns were also expressed about the impartiality of the LINK organisation being compromised, with LINK being overwhelmed by complaints, and therefore being unable to address general health issues.
- ★ An event to discuss all of these matters is to be held at Plymouth Pavilions on 15th September 1pm-5.30pm, which is being run by the Dept of Health. A large proportion of the Stewardship Group is to attend, together with Vicky.
- ★ Bristol LINKs has tabled a series of questions regarding Healthwatch and health service changes, and has asked for input from other LINKs organisations – Regional Voices is running an event in Exeter on 14th September to discuss the implications and consult about the white paper – this is a full day event which Vicky will be attending, possibly accompanied by Dan and Fred.

- ★ Vicky has also received a copy of a letter to local authority heads re health services which specifically mentions LINKs as having to be consulted on any changes to services – this is viewed as strengthening LINKs position.

Concern was expressed about the NALM organisation, which runs its website through the NHS website, and does not therefore appear to be an impartial body – Vicky said that she is monitoring the situation, and that Plymouth LINK would only join up if necessary.

6. Opportunities for Involvement

An updated document was circulated, and Stewards invited to attend events.

7. Consolidating Service

In an effort to become more efficient, the Host Team had met, discussed and then sent out proposals to the stewardship groups containing suggestions for amalgamating some organisational procedures. The Chairs of the LINK and PAPOP groups had been invited to attend the meeting for their perspectives, and Anni Webb had given valuable input. However, it has been decided that now is not the time to change service provision and organisation, whilst funding decisions are being made. The stewards made the point that it was important that the groups kept their individuality, and Vicky suggested that there should be crossover in news bulletins to ally all of the groups and give mutual information on important issues. As this is a large topic with far reaching implications, it was agreed to discuss this further at future meetings.

8. Stewardship Group and Host Team Working together

Vicky put this on the agenda for an update from Chris Boote and Lois to give feedback on their experience of being supported by the Host Team while organising the Healthy Plymouth event on 9th October. Vicky noted that she was aware of some shortcomings which needed to be addressed. This item was rescheduled for the next Stewardship Group meeting as neither Chris nor Lois was present.

9. New Stewards Appointment Process

The new appointment process document was circulated, and Vicky asked for comments from the group. Several loopholes were identified which could leave LINK open to potential problems. Concerns were also raised about the criteria for denying a person a seat on the stewardship group – as these are complicated issues, it was suggested that the matter be referred to a focus group to reassess the appointment process. Vicky is to arrange, and the findings be presented to a future stewardship group meeting.

10. Healthy Plymouth Event update

Vicky showed a copy of the floor plan for the day to the stewards, and gave a brief resume' of the day's events to the stewards. A rota sheet was circulated for stewards to volunteer time to assist on the day.

11. Budget

A current budget sheet was circulated, and a breakdown of expenditure was given by Vicky. The new budget format was approved by the stewards.

12. Christmas Meal

Menus for Heaven Restaurant were circulated, and Christine was asked to make a reservation for 7.30 on the 8th December, after the Issues meeting.

13. Next meeting date

Wednesday 15th September 6-8pm - **Issues** meeting

Wednesday 29th September 6-8pm - **Stewardship Group** meeting