

LINK News



Issue 4 — February 2009

Be part of our Plymouth LINK

The LINK is a network of people who have experiences and ideas about how to improve health and social care services. The LINK will:

- talk to all local people about what they want from health and social care services
- Talk to the people who provide and influence services about how they can meet the needs of the public
- Support people to get involved in the LINK

Current Opportunities



Become a LINK
Ambassador

Be part of a focus
group



Become part of the
Visiting Team

To find out more, read on . . .

LINKs Exchange - www.lx.nhs.uk

The LINKs Exchange (LX) is run by the NHS Centre for Involvement (NCI) to support local involvement networks (LINKs).

On their website people can share what's happening in their LINK and access information and guidance.

It is now open to everyone involved in the LINK.

You can register on the LINKs Exchange by going to www.lx.nhs.uk



www.plymouth-link.co.uk

Search our site:

LINK Website

The Plymouth LINK website is almost finished so watch this space! We hope that you can find us online by March 2009 and we would like your thoughts and ideas for the site

The New LINK Stewardship Group

The LINK Transition Group (see photo) has now handed over to a permanent Stewardship Group. We would like to thank the Transition Group on behalf of the LINK for all their input and for successfully getting the LINK set up and ready to be handed over. The Stewardship Group has 12 enthusiastic new members, who come from very different communities and backgrounds. They will:



- ⇒ Guide the work and activities of the LINK based on feedback from members, local issues and opportunities to improve health and social care services
- ⇒ Report on what local people need and ask for change
- ⇒ Protect the values of the LINK
- ⇒ Talk to the LINK and public about its work and successes
- ⇒ Oversee the LINK budget

The group are having training and support to get them up to speed. See our next LINK News for information about the Stewardship Group members.

Feedback

Your ideas, opinions and experiences are central to what the LINK does. Any feedback you can give us about health and social care services you have used will give us a better picture of what needs to be improved and what is working well. Please give us your feedback, ideas and experiences. Our contact details are on the last page. We look forward to hearing from you.

Opportunities and Getting More Involved

The Visiting Team will:

- Visit places where health or social care services are provided
- Look at how services are run
- Talk to service users to find out what they think
- Report back to the LINK about what they have found out
- Help to improve services for people who use them

Focus Groups will:

- be arranged and meet for a set period of time to think about:-
- How to improve specific services
 - How to improve areas of the LINK, for example LINK information, LINK membership
 - New services being developed
 - A request for the LINK to give its thought on a new policy or strategy for health or social care services

LINK Ambassadors will:

Support the LINK to run and represent the LINK by:-

- Speaking to people about their views of health and social care services
- Promoting the work of the LINK and getting people involved
- Presenting the LINK at events
- Representing the LINK at meetings/groups and reporting back to the LINK about health and social care issues

The LINK will support people to get involved as and when they can and pay expenses. If you don't want to be actively involved, you can still become a participant. This means:-

- ◊ You will receive regular information about the LINK
- ◊ You can choose to give your views on health and social care services you have used
- ◊ You can get involved as and when you want in any consultations about services that interest you

LINK Involvement Day

Find out more about the LINK and how to get involved. Meet the LINK Support Team, members of the Stewardship Group and some of the Ambassadors and hear about their experiences of being part of the LINK. Just drop in at any time during the session!

Come along on Tuesday 17th March between 2.30 pm and 6.30 pm in the Conference Room, HQ Building, 237 Union Street,

Consultations

Feedback form the Soft Tissue Sarcoma Stakeholder Day

This was held at the Exeter Court Hotel on the 07th January 2009. There were 8 members of the public there and slightly more clinicians.

We were told about soft tissue sarcomas. They are defined as a rare cancer (less than 1% of all cancers) that can start anywhere in the body where there are muscles, fat, fibrous tissue, blood vessels or other supporting tissues. They are very aggressive and can be unpredictable.

There are currently soft tissue sarcoma services in Plymouth, Exeter and Bristol in the area covered by the NHS South West Specialised Commissioning Group, but some patients have to go outside for their treatment – for instance, patients from Dorset often end up in Southampton or London. New guidelines state that in order to have a local soft tissue sarcoma centre there would have to be at least 100 new cases every year, so that the surgeons can 'keep their hands in'. The population of each sarcoma centre would have to have a catchment area of around 2 million. The population of Devon and Cornwall is about 1.7 million, but because of poor geography and transport links we are only likely to get a centre at either Plymouth or Exeter in the entire Peninsula area.

The main theme to come out of the emerging discussion was that people wanted the best treatment possible wherever they came from, but it was also noted that public transport was almost non-existent in some areas and both road and rail services got worse as you went further west. Another theme was about after care, where it could be delivered and whether 6-month scans were adequate.

I felt that it had turned out to be a good day and that our views would be looked at.

By Barry Lucas, LINK Stewardship Group member and Ambassador



The Strategic Framework for Improving Health in the South West 2008/9 to 2010/2011

Following recent consultation, the Strategic Health Authority has produced 'The Strategic Framework for Improving Health in the South West 2008/9 to 2010/11' document. You can see a copy of this in the LINK Support Team office - please phone us (01752 202407) to make an appointment.

Better Care Higher Standards Charter

This charter, drawn up by the Plymouth City Council, is for anyone aged over 18 living in Plymouth who:

- Has difficulties associated with age, long term illness or disability;
- Or is a carer who supports someone in these circumstances

It sets out 6 key areas and standards:

1. Helping you to find out about services - ensuring that information is easily accessible to all
2. Understanding and responding to your needs - assessing and responding to needs
3. Helping people to stay independent - offering choice through 'Direct Payments'
4. Helping carers to care - supporting and listening to carers
5. Finding a suitable place to live - helping with emergencies and problems around housing
6. Getting the right health care - about how people using services should be treated

The Charter is set out in full on the Plymouth City Council website at

www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/bettercare.htm

You can let them know what you think by writing to them at: Better Care Higher Standards Feedback, Freepost PY50, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth PL1 2AA

New opportunities for people who have experience of mental health services

Opportunities for public and patient involvement to improve services is growing and there are new opportunities for service users, carers and people who have an interest in mental health services, in the form of PIPs. PIPs stands for the Plymouth Involvement and Participation Service and will provide a forum for people with experience of services to:

- Share their views and ideas on how services can be improved
- Get involved in monitoring and shaping services;
- Represent PIPs and feed the views of local service users and carers to the people and groups who can change services.

PIPs will support and train people to become involved and find new ways of working with services to better meet the needs of the people who experience them. PIPs will talk to its members about what they need and how services have changed as a result of their involvement.

PIPs is an exciting new service and a part time Engagement Worker, Ashley Daw, has been appointed to get the service up and running.

If you want to give PIPS your views on mental health services or become part of the PIPS network, Ashley would like to hear from you.

Please contact Ashley Daw on 01752 202406 or e-mail

adaw@colebrookhousing.co.uk. PIPS is based at Unit 15, HQ Building, 237 Union Street, Plymouth PL1 3HQ

Making Experiences Count Regional Exhibition and Networking Event

Find out more about the new complaints system being introduced for health and social care services - an opportunity to talk to services that work with and resolve complaints.

Tuesday, 24th March, Marriott Hotel, Bristol

If you are interested in this event, please contact the LINK Support Team

LINK Documents

The Plymouth LINK has several documents that give information about how it will work. These are proposed documents and will develop with the LINK.

- ◆ Governance Framework - talks about what the Plymouth LINK is, how it will talk to people and the groups that make up the LINK
- ◆ Expenses Policy - gives information about the out-of-pocket costs the LINK will cover for people who get involved.
- ◆ Code of Conduct - talks about what's expected of the people who are involved in and represent the LINK
- ◆ Training & Development Policy - details what training and support people will have and how it will be delivered
- ◆ Complaint - gives information about what will happen if someone complains about the LINK or one of its members and how it will be dealt with

The Plymouth LINK is also working on:

- ❖ A Communication and Engagement Strategy
- ❖ A Finance Policy

These documents will be available on the website and we welcome your comments and feedback on them.

Come and Join Us!


The Plymouth Link Support Team will be at the following events and locations:



Monday 23rd to Friday 27th February	Stonehouse Week of Action	Frederick Street Centre
Tuesday 17th March	LINK Involvement Day 2.30 to 6.30 pm	HQ Building
Wednesday 18th March	Estover Information Day 2.00 to 4.00 pm	Estover Primary School
Friday 20th March	Improving Reach Conference	Roland Levinsky Building, University of Plymouth

To find out more, please contact us

Contacting the LINK Support Team:

For more information about the LINK and how to get involved, contact us at:

 By Post: Freepost RRZE-AGZT-EXRS
LINK/PAPOP Support Team
Unit 15, HQ Building,
237 Union Street,
PLYMOUTH,
PL1 3HQ.
(01752) 202407
info@plymouth-link.co.uk
www.plymouth-link.co.uk

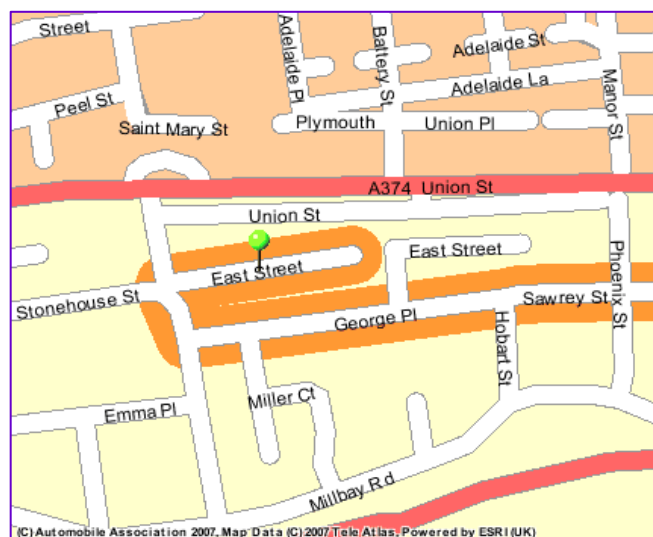
 By Phone:
 By e-mail:

Please let us know if you need this in another language or format

Do you have anything to say?

Please let us know if:

- There is information you would like to see in the LINK News
- You have any comments or feedback on the LINK News
- You have any news that we need to tell people about



Annual Health Check

Every year the Health Care Commission (HCC) check that our health services meet standards to provide a quality service which is safe, value for money and based on what people have to say about the services they use.

The Plymouth LINK is contributing to the Annual Health Check for 2008/2009, using the feedback we have gained so far. We are pleased to say that we are contributing approximately pieces of feedback to help improve local health services. This is just one of the ways

that the Plymouth LINK can make a difference.

If you have anything you would like the HCC to know for their Annual Health Check, we have attached a form the HCC have given us. Please complete this and send it back to the LINK at our Freepost address.

If you know of any individuals or groups that might also have information to contribute, please pass this form on. We need your feedback by the end of March. If you need any more forms,

The Healthcare Commission is the independent ‘watchdog’ for healthcare in England and Wales.

Our role is to Inspect, Inform and Improve

We do this by:

- Checking for quality and value for money
- Telling people about what we find out about healthcare services
- Making sure that healthcare services get better all the time

Listening to and acting on what people have to tell us about their experiences of healthcare is really important.

Better and safer experiences

You can help us by making sure we know about what is happening in your area.

Safeguarding the public

You can help us by letting us know what is good and where things could be better. Thinking about the last year, describe your experiences using the table below.

Please send your comments to your Local Involvement Network Host at:
Freepost RRZE-AGZT-EXRS, LINK/PAPOP Support Team, Unit 15, HQ Building, 237 Union Street, Plymouth, PL1 3HQ.

They will then pass the information on to us.

The more detail you can provide the better.

Your name:	Do you represent a particular group? If so please say which group in this space:
Date form completed:	
When did the issue or experience take place? <i>Any dates you can include will help us</i>	
What type of issue or experience was it? <i>For example, poor quality care, access to a particular service like a dentist or a clinic, the patient experience, the environment?</i>	
Where did this experience take place? <i>Can you name the NHS Trust or name the doctor or service that was involved?</i>	
What happened next? Did you discuss the experience with the organisation involved? <i>What was the response?</i>	
Any other comments	