



**Issues about local NHS and Adult Social Care services
identified through LINK community outreach, consultation and
networking**

February – July 2009

Coventry LINK is an independent network hosted by:

Voluntary Action Coventry

6th Floor Coventry Point

Market Way

Coventry

CV1 1EA

Telephone: 024 76220381

Fax: 024 7625 7720

Email: coventrylink@vacoventry.org.uk

Website: www.coventrylink.org.uk

Introduction

Coventry LINK is a new local network working to increase the voice of local people in decision making about local NHS and adult social care services. The LINK is made up of individual local people and voluntary and community groups and offers different ways for people to feedback about services and to contribute views on how services should be provided in the future. The LINK also offers different ways to be involved in its work from dipping in and out to regular volunteering.

Community outreach is key to Coventry LINK's approach so that we can work to reach different communities within Coventry and enable people to feed in their perspectives about NHS and adult social care services.

During the set up phase for Coventry LINK the LINK staff team focussed on collecting feedback and views about local NHS and adult social care services in different ways. This was to gather information to enable the LINK's Caretaker Steering Group to prioritise issues for the first substantive work programme for the LINK, which will be delivered through its working groups of volunteers.

This programme of community outreach involved:

- Running focus groups
- Attending service user groups
- Attending meetings organised by community groups
- Holding a consultation session on a Saturday
- A consultation session for people with learning disabilities in conjunction with a learning disability Charity (Grapevine)
- Stalls at community events
- The LINK launch event
- A paper questionnaire
- Liaison with community and voluntary sector groups, Housing Associations and Children's Centres.

We received direct contact from some individuals regarding services and read reports on local services and attended public meetings to gather patient and public views about health services.

The staff team also held discussions with a range of service managers and other partners involved in patient public and user involvement.

Findings

From this consultation 54 distinct issues and concerns about local NHS and adult social care services were gathered for consideration by the LINK Caretaker Steering Group at its August meeting.

Prioritisation of LINK Work Plan

The Steering Group had the task of prioritising the 54 ideas to produce a manageable work programme that the LINK could deliver through its new working groups. As the LINK is still developing it was necessary to be realistic about the amount of work that could be undertaken. The Steering Group was also keen to ensure that work had an impact as demonstrating the LINK's work and effectiveness would encourage more people to be involved. Carrying out the work programme relies on people volunteering regularly within the LINK's working groups.

The Steering Group met in August 2009 to think about which issues to shortlist for the work programme. They used a prioritisation checklist to help them consider each issue which focused on 6 areas:

1. Does this issue affect a significant number of people (i.e. not just a few individuals or families)?
2. Is the LINK the mechanism best placed to investigate this, or is there a more appropriate body?
3. What is the likelihood that clear, achievable and worthwhile **outcomes / goals** can be identified for the work prior to it taking place?
4. What impact can the LINK realistically have on this issue? (What is the likelihood of success?)
5. Is this the best time to do this piece of work or to have an impact as a result?
6. What's the likelihood that this impact can be achieved within the resource we can devote? Is the amount of time and resources needed proportionate to the outcome.

This meeting produced a shortlist of 11 potential work plan themes. This was circulated to partner agencies for comments asking:

- 1 Do you know of any recent work on this topic and if so what was this and are there any documents/reports LINK should be aware of?
- 2 What else is already known about this service area/issue?
- 3 Are you aware of any plans for service change in this area – If yes please give details?
- 4 Any other comments about individual work areas?

The responses were considered in the final decision making producing a work plan of 6 themes (and continuing one current piece of work).

Work stream	Further details
1 Maternity services	To complete and follow up piece of work taking forward focus groups' comments about maternity services.
2 Personalisation of care	How is this being implemented locally in adult social care - how far have we got in Coventry?
3 Quality of information about how to access mental health services and access to out of hours support	Especially from the perspective of people who are not current service users.
4 Hospital discharge	How is hospital discharge working?
5 UHCW outpatient appointment systems	Investigate concerns over the confusing nature of letters sent to people regarding appointments.
6 GP appointment systems and how to register with a GP	What works well and what doesn't work so well?
7 Information for public and patients about GP services	What do people think of information, what information would they like and in what format?

The table in appendix 1 provides full details of all 54 these issues, which issues were prioritised for the work programme and why.

Conclusions

The Coventry LINK Caretaker Steering Group found it an interesting and challenging process to produce a shortlist of items for the LINK work programme. There were clearly more potential pieces of work than the LINK could take forward at this time. The Group is keen to demonstrate that LINK can make an impact on issues and to ensure that its first full work programme demonstrates this. Some issues not taken forward in the initial work programme may be re-assessed for future work planning.

Appendix 1: issues gathered from community outreach and LINK work plan decisions

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
Maternity services – issues raised about experiences and perceptions of care within the maternity unit: including pain relief; involving of husbands/partners; and breastfeeding support and information.	Two LINK Focus Groups with recent mums	Issues taken forward through piece of work to put the concerns to service managers and seek a response
Maternity services – issues raised about community maternity services including getting appointments with community midwives	Two LINK Focus Groups with recent mums	Issues taken forward through piece of work to put the concerns to service managers and seek a response
Integrated services closer to home – concerns/view that some services could be provided in other settings rather than at the Hospital (which can be difficult for some people to get to) eg to collect equipment/for hearing aids etc	PCT priority Attendance at groups	Not prioritised for current work programme. But LINK to maintain a watching brief over the development of the new City Centre facility
Service for people with learning disabilities: reports that service users do not take up appointments (in a variety of settings) because of form filling required (One example given was appointments regarding sexually transmitted diseases)	LD group	Not added to work programme as currently unclear about the extent of the issue and the likelihood of LINK impact.
Quality of GP services; variation of care between GP surgeries; availability of home visits for those who need this; and the involvement of carers.	LINK questionnaire responses; LINK- Parent Partnership focus group; PDSI planning day. PCT quarterly meeting 05/09	LINK aware of PCT focus on this issue and current consultation on what does a quality GP service look like. As this relates to variation in service in the City LINK feel that this is an issue for the PCT to address and therefore specific LINK work has not been included in the work programme.

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
<p>Access to GP appointments: issues around access to emergency GP appointments; pre-booked appointments and getting a GP appointment at all. Reports of some people being sent to walk in Centre instead; street workers and homeless people accessing GP services. Lack of user friendly processes. Barriers to access such as dislike of giving explanations to receptionist</p>	<p>Community based workers; LINK questionnaire; focus groups</p>	<p>Prioritised as an issue for the LINK work programme shortlist due to the number of people affected by the issue and the number of comments received on this point.</p>
<p>Referrals - Issues around people with Learning Disabilities not being referred for breast screening and smears; also podiatry and obesity</p>	<p>Grapevine session</p>	<p>Not prioritised for current work programme because insufficient information about likely impact and role LINK can play along with whether this is the best time to do work on this issue.</p>
<p>End of life care – concerns about bereavement and aftercare</p>	<p>PCT Quarterly meeting 16/2/09</p>	<p>Not added to work programme as no current policy drivers for this area of work which would add to the likelihood of LINK having an impact.</p>
<p>Long term conditions - care in primary care; services that support people and make living with ill health more manageable</p>	<p>LINK launch; PCT Quarterly meeting 16/2/09</p>	<p>Not added to work programme as currently unclear about the extent and nature of the issues.</p>
<p>Provision of bereavement services: reports that limited long term bereavement support services result in deteriorating mental health, isolation, and physical health decline in older people (but could also affect any community group).</p>	<p>Older peoples voluntary sector group</p>	<p>Not added to work programme as currently unclear about the extent of the issues.</p>
<p>Information in primary care - PCT Quality Work programme about what information people want to make informed choices about GP services and how best to provide this information. Issues raised about quality of information provided to patients by GP practices – variation between practices. EG</p>	<p>PCT Quarterly meeting May 2009;PCT Priorities. Focus groups</p>	<p>Prioritised as an issue for the LINK work programme as comments for local people tie with a PCT priority to address information and therefore should provide a good climate for LINK to have maximum influence.</p>

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
confusion about when it is appropriate to use the walk in facility.		
Information - about Dental services – people feeling this is not sufficient.	consultation event	More evidence of the issues and their extent required.
Access to a local phlebotomy service - not at GP or local chemist	LINK questionnaire	Not added to work programme as currently unclear about the extent of the issue. PCT also planning a review of phlebotomy provision.
Attitudes in GP Practices – unpopular GPs; receptionist attitude. Not feeling GP listens to patients	Focus group; LINK consultation sessions	Caretaker Steering group did not feel the LINK was the body best placed to look at this.
Uptake of screening services PCT doing work around this and there is potential for LINK to feeding by gathering public feedback on screening services and why people don't use them perhaps through focus groups and community groups Work going on until March next year – to be followed by further 12 month	PCT transformation priority	It was felt this was more a PCT piece of work than a LINK piece of work.
Hospital discharge arrangements. Co-ordination of discharge arrangements Carers inclusion in hospital admission and discharge process. Concern about loss of information to GP.	CSCI inspection and star rating of Coventry Adult Social care (see inspection report and letter from City Council); PDSI planning day; LINK consultation event.	Shortlisted for LINK work programme because of the number of people this has an impact upon and the issues highlighted.

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
<p>Hospital transport – concerns about standard of service eg reported 5 hour wait and then taken home by taxi. Hospital transport delays leading to lateness for appointments; concerns about non emergency patient transport to hospital. Long delays when attending outpatient appointments impacting on transport</p>	<p>PDSI planning day; PCT Quarterly meeting 16/2/09. LINK questionnaire</p>	<p>Issues concerning hospital transport are well known and service managers and commissioners are aware of issues. At this point in its development the LINK felt it did not have the resources to do work on this area effectively.</p>
<p>Within hospital issues around getting patient information to patients – the right information to the right people at the most appropriate time.</p>	<p>Hospital Managers</p>	<p>Shortlisted for work programme but did not go through to final work programme list because there were three shortlisted pieces for work for the Hospital Project group and there would not be resource to do each effectively and so as to have an impact.</p>
<p>Outpatient appointment systems - cancellations causing long delays resulting in appointment not taking place in timeframe that Consultant had advised; confusing/duplicate letters sent out to people; tone of letters; and issues when turning up for appointments..</p>	<p>Hope 2 meeting; LINK questionnaire; Legi workmates; discussions at meetings</p>	<p>Shortlisted for LINK work programme for Hospital Working group because of the volume of comments received on this topic and the number of people likely to be affected.</p>
<p>Cleanliness -concerns about quality of cleaning practice – i.e. cloths not being washed between wiping surfaces for different patients.</p>	<p>Hope 2 meeting</p>	<p>Other information exists showing happiness with cleanliness so further evidence of concerns would need to be brought to LINK's attention. This issue was raised with UHCW.</p>
<p>Staffing issues on some wards reported; concerns about nursing care - lack of continuity of staff</p>	<p>Hope 2 meeting; LINK questionnaire</p>	<p>Insufficient information to enable prioritisation for current work programme.</p>
<p>Concern about nursing staff attitudes and the need for more emphasis on this in staff training</p>	<p>Hope 2 meeting</p>	<p>This point was raised with Julia Flay at this meeting and would be something for the hospital to address.</p>

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
Care on ward 23 for people with disabilities	LINK questionnaire	Insufficient evidence of extent of problem. LINK took part in recent patient survey aimed at people with disabilities and a report is going forward to the Hospital.
Negative experiences of first contact triage in A&E	Consultation event	Unclear about the extent or nature of the issue at the moment – it could be an issue of expectations
Waiting times in A&E	Statistics; Health Care Commission	Ongoing issue in Coventry however the LINK is not the body best placed to address this as targets are monitored nationally and the PCT has a responsibility for ensuring they are met.
Some waiting times for GP referral to specialist	LINK launch event	The LINK is not the body best placed to address this as targets are monitored nationally and the PCT has a responsibility for ensuring they are met.
Clinicians the learning disability rather than a person with a health problem that needs sorting out	Learning disability session	Unclear about the extent of the issues and lower likelihood of impact.
Cultural sensitivity in Hospital – eg food	CSCI	Not included in work programme. UHCW Patient Forum carries out work regarding hospital food.
The completion of work underway to personalise day services for older people.	CSCI inspection and star rating of Coventry Adult Social Care (see inspection report and letter from City Council)	Added to the LINK work programme to find out what is happening in Coventry.
Getting a social services assessment	LINK questionnaire (Raised by one or two individuals)	Unclear about the extent of the issue
Delays in receiving Direct Payments	Parent Partnership Focus Group	Unclear about the extent of the issue
Lack of flexibility – sitting service for children.	Parent Partnership focus group	May not fall within LINK's remit.
Quality of information provided by Social Care and Health Professionals with regards to eligibility criteria and appropriateness of	Parent Partnership focus group	Unclear about the extent of the issue

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
services. Conflicting information.		
Alzheimer's/Dementia care	Scrutiny; CQC	Short listed for the LINK work programme – however not take n forward at this time as it is a big cross cutting piece of work which LINK should be better placed to tackle next year.
National consultation and discussion on the future of social care: Green paper Shaping the future of care together. Deadline 13 November 2009	National policy drive	Not added to the LINK work programme on the basis of timelines and the Steering Group felt it would be difficult to have a lasting impact on policy because of the likelihood of a change of government next year.
Early discharge from Caludon Centre - lack of community support; lack of support for carers/family members of in- patients in Caludon Centre	VCS group; consultation event	Not added to current work programme as the extent of the issue is unclear.
Number of people who are homeless who have Mental Health problems – extent/is there an issue	Mental Health Charities Sandy Taylor Partnership Trust	Not added to current work programme as a direct outcome could not be identified.
Substance misuse - making contact with people within the service and their experience within the service	Sandy Taylor Partnership Trust	Not added to current work programme as the extent of the issue is unclear.
Testing out effectiveness of new care programme approach - by gathering opinion	Sandy Taylor Partnership Trust	The LINK did not have the resources to take forward this piece of work at this time.
Autism – new national strategy consultation	National policy; VCS group	With the tight deadline it was felt that it was better to look at the results of the consultation and their implementation rather than have an input.
Question of equality between 2 services provided by Partnership Trust: mental health and learning disability	VCS Group	Fits best as something to keep a watching brief on rather than a specific piece of work.
Lack of information about mental health services especially for those in crisis.	LINK questionnaire; consultation session	Added to the LINK work programme because this issue was raised by a number of people.

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
Lack of support for pre-natal depression	Focus group	Not added to current work programme as the extent of the issue is unclear.
Lack of choice in treatments eg anti depressants/counselling/CBT etc	Consultation session	Not the best time to look at this as a new IAPT service is currently being implemented
Waiting times for counselling services	Consultation session	Not the best time to look at this as a new IAPT service is currently being implemented
Investigation into knowledge and training of first contact staff in NHS regarding mental health	Warwickshire LINK – suggesting a joint piece of work	IAPT programme being commissioned and launched which will provide – which will provide 100 new staff and work at primary care level.
Government consultation New Horizons; plans to help improve everyone’s mental well-being and the services that provide mental health care.	Government policy drive	Because of the deadline, it was felt better to look at the results of the consultation and the implementation of them rather than have an input.
Implementation of the NHS constitution – what difference has it made, or how aware are NHS staff of it, and what work are the Trusts and PCT doing to raise awareness?	NHS worker	Not added to current work programme as the extent of the issue/impact is unclear.
Diabetes care - inequalities between GP practices ; lack of co-ordination of services; training of practice nurses; inconsistency of care between hospital wards (especially night times and weekend)	LINK consultation session. Currently PCT strategy is to devise a Diabetes Strategy. PCT Quarterly meeting 16/2/09	Whilst this was perceived to be a significant issue it was felt that the LINK did not have the resources at this point in time. This work should be considered for the next work plan.
Consultation on the de-authorisation of NHS foundation trusts Closing date: 18 September 2009 A consultation on proposals to introduce a power for Monitor to de-authorise foundation trusts, and for the introduction of a framework for the Secretary of State to set out his concerns where a serious failure occurs at a foundation trust.	Policy	The LINK as not able to meet the short deadline.

Suggested piece of work	Who/where suggested	What LINK decided to do
Are people over 50 subject to ageism in how they are offered treatment (especially by primary care) e.g. not given medication because too old and not worth it	Came from discussions at drop in group.	The extent and nature of the issues and the impact the LINK can make were considered as not clear enough at this stage.
How deaths are recorded and categorised – as sudden	Raised by member of public following own experiences	Not added to current work programme as the extent of the issue is unclear.
Oxygen masks in hospital	Raised by member of the public who has been through NHS complaints process. Currently being raised with British Thorax Society.	Not added to the work programme as it was felt that other bodies were better placed to address this.