

Your LINK for improving health and social care

www.thekentlink.co.uk



Kent LINK Governors' Group Report

Introduction

The Kent LINK Governors' Group is a small group of LINK participants with a range of skills, knowledge and experience, which is used to effectively guide the LINK.

The membership of the Governors' Group and the roles currently assigned to individual members are as follows:

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| • Francisca Alabi | Equality and Diversity |
| • John Ashelford | Performance Management |
| • Mike Eddy | Strategic |
| • Mark Fittock | Legislation, Policy, Governance and Community Engagement and Partnerships |
| • John Fletcher | Chairman and Project Management |
| • John Holloway | Strategic |
| • Cate Jackson | Priorities Panel Liaison |
| • Bose Johnson | Liaison with Care Quality Commission on Health Service matters |
| • Roger Kendall | Vice Chairman and Finance |
| • Sally Keverne | Community Engagement and Partnerships |
| • Kath Pavely | Communications and PR |
| • Stan Richardson | Finance |
| • David Swaffer | Equality and Diversity |

The Governors' Group is accountable to the LINK through its reports to quarterly LINK events and to the LINK's annual meeting. The Terms of Reference of the Governors' Group is attached at Appendix A.

This report covers the progress that has been made since the last LINK's quarterly event held on 10 November 2009

Promotion of the LINK and recruitment of new participants

We continue to implement the LINK's community engagement and communications and PR strategies. This has included the activities of the LINK's Development Workers whose task has been to make contact with those communities and groups that previously have found it difficult to get their voices heard. The Governors are currently reviewing the LINK's policy of focussing on so-called 'seldom heard' or 'hard to reach' groups.

Since the last quarterly meeting in May 2009, the numbers of LINK participants have increased from 801 to 844. Included in this number are 134 organisations which bring with them their membership.

The Governors have also discussed a first draft of the LINK's Youth Engagement Strategy

We continue to publish the LINK Bulletin on a monthly basis – providing regular updates on LINK activity, consultations, news items and related events in health and / or social care. This is provided for all LINK participants. Two newsletters have been published since the last event, one of which was a Christmas edition. This, together with the LINK website continues to be the main stays of our communications with LINK participants.

The Kent LINK website continues to generate an impressive number of hits, nearly half of whom are new visitors. The 'Talkback' section currently has three discussions taking place:

- Pain services in Kent
- What's right and wrong about Foundation Trusts?
- Should complementary therapies be funded through taxation?

The website also continues to carry a range of:

- News and information about health and social care
- Information about events
- Opportunities to take part in surveys
- Current consultations on health and social care services.

LINK Work Programme

The range of issues the LINK is being asked to look at continues to grow. Projects currently underway include:

- **Hygiene and cleanliness in Kent's hospitals**
This project uses the LINK's 'enter and view' powers and is highly innovative. LINK visitors as part of this project are equipped with equipment to test for infective organisms and also to check on the adequacy of disinfectant in use. The project is running over on time due to the inclement weather and an inability to visit certain hospitals which have the Norvo virus. We hope that the majority of visits will be concluded by the end of February. We are extremely grateful to the LINK's 'authorised'

visitors for carrying out this exacting first LINK project under extremely difficult circumstances and for their fortitude.

- **Stroke services in Kent and Medway**

Following a government report of 2008 which highlighted deficiencies in certain hospitals in the South East, this included Darent Valley Hospital, Dartford, Maidstone Hospital, and Kent and Sussex Hospital, Tunbridge Wells. The LINK's review is now complete and a summary of the recommendations will be presented to the LINK at the quarterly meeting.

- **Day services for the older people in West Kent**

Eight Day Centres run by Age Concern have hosted focus groups led by the LINK facilitators to find out what the future of day care should be in Kent. Other aspects of this project have included contact being made by the LINK 'mystery shoppers' to gain an insight into how prospective users of such services are received and their impressions of the services and facilities. The final stage of the project will concentrate on that group of older people who may suffer social isolation who currently do not use day centres, to find out what form of day care they would want for themselves, if it was on offer.

- **Access (transport) to hospitals**

A series of LINK events throughout the County (including Medway) are being planned with the intention involving LINK Participants with an interest in this topic – to find out what effectively is being done to provide improved transport for patients and others in getting to our hospitals.

LINK Representatives on external groups / organisations

The Governors Group is anxious to involve as many LINK participants as possible in representing the LINK on various NHS or social care groups. The full list can be found on the LINK's website www.thekentlink.co.uk.

LINK financial statement

Attached at Appendix B is a report of the LINK's financial position for the first six months of the financial year, ie the period 1 April 2009 to 31 January 2010.

Conclusion

The LINK continues to develop and new challenges emerge, but it is also important for the LINK to sustain what has been achieved over the past year of operation. We welcome the positive relationship that is developing with NHS and social care organisations and, most important of all, the involvement of LINK participants.

The Kent LINK Governors' Group
25 February 2010