



**Draft minutes of the Budget Sub Committee meeting held on
10 February 2010 from 10.00am– 12.00noon
at Aylesham & District Community Workshop Trust, Ackholt Road, Aylesham**

Present:

Roger Kendall
Sally Keverne
Stan Richardson

Also present:

Graham Hills, Operational Director, Kent LINK

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Eddy

2 Notes of previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 2 January were confirmed as a correct record.

3 Matters arising from previous meeting

The following matters arising from the previous meeting were discussed:

- 3.4 - Quotes for “marketing” of the LINK, were being sought
- 3.7 - With regard to the LINK seeking sponsorship for projects, this matter was still to be actioned by the Group
- 3.9 - It was noted that LBV TV had still not submitted payment in the sum of £2,999 and advice was sought on whether legal action should be taken to recover this amount. It was **agreed** a further letter be sent to LBV TV advising that LINK had been informed and advised requesting payment before the end of the financial year.

4 Review of expenses policy

The Group had been charged with the task of reviewing the LINK’s expenses policy (copy attached) with a view to advising the Governors of changes the LINK may need to be recommended to the Annual Meeting of the LINK in May 2010.

Consideration was given to arrangements for paying expenses to individuals approved to represent the LINK on external organisations. It was **recommended** that:

- a) The expenses policy is clarified to ensure that all individuals approved by the Governors’ Group to represent the LINK shall be eligible for reimbursement of their expenses and not just those on the Panel of External Representatives.
- b) No change be made to the:

- i. 40p mileage rate
 - ii. Additional payment of 2p per mile for carrying passengers on LINK business
- c) With regard to the payment of subsistence allowance, of up to £5 for LINK Participants on who are away from home / work for over 4 hours, should not be required to submit receipts to support such claims
- d) Claims for the preceding financial year submitted beyond the second week of April following may not be payable.

5 Kent LINK commentaries on NHS Quality Accounts

The Group noted that proposals had been sought from Kent and Medway Universities with a view to obtaining academic support to enable Kent and Medway LINKs to provide a commentary on NHS Trusts' Quality Accounts that were to be introduced in April 2010. Two detailed proposals had been received, one from Canterbury Christ Church University and the other from the University of Greenwich (copies previously circulated to all LINK Governors). Group members, Mike Eddy and Roger Kendall had met with representatives of both Universities, together with representative of Kent and Medway Networks. Careful consideration had been given to both proposals and the Group **agreed** to recommend:

- a) That the proposal of Canterbury Christchurch be accepted in the sum and time for delivery of the work set out in the quote.
- b) The Governors further explore with Greenwich University their proposal to train and support LINK community researches with a view to carrying out similar work to that proposed on the NHS Quality Account, but this time in respect of social care. It was felt that building capacity of the LINK to take on more project work could only be achieved by training and supporting suitably skilled individuals; this it was felt would also be good value for money. A copy of the proposal with regard to training community researchers is attached.

6 County Show

It was noted that the NHS for East and West Kent had revised the amount the LINK would have to contribute to exhibiting at the County Show at Detling in 2010 from £11,000 to £5,000. The Group **agreed** to recommend that the LINK should to pay a proportionate amount with other exhibitors but not exceeding £5,000. Also negotiations should commence as soon as possible with a view to securing a pitch within the KCC's Social Care exhibition area. It was also felt that LINK Participants should be encouraged to man the LINK exhibit with minimal staff support.

7 Audit of Accounts 2008/09

It was **agreed** that KMN expedite the audit of the LINK's 2008/09 accounts which was now overdue.

8 Date of next meeting

It was **agreed** that the next meeting of the Group be held at 10.00am on Wednesday, 10 March 2010 at Beach House, Beach Road, Herne Bay.

Section 8 – Reimbursement of Expenses

Introduction

1. The Department of Health has produced guidelines for reimbursement of out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers. The guidelines acknowledge that patient and service user involvement is key to developing and delivering responsive services and that they should not be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off as a result of their involvement.

2. The following indicates those Kent LINK participants who would be eligible to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses:
 - governors on authorised Governor activities
 - members of the
 - authorised Panel of Visitors
 - Panel of External Representatives
 - members of the Moderating Panel
 - members on authorised business of one of the above named panels and in accordance with the LINK's approved work programme
 - LINK participants performing authorised duty on behalf of the LINK and in accordance with the LINK's work programme.

3. Following the LINK's principle of inclusiveness, no one should be disadvantaged. This means that cases of hardship, eg for reasons of income, will be considered on an individual basis.

Eligible expenses

4. The LINK's expenses budget constitutes a proportion of its overall budget. This means that there is a need for diligence on what can and cannot be reimbursed. With this in mind the following are items that eligible participants will be able to claim (in accordance with the criteria identified above under eligible participants)
 - mileage at 40p per mile
 - passenger miles at 2p per mile
 - car parking charges*

- public transport fares*
- subsistence*, up to a maximum of £5 per event and where the LINK business has incurred the participant being away from home / work for over 4 hours (note that this means that the participant's travelling time will be included)
- special needs such as
 - carer / advocate / personal assistant accompanying the participant**
 - child care arrangements**
 - private transport* ** – such as a taxi
 - stationery* ** – such as printer cartridges
 - phone bills * **

5. All claims for those items marked * above will need to have supporting receipts attached. There may be occasions whereby it will not be possible to obtain a receipt. Should this be the case, then a short explanation accompanying the claim will be required and authorisation for such cases will be done on an individual basis.

6. Those items marked ** above will require prior approval of the Finance Governor. Taking into account the LINK's principles of inclusiveness, it will endeavour wherever possible to ensure that nobody be excluded from any Link event / meeting. However, each case for reimbursement of such expenses will be looked at on an individual basis. Any refusal for such expenses will be accompanied by a full explanation, but the final decision will be made by the Finance Governor.

Process for claiming expenses

7. A form will need to be completed to indicate the expenses being claimed – form and detailed process are in development. The claimant will need to sign the form, attach relevant receipts and ensure the claim is authorised by KMN's Operational Manager. The Operational Manager will be able to verify the eligibility of the claimant and the expenses claimed (by reference to this governance framework, the LINK's work programme and any relevant LINK policies or strategies).

Role and responsibility of the participant

8. It is the responsibility of the participant, in submitting a claim for expenses, to ensure that:
- they are an eligible participant
 - the expenses claim is valid and for eligible activity
 - all relevant receipts accompany the claim
 - they do not submit a claim for the same activity / expense to any other organisation
 - any personal tax implications are explored
 - if claiming any state benefits, they are aware of the impact of making a claim for expenses whilst on LINK activity
 - if claiming any state benefits, the relevant government department is advised of the expenses to be claimed, as appropriate
 - they submit any claim for expenses within two months of the expenditure being incurred
 - at the end of the financial year, they submit all claims for that year by the second week in April.

Extract from proposal from the University of Greenwich

Training and Supporting Community Researchers.

The Centre for Research would train community researchers, and LINKs staff, to conduct focus groups and/or one-to-one qualitative interviews. We envisage that LINKs' own staff will take responsibility for helping the community researchers organise the various research activities, but they could also conduct some research themselves. It is important for them to attend the training, whether or not they are to undertake research. It would be valuable for community researchers and LINKs staff to work together at each stage of the research process.

Our previous experience suggests that community researcher training is most effective if it also forms an integral part of the research process. This means, for example, that community researchers will be trained how to construct an interview topic guide through the process of constructing a topic guide for the piece of research they are planning to conduct. We propose the following schedule of training sessions. At this stage only broad areas of training are specified, as we would anticipate collaborating with LINKs on the design of this training.

Day 1: What is qualitative research? How to design a qualitative research study? What are the advantages/disadvantages of one to one interviews versus focus groups?

Practical sessions:

1. Designing a study: who should be interviewed and how? How can we be systematic about selecting people to be interviewed? Can any other research methods be used?
2. Developing interview questions: What do we want to learn? How to formulate questions and develop a topic guide?

Day 2: Conducting qualitative research. Research Ethics. Tips and techniques for interviews and/or focus groups.

Practical sessions:

1. Small group work practising interviews – role play.
2. Finalising topic guides.
3. Design Research Ethics systems.

Community Researchers conduct a round of interviews

Day 3: De-brief and researcher support day. Discussion of conduct and progress of research to date, and suggestions for future activity. The day would focus on assessing how systematic, and robust, the research process has been to date; and consider whether additional, or alternative methods, might be adopted.

Practical sessions:

1. Identification of research gaps (eg. are we reaching all the communities we are aiming for?). How to fill gaps.
2. Practicing interviews – using role play when researchers reproduce situations they may have found challenging.
3. Critically analyse the topic guides, and revise in the light of emerging issues.
4. Review research ethics.

Optional Training Day: Repeats Day 3

Community Researchers finish conducting research

Day 4: Preliminary discussion of emerging research findings, and starting the analysis.

Interactive discussion and workshops would take place throughout the day. The data would be analysed thematically with the help of qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo or Framework.

Practical sessions:

1. Identification of themes in the data.
2. Coding the interview transcripts

Day 5: Final discussion of research findings; issues to be covered in the LINKs' commentaries; possible recommendations.

Interactive discussion and workshops would take place throughout the day.

Practical sessions:

1. Ordering the different themes.
2. Identifying recommendations for LINKs' commentaries.

The training would thus be organised around the studies that Medway and Kent LINKs would like to pursue in order to ensure patient and public involvement in the development of their commentaries. Our assumption is that the studies would start with giving a voice to individual LINK participants and LINK participant organisations; and then move onto giving a voice to the wider community, including 'seldom heard' groups. It is likely that the optional training day will be needed to plan the movement from accessing LINK participants, to working with the wider community. Four principles will guide this entire process:

- **Collaborative** working whereby the Centre for Research and Development guides and support studies being undertaken by Kent and Medway LINKs.
- An **iterative** and **flexible** process, whereby the results of one stage of the studies are drawn upon in order to inform subsequent stages (all discussed and developed at training days).
- **Community** involvement in each stage of the process.
- **Capacity Building** so that LINKs can conduct similar studies in the future.

Budget

Research Centre staff time required:

Lesley Hoggart: preparation and conduct of training days (£6000)

Research Fellow: should be covered in overall time dedicated to this project

Community Researchers to be thanked for the time devoted on the project with the use of high street vouchers. Assume 10 researchers spending 4 days each conducting research (£100 per day): £4000.

Staff

Dr Lesley Hoggart would co-ordinate this work, and undertake the training with the support of the Research Fellow. Lesley is an experienced qualitative research trainer who has recently trained and supported community researchers on three projects: *Investigating the health and sexual health needs of Unaccompanied Minors in Enfield and Haringey*; *Health for Haringey, an evaluation of healthy living centres*; and *An investigation into community childcare needs in the London Borough of Camden*.

The Research Fellow (to be appointed) would also support the community researchers on an ongoing basis, and co-ordinate the administration of the research with LINKs staff.