



August 2010

Working Better Together – involving local people in healthcare

The purpose of this document is to promote closer working and co-operation between NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services (ECKCS) and the Kent Local Involvement Network (Kent LINK).

Values

This agreement is based on the shared values of:

- Openness
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Integrity
- Respect
- Trust
- Understanding
- Effective communications
- Listening.

Principles of joint working

The following principles form the basis for a way of working, and reflect the Kent Partnership Compact. They are the principles that both partners are committed to working towards:

- We will share information with each other with proper respect for confidentiality, protocols and the Data Protection Act
- Both partners are equally important and will respect the diversity and roles of each organisation
- We are both committed to promoting equality and diversity
- We recognise the independence of Kent LINK

- Both partners acknowledge the different constraints under which we work, including the requirements to follow legislation and contractual agreements
- We acknowledge that differences may arise; however, we are both committed to resolving disagreements within the partnership in a constructive and respectful manner.

How we will work together?

- We will meet twice yearly to discuss priorities, plans and issues. The meetings will involve the ECKCS Managing Director, Chairman and nominees from the Kent LINK
- There will be a quarterly operational meeting involving the Associate Director of Quality, Performance and Corporate Development, the Head of Patient Experience and Public Involvement, the two LINK representatives on the Board and a LINKs officer
- There will be regular contact between the ECKCS Communication and Engagement Team and the Kent LINK Development Workers for east and mid Kent. This will involve both face-to-face meetings, email and phone contact
- The Kent LINK will be invited to nominate two representatives for the ECKCS Board
- There will be a Kent LINK representative on the ECKCS Patient Experience Group
- The Kent LINK will be invited to nominate representatives for other ECKCS groups.

NHS legal duty to consult and involve

NHS organisations have a legal duty to consult and involve patients and the public in the planning and provision of services, the development and consideration of proposals for changes in services and decisions about the operation of services.

ECKCS see LINKs as a key stakeholder and we will seek LINKs' views as part of any consultation process, and we will do so in a timely manner that respects the LINK's structure and way of working. We recognise that LINKs are able to get the views of groups and communities that are reluctant to engage directly with the NHS.

What are the benefits?

- Shared understanding of our respective roles
- Clear lines of communication will ensure there are 'no surprises' and that where we are able to share information this will be communicated at the earliest opportunity
- Early identification of opportunities for joint patient and public engagement, particularly with harder to reach groups
- Public acknowledgement of the valuable role of LINKs
- Strengthened accountability.

Review

This agreement will be reviewed annually, or as required if there are changes to the legal structure of either organisation.

Signed:

Signed:

On behalf of Eastern and Coastal Kent
Community Services

On behalf of the Kent LINK

Date:

Date:
