

Compact between NHS West Kent and Kent Local Involvement Network [LINK]

1. Introduction

This Compact framework sets out the priorities for progressing the partnership between NHS West Kent and Kent LINK, building on the relationship that has already been established. It recognises shared values, principles and commitments and sets out guidelines for how the partners will develop more effective joint working and better decision-making, leading to improved outcomes for individuals and the community.

It is not a legally binding contract but a formal document that aims to strengthen relationships between the two partners by establishing core principles and actions on which to work together.

2. The Kent LINK

The Kent LINK is an independent body set up in statute through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Its remit is to:

- Promote and support the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of NHS and Social Care Services
- Enable people to monitor and review such services for the purposes of commissioning and quality of provision
- Ask local people what they think about local health and social care services and provide a chance to suggest ideas to help drive improvements
- Investigate specific issues of concern to the community
- Use its powers to hold services to account and achieve results
- Ask for information and receive an answer in a specified amount of time
- Be able to carry out spot checks to see if services are working well (carried out under safeguards)
- Construct reports and recommendations and receive a response
- Refer issues to the local Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3. Aim of the Compact

NHS West Kent and Kent LINK have identified and agreed the following aims:

- to improve mutual understanding, trust and communication
- to improve partnership working through more effective joint planning
- to attract and provide better opportunities for volunteers
- to establish a framework for effective consultation and positive engagement with the community

4. Joint working and Service Level Agreement Protocol NHS West Kent and Kent LINK

As the profile of the LINK increase within NHS West Kent it is anticipated that demands to work closely and to utilise the resources and expertise will increase.

To manage this demand on the LINK and to ensure that any joint working is carried out as effectively as possible the following process will be observed.

Contact with the LINK from NHS West Kent will be channelled through the Stakeholder Engagement team who will liaise with a nominated LINK representative.

Requests to work jointly or to receive services or support from the LINK will specify:

- The scope of the joint working opportunity, service or support required
- Expectations from the LINK and how it will add value
- Description of the relevant PCT commissioning priority or core business plan aim to which the joint working will relate
- Projected resource implications for the LINK (time, people and financial)

The LINK will consider the request and propose how they might be able to meet the need specified. This needs to emphasise their responsibility – who will consider (governors, priorities panel?), an amount of time to be set.

The Stakeholder Engagement team will liaise with the nominated LINK representative to form a joint working agreement or service level agreement that is appropriate.

5. LINK representatives working with the PCT

NHS West Kent welcomes the opportunity to work closely with the LINK and to support its remit as described above. To fully support this aim LINK representatives will be invited to be represented on appropriate committees, and be supported in this role by a PCT 'mentor' and patient training programme.

The establishment of Commissioning Delivery Teams (CDT) within the PCT to support the delivery of the Strategic Commissioning Plan represents the ideal opportunity for LINK representatives to embed patient involvement in all future PCT commissioning in West Kent.

6. Kent LINK to NHS West Kent

Formal referrals from the LINK will be sent to the Chief Executive in the first instance in line with statutory requirements to respond to formal referrals.

To enable NHS West Kent to respond adequately, appropriately and in a timely way to requests from the LINK all contact from the Kent LINK should be copied to the Stakeholder Engagement team and Customer Services Team.

A regular (at least bi-monthly) meeting will be scheduled between representatives of the Kent LINK and the NHS West Kent Stakeholder Engagement team.