



Kent LINK - Priorities Panel

Introduction

The Priorities Panel is a group of LINK participants with a range of skills, knowledge and experience, which, when combined, will assist the LINK in making decisions and prioritising actions. It will do so using decision making, priority setting, criteria adopted by the LINK.

Terms of reference

In accordance with the LINK's agreed decision making and priority setting process the Priorities Panel will:

1. decide upon action to be taken on areas of interest, topics or issues ie items:
 - a. brought to the LINK's attention
 - b. not currently included in the LINK's annual work programme
 - c. that arise at any time between LINK quarterly / annual events.
2. Approve items, using the agreed decision making / priority setting criteria, to be:
 - a. added to the LINK's work programme
 - b. referred to the commissioners / providers of services
 - c. referred to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Kent County Council
 - d. included as discussion topics on the LINK's website / through the LINK's bulletins.
3. Determine those matters which are not to be actioned by the LINK.
4. Inform the LINK on actions it has taken between LINK events.
5. Report to the LINK Governors' Group – through a copy of each decision made.
6. Report to the LINK Governors Group where an issue is considered to have implications for the governance of the LINK.

Status of Priorities Panel Appointees

Being a member of the Priorities Panel is a voluntary unpaid position. Travel and other agreed expenses will be paid to Priority Panel Members working on behalf of the LINK, according to the LINK's Reimbursement of Expenses Policy (where travel is by private car the driver will be reimbursed at 40 pence per mile; where the total time taken on a visit including travel time exceeds 4 hours meal costs will be paid against receipts up to £5; all claims should be submitted on the appropriate form within three months).

The term of office for a member of the Priorities Panel will initially be for a period of 12 months. Thereafter, half the membership will be appointed for two years and the other half for three years. Those members appointed for the initial twelve months will be eligible to stand for a further period of office. There will be 7 panel members and a quorum of 5 to make a decision.

Commitment

Membership of the Priorities Panel will involve being available to be consulted as and when necessary but as a general guide the following level of commitment is anticipated:

- Activity - ie being consulted may account for 6 hours a week of your time
- Meetings - 3 or 4 times a year
- Training - at least twice a year - for whole or half day

More time may be required in the initial stage of the setting up of the Priorities Panel.

Desirable Background Experience

A member of the Priorities Panel needs to have some experience / knowledge of aspects of health and social care services. This could be as a service user or carer or as someone involved in the voluntary sector, etc. Knowledge / experience is required in one or more of the following areas:

- Ambulance services eg emergency, patient transport
- General health and well being, eg public health, diet, nutrition
- Hospital services eg outpatients, wards
- Primary health care eg community hospitals, GPs, dentists
- Social care in the community eg day care, home help
- Social care in residential settings eg care homes
- Specific conditions, eg cancer, diabetes
- Service user groups, eg carers, young people, elderly

Personal Competencies

Good communication skills are necessary, including the ability to:

- Be able to communicate widely (with support where needed)
- Be open to the views of others
- Make a short presentation (with support where needed)
- Objectively interpret various presentations
- Objectively consider and evaluate proposals
- Be willing to use computer technologies where possible. If this is not possible the LINK will work with the person appointed to the Priorities Panel to develop a communication strategy

Personal Attributes

Ability to set aside personal interests or concerns when making decisions on behalf of the Kent LINK, including:

- Preparedness to support collective decisions, irrespective of personal views
- An awareness of diversity and equality principles

Standards in public life

All members of the Panel are expected to observe the LINK's code of conduct and to observe the seven principles of public life (known as the Nolan Principles). These are a useful basis for understanding the role of Panel members:

- **Selflessness**
Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their families or their friends.
- **Integrity**
Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity**
In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability**
Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness**
Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest demands.
- **Honesty**
Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership**
Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

*Quoted from Centre for Excellence in Leadership
http://www.fegovernance.org/nolan_committee.html