



# Darlington LINK Newsletter

Issue 8

October 2010

## LINK

### Local Involvement Network

Make your voice heard and  
have your say in Health &  
Social Care in Darlington.

Darlington

LINK

MAKE IT  
HAPPEN!

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If you require this document in any other format  
please contact the LINK office on 01325 380 145

### Where are we now?

On 24<sup>th</sup> September Darlington LINK in conjunction with Crown Street Library held a coffee morning to raise

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

money for . Many people turned up for free coffee and cakes, to play our tombola or to speak to the Talking about Cancer team. In total £212.82 was raised and given to Michelle Thompson who accepted the funds on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support Darlington fundraising group.

Over the last few weeks Darlington LINK have been consulting its members on the new government White Paper and its supporting documents. All members were asked to complete a questionnaire for a chance to win £25 of shopping vouchers for our town centre stores – the lucky winner of which was A. MACRYS. Congratulations to you!



Darlington LINK are looking for volunteers to get involved with shaping health and social care services within their local community, to find out more contact us at the office 01325 380145.

Keep up to date with our activities via our website:

[www.Darlingtonlink.co.uk](http://www.Darlingtonlink.co.uk)

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# LINK to become HealthWatch

The White Paper '**Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS**' sets out the Government's vision for transforming health and social care.

Across England, many people already give up their time - via Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) & Patient Participation Groups - to help shape local health and social care services.

To build on this work and to give consumers a stronger voice, the White Paper proposes to establish HealthWatch England as the national independent champion for health and social care consumers. They also plan to build on the current role of LINKs by turning them in to local HealthWatch - a 'citizen's advice bureau' for health and social care. Legislation to establish HealthWatch is likely to be introduced as part of the forthcoming Health Bill. We expect HealthWatch to be up and running by 2012.

Up and down the country, Local Involvement Networks, Patient Participation Groups and other consumer groups are helping to make a difference by helping to shape and hold to account health and social care services. We estimate that in just the last year, LINKs alone have involved around 50,000 people and organisations and achieved approximately 300 service improvements.

Liberating the NHS gives a clear commitment to build on these efforts. We want to keep the role LINKs have in influencing how health and social care services are planned and delivered. However, we also want to give you the ability to make your views known nationally and to give patients a new local champion who can support them to complain and make choices about services.

The Government believes the impact of LINKs would be even greater if their role and powers were clearer, and there was a national voice for health consumers.

The role of LINKs are not ending, LINKs will evolve into local HealthWatch, the consumer champions for patients and communities. Local HealthWatch will also provide a powerful new voice for Patient Participation Groups and other consumer groups that join them.

Local HealthWatch will be the local consumer champion across health and social care.

## **Existing powers**

Local HealthWatch will:

- retain LINKs' existing responsibilities to promote patient and public involvement, and to seek views on services which can be fed back into local commissioning;
- have continued rights to enter and view provider services, and;
- continue to be able to comment on changes to local services.
- Like LINKs, they are likely to continue to take an interest in the NHS Constitution.

## **New role**

The White Paper proposes giving local HealthWatch additional functions and funding, for providing complaints advocacy services and for supporting individuals to exercise choice. In particular, they will support people who lack the means or capacity to make choices.

Local HealthWatch will be able to report concerns about the quality of local health and social care services to HealthWatch England. Local HealthWatch will be able to do this independently of their local authority and HealthWatch England will be able to recommend that the Care Quality Commission takes action.

A HealthWatch member will also sit on the new Health and Wellbeing boards so the community has a say in local decisions.

# Work Planning

## Stroke Services

The Stoke task group met in September to get further updates about the progress of stroke services in **Darlington** and County Durham. The updates have been provided by Lisa Cole (Emergency Care Manager County Durham and **Darlington** NHS Foundation Trust) and Christian Scollen (Project Manager Adults and Older Peoples Commissioning NHS County Durham and **Darlington**).

Quality Markers - The target is to get 90% of stroke patients onto the stroke unit within 4 hours. In June and July 70% was achieved but the figures dip even lower in August. This is being investigated and the group were assured that all stroke patients would still be assessed by a stroke physician. Jane Nicholson is the newly appointed Stroke Co-ordinator who is monitoring stroke patients across all 3 sites.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Stroke Service Review – This review looked at people who have had a stroke and focused on what happens to them after leaving hospital. It is a multi organisational review and the draft report expected this autumn.

Hyper Acute Stroke Services- The trust is committed to providing 24/7 thrombolysis from October 2010. There remain some issues around this as there are still 2 vacant posts for Stroke a specialist, a new advertising campaign has begun in the British Medical Journal but it is recognised that there is a national shortage of stroke specialists.

**Get Involved!** It's not too late to get involved with the stroke task group. If you have any expertise, knowledge or an interest in stroke services get involved with this task group. Contact the office for further details.



## GP Task Group

**Darlington LINK** have now completed their meetings with each individual GP surgery and identified areas of interest for follow up. Plans are in place to request further information and evidence from the surgeries and the Primary Care Trust with plans to meet up with all parties involved to discuss improvements and positive patient experience.

Our Enter and View team have been out to one of the surgeries in **Darlington** to review signage which we have been told is a problem. Issues have been highlighted and **Darlington LINK** are gathering more evidence to present a case for review to the Primary Care Trust.

### Get Involved!

To see the minutes from the meetings please see the website or call the office. If you have any expertise, knowledge or an interest in GP services get involved with this task group. Contact the office for further details.

## Care Homes

**Darlington LINK** has had some concerns raised about Care Homes and they would like to gather more information good or bad about your experience or the experience of someone you know. Have you or a friend or relative recently visited a care home? How was the experience? Tell us about it contact the **LINK** office now with your story. 01325 380145 or email [info@Darlingtonlink.co.uk](mailto:info@Darlingtonlink.co.uk)

# Work Planning

## Communications Task Group

This task group meets monthly to discuss prioritise and organise meetings and events that LINK had been invited to as well as improving the communication between all parties both internally and externally.

**Would you like to get involved? Do you have any ideas for promoting your LINK? If so please get in touch.**



## Mental Health Task Group

This task group has met on numerous occasions to discuss issues that have been brought to the attention of the LINK. The group has decided to concentrate on access to the Mental Health Crisis team and will be working alongside other LINK organisations across the trust area in a bid to improve the access for service users.

Our first cross boundary meeting will be held Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October and guidelines and action plans put in place for future research and service improvements.

### Get Involved!

Have you had any experience good or bad when accessing mental health services in Darlington. We'd love to hear from you. If you have any expertise, knowledge or an interest in stroke services get involved with this task group. Contact the office for further details.

## Information and Support

Darlington LINK have gathered public issues and concerns around information and support available to local people about health and social care services. At present there is no task group set up to take these issues forward and Darlington LINK would like to hear from any of its members who would be interested in forming a task group to take these issues forward.

**Darlington LINK are always looking for people to get involved to help make a difference in shaping our local health and social care services, for an informal chat to find out more contact Diane or Andrea on 01325 380145**



# Information



## **New publication informs patients and families what standards to expect from the regulation of their NHS hospital**

From April 2010 new essential standards of quality and safety are being introduced gradually across all health and adult social care services in England. The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the new independent regulator of health and adult social care, will license services if they meet essential standards and constantly monitor them to make sure they are compliant with new legislation about to be passed in parliament.

NHS trusts are the first to come into the new system starting 1 April this year; they will be followed in October by all providers of social care for people over 18 years of age and by providers of independent healthcare. Over the coming two years the system will include all primary care and dentists too.

The new system means that you can expect your care and treatment to meet essential standards of quality and safety that respect your dignity and rights. The biggest change from any earlier system of regulation is that each of the standards is based on an actual outcome for people rather than a policy or a target. Providers must demonstrate that people in their care have a quality experience across all aspects of their treatment, care or support.

CQC is publishing information about the status of all NHS trusts registered with them from April on its website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk). Here you will be able to look up the activities provided by your local NHS hospital. In the course of 2010 CQC will be enhancing the level of detail it publishes on its register of providers, displaying information on how providers are meeting the essential standards of quality and safety and making this data much more transparent and accessible to patients, their carers and families. For the first time information will be updated directly judgements are made by CQC's assessors and inspectors and CQC will monitor the status of providers continuously, noting improvements as they happen and taking swift action where providers are failing people.

CQC is putting people who use health and social care services at the centre of their work and wants them to have a bigger say in how services should improve. Your voice will count in helping CQC decide what action to take and to make judgements about providers. The regulator is interested in feedback from patients, their carers and families alike and in hearing about instances of both good and poor care. They are developing ways for you to feedback to them directly but meanwhile recommend that you contact a local representative group such as your nearest Local Involvement Network who will pass your comments to them.

You can find out more about the new essential standards of quality and safety at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) or contact the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161.



**Make your voice heard and have your say in Health & Social Care in Darlington**

# Information



County Durham and Darlington **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

## County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust - AGM

2009/10 was another successful year for County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. During the year, we implemented the ambitious programme of service change described in the Seizing the Future proposals. The implementation has been successful and we now deliver high quality acute services from our sites at Darlington and Durham. Bishop Auckland has established itself as a centre for planned care providing excellent rehabilitation services.

The Trust made significant improvements on its Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAI) performance, achieving targets for both MRSA and C Diff. We were rated Good/Excellent by the Care Quality Commission and our continued strong financial performance ensured that we retained our excellent rating for the use of resources.

For the third consecutive year, the Trust was named as one of top 40 Hospitals by the UK leaders in healthcare intelligence and improvement services (CHKS). The awards recognise outstanding performance in 21 different areas which are judged to be critical to delivering excellent patient care.

2009/10 also proved to be a year of accolades and recognition for many individual services and members of staff. Stuart Wray, the Trust's Catering Manager was named 'Caterer of the Year' in the national Hospital Caterers' Association awards, Lynda Gettings, one of the Trust's nurse specialists in Rheumatology was named the Nursing Standard's 'Nurse of the Year' and one of the Trust's consultants, Dr Richard Hixon was recognised nationally for his work on an innovative pocket sized device to help with prescribing safe and effective pain relief for children while a Colposcopy nurse gained recognition across Europe with an award for a pioneering service in prisons.

The Trust's Annual Report for 2009/2010 includes more details on these achievements and developments and is available from the Trust's website – [www.cddft.nhs.uk](http://www.cddft.nhs.uk)

The Trust recognises it will face some challenges in the course of the next few years. However, with the continued efforts of our staff, and the support of our patients, partners and communities, we feel confident that we can meet these challenges.

Gillian Parsons  
Communications Manager  
County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

# LINK Activities & Event Feedback



(Growing Older Living in **Darlington**)

GOLD held its Positive Health Day at **Darlington** Football Club on October 6th.

The day was again a huge success attracting lots of organisations promoting alternative therapies for the older people in **Darlington**.

**Darlington LINK** had its stand there and attracted 10 new members. Diane and Andrea the staff members of the LINK were able to also join in the activities by attending one of the therapies that were on offer. Both enjoyed the session advising of its benefits.

**Darlington LINK** is running a series of free events for you to drop in and join in, have your say and be heard.

**WHAT: COFFEE MORNING WITH CHURCH AUTUMN FAIR**

**WHERE: HARROGATE HILL METHODIST CHURCH**

**ON: 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2010**

**TIME: 10:00-13:00**



## Core Group Meetings

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 14:00-16:00**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 18:00-20:00**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010 10:00-12:00**

**All at eVOLUTION, Church Row**

## Darlington LINK at the Beach Party

**Darlington LINK** held a Stall at the Beach Party held in the market square. It is important that the LINK raises awareness of what it does, and how local people can be involved in shaping their local services in **Darlington** therefore this was an excellent opportunity for the LINK to reach out and engage with everyone in **Darlington**.

The weather stayed fine and the children really enjoyed the beach environment. The event was fun and promoted **Darlington LINK**.

## Watch this space for more

**Darlington LINK**

## Free Events



# Get Involved

## How you can get Involved!

There are various levels of participation in the **LINK**. You can participate as much or as little as you want to.

- **Members:** Members receive regular newsletters and updates on **LINK** activities. They may be asked to spare a few minutes to fill in a questionnaire or be asked to give their opinion on local services.
- **Core Group:** The core group are elected representatives. They look after the governance and management of the **LINK**. They meet monthly and make decisions regarding the work and action plan for the **LINK**.
- **Task Group:** Task groups look at particular community concerns or issues. Members can join a task group if they have a particular interest in an issue or have experience or knowledge in the area. The task groups aim to work on and resolve community concerns and issues.
- **Other opportunities:** Raising awareness by distributing leaflets and freebies. Helping to run the **LINK** stall at public events.

No skills or particular experience is needed. If you want your voice to be heard the **LINK** can help this happen. This is your chance to have your voice heard and have their say in improving health and social care services.



## Task Groups

This is your chance to have your voice heard and have your say in health and social care in **Darlington**:

Existing Task Groups:

- **Stroke Services**
- **GP Surgeries**
- **Mental Health**
- **Information and Support**
- **Communications**

If you would like to be involved please contact the **LINK** office.



## Issues and Concerns

**Darlington LINK** wants to hear community issues and concerns regarding health and social care in **Darlington**. Please call the office with any concerns or fill out the form available at the office or on our website.

## Contact Us

FREEPOST RSGX-HBSK-YXBB

**Darlington LINK**

eVOLution

Church Row

**Darlington**

DL1 5QD

Tel: 01325 380145

07525 237723

Email: info@**Darlingtonlink.co.uk**

Web: www.**Darlingtonlink.co.uk**

Facebook: **Darlington LINK**

Twitter: **DarlingtonLINK**