

REGIONAL LINK CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY 15TH July 09

STADIUM OF LIGHT 10-3:30

AGENDA FOR THE DAY:

Registration / Tea and coffee on arrival

Introduction

Joan Saddler OBE – Department of Health National Director of Patient and Public Affairs

Tea / Coffee break

Morning workshop – Do we need a Regional LINK network?

Lunch / LINK stalls / Networking

Paul Johnson – Regional LINKs lead – Feedback from morning workshops

Afternoon workshops

9:00 Facilitator/scribes meeting

Paul Johnson explained to all the facilitators and scribes the outline of their roles and responsibilities for the day and handed out the notes to follow with the details of the morning workshop – as follows:

Ask each delegate around your table to introduce themselves and briefly say **why** they are there. (scribes please capture their reasons for being there)

Explore (scribes please capture comments made against each bullet point);

- What advantages would a Regional LINKs Members Network bring?
- What disadvantages could it bring?
- What purpose could it serve?
- What governance would it need?
- How would members be drawn from each area?

- Would it need resources? If yes, what?
- What value would it bring to your Local LINKs?
- What Value would it bring to other stakeholders? (the people we serve, health and social care providers, commissioners, CQC and Department of Health)
- What could be the barriers that would impede its formation or its function?
- Any ideas on how we overcome these barriers

Identify your top 3 recommendations from your discussions to inform the next steps for LINKs in the North East.

10:30 Introduction by Steve Wilkinson

Steve welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained where the meeting points were in case of fire. Photographs would be taken throughout the day and if anyone did not want theirs taken to inform the photographer. He explained the information pack to everyone and asked that if everyone would complete the feedback forms and hand them in at the end of the conference.

Steve the talked through the agenda and said question could be put to Joan Saddler after her presentation. Any questions not answered in the session could be written down and put in the box at the back of the room and these would be answered after the conference as soon as possible.

The following workshops for the afternoon were read out and all the facilitators were asked to stand for their workshop to enable the members to know who was running each workshop.

10:40 Joan Saddler's presentation

Joan introduced herself and said that this was a region of contrasts as it contained an urban and rural mix which runs from Northumberland to Yorkshire. Therefore, how do we make it work and work together across the region?

Answer: By using engagement and policy and the challenges of the LINK. She is going to try and make all voices heard, support LINKs, NHS trusts and the third sector to implement this. We have the backing from Lord Darzi, Andy Burnham and David Nicolson. Joan started her presentation, see attached:



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Steve thanked Joan for her presentation especially for highlighting cross boundary working.

11:15 Steve started the question session.

Question: How do we stop whistleblowers being victimised?

Answer: There are 3 types of people in engagement, those who get involved, those who rally and the thorn in the side. Guidance and measurement are now in place and is monitored to prevent this happening. LINK has to be arbitrary.

Question: Will LINK be extended beyond 2010?

Answer: Every 4 years there will be a change in Government but she did not think that any new government would change the LINK as it is at the moment.

Question: Putting people first, what is happening about public involvement in this?

Answer: LINK must be involved in putting people first.

Question: Many PCT's totally ignore Section 11, how do we get them involved in this?

Answer: This could be one of the issues to work on going forward and a regional LINK would be a stronger force.

Question: Constitution – If you complain to a PCT they have 20 days in which to reply. They can reply within this timescale but in fact they do not do anything. Is there a way any fines could be forced on the PCT if they fail to action a complaint?

Answer: Agree a local resolution with the PCT to agree timescales on processes. Use the Ombudsman for Health Services as they will monitor any PCT's who do not deal with complaints in a timely manner.

Question: Lord Darzi completed a survey for Hartlepool and Patricia Hewitt turned it down therefore people lose faith in the government.

Answer: LINKs have to try and change this and understand how to engage with NHS trusts.

Question time finished any unanswered questions to be placed in the box.

Tea and coffee break

11:45 Morning workshop

All members joined the relevant workshop

12:45 – 2pm Lunch

2:00 Paul Johnson

Paul thanked all for the input from the morning workshops and talked through the recommendations as follows:

Yes to a Regional Network for LINK.

It needs to have a purpose and to share best practice.

By sharing the information it would stop the duplication of work.

A stronger collective voice.

Cross boundary working.

Resources are needed, therefore what funding and support would we need. The host will have a small proportion of the budget to use but Paul Johnson would dedicate 4000.00 per year to use for the Regional meetings as it is his role to support the regional network for the forthcoming year.

Essential to have good communication, especially for sharing issues.

Paul then asked the question to the members – Do we want a Regional LINK? Vote of hands showed a majority of YES but note this was not unanimous.

Question: Would this restrict any funding into local LINKs?

Answer: NO.

Question: Now we have voted for a Regional LINK would this lead to a National Network?

Answer: He cannot predict this, it would be up to the LINKs to decide this.

Question: What is your opinion on NALM?

Answer: No comment, not relevant to this meeting.

Question: Re having a purpose – Criticism of the reasons.

Answer: These were just pointers taken from the mornings workshops and it was for the Regional Network to build on them. A full report will be written from the day's event and sent out to all members. It would then be up to individual LINK groups to discuss the reports findings with each Management

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Group and for the Chairs to discuss at the next Regional meeting later on in the year.

Question: We need to make LINK strong very quickly to prevent any new government trying to change things.

Answer: Agreed.

Question: Some areas do not have the LINK fully operational as yet so we not want to rush things.

Answer: When we discussed setting up a Regional LINK with all the Chairs it was agreed to have this conference and then take the report back and discuss with members and report the feedback at the next Chairs meeting.

Paul advised he will send out a copy of the report along with the minutes as soon as possible.

He thanked everyone for their time and he felt very positive of the outcome of the conference.

2:30 Individual workshops

All members regrouped to their workshops.

Conference closed at 3:30