



Your voice on local health and social care

Newsletter

Berkshire LINK Newsletter

February 2010

edition 1

Slough LINK update

Welcome to the first edition of the Berkshire Newsletter. We hope to give you a flavour of what the Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) in Berkshire are currently working on. Enjoy and Happy reading!

Action Before Addiction

Somalian Women's Group in Slough have raised concerns for the health of young people within their community. Particular concerns are around the alleged use of KHAT, a cultural substance which is chewed. Khat is legal in the UK but illegal in parts of Europe, the US and Canada.

Most worryingly, Khat use is becoming

increasingly prevalent among young Somali males in Slough and it is readily available at numerous 'Khat' outlets in Slough.

The Slough LINK study will seek to elucidate the Somali community's own perception of drugs misuse and any associated trends.

With a view to investigate what

barriers hinder access to support services in Slough. A key section would also look at the impact on education and will document the expectations, fears and experiences of the family and local community.

To find out more about this project contact: Carol Jackson - Doerge, Slough LINK Development Officer on 0118 936 0090.



Service users *fear* of potential changes

The LINK are aware that people are concerned about the changes to day care services under the governments agenda of personalisation.

FEARS that Day Centres in Slough could be re-shaped have sparked an

emotional reaction from many service users.

Many of these worries lie in the 'unknown impact' this would have on the individual. Slough LINK is seeking the views of the community on how existing services fulfill

the needs of the local community and how they could be improved.



Accessing GP appointments for Deaf or Hard of Hearing people

The need for a new and enhanced system for deaf or hard of hearing people when accessing GP appointments has been raised with the Bracknell Forest LINK.

The Bracknell Forest LINK is currently in the process of analysing all the systems that are currently in place across the borough and a comparison with

other services across borders that are more efficient. Research will be undertaken with national organisations such as the Deaf Association to enhance the project outcomes.

The systems uncovered will be tested and trialled with the hard of hearing group in Bracknell

Forest to provide feedback.

The final report will be sent to the PCT, NHS Trust, Local Authority, Key Stakeholders and LINK participants.



Services available to the homeless in Bracknell Forest

Whilst out engaging, Emma Austin, Bracknell Forest LINK Development Officer, was told of issues around homelessness within Bracknell Forest.

The Bracknell Forest LINK is trying to identify a process that makes access easier for those people that are homeless. Research will be undertaken to identify

current services available to the homeless and to identify gaps in services as well as looking at other boroughs to identify good practice.

A study of a 'Week in the life of a homeless person' will be carried out to track 2 separate homeless people in

Bracknell Forest and diaries their experiences, particularly around health and social care services.

The final report will recommend a clear pathway which will be shared with the PCT, NHS Trust, Local Authority, and Key Stakeholders.

Closure of the Look In

On Friday 22nd January a meeting was held regarding the possible closure of the Look In café in Bracknell Town Centre.

Over 100 people turned up to show their support and to demonstrate how important it is to them.

Cafe patrons are collecting signatures to oppose the

closure. LINKs participants can also pledge their support and add their names by calling us on 0118 936 0090.

You can also pledge your support by writing to your local councillor, commenting on the budget consultation that is available on the Bracknell Forest Council website or

by calling Andrew Peach on BBC Radio Berkshire on 0845 900 1041 and let him know how you feel about the issue

The LINK is happy to keep you informed of any developments.

DSS Payment

The need for more private landlords to accept DSS as a payment within the Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead area has been raised with the LINK.

Whilst looking into this project, the Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Steering Group have discovered that only a small number of landlords accept DSS as rent payment. This is

mainly due to DSS tenants receiving a lot of negative press; they are seen as high risk due to the historical view of them being people with poor credit history who don't look after their rented property, of course, not everyone is the same.

The Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead LINK are currently in the

process of undertaking a survey involving private landlords in the area, with the aim of finding out why landlords are reluctant to accept DSS.

To find out more contact Kayleigh Argyle, Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead LINK Development Officer on Kayleigh.argyle@makesachange.org.uk or call 0118 936 0090



Volunteers Wanted

Do you have a few hours to spare each month?

Are you interested in improving health or social care?

If so, contact the Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead LINK on the details above and get involved with the LINK projects.

My Care, My Choice

A new scheme has been introduced which will give Royal Borough residents a greater say in how they use their social care funding.

From 1 February older people and people with physical disabilities needing social care will be assessed under the new government scheme.

Everyone receiving community based social care will be allocated a personal budget, giving them the flexibility to use the money in the way that works best for their needs.

Leaflets are available from council offices and libraries or you can call Laurel Hegarty on 01628 796720 or write to Transforming

Social Care, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF or email tsc@rbwm.gov.uk



Physical Access to GP surgeries

The issue of disabled access to GP surgeries around the Wokingham area was brought to the attention of the Wokingham LINK.

The Wokingham LINK gathered the views of patients around this

subject and looked at the GP surgeries own patient information leaflets.

The LINK has written a report on findings which includes recommendations and will be sending this to

NHS Berkshire West for comment. If you would like to see a copy of the report please contact Michelle Wooff, LINK Development Officer, Tel: 01189 360090, or email

michelle.wooff@makesachange.org.uk

Did you know

There is a Forum for Young People with Dementia in West Berkshire? If you would like to make contact please call Michelle Wooff, LINK Development Officer on 0118 9360090 or email

michelle.wooff@makesachange.org.uk

Singing for the Brain

Singing sessions for people with dementia or memory difficulties to share with family carers or friends; led by an inspiring facilitator & supported by volunteers. To find out more contact Gwen Turner on 0118 9784815 or the Alzheimer's Society – Wokingham Branch on 0118 954 7558.



Recent LINK response to RNIB research and national survey June 2009

The LINK received a report from RNIB following research to investigate the experiences of blind and partially sighted people who had used NHS services.

The LINK Development Officer and a member of the LINK Steering group

consulted with FAST (Friendship and Support group for blind and partially sighted people in Wokingham) to ask if they agreed with the findings and recommendations.

Wokingham Area Access Group (WAAG) and Wokingham Ability Partnership (WAP) have also circulated

a LINK request for comments to their members. Comments have been collated and have been shared with NHS Berkshire West whilst asking how the recommendations are to be considered in future service provision.



Patient Experience Programme

NHS Berkshire West Primary Care Trust are running an Expert Patient Programme which is a free course for adults with one or more long term chronic medical conditions such as, but not limited to, Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, Diabetes, HIV, heart disease, ME, Parkinson's Disease or back pain.

The course helps people to learn new skills, gain confidence and knowledge to help them manage and live with their condition. The course runs for six consecutive weekly sessions. Each session lasts two and half hours and covers topics such as:-

- Relaxation and exercise

- Planning for the future
- Understanding the importance of healthy eating

If you are interested in enrolling or finding out more please contact Karen Redford on 0118 982 2916 or karen.redford@berkshire.nhs.uk

NHS Berkshire West 'Health network' – have your say

The Health Network is open to local people and organisations who wish to receive regular information about developments to local NHS services.

The next meeting is being held at Wokingham Town Hall on the 23rd February from

6pm-8pm.

The meeting will allow you to have an opinion on the following subjects;

1. Exploring access to GP appointments. What barriers do you face when trying to book or get

appointments?

2. Publish information about the performance of all GP surgeries in our area.

To register your attendance and have your views listened to, contact NHS Berkshire West on healthnetwork@berkshire.nhs.uk or 0118 982 2962

Volunteers Wanted

Do you have a few hours you could spare each month?

Are you interested in improving health or social care services?

If the answer is yes, then we need your help.

The West Berkshire LINK has a number of projects developing, including:

working on issues around individual social care budgets, looking at availability of GP appointments, assessing services for people with dementia conditions and investigating the poor take up of drug rehabilitation services in West Berkshire.

If any of these projects interest you and you would like to get involved, contact Barbara Wade, West Berkshire LINK Development Officer on 0118 9360 0090 or email

Barbara.wade@makesachange.org.uk

Berkshire Events

Decision Making Training

Every LINK should be able to explain to people how decisions are made within the LINK. Regulations stipulate that procedures for decision making must be published in a way that can be easily accessible and understood by everyone.

This training workshop is open to everybody in the community with an interest in helping the LINK prioritise which issues to work on. If you would like more information or think you would

make a good decision maker please contact Topsy Bradshaw

on
topsy.bradshaw@make.sachange.org.uk or
phone 0118 936 0090

Date: 23 February 2010

Time: 10-2pm

Venue: 4 Marlow Road
Community Centre,
Maidenhead

Cost: Free

Facilitator: Patient &
Public solutions

Men's Health Forum Council

The Men's Health Forum, in conjunction with Mind and the National Mental Health

Development Unit, is running a conference in Reading.

The conference will focus on effective practice in male mental health and will be of particular interest to mental health practitioners and other health professionals, service users and carers, specialist voluntary sector organisations, and academics working in the mental health field.

Date: 30th March 2010

Time: 10am - 4pm

Venue: University of Reading

To book your place, email
s.l.liddell@reading.ac.uk

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Patients and families to benefit from new essential services

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.

For more information go to
www.cqc.org.uk

