

Care Home visits by Enter & View team



Tony Reynolds

In our August edition of our Newsletter we mentioned the recent Enter & View visits to care homes across the county. In this issue we catch up with Tony Reynolds, who is the Stewardship Group lead on this work.

What was the purpose of these visits?

“Our focus has been on cleanliness and hygiene. Without wishing to pre-empt our forthcoming interim report [to be published in January] I can say that the general impression is that staff in the care homes we visited know the correct infection control procedures and that most took this matter very seriously. There were certainly no major lapses found, and many were excellent, very clean homes”.

Who is involved in this work?

“The questionnaire and survey form was developed by Norman Webster, a LINK member from East Grinstead, and we liaised with and received advice from Rachel Loveday, Senior Infection Control Practitioner, NHS West Sussex. Mark Habibi, Development Officer with the LINK’s host team, played a major role in the planning and training sessions. But all of the people who actually made the visits and carried out the inspections were taken from our pool of volunteers all of whom have been trained and suitably vetted”.

So what do you and your team of volunteers actually do when you visit?

“Well, apart from reviewing staff training and the cleaning schedules, we physically looked around all the key areas. For example, we checked bathrooms – we found three wheelchairs in one! – and laundry rooms. We noted the temperatures of washing machines and when they were last serviced. We also reviewed the cleanliness of the bedpan sluices and commodes. We lifted lids of waste disposal bins to check correct coloured bags were being used, examined cleaning trolleys and quizzed staff on colours of mops [the colours indicate what they should be used for]. We inspected kitchens, especially fridges and food preparation surfaces.

We also questioned staff on the cleaning up of spillages and the associated procedures for body fluids, always making a point of using the antibacterial hand gel ourselves to set an example”.

What was your most difficult moment?

“Telling a very tall, frowning chef, who was busy preparing lunch, and ‘armed’ with a huge chopping knife, that we wanted to look inside his fridges... ‘please!’”

Are there any highlights that stand out for you?

“I think seeing the residents enjoying the activities laid on for them. I found the music and energy of the ‘Chairobic’ sessions particularly uplifting to experience”.

Most amusing moment?

“Being invited by an elderly resident into her room to see her commode! She’d seen us inspecting one in a nearby bathroom”.

What would you like to say in conclusion?

“We are really doing useful work here, keeping care homes on their toes, making sure their procedures are up to date and being followed correctly – particularly as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have done relatively few visits this year. And we have more to do too!”

Facts & Figures

- 10 volunteers involved
- 17 Care Homes visited between April and Nov
- smallest - 10 residents
- largest - over 90
- samples from all 7 Districts and Boroughs across the county
- tallest chef 6’ 3”

LINK launches Social Care Survey

Earlier this year West Sussex County Council (WSCC) made policy changes which affected some of the people who receive social care services or a personal social care budget.

As you may recall from the August newsletter, the LINK is very keen to hear from anyone who has been affected, either directly or indirectly, by those changes. It wants to find out how the changes in social care policy have affected people, and impacted on their quality of life.

With the co-operation of WSCC and the specific assistance of their Research Unit, the LINK can now report that it is inviting a random sample of those affected to take part in a survey. The survey will involve a short conversation between a LINK representative and the individual affected during which specific questions will be asked about their social care needs and the help they receive. The answers will be recorded (anonymously) onto a computer database. When all of the conversations have taken place the information will be analysed and a report produced for WSCC.

The aim is that this will lead to improved services for local people by helping WSCC make good decisions when deciding what help they can provide for people.

“Six hundred letters are being sent out jointly by WSCC and the LINK inviting people to participate, so if you receive one, or know someone who has, I do hope that you will agree to take part and encourage them to do so”, says Vicki King, Chair, West Sussex LINK Stewardship Group.



West Sussex Research Unit



Dr Vicki King

Mid Sussex Hospital Discharge

Following on from similar work carried out elsewhere in the county, West Sussex LINK volunteers are about to begin gathering patients' experience of hospital discharge in Mid Sussex. We will be working closely with the GPs in the Mid Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS staff in Princess Royal Hospital and the Kleinwort Centre in Haywards Heath to plan the activity and will begin speaking to patients about their experiences early in 2012.

As with all the LINK's activities, we are always keen to hear from potential new volunteers. If you are from the Mid Sussex area and would like to help with this important survey, please contact us.

Volunteers needed

Trained volunteers will play a key role in the Social Care survey and the Mid Sussex Hospital Discharge work mentioned above, and are already involved in the hospital / care home teams carrying out the 'Enter & View' visits detailed in previous pages.

“The LINK is always on the look out for people to help with this type of work and in other ways too so, if you have a little time on your hands and would like to help make a change to the way health and social care is delivered in the county, give me, Mark Habibi, a call on 01403 276601 or email me at the email address below.

All volunteers will receive free training as required (like interviewing techniques, and infection control in care homes) and because of possible contact with vulnerable individuals and confidential information, all LINK volunteers are CRB checked. And of course, expenses incurred in volunteering activities for the LINK are reimbursed”.



Mark Habibi

Thank you, volunteers!



The West Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK) would like to thank everyone who has offered their time to help as a volunteer. Some of you (like those in the photo) have attended a briefing session, others have been briefed individually.



Diane Ruban

“There is plenty of work to do, but before you can get started we have to arrange briefings, complete the inevitable paper work and then put the necessary checks in place. So, if you are waiting to hear more from us, please be patient, we will be in touch shortly”, says Diane Ruban, LINK Senior Administration Assistant. For more, call the office on 01403 276601.

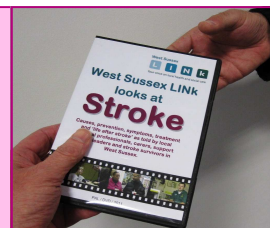
LINK in the news

The theft of belongings from hospital patients in Crawley, changes in the location of vascular services, talks over borrowed radiotherapy machines and a review of nutrition at Worthing Hospital all attracted the attention of the local media last month.

And each resulted in an approach that gave a representative from the LINK an opportunity have a say on the topic in question. When BBC South East contacted the LINK one morning looking for someone to be interviewed live on the lunchtime news in front of Crawley Hospital - talk about short-notice! - the LINK was able to arrange for local man and Stewardship Group member, Chris Mullins, to stand in front of the camera.

The West Sussex LINK also featured in the Midhurst and Petworth Observer, Worthing Herald and the Chichester Observer.

LINK still looking at Stroke



Since the last newsletter, 55 more copies of the 'LINK looks at stroke' video have been distributed, this time to all those GP surgeries in West Sussex that have a Patient Participation Group (PPG).

This is to help with their activities to raise awareness about Stroke.

Have your say

This is how to get in touch if you want to contact the West Sussex LINK

Please advise us also if your contact details change or if you no longer wish to be a LINK participant.



telephone 0300 111 0102

Calls to 03 numbers are charged at no more than UK geographic rates (as for 01 and 02 numbers) and will be included as part of any inclusive minutes. Calls from mobiles may be higher.



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