

February

2010

# Northumberland LINK Newsletter

**Northumberland LINK's membership is currently 154 (71 groups/organisations and 83 individual members).**



Big Care Debate roadshow in Northumberland

have  
your  
say

NORTHUMBERLAND  
**LINK**

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# Northumberland Disability and Deaf Network

We are setting up a new, independent network in Northumberland which will be run by and for disabled and deaf people.

This is being supported by Adapt (North East) and Northumberland LINK.

## As a Network, we will:-

- Support the interests of disabled and deaf people and disability and deaf organisations.
- Listen to people's views.
- Tackle issues raised by our members.
- Be a source of information.

## We will do this by:-

- Bringing together disabled and deaf people and disability organisations in Northumberland.
- Providing advice and information on disability and deaf issues.
- Signposting people to other organisations that can support them.
- Advocating for better services.
- Making sure that policy makers listen to the views of disabled and deaf people when planning and delivering services, and take their needs into account.
- Providing peer support - members will be able to share information and experience with each other.

We plan to hold some focus groups during the spring to find out which issues are important to people and how we can deal with these. If you would like to be involved in one of these focus groups, please contact us.

## Membership

Membership of the network is free.

If you would like to join, or would like more information, please contact:

### Carolyn Roberts

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Carolyn Roberts is the Disability and Deaf Involvement Officer with Adapt (North East). Part of her role is to set up and facilitate this network and part is to develop, with local communities, the involvement of disabled and deaf people to have a voice in the Northumberland LINK.

## Cynthia Atkin on her role as LINK Chair

I was working for Social Services in North Northumberland when I was diagnosed with MS in 1987. This totally changed my outlook on life and I saw how an acquired disability/condition can have an impact on individuals and their families.

I was given the first job in the North East for the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), supporting and helping develop voluntary groups and campaigning at a time when RADAR played a key role in campaigning for the Disability Discrimination Act. I delivered Disability Equality training and presentations and talks on disability issues. I helped set up access, advocacy groups and other empowering groups such as 'One Voice' in Cumbria and the Northern Advisory Group for Disabilities (NAGD) and was passionate about empowering people with disabilities and encouraging collaborative working.

I was then the MS Society's Regional Support Officer for 8 years after which I joined the MS Research and Relief Fund. My role in both was to encourage and set up partnership working, presenting on legislation, direct payments and other relevant pieces of legislation. I was involved in setting up the Long-Term Conditions forum for Northumberland, working with the Social Care Trust, and set up the Partnership Forum for Health and Social Care Professionals as a way of encouraging networking and sharing information and good practice.

As a Trustee for Disability North and Chair of Berwick Disability Forum, and also through my involvement and involvement with the Community Council of Northumberland, the people and the services in Northumberland were very important to me and I recognised the rural issues and the need to constantly push for more accessible services. With experience of both the statutory and voluntary sectors, my approach to all services is inclusive. I was delighted to be voted the LINK Chair and care passionately about the need to work together and improve Health and Social Care Services together.

We have an excellent team working approach on the Steering Committee and the other active groups set up to concentrate on various health and social care issues. The members have an array of knowledge, skills and experience which is being channelled in the direction of influencing change with the statutory services. Regular dialogue with health and social care professionals and commissioners is proving to be worthwhile, and the input and comments received from our members throughout Northumberland makes this possible. We are fortunate to have NHS and Social Care support; however there is always room for improvement and there are changes needed. Your voice counts.

# Steering Group roles

AREA		RESEARCH & SCRUTINY	HAVING A SAY	PARTNERS
<b>NORTH</b>	Joan Thomas Elizabeth Richardson Grace Haigh	Anne Benson  Pat Maginn  Fiona Wardlaw	Heather Abrahams	Fiona Macdonald
<b>WEST</b>	Eileen Drew Ray Thompson John McIndoe		Ken Patterson	(Gateway into the Community)
<b>SOUTH EAST</b>	Pauline Greaves Sue Trimming (Member required)		Ron Moule	

**Some of our steering group members talk here about their role:**

## John McIndoe

I came into the LINK as I have been nursing my wife (an ex-District Nurse of the old school) for the past ten years, six of them at home and the last four in a nursing home. I visit her every day.

My wife has Alzheimer's. I am mainly interested in mental health as a result of my experiences and I want to make things easier for those who will have to follow in my footsteps.

I want GPs to be better trained in diagnosing mental conditions and I want caring to have a high priority in the NHS.

The LINK needs to be represented in every NHS activity — a high ambition but necessary if we mean to be an influence in Northumberland and in the NHS in this century.

## Sue Trimming

I am married with three daughters. My youngest daughter, who is 22, has complex disabilities and learning needs. I have been involved with the LINK for about 18 months. I am a member of the Steering Group as well as working on the Health and Social Care Task Group. I am very keen to work alongside other LINK members to pursue the many challenges we have.

I am particularly interested in Transition from Children Services to Adult Services and have recently joined the Transition Working Group of the Northumberland Learning Disability Partnership Forum. I am also interested in Dual Diagnosis, which presents lots of problems for both the patient and the carer due to a lack of holistic care.

I have gained a lot of experience over the years which I feel will be beneficial to the work I do with the LINK.

# LINK Steering Group roles

## Pat Maginn

Everyone has health needs at some stage in their life, and perhaps the needs of social services. I see the function of the LINK to scrutinise these services and, where appropriate, make objective suggestions to achieve the best possible health and social care in Northumberland.

The LINK steering group must be accessible to suggestions from members and use both their experience and talents to enhance whatever current work is in progress.

The effectiveness of the LINK is also dependent upon listening to voices from groups and individuals in Northumberland, which are sometimes not heard. Their voice has equal value and a right to be listened to. In this way the LINK will achieve inclusivity.

## Heather Abrahams

I live in Tynedale and have always been interested in Community Affairs.

My previous experience includes being a radiographer, a member of the Northumberland Family Practitioner Committee, Chair of Supplementary Benefit and Member Social Security Appeal Tribunals, Chair of the PPI Forum, Governor of Newcastle Hospitals, Chair and Treasurer of Northumberland Federation of Women's Institutes. I am presently Chair of Newcastle's Organ Donation Committee, a WRVS Meals on Wheels Food Organiser and WI Advisor.

With LINK, I am on the Steering Group and Pharmacy Task Group Member, and representative on West Northumberland Practice Based Commissioning Group. I want equal access to all services for everyone.

## Joan Thomas

Having previously been a member of PPIH (Patient & Public Involvement in Health), I decided to transfer to LINK, which replaced PPIH.

Before retiring, I spent 25 years as a District Nurse/Midwife/Health Visitor/School Nurse in a remote district of the North West Highlands of Scotland, where I became very aware of the difficulties of providing health and social care. Not only was access difficult, lack of locally available human resources compounded the problem.

Now retired, I am living in rural North Northumberland and, although not as remote as the Highlands, I see the same difficulties in relation to provision of services.

As a LINK member, this is the area in which I would like to raise awareness, particularly in provision of health and social services, including transport, for the elderly.

My personal interests are membership of U3A, walking, reading and entertaining friends.

## Personalisation Task Group

LINK's Personalisation Task Group met on 4th November 2009 with Fiona Horsman, Transformation Programme Manager for Northumberland Care Trust, who answered questions from members on transformation and individual personal budgets (IPBs).

Fiona confirmed the ***Putting People First*** transformation project groups as:

- Self Directed Support led by Sue Marrs
- Business and Systems led by Neil Bradley
- Commissioning and Procurement led by David Minto (in the interim)
- Customer Experience led by Vanessa Bainbridge
- Workforce Development led by Lynne Shaw
- Market and Community Development led by Michele O'Brien (in the interim)

Details of the groups will be sent to LINK members; anyone interested in joining a group should contact Fiona who will pass their details on to the project leads.

Fiona noted that the Regional Efficiencies and Improvement Agency (REIP) and the Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) have Department of Health funds to work on transformation (twelve directors of Adult Social Services in the north east sit on the groups). These funds have been divided between Commissioning, Personalisation and Workforce, with 25 projects under these three titles. As the projects progress, LINK may be interested in getting involved regionally.

LINK members asked a number of questions about Individual Personal Budgets:

- Whether taking up IPBs would affect current benefits
- What stage Northumberland is at in delivering IBPs and who funds delivery
- How many people currently use IPBs
- How are people being made aware of or encouraged to take up IPBs
- Safeguarding vulnerable people taking up IPBs
- Promoting joint working between Health and Social Care in developing IPBs
- Is there a suitably skilled workforce for delivering IPBs
- Whether brokers for IPBs might be used
- Monitoring and support for people accessing IPBs
- Level of service for people living in remote areas.

**A summary of this interesting question and answer session is available on the LINK website (or by e-mail or phone – see details on the back page).**

LINK Chair Cynthia Atkin said she felt the meeting with Fiona had been very beneficial and had made the situation much clearer. Dialogue will be ongoing.

## Dual Diagnosis Task Group

The Dual Diagnosis Task Group meets to discuss mental health and alcohol related issues. LINK has been offered a seat on the Mental Health Partnership Board and is meeting with Mental Health North East to discuss joint working.

To find out more, e-mail [info@northumberlandlink.org.uk](mailto:info@northumberlandlink.org.uk) or call 01434 600599.

# Transition Task Group

## Priority issues identified (and action agreed) November 2009

1. The age range for young people's support services to be extended to age 25 to be inclusive.
  - Support LINK members in work on transitions
  - Group to promote this
  - Run a LINK seminar 'Services to Young People need to extend to 25'? In the form of a debate with different perspectives:
    - ⇒ Expert on emotional age
    - ⇒ Expert on intellectual age
    - ⇒ Legal update on children and young people having a say themselves
    - ⇒ Parent/carer perspective
    - ⇒ Young person's perspective
2. Widen eligibility criteria for recognition and support at critical intervention times e.g. Year 9 – not just '33' known to Disabled Children's team or those with statements of SE need.
  - Transitions strategy group
  - Follow-up scrutiny
3. Change name from transition to 'planning for the future' so more inclusive.
  - Transitions strategy group
4. Lack of participation by young people with learning disabilities in mainstream participation strategy, e.g. YPIN.
  - Invite young person to take up rep roles offered on YPIN YP Participation Strategy Groups
5. Tracking/mentoring young people aged 18+ into independent living and capturing their views appropriately.
  - Transitions strategy group
  - Follow-up scrutiny
  - Further discussions with Connexions/SEEDS etc
6. Education is the gatekeeper – needs holistic approach between education, health and care.
  - Engage with Transitions strategy group
7. Berwick pilot – more involvement at early stages required for its claim to be transformational.
  - Follow up to ensure that the LINK is represented on the Transition Strategic Group and on Berwick Pilot partnership
8. Better recognition for the LINK
  - Follow-up on Transition issues, scrutiny meeting with Head of Operations for FACT, Head of Disabled Children's Team, Head of Operations for Northumberland Care Trust and request seat on Transition Strategy Group
9. Appropriate models for getting the views of young disabled/learning disabled people.
  - SpLinter group, Gateway into the Community consultation activity funded and supported feeding into LINK strategy.

## Pharmacies Task Group

The Pharmacies Task Group meets to discuss pharmacy issues including prescription costs and the availability of stock. To find out more, call 01434 600599 or e-mail [info@northumberlandlink.org.uk](mailto:info@northumberlandlink.org.uk)

## Involving Young People

A group has been set up for people aged between 18 and 25 who live in Northumberland.

Called SpLinter, the group is for younger people who are looking for support, social contact and a chance to talk about any issues they may have. It meets regularly so that members can chat and plan activities and a linked Facebook site is now up and running.

One-to-one mentoring is available for younger people who are looking to get into work or training, or for help with life choices.

To help with learning to drive, driving theory support sessions are held and members can borrow an automatic car for help with driving lessons.

The group is being facilitated by Frank Lyford. Anyone interesting in joining can contact him on 07824 995873 or by e-mailing: [frankl@ncdn.org](mailto:frankl@ncdn.org)

## North East Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

NE RIEP is working with local councils across the region to improve social care services by supporting them to work together and in partnership with health services, the voluntary sector and local people. It aims to improve health, emotional wellbeing and quality of life and to increase choice and control for people across the North East.

To get involved or contribute, or to find out more about helping improve social care services for all, visit: [www.northeastiep.gov.uk/adult](http://www.northeastiep.gov.uk/adult) or ring Zoe Campbell on 07901 102723 or e-mail her at: [zoe.campbell@northeastcouncils.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.campbell@northeastcouncils.gov.uk)

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## The co-hosts:

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