

have
your
say

NORTHUMBERLAND

LINK

Newsletter
August 2011

The Northumberland LINK is the place where you can have your say on health and social care services. It is made up of local people, community groups and organisations and aims to improve health and social care services in local communities. Through joining the LINK, you will have the chance to share your thoughts, experiences, ideas and concerns, and

Monthly Open Meetings replace Area group meetings

The Northumberland LINK is now holding monthly open meetings around the county. These meetings will provide the opportunity to learn more about the LINK and to raise any issues you have about health and social care.

Upcoming open meetings:

Wednesday 14th September 2011

St. Margaret's Church Hall,

Longhirst Road, Pegswood

Meeting 7 - 9

Wednesday 12th October 2011

The Maltings, Berwick upon Tweed

Meeting 1 - 3

(Lunch included at 12.30)

To confirm attendance, please contact us.

ensure that the people of Northumberland receive the health and social care services that they want.

Northumberland LINK Annual Report 2010-11

This is now available as a hard copy or on our website

What have you been telling us about?

- ◆ Problems accessing emergency out of hours dental treatment
- ◆ The need for better monitoring and standards of care for the elderly and severely infirm in hospitals
- ◆ Difficulties accessing GP appointments
- ◆ The expense and lack of spaces to park at hospitals

Have you had similar experiences? Why not share them with the LINK?

Contact us:

www.northumberlandlink.org.uk

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Or visit our Facebook page

Latest Health and Social Care News

Think Pharmacy First



Sometimes when you or your family are unwell, you may not need to make an appointment to see your GP. As well as free medical advice, your local community pharmacy can now also provide free medication for some illnesses and minor ailments under a scheme called Think Pharmacy First. Think Pharmacy First allows people who receive free prescriptions to go straight to their pharmacist to receive treatment without needing to visit their GP to get a prescription first.

The scheme is available to adults who are entitled to free prescriptions on the grounds of low income and their children along with all people aged 60 or over. You can go to any pharmacy across Northumberland displaying a Think Pharmacy First window banner or door sticker to use the Think Pharmacy First scheme.

Fairer Care Funding

- You may have taken part in Northumberland LINK's 'Big Care Debate' towards the end of 2009. This provided the opportunity to consider the reform of social care and respond to the Government's consultation. The Dilnot Commission has now published its report on reforming care funding. Key proposals include:
 - ⇒ A £35,000 cap on lifetime care costs (not including board and lodging in residential care).
 - ⇒ Means-test threshold for residential care up from £23,250 to £100,000.
 - ⇒ Free social care for people who develop care and support needs before they turn 40.
 - ⇒ National assessment and eligibility system.
- For a full copy of the report and its recommendations in full, visit www.dilnotcommission.dh.gov.uk/

Latest on HealthWatch

- Northumberland LINK has been successful in gaining HealthWatch Pathfinder status.
- Under the Government's planned changes for the NHS, LINKs will be replaced by HealthWatch in October 2012.
- Locally, HealthWatch will continue the LINKs role in ensuring that evidence from people's views and experiences of health and social care are used to influence the policy, planning, commissioning and delivery of services. But it will also provide information about health and social care services and about the choices people can make, and from April 2013 will provide support for people to complain about the quality of NHS services.
- Lessons learned as a pathfinder will be incorporated into the design of HealthWatch for Northumberland.