

Report to: HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

Date: 8 APRIL 2008

Report of: DIRECTOR OF ADULT SERVICES

Report No:

Contact Officer: Larry Hollando

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Report Title: LINKs

Non Confidential: This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Decision:

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report is an update of a paper presented to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2008.

It covers the financial allocation for establishing the Bolton LINK and the powers of the new organisation as set out in the 'LINKs Regulations' published in March 2008.

Significant preparation has already taken place including numerous presentations to stakeholders organisations and the establishment of a Transitional Group, chaired by an independent person. We also held a Stakeholder event which was attended by approximately 70 people.

The report also sets out in some detail the proposed transitional arrangements between the 1 April 2008 until the appointment of the LINK's host organisation.

Finally the report covers the financial allocation for both the transitional arrangements and the ongoing contract monitoring.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 A report was presented in November 2007 and January 2008 outlining the new legislation, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007, which abolished Patients' Forums and the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health and created a Local Improvement Network (LiNK) in every local authority with social care responsibilities.
- 1.2 In November 2007 we received approval to invite tenders for a host organisation to support the Bolton LiNK on a three year contract beginning on 1 April 2008 or as soon as possible after that date.
- 1.3 This reports covers the development work which has taken place to prepare for the establishment of the LiNK and seeks approval for the establishment of transitional arrangements until the appointment of the Host Organisation and the financial allocation for the transitional arrangements and ongoing contract monitoring.

2. UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS

- 2.1 The tender for the host organisation was published in January 2008 after considerable consultation with stakeholder organisations and patients and service users representatives.
It is expected that the final selection will take place in May 2008. The interview process will include the input from patients and service users and other stakeholders.

- 2.2 The Government announced the resources made available to each local authority to develop local LiNKs as part of the overall Local Government Finance Settlement. The allocation for Bolton is as follows:

2008/09 £ 166,000
2009/10 £ 166,000
2010/11 £ 165,000

- 2.3 As already reported the Council also received £10,000 in 2007/08 to assist with preparation work.

- 2.4 In March 2008 the Department of Health published the 'The Local Involvement Networks Regulations'. The powers of LiNKs members will include :

- Placing a duty on service providers to provide LiNKs with information they request
- Placing a duty on commissioners to respond within a certain timeframe to reports and recommendations made by LiNKs;
- Placing a duty on service providers to allow members of LiNKs to enter and view services;
- Enabling LiNKs to refer issues to a local authority Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for action.

- 2.5 To continue with the preparation for the establishment of the Bolton LiNK the following activities have taken place:

- Consultation events with The Health and Care Together Forum, Joint Meeting of the three local PPI Forums, Bolton PCT Board, Bolton PCT Professional Executive Committee and Senior Management Team
- Appointment of an independent consultant who has facilitated a Stakeholder event

- The local Steering Group has been re-established and re-named Transitional Link Group. This has expanded membership from OSC, the three current local PPI Forums and includes representation from social care user involvement groups. It is chaired by an independent local patient representative.
 - On 18 February we held a very successful Stakeholder event, which was attended by approximately 70 people where we shared current patient and service user experiences and prepared the ground for the establishment of a well supported LINK.
- 2.6 In light of concerns expressed that on the 1 April 2008 a number of local authorities might not have appointed a host organisation to set up and run a LINK, the 'Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act' was amended to include a clause regarding transitional arrangements.
- 2.7 This clause stipulates that local authorities was unable to appoint a host organisation by 1 April 2008 would need to ensure that there was no gap between Forum and LINK activities and that such activities were carried out by other means until a formal LINK was in place. Transitional Arrangements can run until 1 September 2008 when all local authorities are expected to have in place formal LINKs arrangements.
- 2.8 To enable us to continue the preparation for the LINKs and retain the engagement of PPI Forum volunteers it is proposed to make the following transitional arrangements:
- LINK preparation – including administration of the Transitional Group, newsletter, Exit process for PPI, administration of volunteer's expenses etc. - to be undertaken by Bolton Adults and Community Services Officers.
 - Support for former PPI members still undertaking NHS involvement and monthly meetings with former PPI Forum Members to keep them informed with LINK progress – to be undertaken by PCT Communications and Engagement Officer

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To fund the transitional arrangements in 2008/09 and to the fund Council's contract management support it is proposed to identify the following from the grant:

2008/09	£ 26,000
2009/10	£ 17,000
2010/11	£ 16,000

3. CONCLUSION

We are making good progress towards the establishment of a successful LINK in Bolton. A well supported Transitional Group has been set up which is setting the agenda for the development of a new organisation which can deliver a successful programme of activities involving local people in monitoring health and social care services.

