

**Oxfordshire Local Involvement Network  
Update for Adult Services Scrutiny Committee  
meeting 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

Public, patient and carer concerns, issues and compliments collected through LINK engagement and outreach activities have resulted in the following projects being taken forwards. Further Health and Social care issues will be prioritised during this year.

**N.B. The following concise update refers to LINK projects which have a Social Care remit only, unless there is crossover, or joint commissioning, with Health.**

**LINK Core Group**

All members are welcome to attend the next Core Group meeting, which will take place at **Cornerstone Art Centre in Didcot** on **8<sup>th</sup> December from 1.30pm – 4.00pm**. The main topics for the agenda will be an information session about the transition to HealthWatch and new Commissioning structures in relation to public engagement. Papers will be available on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

**Ongoing projects and engagement:**

**Third Social Care Hearsay event – March 2012** *(date and venue to be agreed)*

Following the current action plan derived from the Hearsay 2011 recommendations, there will be one further update before planning for the 2012 engagement event gets underway. All actions completed, still in progress and incomplete will be taken into account in compiling the next series of recommendations, together with the views of service users and carers as to what has improved, remained the same or become more problematic over the last 12 months as a result of changes to services.

**Self Directed Support (Personal Budgets) research project**

A response to the LINK report previously submitted to the Leadership Team has been received. It was agreed with the LINK to incorporate some of the recommended actions within the Hearsay quarterly plan, as there are similar areas of concern noted. However, there are other issues stemming from the report findings to which the LINK has requested further information. These are being followed up at the time of writing and more details should be available for members at this meeting.

**'Enter and View' visits to Care Homes**

A new information and training session has been arranged on 9<sup>th</sup> December for 'Enter and View' participants in order to provide statutory authorisation for newly recruited visitors and an opportunity to review the process for those who carried out visits earlier this year. A plan to conduct a second series of visits to approximately 10 Care Homes selected by provider, size and geography, will take place from January 2012 onwards,

with a second report due towards the end of March. The emphasis will be on quality standards of reporting and sharing recommendations with the Care Homes together with Social and Community Services.

### **Future Projects:**

A Mental Health 'Hearsay' event is being planned for 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012; a replacement for the Mental Health 'Sounding Board', which has been a feature of SCS engagement over the last 2 years. In order for the recommendations and comments from service users and carers, obtained through recent Sounding Boards, to have a more consistent and robust means of follow up with service providers and commissioners, it was proposed that the Hearsay model be incorporated into the current structure. Concerns which have arisen from comments collected by the LINK together with issues received from earlier Sounding Boards will be considered in partnership with Directors and Service Leads from Oxford Health and Social Care. All previous participants have been included within the new arrangements and will be invited to the event. Topics will be developed in the planning round, which will have user and carer involvement.

**New project proposals**, supplied to the LINK Priorities and Finance Groups, have been accepted from: Oxfordshire Wheel, to partner a large service user and carer-led event about Self-Directed Support being planned for 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The main aims and objectives of the event are: to share service user and carer experiences of SDS; to provide a showcase for related organisations to promote what they do; provide a promotion opportunity for HealthWatch; gather feedback with regards to the effectiveness of SDS so far and what would improve it in the future.

An application from Oxfordshire Family Support Network has also been approved to continue the LINK-funded work begun last year in developing further understanding of the needs of older carers who care for family members who have learning disabilities and to investigate the best way to deliver an older carer support service.

### **HealthWatch / public engagement**

LINK is liaising with the PCT following the recent consultation events to inform their draft Communications and Engagement Strategy for the OCCG and how public and patients should be involved in decisions about local services. Once the results of the consultation are known, LINK will be planning an approach, initially to selected GP Practices, in order to gather information about their own strategies for patient & public engagement and to offer a means of developing this in partnership, supported by the LINK and its network.

### **HealthWatch Background Info**

HealthWatch is to be a new independent 'consumer champion' for users of health and social care services, taking over from the Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has responsibility for commissioning a Local HealthWatch for Oxfordshire, drawing on the significant experience of existing providers such as LINKs and others. It will launch in October 2012.



Locally, Oxfordshire HealthWatch will:

- Support children, young people and adults to share experiences, views and be involved in shaping policy and services
- Make those views known and influence decision-making through representation on the new Health & Wellbeing Board and the chairing of the Public Involvement Board
- Provide advice and information about access and choices
- Provide an advocacy and complaints service (from 2013)

OCC was successful in its bid to set up a Local HealthWatch Pathfinder and aims to agree a model for commissioning through an extensive engagement exercise, developed with the HealthWatch Interim Steering Group (which includes LINKs, PCT and users/carers).

The consultation is running through late October to December. It includes:

- Café-style workshops for children, young people and adults (users and carers or otherwise)
- Focus groups for stakeholders
- A questionnaire (through the OCC e-portal, Facebook and partners' routes)
- Debate at Oxfordshire Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament
- Outreach to targeted groups, (e.g. Age UK, Unlimited, Children in Care Council)
- An OCC Members' Drop-in session
- A 'next steps' Stakeholder Event for 80 people from across Oxfordshire

The Stakeholder Event was then held on 28<sup>th</sup> November. It drew together what has been heard so far and developed more detail of the model for Oxfordshire Local HealthWatch.

Further dialogue will continue as findings are collated through December and January. Final commissioning specifications will be agreed in February.

An independent consultant, with extensive experience in supporting LA's to develop HealthWatch, has been employed to support and advise the Interim Steering Group in shaping the process.

Members and the public can get more information by contacting:

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