

The Stockport Local Involvement Network [LINK] Governance Arrangements



LINK Governance Arrangements [Working Document]

Essential Responsibility of the LINK

LINKs have been set up across the country to give communities a stronger voice in how their health and social care services are delivered. Funding has been provided by the Department of Health through central government and they have given each local authority area responsibility to contract a LINK support organisation to support the development of LINKs. In Stockport that organisation is Pebble and the LINK has 2 full time dedicated staff to help and facilitate the LINK until April 2011.

The Stockport LINK should regularly check that they are developing as an effective local network and ensuring they have the right foundations to include everyone in their activities. Having a checking process to demonstrate how the LINK will work and develop will also be included in the LINK annual report.

Ways of meeting responsibilities

The Stockport LINK will:

Make decisions based on evidence of what local people are telling the LINK. LINK Board Members and the Support Team will do this by building relationships with local people, communities and voluntary organisations. The Stockport LINK Support team will collate information and record people's views. Other methods of gathering information and people's views will be sought through our new website, text messaging, surveys, meetings, focus groups, promotion through the media, newsletters, events and any other means appropriate.

The LINK will be able to visit premises of health and social care provision 'Enter & View' as a result of feedback from local communities and the purpose of any agreed visits is clear, recorded and publicised.

From time to time the Local Authority, Primary Care trust, The Foundation Trust, Pennine Care Foundation Trust, The Ambulance Service or local Voluntary agencies may ask the LINK to undertake a piece of work or ask for views and comments on particular documents, new service developments, reviews, service delivery etc... It will be up to the LINK to decide if they want to be involved or not.

There will be a number of issues and concerns that local people will want the LINK to explore and therefore the LINK Board will need to decide and identify key priorities and areas which they will concentrate their efforts on.

The LINK will need have structures in place to be both reactive and proactive – and is able to respond fast when needed, and will mean making decisions and sending correspondence between LINK Board Meetings.

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The LiNK will need to recognise the emphasis on local needs but keep in mind that many health and social care resources and targets are government set.

Aims and objectives:

- The LiNK must work closely with health and social care organisations in Stockport, both formally and informally
- Ensure full and accurate information is well publicised as appropriate and possible collate and analyse the views and feelings of these people, bearing in mind the absolute responsibility to take into account minority groups and those voices that are seldom heard, including tax payers.
- Be prepared to raise issues with whomever may be appropriate provide always that it is in the interests of the people of Stockport
- Maintain a register of any members of the core group with any vested interest in the health and social care organisations
- Be prepared to decide priorities and means of approach. The support organisation will record and keep up to date table of actions plans
- Recognise that in being accountable to the residents of Stockport and to the Government as the source of funding, complete and appropriate records must be kept, being made available and publicised in all appropriate ways
- Recognise the need to act promptly in certain situations and have protocols that allow this.
- Encourage residents to participate in all possible ways and by all possible means
- Have clearly written protocols regarding the writing and signing of letters in its name, and approval of costs etc... in conjunction with pebble as appropriate
- The Stockport LiNK will be freely available to health and social care organisations for such help, participation and advice as may be asked for although the LiNK will retain the right to decide the extent of the involvement
- The Stockport LiNK may from time to time be prepared to carry out some particular work that would be considered as beyond the normal remit of the LiNK. In such a situation the LiNK may seek appropriate remuneration
- The Stockport LiNK Board will set target dates for completion of action whenever possible
- The Stockport LiNK as an organisation and this is a collective noun and is therefore singular

LiNK Board

Currently there are 30+ members included in the distribution list of Board Members who have started to meet monthly since October 1st 2008. These are a mix of members who represent local organisations and community groups as well as individuals who have no formal attachment to such organisations/groups. They are a diverse mix of the population of Stockport. However this LiNK board is temporary

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until Election Process in March, where the wider LiNK will be able to vote members onto the Board. It is recognised that some groups are underrepresented for example children and young people, people with learning disabilities and general members of the public. However there are plans to actively engage with individuals and groups further. Currently the LiNK Board are made up of representatives who have some time to commit, have a general interest in the health and social care, are of the local community, and are willing to liaise with their local community about issues and obtain feedback.

THE LiNK Executive

There are five members of the LiNK Board who have agreed to meet more frequently (every 10 days or so) to help drive forward the development of the LiNK and have started to draft a LiNK action plan. It is planned that this group is able to move the LiNK forward more quickly than would the Board who meet monthly. This group will be reviewed in March 2009.

The LiNK Board will:

- Make decisions on behalf of the Stockport Wide LiNK based on evidence of what local people are telling the LiNK. Stockport LiNK Support team will collate information and record people's views. The Support Team will do this through outreach work. Other methods of gathering information and people's views will be sought through our new website, text messaging, surveys, meetings, promotion through the media, newsletters, events etc...
- Identify priorities and areas which they will concentrate their efforts on
- From time to time the Local Authority, Primary Care trust, The Foundation Trust, Pennine Care, The Ambulance Service or local Voluntary agencies may ask the LiNK to undertake a piece of work or ask for views and comments on particular documents, new service developments, reviews, service delivery etc... It will be up to the LiNK to decide if they want to be involved or not.
- The LiNK Support Team will be able to circulate requests and general information from the above agencies to other Active LiNK Participants and the Wider LiNK.

Active LiNK Participants –

Active LiNK Participants are Interested individuals, groups and organisations who sign up to join the LiNK and who do not want to be as involved as a full member.

An existing group may want to form a subgroup of the LiNK and be a group that the LiNK calls upon as an expert group because of their knowledge and experience. Likewise key individuals may be called upon for the same reason. Alternatively there may be times when a time limited group will be set up to focus on a particular piece of work and active participants will be invited to take part in these pieces of work.

Identifying Priorities

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Priorities will be identified by the LINK Board with support from Stockport LINK Support. To identify priorities all issues brought to the LINK Board will be carefully considered and weighted by various factors and sources of evidence available to them. An evidence gathering exercise will need to be undertaken. Once priorities have been identified the LINK Board will need to establish the amount of work is needed:

A request for more information from the providers and commissioners of services may be sought. The wider community may be consulted – if so why, who, when, where – who will oversee and do the piece of work and timescales will need to be agreed. All decisions made by the Board and action plans will need to be published and the LINK will need to decide how this is done.

It may that a subgroup of the LINK is asked to carry out an activity/piece of work or a new task group is set up to do the work – we can advertise/promote the piece of work to recruit people who would like to get involved. This would help existing groups to network by identifying 1 or 2 people to be part of the task group.

Once the activity or piece of work is completed the task group/subgroup will need to make a report of recommendations back to the LINK Board. The Board will then make necessary arrangements to liaise with the appropriate bodies and the report is received.

Any requests for information or responses from these bodies need to be made back to the LINK within 20 working days.

All LINK activity needs to be reported by to the Department of Health annually.

Decision Making

The LINK Board will need to ensure that all the decisions it takes are done so in accordance with policies and procedures that it decides upon. There are some requirements set out by government that we have to have in place (see Policies and Procedures below)

The LINK Board will need to make sure it is equitable and does not exclude the views of minority groups and those whose voices are seldom heard.

There will certainly be a lot of information to get through once the LINK gets going fully and they might find it helpful to have a separate Governance/executive group that keeps policies and procedures up to date and this group might ensure the LINK Board is making decisions in accordance with its governance.

Policy and Procedures

Please see:

Access Protocol/ Code of Conduct / Declaration of Interest / Complaints Procedure / Decision Making Procedure / Enter & View

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This is intended to be a working document and has been agreed and endorsed currently by the LiNK.