

Gateshead LINK Newsletter

HealthWatch is coming

In the White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' (July 2010), the government stated their aim to "strengthen the collective voice of patients and the public". One way in which they are doing this is by the creation of local HealthWatch to replace LINKs.

Gateshead LINK is currently in transition and working towards the establishment of Local HealthWatch in October 2012.

Local HealthWatch will be a new independent consumer champion whose job will be to gather and represent the views of the public. Some of the things that HealthWatch does will be the same as the LINK, including:

- promoting involvement
- obtaining views
- monitoring health and care services
- making reports and recommendations
- carrying out Enter & View visits

There will be some new and different responsibilities for Local HealthWatch which will include:

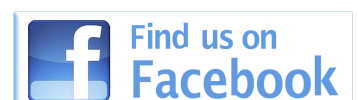
- providing information to support patient choice
- serving as a representative on Local Health & Wellbeing boards
- providing members of the public with access to NHS complaints advocacy (from 2013)



In July, Gateshead was awarded the status of HealthWatch Pathfinder, this means the LINK will work on:..

“building on a community development approach to engagement and relationships with the voluntary sector, this will empower people and their communities to have effective relationships with public bodies”

Watch this space for more News on how Gateshead LINK will transform into your Local HealthWatch





Gateshead LINK Engagement Work

Gateshead LINK staff, Kim Newton and Ruth Dodds, are out and about across Gateshead gathering health and social care issues and concerns from local groups and individuals.

Some of the groups and venues visited have included:

Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly
(South & East forums)
Gateshead Libraries
Springwell Summer Fete
Gateshead Carers Association
Gateshead Fire Station Open Day
Bensham Grove
Just to name a few!

We have had a good response to requests for issues, concerns and compliments regarding health and social care in Gateshead. It's important to hear about good service too.

The information is now being fed though to the people who plan and run services in your area to help design health and social care locally.

We would like to speak to a lot more people so.....

If you would like Gateshead LINK to visit your group or venue, please contact:

ruthdodds@gvoc.org.uk or
kimnewton@gvoc.org.uk
Telephone 0191 4784103

Gateshead LINK Issues Concerns and Compliments Meetings



Gateshead LINK is also running monthly drop in sessions to gather issues concerns and compliments about health and social care in Gateshead. We have been to:

Gateshead Central Library,
Blaydon Library,
Gateshead Civic Centre.

The issues, concerns and compliments meetings have taken over from the working groups which have been running since in 2008.

This is to allow Gateshead LINK to consider a wider range of issues as we make the transition to HealthWatch.

Come and share a cream tea with us at the Next Drop in on 18th January (venue to be confirmed).

Keep up to date with Gateshead LINK's dates for issues and concerns meetings at:

www.gatesheadlink.org.uk
Or ring Linda Thompson
0191 4784103



Person Centred Plans and the Housing Pathway for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Earlier this year Gateshead LINK's Engagement Worker met a group of carers. They wanted to discuss the current situation in Gateshead for people wishing to access a Person Centred Plan (PCP) and/or housing options for adults with Learning Disabilities.

Many stated they would like to look at the options available but found the information confusing. There were also other issues raised.

LINK met with representatives of Gateshead Council to discuss the way forward.

Gateshead Council offered to meet with carers and give them the chance to ask questions and discuss social work assessments (including carer's assessments), reviews and changes to care packages.

Gateshead LINK are pleased that partnership working with Gateshead Council has been so effective and anticipate that further examples will be seen, as LINK make the transition to HealthWatch.

If you have any comments or queries please contact the Gateshead LINK team.

Contact details on the back page

More about working in partnership

Gateshead LINK Personalisation Guide & Leaflet

Gateshead LINK undertook a large piece of work to produce a personalisation guide and leaflet. This was in response to reports that information was confusing and difficult to obtain.

The guide and leaflet were the result of partnership working with Gateshead Council, Gateshead Carers Association, Sight Service, Gateshead Mental Health User Forum, Headway and Gateshead Information Network (GAIN)

The guide and leaflet are available to all at the Gateshead LINK website www.gatesheadlink.org.uk

Gateshead LINK Steering Group

Gateshead LINK's Steering Group is made up of local residents and co-opted members.

During this period of transition it was decided that the group as it currently stands would continue to oversee the project. Therefore there will be no elections at the 2011 Annual General meeting.

Gateshead LINK staff would like to thank the group for their commitment dedication and hard work, especially at this time of great change.

Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board What's it all about?

From April 2013 every local authority area will have a Health and Wellbeing Board. The Government says they must be set up in shadow form by April 2012.

Gateshead Council successfully applied to be an early implementer and is working now to establish an effective shadow health and wellbeing board.

The Department of Health says:

“By involving democratically elected representatives and patient representatives, and bringing them together with local commissioners across health, public health, and social care; we will significantly strengthen the democratic legitimacy of commissioning decisions, as well as providing a forum for challenge, discussion, and the involvement of local people”

Who is on Gateshead's board?

The shadow board is chaired by the leader of Gateshead council and members include:

- * Director of Public Health in Gateshead
- * Chair of Gateshead Network Commissioning Consortium (GatNet)
- * Senior representatives of the council
- * NHS South of Tyne and Wear
- * Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (GVOC)
- * Gateshead LINK/Local HealthWatch

A paper on working arrangements for the shadow board says:

“it will be important to ensure that the voice and influence of the voluntary and community sector is retained”



Proposed Relocation of Gateshead Walk-In Centre

Gateshead PCT have changed their plans to move the Gateshead Walk-in Centre, from Bensham Hospital to Trinity Square.

The new proposals are to place it next to the A&E Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to ensure local people access the right service for their needs at the right time and also provide a wider range of services all on one site in a purpose built facility.

This is still only a proposal, so make sure you have your say.

Gateshead LINK have invited Marc Hopkinson (Public Health Practitioner, NHS South of Tyne & Wear) on 14 December 2011 at GVOC 10.00 am to provide more details about the PCT plans. Please feel free to come along, but we would be grateful if you would let us know.

Based on this meeting, Gateshead LINK will make recommendations for future action. We will let you know when the formal consultation is announced..

Gateshead LINK

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