
Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 05 March 2012
Subject: **BEDFORDSHIRE LINK REPORT**
Report of: Operations Manager, Bedfordshire LINK
Summary: The report proposes to update members on the key work items of the LINK in Central Bedfordshire, for consideration and note as required.

Advising Officer: Max Coleman and Charlotte Bonser, Bedfordshire LINK & Host
Contact Officer: Charlotte Bonser
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting and caring for an ageing population• Creating safer communities• Promoting healthier lifestyles. |
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Financial:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Not applicable. |
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Legal:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Not applicable. |
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Risk Management:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Not applicable. |
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Staffing (including Trades Unions):
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Not applicable. |
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Equalities/Human Rights:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Not applicable. |
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Community Safety:

7. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to:-

1. **To consider and note the report.**

The LINK would like to highlight its concerns regarding the lack of provision for those adults on the autistic spectrum; an issue it will be raising with the Commissioner for Mental Health Services in Central Bedfordshire.

10. For some time the LINK has been aware from discussions with carers and service users that the issue of provision for autism has been somewhat lacking in terms of the data collected, poor early diagnosis, lack of GP knowledge/training in autism, accessibility to diagnostic assessment and supporting the needs of those with autism. Often those with autism are precluded from services because they have a high IQ or because autism does not fall within learning disabilities or mental health provision. Lack of diagnosis of autism and therefore support has a negative effect on a person's health, social and working life.
11. The LINK has been involved in the cross-county Autism Steering Group and recently in feeding into the Autism Strategy Launch held in January this year. The LINK has raised concerns with SEPT regarding accessibility of access to diagnostic services, expressed concerns that the recent development of a Health Facilitation Service by SEPT for those with learning disabilities does not include provision for those on the autistic spectrum. LINK will be raising these issues with the commissioner, NHS Bedfordshire at a meeting planned for April 2012.
12. The outcome the LINK would like to see is that the commissioners plan services that include provision for those on the autistic spectrum.

The LINK wishes to raise a concern in relation to the Out of Hours (OOhrs) Service, which it will be taking forward with NHS Bedfordshire

13. The LINK has recorded three concerns by patients in Flitwick and six cases in Leighton Buzzard, where patients ringing the out of hours service have been directed to clinics outside their towns of residence. To illustrate the point, below is an extract of one issue highlighted to the LINK from a gentleman from Flitwick advised to attend a Leighton Buzzard OOhrs clinic.

“He had felt unwell since Friday evening and his wife insisted on ringing the Surgery at about 10am on Saturday morning. She was able to access the OOH ‘phone number and they were advised to attend either Leighton Buzzard or Luton. This was not possible and so they were advised to go to Flitwick OOH centre at 1.30pm. There he was examined. They were given a letter and told to go straight to Bedford Hospital. At Bedford Hospital they were directed straight to the Assessment Ward and then on to the Cardiac Ward. After a stay overnight he was taken to Papworth Hospital on the Sunday and had an operation on the Monday.”

14. The issue in Leighton Buzzard is that the out of hours, weekend clinic times have been reduced from 9am – 10.30pm clinics to just two hour slots on Saturday and Sunday, 10 – 12noon. A patient’s relative who managed to get one of the slots at the Leighton clinic on Saturday, 11 February, heard the receptionist direct six patients to out of hours clinics in Dunstable and Luton.
15. The LINK is concerned that people may have problems accessing clinics outside their towns of residence due to transport or other issues.

Background papers and their location: None