
Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 30 July 2012
Subject: BEDFORDSHIRE LINK Report
Report of: Operations Manager, Bedfordshire LINK (covering Central Bedfordshire)
Summary: The report is to update members on the key work items and issues the LINK is engaged with for consideration and note as required.

Advising Officer: Bob Smith and Charlotte Bonser, LINK Chairman and Host
Contact Officer: Charlotte Bonser
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable

Financial:

2. Not applicable

Legal:

3. Not applicable

Risk Management:

4. Not applicable

Staffing (including Trades Unions):
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5. Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Not applicable

Community Safety:

7. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to note the report.

Background

10. This report is to update on the LINK's final workplan before Healthwatch emerges in April 2013. As detailed in the LINK's Annual Report 2011-2012 <http://www.bedfordshirelink.co.uk/Pages/AnnualReport20112.aspx>, which was presented at its AGM held on 21 June, the LINK will be focusing on preparing for Healthwatch, continuing to look at the area of inappropriate hospital discharge and standards of nursing care, enter and view visits to six care/nursing residential homes, to continue to monitor the effects of the transformation of inpatient mental health beds and to undertake initial work on encouraging the participation of children and young people in the LINK/Healthwatch.
11. Training and development of members has been an important aspect for the LINK and over the year members have been involved in Carers Awareness, Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, regional and local enter and view training and autism awareness. All this training will be valuable for Healthwatch.

LINK involvement in the Transition to Healthwatch

12. Members of LINK and the host organisation are working with the Council and NHS partners to ensure, through such vehicles as the Healthwatch Steering Group and the 360 degree reviews which are being conducted with the LINK Board, the LINK membership and a questionnaire to stakeholders and the general public, that LINK best practice is captured. The membership have been asked in writing for permission to pass their details to the new Healthwatch organisation.

Continuing to look at patient experience on hospital discharge and standards of nursing care

13. The work on hospital issues, both in terms of discharge and nursing care is still being progressed. Following the LINK enter and view visits to the L&D Hospital, visits to Bedford Hospital are planned for August. Discussions have also taken place with the Hertfordshire LINK about patient concerns raised by Central Bedfordshire patients admitted to Lister Hospital. However, because the patients do not wish to make formal complaints, we could only raise the general points.

Looking at residents/patients experience in care and nursing residential homes

14. At the LINK Social Care Working group meeting held on 13 July, teams have been agreed to visit six care/nursing homes in Central Bedfordshire. The visits will take place in August and September 2012. The homes will be notified by telephone and then the visit will be confirmed by letter. A poster notifying residents/carers and relatives of the visit will also be supplied to the care/nursing home for display. The LINK visiting teams will familiarise themselves with the work undertaken by the Bedfordshire Falls and Fracture Prevention Steering Group in developing a Falls Care Home Information Pack. The LINK Chairman, participated in this work.

15. The homes have been randomly selected, but there will be a mixture of BUPA run and privately run homes covering care for those with dementia and other mental health and neurological impairments, learning difficulties, physical difficulties, specialist care and so on.
16. The reports findings with recommendations will be shared with the Council and the NHS for appropriate consideration and action.

Developing an understanding of mental health pathways in order to help service users access the right support in a timely manner

17. The LINK identified the need to understand better the process for someone trying to access mental health services. After several presentations from the providers, SEPT, the new Chair/Lead for the LINK Mental Health & Learning Disabilities working group suggested a presentation from the NHS Commissioner for Mental Health. This has resulted in a better understanding of the "Stepped Care Model" which underpins the pathway a patient follows through when accessing mental health services.
18. The LINK has logged concerns on aspects of mental health care to do with crisis calls and pathways for recovery following discharge from acute mental health care. In order to ensure these issues are being addressed, the LINK has asked the commissioners and provider if it can be involved in the Mental Health launch planned for early September 2012. It is also looking at the action plan for the Mental Health Strategy.

Appendices:

None

Background papers and their location: (open to public inspection)

None