

Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group
Tues 24th Nov 2009 - Compass Disability Meetings Room

Jonathan Yelland – Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

LINKs has been running for approx. 6 months as a result of the Public and Patient Involvement Act 2007 which came in putting Health and Social Services together for reporting issues. They are funded by Somerset County Council. Each LINK is a local body made up of local members of the community to guide and oversee how the Host organisation works. Help and Care are the host organisation.

They do not get involved with individual issues, their purpose is to investigate issues and look at where problem occur. They may signpost people to services such as PALS. LINKS cover issues on the following;

- Doctors surgeries; hospitals; mental health services; sexual health; dentists ;day care; residential homes; maternity services; care at home; support for carers or any other health and social care service.
- They aim to give a voice and involvement opportunities for members of the public. They look at collating issues and feedback to the services in questions.
- They are in the process of carrying out a mapping exercise to see what has been done already and bring together information with a list of voluntary organisations. One member raised the fact that Somerset Sight have done this for referrals and there could be an opportunity to share this information.

More information can be found by contacting them on:

Tel: 0300 1110102 Or visiting www.makesachange.org.uk

Email: somersetLINK@makesachange.org.uk

In writing; Freepost RSAC-KSRE-CZCE,
Somerset LINKs
Unit 2, Bowden Business Centre
Hambridge, Langport, TA10 0BP

Annie Barnard – Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

Annie gave an overview of the PALS service. Each NHS Trust has a PALS service; there is also a PALS service in Musgrove Hospital. Two people cover the PALS service for the County. The purpose is to;

- Provides on the spot help and aims to resolve issues before they escalate into serious problems.
- Act as a gateway to other organisations
- Liaise on behalf of patients/families and deal with individual cases.
- Raise awareness of PALS to NHS providers and outside organisations e.g. Social Services and voluntary organisations

- Collect data and produce reports for the Trust and the wider community
- Be impartial and confidential and work with a network of other PALS services.
- Provide early warning system to monitor problems and highlight gaps in services.
- Improve the patients' experience.

PALS will not make any further contact without the patients' permission.

Questions / Issues

What can you do if you want to change your Doctor?

You need to go to the Practice Manager and ask if you can change. Suggestion to contact PALS if you feel you aren't getting anywhere.

Who decides who gets transport and who doesn't?

Annie mentioned the fact that rules had changed recently. The following information has been obtained since the meeting and published in our recent newsletter;

Patients that are eligible for free NHS transport to hospitals are those that have a medical need. This means:

- You need prescribed oxygen to breath
- You need intravenous (IV) support
- You can only be moved by stretcher
- You can't stand or walk more than a few steps and cannot use car or public transport
- You depend upon medical equipment or aids that cannot fit within a bus or taxi
- The treatment leaves you so debilitated that you cannot use a car, bus or taxi
- You have an illness, condition or disability which stops you using a car, bus or taxi unaided

Patients also can get free hospital transport under the 'Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme'. Those patients are on a low income and receive the following-

- Income Support
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee
- HC2 or HC3 (low Income)
- NHS Tax exemption certificate

Leaflets are available on Hospital Transport from your local doctor's surgery. Patient Transport can be contacted on 01278 727444 for more information.

Information on how to contact PALS also been published in the recent copy of the Networker.

Contact Details as follows;

Your local PALS can be contact on 0800 0851 067.

FREEPOST RRKL-XKSC-ACSG, PALS, Somerset PCT, Yeovil, BA22 8HR
Email:pals@somerset.nhs.uk.

Would it be better for PALS to be independent to the NHS?

Annie explained that it the patient is the most important thing in the whole process.

Repeat prescriptions – an e mail request was sent to French Weir medical centre with a request for a reply which wasn't received until 4 working days later. Other members quoted receiving good response form the same centre when phoning through repeat prescriptions. PALS can take this up if required.

The automated phone system at Musgrove Hospital is not user friendly.

Bonnie Bindon - Active Living

Bonnie gave a brief talk on Active living Centres. There are 98 centres across the County which provide various events. They are mainly for people over 50, but if you are under 50 and wish to attend please contact your local centre. Each group operates different activities ranging from Quizzes to Tai Chi and computer classes.

In the centre of Taunton there is a pop-in centre at Temple Methodist Church on alternate Wednesdays from 10.30am until 1.30pm and on alternate Thursday from 12.30 until 3.30pm at Taunton United Reform Church, Paul Street. Also once a month at the Library Meeting Room, on a Wednesday at 11am. More information on the activities for the year is enclosed.

Bonnie Bindon – Community Coordinator for Somerset Coast & Taunton Deane can be contacted on: 01643 700873, or bmbindon@somerset.gov.uk.

For other centres around the County please contact 0845 345 9133 or **email:** info@somersetactiveliving.org **Or in writing to:** Active Living, Community Directorate

Somerset County Council, Floor A2, County Hall, Taunton,TA1 4DY.

Mandy then explained that we have one more meeting taking place under the current funding arrangements in February next year and gave members the opportunity to contribute to an open session on future issues which may be considered or addressed with the Council. These are summarised below;

- Shopmobility – lifts are owned by the Council, they keep breaking down.
- Seating in the old market – removed, responsibility of Orchard Centre however can the council address the need to put seating in others areas throughout the town.
- Town Centre Manager – can they discuss the issues surrounding access to the town? Electric doors on the parade in Taunton – one member thought they were not permitted on the parade?

- Multi-Storey Car Park – is this going under future developments, how will this effect Shopmobility? Current Width of parking bays for shopmobility are usual size, need to be wider.
- Hospital parking – General lack of blue badge spaces and those in the road have been taken away. What happens when the helipad goes in? – Musgrove Park Hospital has been in contact with Compass Disability Services on this subject and are in contact with them about involvement in a future meeting.
- First buses – you do not know when an accessible bus will come. A consultation concerning transport is planned with SAIN in the new year. Members will be kept informed
- Musgrove flyer was removed – are there any plans to bring this back.
- Access to buildings for visually impaired people – would be helpful at hospital to have building name on the floor at the entrance and a button to press for assistance at the entrance.
- Who provides transport for hospitals? – For Ambulances it is South West Ambulance Service and for cars it is Somerset County Councils hospital transport department.
- Public Toilets – general lack of in Taunton.
- Healthy Eating – can this be incorporated into a future meeting?
- More clarification on the requirements of organisations to make their services accessible for disabled people. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states that is unlawful for service providers to treat you less favourably because of your disability, and they must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for you, such as giving you extra help or changing the way they provide their services. Following changes to the law in 2004, service providers must make consider making changes to physical features of their premises so that there are not physical barriers which prevent you from using their services, or make it unreasonably difficult to do so. More information on this is available from;

Equality and Human Rights Commission;
 0845 604 6610 - England main number
 0845 604 6620 - England textphone
 0845 604 6630 - England fax

Monday - Friday 8:00 am-6:00 pm

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
 Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTR
 Arndale House
 Arndale Centre
 Manchester
 M4 3AQ

Email: englandhelpline@equalityhumanrights.com

- Who is responsible for care homes and are charitable homes covered?

The Care Quality Commission is the new health and social care regulator for England. Their aim is to ensure better care for everyone in hospital, in a care home and at home. For general enquiries call the customer services team, who are available 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Telephone: 03000 616161 Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk or in writing;

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

- Will the Council be providing feedback to the issues raised?

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 23rd February 2010 10.30am until 12.30pm