
Health Scrutiny Committee

3 December 2007

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

Summary

1. This report updates members on progress in establishing a LINK for the City of York Council area.

Background

2. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, which contains legislation to abolish Patients' Forums and start establishing Local Involvement Networks from 1 April 2008, has now received royal assent.
3. The Act gives local authorities a duty of make contractual arrangements with a host organisation for the establishment of a LINK.
4. LINKs will have a duty to:
 - a. promote, and support, the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and social care services
 - b. enable people to monitor, and review, the commissioning and provision of local health and social care services
 - c. obtain the views of people about their needs for, and experiences of, local health and social care services, and
 - d. make these views known and make reports and recommendations about how local health and social care services might be improved, to persons responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local health and social care services.
5. If, by 1 April 2008, a local authority has not yet contracted a "host" organisation to establish a LINK, it will be under a duty to

make sure the LINK activities are carried out by other means.

6. City of York Council are working closely with North Yorkshire County Council and carrying out a joint procurement exercise to establish two LINKs one for each local authority area.
7. Nigel Burchell and Gary Brittain are officers of CYC who have responsibility for overseeing this process and will be in attendance at this meeting to report on progress so far and answer members' questions. Their report on progress is attached as Annex A

Consultation

8. The Department of Health is currently running a consultation process on draft regulations which impose duties on commissioners and providers of health and social care services to respond to LINKs and to allow entry by LINKs to premises under certain conditions. The consultation document is enclosed as Annex B. It also contains details about LINK requests for information and LINK referrals to overview and scrutiny committees.
9. Any comments relating to this consultation must be received by the Department of Health by 21 December 2007.

Options

10. Members can hear the update from the officers who are working on the LINK procurement exercise and ask questions as to progress so far.
11. Members may also decide if they wish to respond to the consultation on the regulations for LINKs.

Analysis

12. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act will place responsibilities on this Committee to respond to a LINK's referral regarding a social care matter. The regulation-making powers of the NHS Act 2006 are likely to be used in respect of a similar policy regarding the referral of health matters.

Corporate Priorities

13. Relevant to Corporate Priority 6 – Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.

Implications

14. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or other implications at this stage.

Risk Management

15. In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

16. Members are asked to receive the update about the formation of a LINK for the city of York council area and ask any relevant questions.
17. Members are also asked to decide if they wish to make a response to the Department of Health's consultation on regulations for LINKs.

Reason: In order to carry out their duty to promote the health needs of the people they represent.

Contact details:

Author:

Barbara Boyce
Scrutiny Officer
01904 551714
barbara.boyce@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Colin Langley
Acting Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Report Approved**Date** 23/11/07**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** *None***Wards Affected:****All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

A – Report on progress in procuring a LINK for York

B – Have Your Say – Consultation on regulations for LINKs
(Department of Health September 2007)

Background Papers

None