

# WIRRAL LINKS NEWS

1<sup>st</sup> Edition – October 2007

## Wirral People LINKing Together

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) will replace Patient and Public Involvement in Health Forums (PPIFs) from April 2008. LINKs are intended to strengthen the way local communities influence health and social care services.

*It is time for Wirral to get ready for LINKs.*

### What Are LINKs?

LINKs are a network made up of local people and organisations with an interest in health and social care. They will:

- Support the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and social care services.
- Obtain the views of people about their need for, and experiences of, local health and social care services
- Enable people to monitor and review the commissioning and provision of care services.
- Raise the concerns of local people with those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing and scrutinising services.

The proposed powers of LINKs include the ability to:-

- Enter specific types of services and view the care provided.
- Ask for information or make recommendations and get a response within a specific timescale.
- Refer matters to the local Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and get a response.

## What is Happening on Wirral?

An initial Wirral event was held in March 2007 to engage communities and statutory authorities in the development of a Wirral LINK. It was obvious that a lot of preparation and discussion needed. A **Project Team** was set up to start the process.

A **Consultation and Development Group** has now been set up. This group will:-

- Ensure all key people are involved in designing LINKs.
- Give people an equal say, both organisations and individuals.
- Keep people informed about developments to LINKs e.g. contract and tendering process.
- Consider potential LINKs structures, set out options and make recommendations.
- Consider guidance and information on LINKs.

This group is made up of representatives from:-

- Wirral Council
- Patient and Public Involvement Forums
- Forum Support Organisation
- Wirral PCT
- The Voluntary and Community Sectors Network
- People who use services/carers/their organisations.
- NHS Trusts.

The Consultation and Development Group will be supported by **Wirral LINKs Reference Group** which will reach into the heart of the community and involve the widest range of people with an interest in improving health and social care so that all key people will be consulted on proposals for the future of Wirral LINKs

## Next Steps

LINKs will build on the good work that is already happening on Wirral. The PPI Forums have worked hard with user groups and local Health Trusts and gained a lot of vital knowledge/expertise which is a foundation stone for a Wirral LINK. Other initiatives promoting involvement include: Wirral Advocacy and Involvement Services Partnership; involvement of people who use services and carers in Adult Social Care; involvement of patients and the public by the NHS; the Voluntary and Community Sectors Network (WVCSN); and local authority community engagement.

This is a great opportunity to join health and social care groups together to make a real impact on the health, care and well being of Wirral residents through LINKs.

We will be sending information out to as many people as possible to keep everyone up to date with this exciting new project.

## Timescales

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, which includes provisions for establishing LINKs, is likely to be agreed by Parliament in November. Wirral Council will start the tendering process for a LINKs host organisation as soon as possible with a view to establishing the LINKs contract for April 2008. The Consultation and Development Group will meet regularly in the coming months to identify proposals to shape the LINK.

## National Information

The Department of Health has produced two guidance documents "Planning your Local Involvement Network" and "Contracting a Host Organisation for your Local Involvement Network".

These are available on:-

[www.dh.gov.uk/patientpublicinvolvement](http://www.dh.gov.uk/patientpublicinvolvement)  
Alternatively contact the Department of Health for copies. Tel: 020 7210 4850  
Textphone (for deaf and hard of hearing) 020 7210 5025.

To get more Patient and Public Involvement Resources – visit:

[www.library.nhs.uk/ppi](http://www.library.nhs.uk/ppi)  
[www.cppih.org](http://www.cppih.org)  
[www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk)

## Local LINKs Contacts

Your local LINKs contacts are:

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