

AGENDA ITEM

28TH APRIL 2008

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK – CONTRACTING A HOST ORGANISATION

Summary

Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPI) were disbanded on 31st March 2008 to be replaced by Local Involvement Networks (LINK). LINKs differ from PPIs in that they cover a geographic area rather than being aligned to a health body (primary care, hospital, mental health, ambulance trusts) and will be made up of individuals and organisations. LINKs will also have an opportunity to influence social care provision, something that was not included in the PPI remit.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has a responsibility to make contractual arrangements with a host organisation that will enable, support and facilitate the LINK in its activities.

Recommendation

That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Health Select Committee continues to scrutinise the contracting process to ensure that best value is achieved.

Detail

1. 150 LINKs will be established nationally, one for each area served by a Local Authority with responsibility for social services. Their primary role will be to enable local individuals and groups to actively influence local care services, from planning and commissioning to delivery.
2. A LINK will include individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in local health and social care services, and will be expected to make sure that all sections of the community can be heard. The LINK will be a network rather than groups of individuals.
3. LINKs differ from Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums as they are based on broad networks rather than small specialist groups. However, the LINK should build on the achievements of local PPI Forums and learn from past practice as the focus of statutory involvement widens to include social care as well as NHS services. Members of existing forums will be able to build on their past work and may choose, for example, to form specialist sub-groups to focus on areas such as hospital trusts or mental health trusts. Forum members may also find opportunities to develop their skills and understanding and to take up new, less formal roles.
4. Local Authorities have received a specific grant from the Department of Health, which comprises a baseline amount to enable a contract to be put in place and cover costs, and a targeted amount of money depending on size, population, population sparsity and deprivation. The total funding package contains three strands: local authority contract management costs, host organisation support function costs and LINK expenditure costs. Funding for Stockton Borough is £126,000 p.a. for three years commencing 1st April 2008.
5. A host organisation will be contracted by the Local Authority to support the LINK, initially for a period of three years. The host will be:

- Accountable to the LINK to ensure the support provided is appropriate and meets the needs of the participants
 - Performance managed against the contract by the Local Authority.
6. The host organisation's role will be to:
- Undertake the initial set-up of the LINK
 - Facilitate the establishment of arrangements to manage and decide the activities of the LINK
 - Hold the finances of the LINK
 - Facilitate correspondence and communication
 - Ensure data management and record-keeping of LINK information
 - Provide advice and support to the LINK
 - Commit to form strategic partnerships and effective working relationships with other organisations
 - Support the LINK in the development and promotion of its priorities and activities
 - Build on and develop local networks to sustain ongoing, sustainable recruitment activity
 - Provide an appropriate service
 - Operate within agreed performance frameworks laid down by the Local Authority
 - Report back to the Local Authority on at least a six-monthly basis
 - Ensure that the LINK is fully accessible
7. While the LINK is being set up, the host will be responsible for engaging individuals and organisations and recruiting a diverse and representative group to establish the LINK. The host must be capable of reaching out to the wider community and will need to be innovative to draw in potential participants.
8. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council officers and councillors have begun to stimulate interest in LINKs with potential members and participants, and potential hosts at a number of events that have been held in the borough. A 'Getting Ready for LINKs' Steering Group exists to discuss in detail aspects of the arrangements needed prior to a host being procured and a LINK being formulated.
9. Further interim information regarding the recent activities undertaken for setting up a LINK in Stockton Borough is attached at appendix 2.
10. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Health Select Committee can scrutinise how the contracting process is undertaken, and ensure that best value is achieved as has been outlined by the Department of Health in its suggested role for overview and scrutiny committees. A copy of the invitation to tender specification for the host organisation is attached (see appendix 3).

Conclusion

The Health Select Committee is asked to consider the content of the tender document and provide feedback.

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Background Papers :

Getting ready for LINKs: Contracting a host organisation for your Local Involvement Network (see Appendix 1)

Local Involvement Network in Stockton-on-Tees – update report (see Appendix 2)

Invitation to tender specification for the host organisation (see Appendix 3)

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not ward specific