



Minutes of the first meeting of the Interim Executive Meeting held on Monday 14 July 2008, at 6 pm at Earlsfield Library, Magdalen Road, London SW18

Present:

Colleen Bowen
Alison Buick
Caroline Furnivall
Mike Grahm
Del Hosain
Suzanna Kawalek
Catherine Kennington
Stefan Kuchar (in the Chair)
Esther Persaud
Marisca Ribeiro
Kurt Schwarz
Louise Shellard
Irene Storer
Peter Whitby
Barbara Willerton

Host team:

Jason Edgington – WCA Director
Andrew Craig – MAC partner
Valerie Moore – MAC partner

Apologies for absence:

Aminuzzaman Khan who has also resigned from the Interim Executive for health reasons.

1.01 Welcome and Introductions

The Acting Chair Stephan Kuchar, who has agreed to chair the first two meetings, introduced himself and the LINK Host representatives who were present. Members of the Interim Executive were asked to introduce themselves and say one work which represented how they felt about the LINK. The words included inclusive,

engaging, action, empowerment, compassion, encompassing, inclusive, accessible, improvement, diversity, link, two way, action, joined up, continuous, coherent, listening and comprehensive.

The Chair covered a number of domestic matters including fire exists, toilets, refreshments, comfort break, mobile phones and help with mobility. The Chair confirmed the hearing loop was working but apologised for bad acoustics in the room.

1.2 Adoption of the agenda

The circulated agenda was agreed as comprehensive but it was thought to be ambitious for a first meeting. It was agreed it was helpful to differentiate between items for information and items for decision. It was agreed papers should be circulated a week in advance of a meeting by post and email and displayed on the LINK website.

1.3 Interim Executive Membership

It was noted that the list of contact details (attachment A) was only for circulation to IE members. A number of amendments and additions were made and the list would be re-circulated.

With regard to confidentiality of LINK members' details, the Host explained there had been a breach and recipients of a particular email had seen the email addresses of all other recipients. An apology has been sent asking everyone not to use the other addresses as this would contravene data protection rules. However WCA was aware that some people are still using the list and will seek legal advice if it continues.

1.4 LINK Public meeting held on 17 June 2008 at Balham Library Hall

1.4.1. It was noted that Attachment B gave the key points raised at the meeting with the exception of the Interim Executive decision to meet in private for two meetings to allow the newly elected members time to get to know each other. It was also noted that there was an official record of who attended the meeting and whether or not they were Members with voting rights at the meeting (ie had signed up by the deadline of noon 13 June 2008).

1.4.2. It was noted that there had been long and detailed discussion at the meeting about a number of procedural and membership issues but that the point being made was not always clear to everyone. There was general agreement that LINK meetings should be open to the full membership to avoid any impression of secrecy even though the first two IE meetings were being held in private to allow IE members to settle into their new roles.

1.4.3. In spite of some disagreement about procedures, the public meeting was generally felt to be positive: it had elected an Interim Executive and had given people a chance to contribute their views at an early stage. There was agreement that this

positive and inclusive start must be maintained and all sections of the community must feel able to participate.

1.4.4. It was noted that there were other people interested in being actively involved in the IE who were too late for election. It was agreed the IE should consider how to involve other people in the LINK work.

1.4.5. It was agreed by all IE members that they did not want the IE or LINK as a whole to be a “talking shop”. They wanted good two way communication and they wanted to get things done for the benefit of users of health and social services in Wandsworth. In order to be effective, the IE and LINK as a whole needed a constitution and this was being discussed later in the meeting under governance.

1.4.6. It was agreed that the paper giving the key points from the public meeting should go on the Wandsworth LINK website and the Chairman reminded the IE that LINK members would want a report back on these key points at the next public meeting.

1.5 Governance policies for the Interim Executive

It was suggested that somewhere in the governance policies there needed to be a definition of the aims/purpose of the LINK IE.

1.5.1. Declaration of Interests (attachment C)

It was noted that IE members had made a declaration of their interests as part of their nomination form. It was agreed that this information should be available at IE meetings and needed to be kept up to date with a reminder item on every agenda. Although the information would not be circulated to the LINK membership, it should be available for inspection at the Host office, if any member should ask to see it.

The Chairman reminded the IE that the declaration was one of interests which could possibly give rise to conflict and IE members should declare any interests they thought might be relevant. Conflict was most likely where IE members had relevant financial or employment interests in the health and social care field. If a conflict arose the IE would decide if an individual needed to stand down from the IE or just stand back from discussion of a particular matter.

It was noted that many of the other interests of IE members would be of benefit to LINK and that it was useful and positive for IE members to know about each others' relevant experience and contacts.

Bearing in mind the above clarifications, attachment C was agreed.

1.5.2. Attendance at Meetings – Attachment D

Concern was expressed that there should be no discrimination against members who, for health or other personal reasons, found it difficult to always attend meetings in person. However it was agreed that it was difficult to envisage circumstances where a member who was committed to the work of LINK would not have a good

reason for missing three consecutive meetings. It was also thought unlikely that they would be prevented from getting in touch and explaining their absence for three consecutive meetings. It was agreed that efforts would be made to contact absent members and find out the problem and that it would be the full IE who would decide if that person was eligible or not to continue as an IE member.

In view of the personal and health difficulties that some people might experience in attending meeting, it was agreed that ways of contributing views outside the meeting should be considered as well as other forms of “virtual meetings” such as conference telephone calls. It was agreed that a record of attendance at IE meetings should be included in the Annual report together with any contributions made instead of attendance

The Chairman asked if the IE wanted the power to remove a member for any other reason. It was agreed that a discussion paper on a Code of Conduct should be brought to a future meeting.

Bearing in mind the above clarifications, attachment D was agreed.

1.5.3. Standing Orders – Attachment E

Agendas: It was noted that whilst two weeks notice of items for the agenda was desirable, urgent matters might arise at shorter notice.

Chairing: It was noted that the Chair of the IE would be elected by the IE and must be a full member of Wandsworth LINK. It was agreed that in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair would preside and in the absence of a Vice Chair, the IE would decide on a temporary chair of that specific meeting rather than rely on the Host Director. It was agreed that the next meeting of the IE would consider the appointment of a Chair (Stefan Kuchar’s chairmanship only being temporary at the moment) and one or two Vice Chairs to spread the workload and share the responsibility. Nominations would be called for at the next meeting and therefore members needed to consider in advance if they are willing to stand.

Papers: It was agreed that meeting papers should be posted on the Wandsworth LINK website and other appropriate websites such as Careline as well as being sent out to IE members in advance. Papers should show if they were for information or decision.

Quorum: Whilst it was agreed that decisions could not take place at a meeting that was not quorate, it was felt that useful discussion might be possible with any action or decisions ratified by a future quorate meeting.

Public attendance: Whilst it was agreed that attendance at IE meeting by non members was desirable, there was concern about non members joining in discussion generally. It was felt that some sort of open space/question time should be allowed before and/or after the meeting and that non members should be asked to submit questions or topics in advance.

Minutes: It was felt minutes should be detailed enough to make sense to anyone who was not present and show where there was disagreement and the extent to which a full range of views had been considered.

Votes: – It was hoped that IE decisions would often be made by a consensus without the need for a vote. It was agreed that all members of the IE should be acting and voting in the best interests of everyone and not just in their personal interest or those of a section of the public who they might represent. It was recognised there was a danger some groups could be overlooked or poorly represented and the IE stressed their determination to do their best to see this did not happen.

It was noted that the above decisions related to IE meetings and further discussion would be needed to agree format and procedures for public meetings.

Bearing in mind the above clarifications, attachment E was agreed.

1.5.4. Recognition and Reward – Attachment F

It was noted that the payment of an allowance was an option for the LINK IE members and would recognise the contribution IE members were making in terms of time and would also represent an incentive. However IE members agreed unanimously that they were working in a voluntary capacity and that this was not an appropriate way to spend the available budget of approx £16,000 per quarter. It was however agreed that reimbursement of expenses should be comprehensive and generous with a simple claim form. Expenses should take account of the work the individual was doing on behalf of LINK and should cover a number of things associated with an individual's circumstances such as transport, phone calls, postage, computer ink, stationery, alternative care, special food, readers for papers, other access costs, etc.

It was not envisaged that LINK members would be able to claim expenses for attending LINK public meetings unless they needed disabled transport facilities which the Host would arrange.

The Host was asked to draw up a proposal for what and how expenses could be claimed, approved and paid. On behalf of the Host, Jason asked members to let him know of any personal access or other requirements they might have and he would do his best to see they were met.

Bearing in mind the above clarification and additions, attachment F was agreed.

1.6. Contingency plan for non completion of agenda and dates of future meetings

Since it was 8 pm, the Chair suggested that the IE meet again in August to complete the current agenda. It was agreed the IE would meet on Tuesday 26 August at 6 pm at a different accessible venue to be confirmed. This meeting would be the second meeting held in private to allow members time to get to know each other.

It was agreed the following meeting would take place at 6pm on Monday 22 September (venue to be agreed). It was agreed that non IE members would be able to attend this meeting but the details of attendance, participation and Agenda would be agreed at the August meeting.

It was noted that suitable venues included Nightingale House, the Town Hall, Putney or Balham Library, Balham Park or Heathfield Surgery and Putney Leisure Centre.

It was hoped future meetings might be arranged at regular monthly interval and members were asked to bring diaries to future meetings.

The Chair closed the meeting with thanks to everyone for a productive and participative meeting which had laid down good ground rules on which to build towards an effective LINK in Wandsworth.

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm