

Wandsworth LINK
to become
Pathfinder
Healthwatch



From next year, it is proposed that all LINKs will be replaced by local Healthwatch organisations. Earlier this year, the Government invited LINKs to apply to become pathfinders for the new arrangements.

Wandsworth LINK has now been told that we, along with all the others who applied, has been successful. *What will it mean?* – well the Government hasn't really told us but we plan to strengthen our organisation by becoming an incorporated body so that we can play a greater part in running our own affairs without having to rely so much on a "host" organisation. We are also already playing a full part in the shadow Health and Well-being Board in Wandsworth which brings together the Council, the local GP Clinical Commissioning Group and the Wandsworth Primary Care Trust. Finally, we are going to look at how local health and social care information and advice services function so that we can ensure that they work well for local people.



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Increase in charges for social care in Wandsworth – the story continues

Back in February, we identified the risk that if Wandsworth Council increased its charges for day care for elderly and disabled people by 163% as planned, frail and vulnerable adults would not be able to afford the service and would stop attending. We are now receiving stories direct from service users who have reduced their attendance or stopped altogether because they cannot afford to pay. To make matters worse, the new financial assessments are only now taking place and some users are facing retrospective bills for the months from April 2011 when the new charges came into effect. It was not until August that users started to receive information about their charges and the back payments they would be expected to make. The Council, in their letters to users said the delay was due to a computer problem. We have campaigned for transitional arrangements for users facing the increase in cost which, for those attending three times per week, amounts to some £3,000 per annum. No transitional arrangements for users who currently attend the centres and pay for their care have been agreed by the Council and, with the delay in the new financial assessments, many users do not yet know how much they will end up owing the Council. The Council has said that it has warned service users of the increases in advance but **is it right that they should be charging the higher level retrospectively because they have been slow to carry out new financial assessments?** The impact of these measures was clear to see when we spoke to Mr White from Church Lane Day centre in early August ...



"When I got the letter about the new charges I was shocked. I just can't afford it. I used to come three days – now just one. I have to come on Thursdays because I can't bath myself and they give me a bath here. I am a diabetic and I am no good at eating the right things. I can't cook properly because of my arthritis – my kitchen is up three stairs and anyway I am scared I will leave the gas on"

GP Patient Groups

LINK is completing an 'audit' to find out which GP practices have patient groups and which do not. We are offering to help GP practices where there are no patient groups to start them. We will help to increase 'patient involvement' - such as doing a survey to get patient's views. In one GP practice we are advising on starting an electronic (E-mail) patient group. The approach we are encouraging is to get some 'linkage' between the GP practice patient groups that meet and the 3 GP lead Locality Commissioning Groups. We want patients to have a 'pathway' so that they can influence the important health commissioning decisions. As ever the NHS has a finite budget and difficult priority choices have to be made - we think patients should influence these choices!

This is an exciting time to create a stronger patient voice. The new Wandsworth GP Consortium which is a government pathfinder (now re-titled 'Clinical Commissioning Group') is keen to work with LINKs to improve patient involvement.

We want you to offer to help! If you can help, get involved in your surgery's patient group or even to start one up then telephone Jeremy Ambache on 0208 785 9650 / 07828 132 814 or e-mail Jam-bache@aol.com

User Involvement in Clinical Commissioning

85 patients, service users and carers attended a workshop in May, jointly facilitated by LINK Chair Jenny Weinstein and Colin Smith PPI lead for the Wandsworth Borough team.

Dr. Jeremy Gray, lead GP for the Battersea area and Jude Channon, locality manager, explained the role of the GP consortia to purchase health services for patients in Wandsworth and expressed the commitment of GPs to involve patients from the outset. They stressed the link between health and social problems such as unemployment and housing and the necessity for future services to be more integrated.



Following group discussion amongst all of those who attended, several recommendations for good PPI strategy were proposed...

- Patient involvement should be compulsory – not just 'good practice' and the support to enable people to participate such as child care, transport, training and translation must be provided
- Patients, service users and carers must be involved in the difficult decisions about budgets and rationing
- Patients must be seen holistically and the value of bringing patients with similar issues to support each other should be recognised.
- Patients, service users and carers cannot play an active part unless they are appropriately informed and information is provided in accessible formats
- Good feedback systems are needed so that practitioners, managers and budget holders hear the patient experiences 'from the horse's mouth'. Feedback must be listened to and acted upon not just undertaken to tick a box
- Need for good information flow between different forums to avoid duplication or communication with only one group
- Don't consult if you have already decided.
- Many models of participation need to be developed because not everyone enjoys groups or meetings

Dr. Peter Ilves, GP lead for Wandsworth, thanked the participants and expressed how illuminating the workshop had been. Work will be undertaken to form the guiding principles for a strategy throughout the Summer. The strategy will incorporate the views of 'hard to reach' groups who have received funding to support participation, including amongst others, older people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities. The strategy will be launched at a conference to be held in the Autumn.



better services better value

In July, South West London PCT conducted a major public consultation on proposals to improve services and save money at the same time by changing the way services are delivered.

Maternity Services

In 2010 22,000 babies were born in SW London and numbers are steadily increasing. There are currently insufficient midwives across the service and insufficient senior doctors in St. George's and Kingston Hospitals. The PCT is consulting about limiting the number of births provided in each Unit (which would mean that some mothers would be expected to seek a bed outside SW London) or focusing resources in three units which would enable economies of scale.

Children's Services

Neither parents nor GPs want to take any risk with a child's health. This means that many children are unnecessarily seen at A & E or are sent to outpatient appointments. The review suggests that money could be saved and services improved if children could be seen by specially trained nurses and GPs in children's urgent care or observation and assessment centres. Seriously ill children would be cared for in fewer specialist units.

People with long term conditions

Patients with diseases such as heart conditions, asthma or diabetes that require ongoing care and frequent interventions are the most intensive users of the health service. They often attend A & E or out-patient appointments and receive in-patient care. It is suggested that they would receive a better and cheaper service if:

- They were educated to understand and respond to their own conditions
- They could receive better co-ordinated support in the community
- They could be looked after in their own homes when they became ill by 'rapid response teams'

Urgent and Emergency Care

Accident and Emergency services are only really needed for people who require attention as soon as possible following for example a heart attack or a serious injury. 90% of people who go to A & E are not in that category

although they do need treatment – for example because they have sustained a minor injury or contracted a nasty infection or pain. These patients endure very long waits and also cost the NHS a significant amount of money. Solutions being consulted on by the review include:

- More access to GP surgeries
- Urgent Care Centres located in the community or at A & E units
- Reduce the number of A & E units and use them only for emergency care

Planned Care and End of Life care

The review is also consulting on proposals to establish planned surgery centres, an increase in day surgery and more advice and support to enable people to end their lives in their own home rather than hospital.

If you want to know more about any of these proposals or you want to feed in your views, contact the PCT Patient and Public Involvement lead – Frances Newell at Frances.Newell@smpct.nhs.uk or contact LINK and we will pass on your views

The Progress of the Health and Social Care Bill

Key principles supported by Wandsworth LINK during the 'listening exercise' on



the Health and Social Care Bill were conceded by the government. The bill is going through parliament, the following changes are expected:

- The Secretary of State for Health will remain accountable for the NHS
- Other health professionals will join GPs on local clinical commissioning boards
- Competition will not be used as an end in itself, but to improve quality
- All organisations involved in providing NHS care must be transparent and subject to scrutiny
- The time frame for restructuring will be more flexible to ensure adequate planning

HealthWatch will not now be introduced until October 2012 at the earliest.

Out of Hours Report

Are you satisfied with the Out-of-hours GP service in Wandsworth?

In February 2011, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported low levels of patient satisfaction with the GP out-of-hours service provided by Harmoni. In April, a report gave the outcome of a full scrutiny. The Wandsworth out-of-hours service is provided under a 3-year contract begun in 2005 and extended for a further 3 years in 2008 and a further year in 2010. In extending the contract, the Primary Care Trust reported no problems with Harmoni but did not mention that, across five indicators of public satisfaction, Harmoni scored worse than the national average on all five and below the London average on four. The

	Response	Wands worth	London	England
Do you know how to contact an out-of-hours GP service?	Yes	48%	54%	62%
How easy is it to contact the out-of-hours GP service by telephone?	Easy/very Easy	63%	68%	78%
How quickly was care from the out-of-hours GP service received?	About Right	47%	52%	61%
Rating of the care received from the out-of-hours GP service?	Good/very good	47%	55%	63%

scores for the 4 key questions are shown below are shown below.

Worse still, when the patient satisfaction was tracked across the last three years, Harmoni's score had worsened on all four key questions. The tender for the new out-of-hours contract is now being prepared. Wandsworth LINK is involved in the discussions about the contract and is trying to increase the involvement of local GPs, ensure that all doctors carrying out the service are experienced GPs and improve the arrangements for liaison between the out-of-hours service and the patient's own GP the day after an episode. *If you have any views on the current contract or Harmoni, please get in touch with us*

Mental Health Study

A number of significant changes are being made to the lives of people with mental health issues who use services in Wandsworth. People are being moved from supported living in group homes to individual social housing flats, traditional day centres are closing and users are being given personal budgets to purchase services of their choice. Employment and training projects are losing their Council funding and community mental health teams are being reconfigured.

The changes are explained as making better use of shrinking resources and giving users more power and choice, but users often experience them as loss or disturbance. The LINK is responding to users' and carers' concern by getting its Enter and View team to focus a project on mental health services in the community. We want to be guided by users' and carers' experience and views and are currently undertaking discussions with a number of representative organisations. In September we will be focusing in on specific service areas to be targeted for study, including the use of Enter and View procedures.

We would be glad to hear from anybody who wants to be involved in the study. Please contact Martin Haddon via the LINK.

The care of older people in hospital and in care homes



Our work in this important area is on track. We got a lot of good feedback from carers at the recent carers' event held in the civic suite in July, and have met with the Council and the PCT who pay for the care older people get. The regulator, CQC, has recently inspected wards for older people at St George's and Kingston hospitals so we are focusing more on going into care homes to see where older people are getting a good experience and where they are not.

We are concentrating on promoting personalisation and the opposite - neglect, using some of the CQC tools to record our observations. Fieldwork is planned for September with a report later in the year.

Quality Accounts

Wandsworth LINK commented on the Quality Accounts for St. George's Hospital & Community Trust and for SW London & St. George's Mental Health Trust. LINK was also consulted by the Care Quality Commission in their inspection of in-patient facilities at Springfield and St. George's Hospital and Community Trust.

Mental Health Services received an improved rating from users but the following issues were identified as in need of further action.

- Improved communication with in-patient service users and their carers
- More person-centred care plans
- Systematic collection of user feedback on discharge
- Appropriate care in the community following discharge
- Annual reviews for people on Care Programme Approach (CPA)

St George's was found by CQC to be compliant in terms of patient experience –but several aspects need further work. The Trust's Quality Account highlighted the following areas for improvement that reflect concerns expressed by LINK members:

- Maintaining 18 week waiting times for treatment
- Support to Mothers after they have had their babies
- Discharge procedures
- Teenage pregnancies & sexual health
- Complaints monitoring and responses

Personalisation

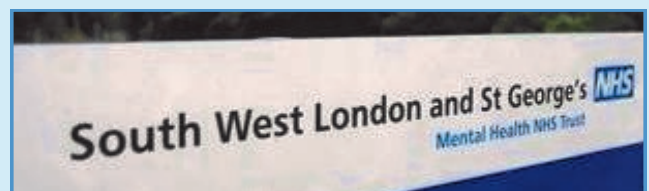
If there's one topic that's guaranteed to get people talking, it's Personal Budgets. Despite professionals best efforts there still seems to be a lot of confusion and questions. On paper Personal Budgets look like a good deal for service users and carers; more choice, more control and more independence. But has this been achieved in practice in Wandsworth? What have been the implications of personal budgets on safeguarding, levels of support, choice of services and money allocation?

In early 2011 Wandsworth LINK, in collaboration South West London Academic Network (SWAN) and with the endorsement of Wandsworth Council and St George's Mental Health

Trust, embarked on a project to find the answers to these questions, by interviewing those in the know- service users and carers. We focused the research on Older People and Mental Health Service users, groups that have so far been under researched. We talked on an informal basis, with service users, carers and professionals to get a feel for the key issues and the questions we should be asking. A steering group was formed, which included representatives from Wandsworth Council, NHS Wandsworth, Service User Groups, LINK and Academic Advisers. The Council and the Mental Health Trust sent letters to those in receipt of a personal budget inviting them to take part. To date the project has come up against a number of obstacles. SWAN has since ceased to exist, Kingston University and Professor Ray Jones, an acknowledged authority on personalisation, have taken on the project. There were time delays and some confusion over what exactly service users were signing up to. However, these issues have actually revealed a lot about people's understanding of personal budgets and their capacity to manage their own budgets.

The project is now at the stage where interviews with older people and their carers have begun, and those with mental health service users are just about to commence. We hope to have analysed the results by the Autumn when we intend to hold focus groups to build upon the initial interviews. The final report should be completed and presented in a variety of accessible formats by the end of 2011.

New Chair of Mental Health Trust



Peter Molyneux has been appointed the new Chair of the Trust, following the retirement of John Rafferty in April. Since 2005 Peter has been Chair of NHS Kensington and Chelsea, and brings considerable experience of leading organisations through significant change. In particular he is expert in promoting greater integration and co-operation between health, social care and housing services.

Events: September to October

Event	Provider	Date	Venue
Wandsworth LINK public meeting	Wandsworth LINK	6 pm - 8.30 pm 21st September	Wilditch Community Centre, 48 Culvert Rd, London SW11 5BB
LINK meeting with NHS Wandsworth/ GP leads (closed)	NHS Wandsworth	20 th September	Closed
Voluntary Sector Summit	Wandsworth Care Alliance	10.30- 3.30, Lunch Included 27 th September	Jury's Inn Hotel, Wellesley Road Croydon
LINK meeting with Dawn Warwick (closed)	Wandsworth Council	27 th September	Closed
NALM conference on Health Watch	NALM	30th September 11am – 4.30pm. £10 members, £30 non-members	For more information and to book http://www.camdenlink.info/events/nalm-conference
Sound Minds Takes over the Airways for World Mental Health Day	Sound Minds	10 th October	Arts Radio Station Resonance FM 104.4
Health and Wellbeing partnership (closed)	Wandsworth Council	12 th October	Closed

Video Participation - neurological conditions

Calling all those with neurological conditions - are you interested in making a DVD? We aim to improve both social care and health services for those with long term neurological conditions in Wandsworth. If you are interested in participating and filming please ring Annabel on 07969 791 246, Alison on 020 8672 1884 or email wandsworthcommunitypartners@hotmail.com

Ongoing Course

Sound Minds:

Keyboard Skills, Film Production, Film Editing, Ward Visiting in Mental Health (small friendly classes- work at your own pace) ring 0207 207 1786 for details

STORM:

Job Shop- every Thursday between 10.30 – 3 pm, Off The Street Youth Club- every Wednesday 6 pm to 11 pm for young people aged 19 +. Ring 0207 498 0311