



Hearing  
new Voices  
on health  
care P. 3

## Issue Highlights

**Biggest Wandsworth patient and public involvement event ever! P.2**

**Delay in Foundation Trust Application for Mental Health Trust P. 5**

## Service Users win campaign against paying backdated charges

Service users are very relieved that Wandsworth Council has listened to their concerns and changed its mind about asking service users to pay charges back dated for up to five months. Letters sent in August demanding the back payments are now cancelled and new letters will be issued so that no one will pay for the time prior to having been told the outcome of their financial assessment.

As a service user I received the backdated charges letter and as I was on the LINK executive, I was able to start a campaign. I contacted a disabled friend of mine, Veronica Thomas and we arranged a meeting for about 14 older or disabled service users to see what we could do. We discussed how worried we were, thinking we would have to give up valued services or find ourselves in debt.

Veronica wrote a letter to the Council and a formal letter went from LINK on behalf of service users. At the same time individual users like fellow LINK executive member Irene Storrer were making phone calls to relevant Council officers.

Users are still worried about the increased costs and LINK will be monitoring their impact. Users have a right to a new assessment, to the continuation of their service and to access to free advocacy if they are worried.

*Colleen Bowen*



## Changes to Maternity Services

In spite of a worrying national report on the health risks to one in 4 new born babies in the UK, new mothers in Wandsworth will only receive one post natal home visit if proposals from St George's Hospital Trust are implemented. Checks would take place at clinics. Concerns have been expressed to LINK about the most vulnerable mothers not being able to get to clinics, vital support with breast feeding being lost, post natal depression being missed or early signs of illness or disability undiagnosed.

# Getting Involved with Clinical Commissioning

## Largest ever patient and public involvement event in Wandsworth

150 patients, service users, carers and members of local community organisations packed Battersea Arts Centre on November 2<sup>nd</sup> to consider their role in the new structures of the NHS. Jenny Weinstein, chair of Wandsworth LINK, opened the meeting and congratulated the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for organising the event and for their commitment to putting patients at the heart of the new system. Then Dr Nicola Jones, clinical lead of the CCG, gave an overview of what she called 'the biggest change in the NHS in 50 years.' She explained how GPs and other clinicians will be in charge of how the health service budgets are spent, and how patients will be consulted at every stage of the process.

## Developing an Involvement Strategy

Dr Sian Job, patient and public involvement lead on the commissioning group, said the



commissioners wanted to hear what patients and community groups needed, and promised to work with them to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. She said there would be a two-way exchange of information to empower decision making, and described how LINK had been working to involve seldom heard community groups in the process. Dr Job summed up by stressing that the strategy of involving patients and the public is no good without action. We should take what is good from present practice and build on it for the future.

## Working Groups

Workshops followed in which members of the audience tackled practical decision-making

problems such as how patients could be involved in whether to pay for expensive cancer drugs for a few patients when this would mean less money for dementia care, or how to reduce sexually transmitted diseases.

## Participant feedback

Some of the audience had reservations about the changes. Dr Carlis Douglas of the New Testament Assembly church wondered why the voice of the Afro-Caribbean community was still seldom heard despite their close



involvement in the NHS as health workers and patients, and suggested that a new approach was required to rectify this.. The role of private health care providers was also questioned.

Dr Jones said the important thing was to make the system work regardless of politics and commissioners would be looking for qualified providers to deliver an improvement over what exists now.

Overall, despite some access problems with the venue, participants thought that the meeting had been an important initiative.

"I think it excellent that the Wandsworth GPs are aspiring to involve patients, service users and carers at this very early stage. There were plenty of opportunities to learn what needs to be in place in future events ." Jim Cowan, Neurological Conditions Group.

"I thought it was very noisy and as I am visually impaired and cannot lip read, it was hard to hear what our facilitator and other people round my table were saying. But it was great to see so many people, and that people want to engage and make changes." Odette Batarel, Thomas Pocklington Trust

*David Peers*

# Seldom Heard Voices

## NHS Grants

As part of the CCG initiative to involve patients and the public, grants were made to nine community organizations to enable them to engage with stakeholders whose voice may not otherwise be heard in planning for the health service. An additional small grant was given to LINK to support the funded projects and to engage with other groups such as people with mental health issues, who had not applied for grants.

Some examples of the work underway are presented here. A full report will be available in the new year.

## Somali Community:

The Somali Community Advancement Organisation used their grant to hold two meetings in September and October to discuss their main health concerns. SCAO representative Yassin Ali spoke to us about some language and cultural barriers that get in the way of treatment.

Very few Somali-speaking health professionals work in Wandsworth - the nearest GP is in East London - and so basic information like why and when to get vaccinations can be difficult. Somali women are also reluctant to be examined by male doctors, so getting access to health care is difficult for them. In a community that has a higher than normal incidence of TB and a lot of overcrowded housing the failure to monitor medication and treatment is another cause for concern.

They would like to see a Somali speaking health worker able to act as an intermediary to tackle the problem of communication. Using younger members of the family as interpreters carries too many risks of misunderstandings.

## Mental Health Service Users:

Canerows and Plaits, an organisation of predominantly Afro-Caribbean mental health patients and former patients, has been training mental health service users to go into hospitals like Springfield as ward visitors to work with healthcare staff and patients.

A recent survey of service users' experience in local mental health wards highlighted concerns over personal safety and the need for more one-to-one communication with patients about services and medication. Devon Marston, a service user who founded Canerows and Plaits says they are concerned that mental health might take a back seat in the new commissioning structures, as

GPs. And other primary care staff do not always understand the complexity of mental illness.

## Asylum Seekers:

For the last 16 years the health team for Homeless People, Refugees and Asylum Seekers has been providing health care for one of Wandsworth's most hidden communities. Set up by the PCT in 1995 it offers advice, support and care to people who have been the victims of a variety of



traumatic experiences, such as civil war, religious persecution and physical torture. The main refugee groups arriving in the borough in recent years are Somalis, Iranians, Tamils and members of the Ahmedi community from Pakistan. Refugees are often hard to contact and have to be visited in their hostels or temporary accommodation. Many of them can spend years waiting for their status to be decided.

The team of six—two nurses, two administrators/managers, a health visitor and a health advocate - operate from Balham Health Centre, and Wandsworth is one of very few boroughs in the country to offer a service like this'

**David Peers**

### Funded Groups

*Generate Opportunities,  
New Testament Assembly, Tooting  
Putney Vale Residents Association,  
Roehampton Trust,  
Somali Community Advancement  
Organisation,  
Thomas Pocklington Trust,  
Wandsworth Carers Centre,  
Wandsworth Independent Living Forum  
(WILF),  
Wandsworth Neurological Conditions Group*

## HealthWatch and the House of Lords



The Health and Social Care Bill is currently being considered by the House of Lords. An amendment is being proposed that Local HealthWatch should be funded and monitored via HealthWatch England instead of by local authorities. This is because there is seen to be a conflict of interest if local Healthwatch has to monitor Council services while being dependent on that Council for its funding. It is also being suggested that HW England should be independent of the CQC. These changes are supported by National LINKs.

The outcome is uncertain as there is strong pressure not to change the Bill which has to return to parliament for final approval prior to gaining Royal assent currently expected in April 2012.

### Patient Groups in GP Practices

Each year GP practices receive funding known as the 'DES' that they are expected to use to develop and embed new ways of working. This year's Des is for establishing processes to involve patients. Research by Wandsworth LINK has found that a third of the borough's GP practices do not have a functioning patient group. 28 groups exist across the area with another 3 in the process of starting up.

GPs are entitled to consult patients in different ways and LINK would like to share best practice in relation to the methodology / questionnaires running patient groups etc. If any LINK member wants to support patient groups, please continue to let us know!

*Jeremy Ambache*

## ENTER AND VIEW

### Older People

Nationally, reports show that good care for older people cannot be taken for granted. For example 20% of CQC visits to 100 NHS hospitals raised serious concerns about dignity and nutrition for older people and a recent report by the Patients' Association tells horror stories



about the personal care of older people in hospitals. Fortunately, resources in Wandsworth are not in the bad books of either of these organizations.

Four out of the five planned Enter and View visits to care homes have been completed. These are designed to shed light on whether Wandsworth's older people are treated properly if they are in hospital or living in care homes. We have talked to over 80 people to get their views—patients, residents, relatives and staff. We have so far been impressed with the care people are getting and will report fully in Jan 2012.  
*Peter West*

### Community Mental Health Services

A background review of community mental health services and a first visit to day centres have now been completed. It is envisaged that reports will be published before the end of the year.  
*Martin Haddon*

If you have any views about how Wandsworth LINK could improve when it becomes Wandsworth HealthWatch, please contact Richard Wiles

### LINK Executive for 2012

Jeremy Ambache  
Roger Appleton  
Fitzroy Beckford  
Colleen Bowen  
Martin Ellacott  
James Gillespie  
Mike Grahn  
Terry King  
Sue Marshall  
Carol Tan  
Jenny Weinstein  
Barbara Willerton

The new LINK executive will come into office from January 2012 following elections on November 16th. Chair and other key roles will be decided in December.



### Irene Stands Down

LINK executive members were sad to say goodbye to Irene Storer who has been a member since LINK's inception. Irene's 10 years of PPI involvement began on the Community Health Council. She was on the board of the PCT and she will continue her role on the Board of Queen Mary's hospital.



### **Mixed sex accommodation for psychiatric intensive care to be replaced at Springfield**

The SW London and St. George's MH Trust is currently consulting on proposals to provide high quality single sex accommodation for the relatively small number of patients each year who require intensive psychiatric care. This will mean providing one specialist ward on the Springfield site and purchasing specialist women's services from a nearby MH Trust. LINK welcomes a long awaited improvement in quality of this service but has asked that family carers receive support with travel to visit their relative.

### **What does 'quality' mean in Adult Social Care?**

Ten service users and carers from all service groups were asked by Adult Social Services to help them decide how they can check that services are providing the quality that people expect. LINK is supporting this initiative so please let us know your views about information you would like about quality of Adult Services.

### **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Consultation**

The JSNA sets out the key priorities on which all Wandsworth health and care providers should base their service delivery plans. Priorities include reducing obesity in school children and preventing falls for older people. Full details of the JSNA can be found at <http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/jsna>

### **Mental Health Trust Application Trust delayed because of CQC Findings**

SW London and St. George's Mental health Trust need to improve their performance in key areas before they can proceed with their Foundation Trust application. These include:

#### **Involvement of users**

People who use services are not being enabled to express their views and make decisions about their care, treatment and support.

#### **Legal rights**

Patients have not been assured of their full legal rights under the Mental Health Act.

#### **Care Planning**

Planning and delivery of care has not been sufficiently person centred.

### **Outrage following closure of Barnes Hospital Ward with no consultation or communication**

Service users and carers were extremely upset when Sheen ward at Barnes Hospital was closed and patients transferred to Tolworth with no prior notice or consultation.

Social Services and other stakeholders, including LINKs expressed their dismay at a meeting held on 25th October because the closure had not been communicated to key partners. The Trust has instigated a Serious Incident Investigation and has postponed stakeholder meetings while they review their strategy.

### **User Involvement Play Devon Marston of Sound Minds is working on a play about the importance of user involvement.**

## Events: December to February

Event	Provider	Date & Time	Location
Executive Committee meeting with NHS Wandsworth (closed to public)	Wandsworth LINK/NHS Wandsworth	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2011 6.30pm-8.00pm	Wimbledon Bridge House, Wimbledon, SW19
Executive Committee & Host team meeting (closed to public)	Wandsworth LINK/ Wandsworth Care Alliance	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2011 6.00pm-8.00pm	Balham Park Surgery, Balham, SW17
Festive Voluntary and Community Forum	Lifetimes	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2011 14.00– 16.30 pm	TBC–on booking. 020-8875 2843
<b>Wandsworth Care Alliance (HOST) – office closure Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2011 – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012</b>			
Roehampton Heritage Guide	Wandsworth Older People Forum/Wandsworth Council	9 <sup>th</sup> January – 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	Various Locations around Roehampton
Adult Care & Health Overview Scrutiny Committee	Wandsworth Council	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2012 7.30pm-9.30pm	Wandsworth Town Hall, Wandsworth, SW18
Help a blind person information event	Pocklington Trust	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2012 1.30pm-3.30pm	Pocklington Resource Centre, SW12
Executive Committee meeting (open to public)	Wandsworth LINK	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2012 6.00pm-8.30pm	TBC
Dear Blind Awareness Day	Pocklington Trust	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2012 12.00pm-3.00pm	Pocklington Resource Centre, SW12
Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership meeting	Wandsworth Council	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2012 7.00pm-8.30pm	Wandsworth Town Hall, Wandsworth, SW18

*STORM continuous classes currently running: JOB shop, every Thursday between 10.00am-3.00pm and Off the Streets Youth Club, every Friday 6.00pm-11.00pm (020 7498 0311)*

*Numeracy and Literacy Course throughout January– call 020 7498 0311 for more details.*

*SOUND MINDS courses coming up after Christmas: Recording Audio Level 2 and Preparing for Ward Visiting Level 2 (020 7207 1786)*

*POCKLINGTON TRUST community based low vision clinic (020 8675 4246)*

### **Better Service Better Value - Maternity tweetchat**

*Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 15:00-16:00. Use the #BSBV hashtag to follow and take part in a Q&A about maternity services in south west London. All of the feedback gathered will be used to inform the Better Services Better Value review.*



@NHSSWLondon #BSBV

*New Wandsworth Diabetes Patient Group if interested in attending, please contact Colin Smith - [Colin.Smith@wpct.nhs.uk](mailto:Colin.Smith@wpct.nhs.uk)*

*The Alzheimer's Society South West London provides support and information for people with dementia and their carers living in the boroughs of Wandsworth, Richmond and Kingston. Services include home visits or telephone advice; support groups for people with dementia and carers, dementia cafes, a regular newsletter, dementia training for carers and an information and signposting service. **For further information, please call us on 020 88770033, or write to Alzheimer's Society South-West London, 241 Garratt Lane, SW18 4DU. Our national helpline is also available on 0845 300 0336.***



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