



Newsletter

Local Voice in Health and Social Care

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2010 ISSUE



Hackney LINK warns government proposals will undermine NHS



Speakers Dot Gibson, Patrick Vernon, Malcolm Alexander and Meg Hillier MP at the Hackney LINK public meeting

HACKNEY LINK has warned local people that the government's health White Paper could damage and undermine the NHS.

A public meeting organised by the LINK heard criticism of the government's recent NHS White Paper from a range of speakers including Hackney MP Meg Hillier, Patrick Vernon from the Afiya Trust and Dot Gibson from the National Pensioners Convention.

The LINK argues that the government's proposal to transfer responsibility for purchasing services from primary care trusts to groups of GP practices will harm the doctor-patient relationship, reduce accountability to patients and require the use of expensive consultancy services and private healthcare companies.

The LINK members argued against the transfer of taxpayers' money to such companies and claimed the government has no mandate for privatisation from the recent election.

A statement was read out reporting that at a joint meeting of about 60 City and Hackney

GPs there was almost unanimous condemnation of the Health White Paper.

The LINK now hopes to get local people to write to their GPs, as well as to their MPs and councillors, urging opposition to the proposals.

Malcolm Alexander, Chair of Hackney LINK, said the LINK wanted to lead the local response to the White Paper by bringing together MPs, councillors, the voluntary sector and the general public.

"There are concerns that this White Paper puts the National Health Service at considerable risk. We don't want to wake up one day and find that our healthcare has gone to the private sector and that the NHS has been left as nothing more than a brand name. That's why we need to organise a powerful response now. We must ensure that the NHS is fully accountable to patients and the public and is focused on their needs, not the need to make profits out of healthcare. We must form a powerful alliance with local community organisations, doctors and the general public to persuade the government to withdraw their harmful plans for the NHS."

Concern over Barts and The London NHS Trust's responses to patient safety alerts

HACKNEY LINK has expressed concern about a report indicating that as of 7 June 2010 Barts and The London NHS Trust had failed to confirm compliance with 19 patient safety alerts issued to NHS trusts by the National Patient Safety Agency.



NHS trusts are supposed to report to a Central Alert System when the actions recommended by the alerts have been implemented. Implementation of such actions by the given deadlines was one of the 'core standards' set by the Department of Health.

The charity Action

Against Medical Accidents (AvMA) has found out through a Freedom of Information Act request which trusts had failed to confirm as of 7 June 2010 that they had complied with alerts for which the deadline had passed.

Its report indicates that 29 out of the approximately 400 trusts in England had failed to confirm compliance with 10 or more alerts.

Barts and The London NHS Trust had failed to confirm that it had complied with 19 alerts, making it joint fifth worst in terms of the number of alerts outstanding.

The report 'Implementation of Patient Safety Alerts' was published on 13 August 2010 by the charity Action Against Medical Accidents and can be found on the charity's website by going to <http://www.avma.org.uk/>.

Improvement at the Homerton

We reported in our last newsletter on an earlier AvMA report indicating that as of 29 December 2009 the Homerton had failed to confirm compliance with 10 patient safety alerts for which the deadline had passed.

In a reply of 12 March 2010 to a letter from the LINK the hospital had failed to identify two alerts for which it had still not confirmed compliance. The LINK had therefore sent a follow-up letter asking it to do so.

In the absence of a response to this follow-up letter the LINK obtained the information itself by submitting a Freedom of Information Act request directly to the National Patient Safety Agency. The LINK then received a letter from the Homerton containing an apology for its failure to reply to the follow-up letter and an explanation of what was being done about the alerts.

The Homerton has now improved its performance on this issue and is keeping the LINK informed about what it is doing.

Transformation of Adult Social Care Focus Group

THE LINK has been offered places on 6 boards looking at the transformation of adult social care so that service users will be able to influence the way personalisation is developed and implemented in Hackney.

The focus group is being run in partnership with Disability Backup and will discuss what service users want from the transformation agenda. All adult social care service users and carers welcome to these meetings. See the events calendar for dates.

Concern over local NHS spending on consultancy services

HACKNEY LINK has expressed concern about the news that the local primary care trust, NHS City and Hackney, spent £4.2m on consultancy services last year.

The £4.2m figure represents £18.80 per head of the population and is equivalent to the cost of about 125 nurses. It makes the trust the tenth highest spender on consultancy

services out of around 150 primary care trusts in England.

The figures for expenditure on consultancy services by primary care trusts and strategic health authorities are from the Department of Health and were reported in the national media on 21 August.

Leading health campaigner to chair Hackney LINK

HACKNEY LINK has elected leading health campaigner Malcolm Alexander as its Chair for the coming year.

Malcolm already chairs NALM, the national body representing Local Involvement Network (LINK) members across the country, and until recently chaired the patients' watchdog for the London Ambulance Service.

He has been an active campaigner for the rights of patients and the public in the NHS for over 20 years.

After working as a microbiologist investigating hospital acquired

infection he became Chief Officer of Southwark Community Health Council and then Director of the Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales. Community Health Councils were responsible for public involvement in the NHS from 1974 to 2003.

As the founder of 'Casualty Watch', a regular survey of waiting times in accident and

emergency departments, he embarrassed successive governments with revelations of long waiting times for emergency care.

The LINK has also elected Shirley Murgraff and Maureen Ford as its two Vice-Chairs.



Newly elected LINK Chair Malcolm Alexander with outgoing Chair Ida Scoullos following his election

Shirley is a lifelong Hackney resident and former teacher who has campaigned in a variety of community organisations on health issues and issues affecting older people. She was the first Chair of Hackney LINK and was a founder member and Chair of City and Hackney Older People's Reference Group.

Maureen has lived in Hackney for 30 years and is a business graduate, counsellor and race awareness trainer. She is disabled and a carer of an Alzheimer's sufferer and another adult with multiple disabilities. She is also an elected representative of Hackney churches on the Diocesan Synod of the Church of England.

Death by indifference – could it happen again?

DENISE Reid, a new member of the Hackney LINK Steering Group, writes about an ombudsmen's investigation into the deaths of six people with learning disabilities.

A report entitled 'Death by indifference', published by the learning disability charity Mencap in 2007, led to a major investigation by the Health Service and Local Government Ombudsmen into the treatment of six people with learning disabilities who died in NHS or local authority care.

In four of the six cases the ombudsmen concluded that the person concerned was treated less favourably for reasons relating to their learning disabilities.

The Ombudsmen said: "we are still left

with an underlying concern that similar failures to those identified in the investigations will occur again – and indeed may be occurring today in services provided or commissioned by NHS bodies and councils across the country".

The problems of service planning and delivery that were highlighted by the Ombudsmen included

- lack of empathy;
- lack of understanding;
- lack of leadership;
- no one taking personal responsibility;
- failure to take a proactive approach to problem solving.

Several public bodies were said to have failed to live up to human rights principles.



Join Hackney LINK

Individuals and voluntary organisations can become a member of Hackney LINK for free and get more involved in changing how health and adult social care services are run in Hackney. Registration is easy, just visit our website or ring the office.

Hackney LINK Forum

Visit our forum to post and reply to topics. The forum can be visited at: www.hackneylink.org.uk/forum

facebook

Visit our Facebook page and become a fan of Hackney LINK. Details are on the home page of the Hackney LINK website.

Hackney LINK videos on YouTube

YouTube

Visit our YouTube page to view videos created by Hackney LINK. It can be accessed from the home page of the Hackney LINK website.

Events for your calendar

STEERING GROUP

Hackney LINK Steering Group Meeting

Venue: Hackney LINK, Unit A (First Floor), Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ

- **Thursday 4th November 2010 2:00pm - 4:00pm**
- **Thursday 2nd December 2010 2:00pm - 4:00pm**

WORKING GROUPS

Primary Care Working Group

Venue: Hackney LINK, Unit A (First Floor), Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ

- **Thursday 11th November 2010 10:00am - 11:30am**

Adult Social Care Working Group

Venue: Hackney LINK, Unit A (First Floor), Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ

- **Tuesday 26th October 2010 1:00pm - 3:00pm**
- **Tuesday 30th November 2010 1:00pm - 3:00pm**

Transformation of Adult Social Care Focus Group

Venue: Hackney LINK, Unit A (First Floor), Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ

- **Tuesday 19th October 2010 1:30pm - 3:30pm**
- **Tuesday 23rd November 2010 1:00pm - 3:00pm**
- **Tuesday 14th December 2010 3:00pm - 5:00pm**

TRAINING

Hackney LINK Training Session: Effective Representation

Venue: Hackney LINK, Unit A (First Floor), Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ

- **Wednesday 27th October 2010 11:00am - 3:00pm**

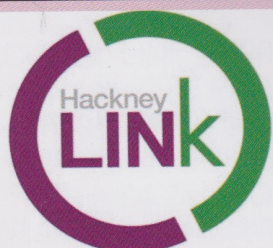
EVENT

Launch of the *Hackney LINK Bigger, Brighter, Better? Report*

The LINK has surveyed GPs across Hackney for their views on the plans for the reconfiguration of GP practices. Our report reveals surprising results.

Venue: Hackney LINK, Unit A (First Floor), Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ

- **Wednesday 20th October 2010 12:30pm - 2:30pm**



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