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NALM Annual General Meeting April 2nd 2009

1) Publicising LINKs

This NALM AGM notes with great concern the tragedies that occurred at Stafford General Hospital and the inadequate action taken by the NHS in response to public concern. The AGM calls upon the Secretary of State for Health to make known the existence of LINKs through a national advertising campaign so that members of the public can obtain support and advice when NHS and local authority services are believed to be failing.

PROPOSER

Bene Afolabi - Havering LINK

SECONDER

Ruth Marsden - East Riding of York LINK

2) Funding of LINKs

This NALM AGM notes with concern that many LINKs are not receiving adequate funds to carry out their activities. The AGM instructs the Steering Group to lead a national campaign to ensure that LINKs budgets match their responsibilities to effectively monitor health and social care services.

PROPOSER

Bene Afolabi - Havering LINK

SECONDER

Ruth Marsden

3) Indemnity

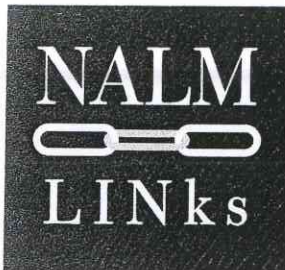
This NALM AGM calls upon the Government to indemnify all members of LINKs carrying out agreed activities on behalf of their LINK, including enter and view, monitoring and inspection of NHS and social care services.

PROPOSER

Malcolm Alexander - Hackney LINK

SECONDER

Ruth Marsden - East Riding of York LINK



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4) Prioritising Healthcare Standards

This NALM AGM agrees to prioritise four of the 'healthcare standards' for national focus and action by LINKs in 2009-10 and to coordinate national responses to the Care Quality commission on these prioritised standards.

PROPOSER
Andrew McCabe

SECONDER
Shirley Murgraff

5) Polyclinics

This first NALM AGM of LINKs and LINKs members, welcomes the purpose intended by the proposal to create polyclinics. It cannot be justified to concentrate even the simplest services used by general practitioners in hospitals serving larger and larger areas, if polyclinics can provide more effective and more local service provision.

PROPOSER
Michael English - Lambeth LINK

SECONDER

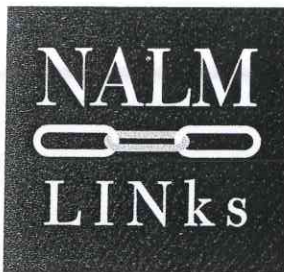
6) Regulation of Ambulance Services

This NALM AGM calls upon the Care Quality Commission to regulate emergency ambulance services and patients transport services provided by independent providers.

PROPOSER
Joseph Healy - Southwark LINK

SECONDER
Ruth Marsden - East Riding of York LINK

7) Access to dentists



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The NALM AGM calls upon the Government to implement the promise made in 1999 that everyone would have easy access to an NHS dentist.

PROPOSER

Emmerson Walgrove - Bradford LINK

SECONDER

Ruth Marsden - East Riding of York LINK

8) Disclosure of information from complaints

This NALM AGM calls upon the Departments of Health and Local Government/Communities, Strategic Health Authorities, Monitor and the National Patients Safety Agency, to support the public disclosure of anonymised details of complaints and patients safety issues and any recommendations made in respect of these events, for each PCT, NHS Trust, Foundation Trust and local authority.

PROPOSER

Andrew McCabe

SECONDER

Bene Afolobi

9) Commissioning of social care

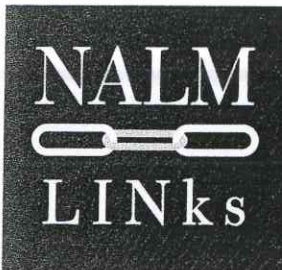
This NALM AGM notes with dismay the lack of real involvement of patients, users and the public in social-care commissioning and instructs the Steering Group to work with ADASS (The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) to negotiate for the involvement of LINK at all levels and stages of the commissioning cycle.

PROPOSER

Ruth Marsden - East Riding of Yorks LINK

SECONDER

10) Access to care homes



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This NALM AGM is concerned that only 'public areas' of social care establishments are open to monitoring by LINKs' members and instructs the Steering Group to work with the Care Quality Commission to overcome this limitation on LINKs by developing and undertaking joint visiting programmes.

PROPOSER

Ruth Marsden - East Riding of York LINK

SECONDER

Emmerson Walgrove - Bradford LINK

11) Personal budgets

This NALM AGM notes with concern the implementation of 'personal budgets' and the impact this may have on equality of access to social care services.

PROPOSER

Pat Bottrill - North Tyneside LINK

SECONDER

Hilda Bell - North Tyneside LINK

12) Human Rights

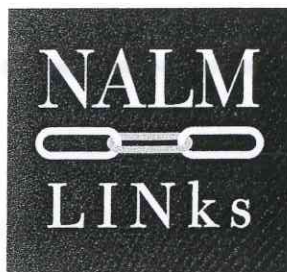
This NALM AGM instructs the Steering Group to work with the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights and with national voluntary sectors organisations, to promote awareness and training in implementation of the Human Rights Act and the Disability Discrimination Act amongst LINKs members.

PROPOSER

Kenneth Jones - Wakefield LINK

SECONDER

13) Communications between LINKs



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This NALM AGM notes with concern that inter-LINK communication is hampered by lack of transparency as to the identity of LINK Chairs (lead), and instructs the Steering Group to request all Local Authorities and Hosts to place the name of the Chair (lead) of the LINK/s in their area in the public domain

PROPOSER

Andrea Darrington - North Yours LINK

SECONDER

Ruth Marsden - East Riding of Yorks LINK

14) Independence of LINKs

This NALM AGM believes that key objective of NALM should be:

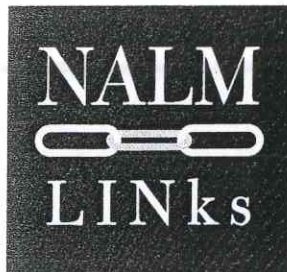
-the maintenance of the independence of each LINK, from the Department of Health, Local Authorities and those NHS Organisations that their remit requires them to scrutinise, as this is fundamental to their objective of securing the delivery of improved Health and Social Care

-to encourage LINKs to work together, at both Regional and National levels to achieve this objective so that the powers given to LINKs by Parliament be concentrated to make the exercise of those powers greater than the sum of the parts, and in particular when Commissioning and/or Service Delivery is pan Regional(s) or influenced by National policies

-to promote coordinated working arrangements that include delegated Representative Powers and which are conducted by Organisations created by, and democratically controlled by, LINKs members.

Conference notes the emerging forces that could threaten the objectives and, in particular:

-the efforts of The London Development Centre, an organisation funded by London NHS and the Dept of Health, which declares itself on its website to be 'accountable to London NHS, to establish, in the London Region, separate Networks of Chairs, Hosts and Local authority LINKs Leads



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-that the LDC seeks to encourage LINKs to sign up to Protocols which are said to have the benefit of guiding relationships with NHS Trusts and Social Care Authorities but which can be seen to be restrictive of LINK Freedom to Act and so limiting of the independent exercise of the LINK remit

-that the LDC has declared that participants in its proposed Networks do not have any representative role in respect of LINKs and/or Health and Social Care policies

Accordingly Conference declares that such proposed Networks in London or elsewhere, cannot possibly provide the independent, pan Region coordination, of the exercise of the LINK remit; and, particularly that in respect of LINKs scrutiny of Healthcare and Social Care Commissioning, and Provision, when that is wider than a single LINK area, which coordination it believes to be necessary to make the outcome of LINK activity a potent force in influencing National and Regional policies.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Steering Group:

-to warn LINK Members of the risks of engaging with Organisations, funded by those whom they have a duty to scrutinise, in respect of preserving the Autonomy and Independence of their local LINK

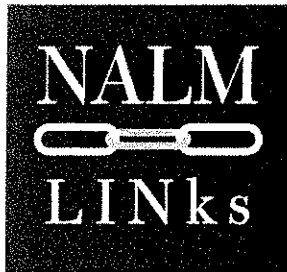
-to warn LINKs Members to be wary of influences bearing down on their Host from Host Networks of which they may be unaware

-to advise LINKs Members to be wary of centrally initiated Protocols and to examine such proposals closely, since they are likely to be designed to limit a LINKs Freedom to Act rather than to enhance it

-to advise against involvement in a Protocol unless the LINK itself wishes to enter into one because it has itself identified benefits

-to build a national picture of centrally initiated and funded endeavours in respect of both Regional Networks and proposed Protocols advising Members of their findings and conclusions in respect of similarity, if any

-not to enter into this kind of engagement itself as an alternative to establishing bottom up, local LINKs funded, Organisations, which it should help to facilitate in every Region



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-to seek recognition of itself as the Network Voice of local LINKs, as against that of any other Charity or Organisation that might be more preferable to the Department of Health and to be wary of becoming a Member of any such Organisation and becoming subsumed by it.

PROPOSER

Barry Silverman - Southwark LINK

SECONDER

Martin Saunders - Southwark LINK