



Health Select Committee

4th October 2006

Report from the Director of Policy & Regeneration

Wards Affected:
ALL

DoH Consultation: “A stronger local voice” -Development of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) and Future of Public Patient Involvement Forums (PPIFs)

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the recent Department of Health (DoH) consultation on the future of public and patient engagement and the development of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs).
- 1.2 The report includes a copy of the joint response to the consultation, forwarded by Brent Council and Brent teaching Primary Care Trust.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the committee consider how the LINKs are developed locally.
- 2.2 That a time limited working group is set up to consider how LINKs could relate to both the Council structure and the Health and Social Care Partnership Board of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). This group would comprise Councillors, partners, and current PPIF members, with support from officers in Policy & Regeneration and Housing & Community Care.
- 2.3 That the committee consider this issue in relation to its work programme for 2006/7 and the current legislative timescale within which these reforms will be introduced.

3.0 Detail

3.1 *Public and Patient Involvement Forums (PPIFs)*

PPIFs were introduced under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 (Part 1, Section 11) - *The duty to involve and consult* (commenced on the 1 January 2013).

PPI Forums have statutory powers to:

- Obtain the views of local communities about health services and making recommendations and reports.
- Forward recommendations on the range and “day to day” delivery of health services.
- Influence the design of, and access, to NHS services.
- Provide advice and information to patients and their carers about services.

3.2 A Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum was established for every NHS Trust and Primary Care Trust (PCT) in England. The Forums comprised local volunteers who represent local opinion and influence decisions around local healthcare delivery. Each PPI Forum is supported by a local Forum Support Organisation.

3.3 In February 2006 an expert panel was established to review patient and public involvement, following the publication of the DoH White Paper “Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services”. The panel’s final recommendations were used to shape the proposals for future direction.

3.4 The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) and patient forums will be abolished and local involvement networks (LINKs) will be established for every local authority area with social services responsibilities.

3.5 The duties to involve and consult will be simplified and strengthened. There will be a new duty placed on commissioners to respond to what patients and the public have said.

3.6 *Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)*

The current review “*A stronger local voice*” sets out the Government’s vision for public involvement within the changing landscape of health and social care provision. The creation of LINKs is an attempt to improve and formalise patient/public input in the planning, development, and commissioning of services.

The LINKs proposals seek to:

- Create an independent voice at a local level in commissioning health and care services, assessing the quality of services provided and in the regulation of the health and social care system.

- Provide flexible ways for communities to engage with health and social care organisations in ways that best suit the communities and the people in them.
- Create a strengthened system of user involvement and promote public accountability in health and social care.
- Allow for a stronger user voice in regulation and in the regulation of involvement.

3.7 The introduction of LINKs is reliant on the introduction of new legislation, as parliamentary time allows.

4.0 Joint response from Council and Brent tPCT

4.1 The Council and tPCT have responded to the consultation within the set deadline of 7th September 2006. The review of the council's overview and scrutiny structures and the delayed appointment of Chairs has limited member input to date.

4.2 Internal discussions have taken place within Brent Council, the Policy and Regeneration Unit, Housing & Community Care, and the Head of Brent tPCT Patient and Public Involvement.

4.3 The Carers Priority Action Group, a multi agency of carers, voluntary sector organisations, and the NHS provided comments on the response. The document was also discussed at the Housing and Community Care Department Management Team in August. The joint response is based on these discussions.

4.4 A joint project group has been set up (Housing & Community Care & Policy & Regeneration Unit) initially to develop the strategic framework and consult locally with agencies about how the LINK will be developed in Brent. This may broaden once more details are provided by Government and could be used to support a working group of this committee.

4.5 The joint response appears in this report as **Appendix (A)**.

5.0 Future LINKs Structure

5.1 The process of appointment for LINKs members will be determined locally. LINKs will need to be inclusive and involve user groups, local voluntary and community sector organisations and interested individuals. There should be scope for involving children and young people and opportunities for existing patient forum members to get involved alongside a more diverse range of people and organisations.

5.2 Local authorities will be allocated a resource (Local Involvement Fund) to consult with local organisations such as voluntary and community groups and identify the most appropriate arrangements. A "Host" will be selected by the Council to service the LINK within the borough area.

- 5.3 The development of the LINK will necessarily have to be within the context of the Local Strategic Partnership's Health and Social Care Partnership Board and the Council's Overview & Scrutiny structure (**see Appendix B&C**)

Appendix (A) "*Brent Council and & Brent teaching Primary Care Trust – Joint response to consultation*", 7th September, 2006.

Appendix (B) Diagram "*LSP/Health and Social Care Partnership Board Structure*", September 2006.

Appendix (C) Diagram "*Overview and Scrutiny Structure 2006/7*", September 2006.

Background Papers*

**Available on request*

"A stronger local voice: A framework for creating a stronger local voice in the development of health and social care services", Department of Health, July 2006- Information document.

"Concluding the review of patient and public involvement recommendations to ministers from expert panel", Department of Health, May 2006.

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