

Appendix 2

Hestia Housing and Support

Brent Local Involvement Network (Brent LINK): An Update Report

1. Hestia Housing and Support

Hestia Housing & Support is a registered charity, established in 1970. Our vision is Empowering People, Changing Lives and our mission is to provide high quality services in partnership with users and local communities.

Hestia provides a range of support services to socially excluded groups, including people with mental health needs, young parents, people with substance misuse problems, offenders, people with disabilities and Black and Minority Ethnic groups. Hestia is a pan-London organisation working in 17 London boroughs, but predominantly in West London.

Hestia's services include Approved Premises, Registered Care, Supported Housing, Floating Support, Outreach and Community Development. We are also the LINK Host organisation for Ealing, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham.

This report summarises some of the key milestones we have achieved in supporting the establishment of an inclusive Local Involvement Network, which can serve the interests of all in the borough of Brent.

2. An Introduction to Local Involvement Networks

The Brent Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a community led network of individuals and third sector groups that will enable people to have a stronger say in how local health and social care services are commissioned and delivered.

The legislation outlining the creation of LINKs is contained within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007 (Chapter 28) with further additions outlined in the Statutory Instruments 2008 (no. 528.) These outline the remit of the LINK and the steps that must be taken before the LINK can be launched.

The remit of the Brent LINK includes:

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services
- Enabling people to monitor the standard of provision of local health and social care services

- Obtaining the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local health and social care services
- Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved to people responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local services

Hestia Housing and Support's role as the Host organization of the Brent LINK is to facilitate the work that the people involved in the LINK want to do. This includes but is not limited to:

- Capacity building and training of LINK participants in order to allow them to carry out the work of the LINK
- Working with the voluntary sector and community to promote and enable participation in the LINK
- Acting as a point of contact for the public, service providers and commissioners
- Carrying out effective administration of the LINK including writing reports and letters on behalf of the LINK
- Financial management of resources
- Servicing meetings and facilitating workshops

3. Host Team Infrastructure

Hestia took responsibility as the permanent Host organisation on the 1st of December 2008. The work of the Interim Host, Community Investors Development Agency (CIDA) has been successfully transferred. The official handover of information took place on 11th December 2008.

3.1 Host Staffing

We have a skilled and experienced Host staff team in place. The team is comprised of:

Name	Position	Start Date
Lauretta Johnnie	LINK Host Coordinator	11 th December 08
Divya Patel	Development Officer	28 th January 09
Carol Sealy	Administrator	1 st April 09

Hestia has also created a Head of Community Engagement post to provide a strategic overview of all community engagement projects run by Hestia, including the Brent LINK.

3.2 Host Office

The Host team is located at Unit 56, The Designworks, Park Parade London, NW10 4HT. The Host team local office infrastructure – IT, furniture, equipment, petty cash, insurance etc. is all in place. The office is open for participants to use if they need.

4. Advertising and Promotion of the Local Involvement Network

We have used a variety of methods to spread the word about the Brent LINK. The following examples detail some of the ways in which information has been disseminated throughout the borough:

- Design and print of Brent LINK leaflets
- Production of promotional material for public events
- Flyers to all libraries
- Flyers to all hospitals, dentists, doctors surgeries and health centres in the borough
- Distributed information to shops and businesses
- Mailouts to members of the public
- Press release to local press
- Article in Age Concern and BrAVA Newsletter
- Information about Brent LINK on websites
- Face to face consultation on the street and at events
- Advertisement about a public event in a national ethnic minority newspaper
- Sent information out through council and voluntary databases
- Design and distribution of first Brent LINK newsletter to participants & the wider public
- Meeting with local radio stations

As well as the above, the Brent LINK Host team has been visiting groups, attending conferences and making presentations at a number of different events and meetings across the borough. Meetings with key voluntary sector organisations include:

- Met with the CEO BrAVA – Brent Voluntary Action discussed areas of collaboration and how to feed into the LSP
- Brent Association of Disabled People the CEO is interested in having a representative on the Brent LINK Management Committee
- Mosaic LGBT Youth (Kilburn Youth Centre)
- Brent Heart of Gold
- Association of Muslims with disabilities
- Age Concern
- Nubian Life

5. Sign Up of New Participants

We have over 80 newly signed up participants to the Brent LINK since we took over as the Host organisation and have reached out to many more people through our outreach work and public events. We have also met with statutory and voluntary agencies that have expressed an interest to become involved.

6. Public Events

We have facilitated public events to develop and promote awareness of the LINK. These include:

- A **Public Information Day** on the 18th February at the Patidar Centre, London Road, Wembley. This event was organised by the LINK Host team in partnership with LB Brent, NHS Brent, Age Concern, Brent Association of Disabled People and BrAVA. Over 75 people attended on the day, to gain more information on the Brent LINK and participate in some of the 4 workshops available.
- **Two public information events** on Tuesday 3rd March at Willesden Green Library Centre and Wednesday 4th March at the Willesden Clinic in partnership with Nubian Life.

7. Working with Service Providers and Commissioning Agencies

The Brent LINK Host team have worked to build relationships and strategic representation in the borough for the LINK. We have been in regular contact with a number of leads within the Local Authority and NHS Brent to define opportunities for the LINK to be represented and work with existing structures in Brent including:

- Owen Thompson from Brent Local Authority and the consultation team
- Chair of NHS Brent and other non-executive directors. The Chair is keen to set up regular contact between Brent LINK and NHS Brent
- The Acute Services Review Project Board (NHS Brent)
- Representation at the Patient and Public Engagement Steering group. This group wish to have a member of the LINK Management Committee on their group when elected
- Marco Inzani – PPI Lead NHS Brent, to look at areas of collaboration
- Participating in a meeting with NHS Brent, Brent Council and PALS to discuss priorities, areas of joint work, synergies and collaboration
- Meetings with NWLH Patient & Public Involvement & Partnership Committee
- Meeting with NICE (National Institute of Clinical and Health Excellence) Public Involvement team to discuss joint working protocols

8. Working with the Interim Stakeholders Committee

The Brent LINK Interim Stakeholders Committee was set up by the interim Host organisation to help set up the Brent LINK. Since becoming the permanent Host organisation, Hestia has developed this group by helping them:

- Define and agree their Terms of Reference

- Widen their representation to include new voluntary sector and community groups
- Facilitate bi-weekly meetings, including a Fact Finding Meeting 19th December 2008 to illicit information about the progress and aspirations of the LINK
- Invite guest speakers from statutory bodies to their meetings
- Decide and agree on the LINK Governance procedures
- Start to address current issues in health and social care based on community concerns

9. Governance Structures and Procedures of the LINK

Through bi-weekly meetings the Brent LINK Interim Stakeholders Committee have developed and agreed the Governance Procedures for the Brent LINK. A signed copy of the documents has been sent to Owen Thompson, Head of Consultation at Brent Local Authority. The governance we have developed in consultation with our participants covers all of the areas required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, including:

- A comprehensive set of rules outlining the decision making procedures of the Brent LINK
- Procedures for determining how the Brent LINK's resources will be spent
- Procedures for holding public and special interest meetings
- A procedure for the formation of special interest standing committees and working groups
- An equality and diversity statement
- Procedures defining the election process of Management Committee and the voting process
- The procedure for selecting and authorising representatives of the LINK to enter and view health and social care service premises
- A procedure for dealing with conflicts of interest
- A confidentiality procedure
- Terms of reference and role descriptions for members of the Management Committee and other LINK participants
- A code of conduct for LINK participants
- A procedure for dealing with breaches in procedure

10. Key Issues Identified and Being Addressed

Since taking over the Host contract, we have also been providing bi-weekly meetings to allow the Interim LINK Stakeholders Committee to discuss their concerns and priorities about health and social care in the borough. We have been facilitating the dialogue of the group using a technique called Open Space Technology. This facilitative technique encourages individuals to take charge of the issues and plan for quick action.

So far the Interim Stakeholder Committee has identified as key concerns:

- The proposed changes to charges for day care, re-enablement care and sheltered care. The group has worked in partnership with Brent Age Concern to facilitate the gathering of feedback on this issue from the public, researched the Local Authority and national guidelines on consultation and has written to the Local Authority
- Improving access to provision of home improvement equipment for homeowners (older people, disabled people and vulnerable people)
- Establishing long-term advocacy services relating to health and social care service access and provision for vulnerable groups in Brent

11. Training and Capacity Building

We aim to support the learning and development of our Brent LINK participants by creating a rolling programme of training and public education to keep them up to date with current developments and empower them to make change happen. Training we have offered to LINK participants so far has included:

- Current issues in health and social care – including the duty to involve, individualisation and the Healthcare for London proposals
- Public accountability, decision making and planning processes within LINKs
- The commissioning cycle – including World Class Commissioning, the Local Strategic Partnership and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
- Writing reports and influencing change within statutory services

This joint training across Boroughs has enabled participants to liaise with LINK participants in other boroughs across West London. In addition we have been offering one-to-one support to participants on an as and when needed basis.

12. Next Steps

Over the next few weeks we will be carrying out the election of the Brent LINK Management Committee, who will represent the views of Brent LINK members and help coordinate the work of the LINK. The existing Interim Stakeholder Committee will act as the Interim Executive Committee for the LINK while elections are being carried out.

Key Election Dates for 2009 include:

- **Information Seminars** for people considering standing for nomination will be held on the 25th & 30th March
- A **hustings** event on the 22nd April
- **Votes** will be **counted** on the 15th May
- LINK **celebration event** on the 30th May

Further next steps will include:

- Induction of Management Committee members and co-options to the Management Committee to ensure representation of different groups
- Continuing to engage new participants in the Brent LINK and feeding back on actions already taken
- Setting up Standing Committees and Working Groups around different areas of interest
- Continue to strengthen the working relationships with other organisations and groups around working together
- Continue to develop more training for LINK participants including enter and view training for LINK authorised representatives

5. Conclusion

We believe that Brent deserves a LINK that helps to promote excellence in commissioning and service delivery within Brent. We aim to facilitate a LINK that doesn't leave people out, that communicates effectively, that listens to what people have to say and is able to take action, based on community-led evidence and in partnership with everyone in the borough.

We have adopted a facilitative approach to try and create a sustainable LINK in Brent, concentrating on capacity building, promotion of the LINK and building positive working relationships. The Brent LINK has been officially launched, has reached out to new people and has started dealing with issues.

Lauretta Johnnie
Brent LINK Co-ordinator
Hestia Housing and Support

