



**Health Select Committee**  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2010

**Report from the Director of  
Policy & Regeneration**

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Brent Local Involvement Network Annual Report – 2009/10**

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 The Brent Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a member based, community led network of voluntary sector organisations and individuals, which includes residents, service users, businesses and community organisations. The network aims to empower and enable people to have a stronger say in how local health and social care services are commissioned and delivered in the Brent.

1.2 The remit of 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

1.3 By the 30<sup>th</sup> June each year, the LINK has to produce an annual report. The annual report is a useful mechanism for the Health Select Committee to consider the work done by the LINK, and decide whether there any issues that could be followed up by members.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Health Select Committee is recommended to consider the Brent LINK annual report and decide whether it wishes to follow up any issues raised by the LINK in its work programme.

### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) were created to give people an opportunity to influence and change aspects of health and social care in their area. The introduction of LINKs is part of a wider agenda to give communities a stronger local voice. Much of this has been legislated for in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act.
- 3.2 The role of LINKs is to:
- Ask local people what they think about local healthcare services and provide a chance to suggest ideas to help improve services
  - Investigate specific issues of concern to the community
  - Ask for information from health and social care providers and get an answer in a specified amount of time
  - Carry out visits to service providers to check that they are working well (carried out under safeguards)
  - Make reports and recommendations and receive a response from health and social care providers
  - Refer issues relating to health and social care services to the Health Select Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
  - Tell those who commission, run and scrutinise local care services, what local people have recommended to help improve services
- 3.3 LINKs cover most publicly funded health and social care providers, no matter who provides them. One prominent exception is children's social services. To assist LINKs with their work, healthcare commissioners will be expected to provide them with information when it's requested and respond to their reports and recommendations. Social services provided by Brent Council, as well as health services, are subject to scrutiny from the LINK.
- 3.4 Membership of the Brent LINK is drawn from a variety of groups in Brent, but essentially it is an organisation that anyone can join. Hestia Housing and Support is the LINK support organisation and they have an office in Harlesden.
- 3.5 Given that LINKs are in effect, another form of scrutiny and holding to account of health and social care services, it is important that the Health Select Committee and the LINK develop a good working relationship. Presenting the annual report to the Health Select Committee is a useful way for the members to get up to speed on the work of the LINK and also to meet some of the LINK management committee, who will attend the Health Select Committee meeting.
- 3.6 The Health Select Committee also needs to consider its own work programme at the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> July. The LINK annual report raises many issues relating to health services in the borough, that the committee may wish to follow up in 2010/11.

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