

# Warrington LINK Governance Framework





# Warrington LINKs Governance Framework

## Mission Statement/Statement of Values

- *The Warrington LINK is the umbrella organisation which brings together other networks, organisations and individuals in Warrington to enable them to have a voice in improving health and social care services*
- *We do this by working in a collaborative and inclusive way across Warrington taking account of the rich diversity of the people of Warrington and their needs.*

## 1. Structure of LINK

- a. Membership of the LINK - There will be two types of membership :
  - i. Individual Membership which is open to anyone living in Warrington
  - ii. Group Membership which is open to any voluntary group or business organisation which operates in Warrington
  - iii. Membership will remain indefinite, unless the member is expelled from the LINK as a result of their conduct or chooses to leave
- b. Core Group
  - i. With the assistance of the support organisation, Black Health Agency, the function of the Core Group will be to steer the work of the LINK and to support and enable the groups and individuals to carry out the work of the LINK through:
    - Ensuring key local stakeholders are represented and their views considered
    - Allocating resources for the work of the LINK, recognising that there are limited resources within the LINK and that it cannot take on all the work that is required
    - Communicating with the wider community
    - Planning work and allocating resources to support that work
    - Supporting groups to undertake work and take up issues as necessary
    - Supporting groups to produce credible reports which commissioners and providers can use to improve services
    - Approving reports produced by groups on behalf of the LINK
  - ii. Membership of the Core Group
    - Membership will consist of individual health champions and
    - Representatives from voluntary/ community groups



- Membership will cover a wide representation of the community
- Induction training and any other relevant training will be delivered as appropriate
- Terms of Reference will be agreed
- The membership can be reviewed and expanded
- iii. Chair / Vice Chair of the Core Group
  - The process of electing a Chair and Vice Chair or having a rotating chair to be decided by the Core Group
  - If a Chair and Vice Chair is elected, this will be done in a democratic election, involving the wider LINK membership
- iv. Functioning of the Core Group
  - Meetings of the Core Group will be public and the group will be required to meet no less than 3 times a year
    - Papers will be sent out with a weeks notice, and will be in the public domain
    - Draft meeting minutes will be in the public domain 5 days after taking place and Core Group members will be notified of the actions to be carried out
    - Quorum: a minimum of a third of the members must be present for the meeting to be able to make decisions
    - Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM): If members require an extraordinary general meeting this must be held giving three weeks' notice to the full membership
    - Annual General Meeting – AGM will be held once a year, and will include the whole LINK membership. An AGM must have at least 10 members or 10% of the membership present
    -

Via feedback from the wider LINK membership the Core Group will be responsible for prioritising work and establishing sub groups and task groups

#### c. Sub Groups

- i. The Board can set up permanent groups to undertake a programme of work and monitor particular services
- ii. Rules for the running of these groups e.g.
  - Each group must report back to Core Group
  - Each group should have a 'Terms Of Reference' which is agreed by the Core Group
  - The Work Plan of the group is to be agreed by Core Group
  - Any LINK member who wishes to join a group should be free to do so and groups cannot discriminate against members
  - Groups have to conform to the code of conduct of the LINK
  - The Core Group, together with the Support Organisation, will identify what level of support to give each group in terms of organising meetings, taking minutes, supporting work projects etc



- The whole group should meet with the relevant external statutory agencies as necessary

#### d. Task Groups

- i. The core group can authorise temporary groups which will have a time limit to undertake a specific piece of work
- ii. Such groups will need clear terms of reference and timescale for its life span
- iii. Each group should have a Chair to take responsibility for what the group does and this person may be a member of the LINK Board or co-opted to the Core Group for the life of the group
- iv. The Core Group, together with the Support Organisation, will identify what level of support to give each group in terms of organising meetings, taking minute, supporting work projects etc

#### e. Affiliated Organisations

- i. There are also existing groups set up by other agencies which represent particular interests and want to be part of the LINK
- ii. These groups will undertake work that the LINK would have done but does not want to duplicate
- iii. The LINK can work with these groups to ensure that joint objectives of service improvement are achieved. The relationship between the LINK and these other organisations will be determined on a case by case basis

## 2. Work of the LINK

- a. The work of the LINK will be undertaken mainly through the sub groups, task groups and affiliated organisations
- b. The Work Plan to be produced by the Board will allocate resources to allow this work to be undertaken
- c. There are statutory powers the LINK has which will underpin its work
  - i. Question commissioners and providers and receive a response within 20 working days
  - ii. Refer issues to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and get a response within 20 working days
  - iii. Enter and view premises where publicly funded care is being provided and to do this the LINK will
    - Seek people who would be interested to undertake visiting and develop a pool of trained visitors
    - Put in place a training programme for visiting
    - Develop a programme of visiting with reports back to the core group and any other group that would need to know the outcome
    - Report back to relevant providers and commissioners
- d. The LINK will support other organisations to do pieces work but would need to approve any report if the organisation wanted such support from the LINK
- e. The LINK will provide feedback to all participants in any piece of work



- i. The LINK will ensure that relevant work receives publicity and that all reports are put on the LINK website

### **3. Relationships with Statutory Agencies**

- a. Members of the Core Group will meet with a Liaison group from the Local Authority and NHS organisations to inform and discuss forthcoming work planning
- b. Relationships will be established with the OSC and GP Commissioning Consortiums. Formal mechanism will be set up to share information and refer matters
- c. Members of the Core Group, sub groups or task groups will meet with the relevant Local Authority or NHS organisation or private providers to discuss the outcome of any piece of work
- d. Individuals representing the LINK on Trust Boards, Boards of Governors, Overview and Scrutiny Committees are to be appointed by the LINK Board and these individuals will report back to the Core Group

### **4. Relationships with Other Agencies**

- a. All other contacts have to go through the Support Organisation and to Core Group
- b. Anyone who speaks to the press or other outside agency on behalf of the LINK may
  - i. only speak on relevant issues agreed by the Core group and
  - ii. if it has been agreed that this person can speak to the agency concerned (for example where special knowledge or expertise is required)

### **5. Conduct of LINK members**

- a. LINK members must abide by the code of conduct which is based on 'The Seven Principles of Public Life'. This is available from the Support Organisation

### **6. Registering an Interest**

- b. LINK members should declare any information appropriate for inclusion on a Register of Interests and where members have a conflict of interest they should declare it and withdraw from the decision making process. This is to assure the public that Warrington LINK responsibilities are carried out in an impartial and transparent way. Failure to declare conflict of interest is a breach of the Warrington LINK Member Code of Conduct. Any conflict of interest that might be considered to influence a member's actions as a LINK member must be declared to the Link Support Organisation as soon as it arises. The Support Organisation will offer advice and keep the Register of Interests up to date
- c. Simply knowing a Register exists together with this policy, will assure the public and our members that we do not make decisions in a way



- which furthers our own interests and that our responsibilities are carried out clearly and honestly
- d. What is an interest?
- i. The criteria is not whether the member thinks they have an interest to declare but whether another LINK member, or a member of the public would think they have an interest to declare
  - ii. An example of a declarable interest would be one which was of financial benefit, such as a member deciding about care services which they, or a group to which they belong, provide. It would also be knowledge of, or an interest in, another person, such as friends or family members

## 7. Complaints

- a. If there is a complaint about the LINK Support Organisation this will be dealt with through the Support Organisations own complaints procedure
- b. If there is a complaint about the LINK, an individual or a group, this must be made in writing and it will be considered by the Core Group in a private part of the Board meeting. An independent investigation will be arranged of the complaint if required
- c. If there is a complaint about the Chair this must be made in writing to the Vice Chair and it will be considered by the Board in a private part of the Board meeting in the absence of the Chair. The Vice-Chair will arrange for an independent investigation of the complaint if required

## 8. Support Organisation

Black Health Agency is the support organisation for the Warrington LINK. BHA will support the LINK and the work it undertakes. The support team and their staff do not run the LINK, it is the groups, organisations and wider community. BHA will seek to provide help and assistance including:

- a. Provide appropriate materials to carry out the Warrington LINK activities
- b. Advise and support the LINK members in dealing with any difficulties and provide guidance with situations which may be new to them
- c. Provide correct and up to date information, sent in an agreed way and format
- d. Hold meetings or events at an accessible venue at an appropriate and convenient time
- e. Provide appropriate ID, training and CRB checks for those members appointed by the LINK core group for the purpose of entering and viewing premises in accordance with the Local Involvement Network Regulation 2008
- f. Engaging with people and organisations in recruiting members
- g. Communicating the ongoing LINK activities and outcomes to the wider community and statutory organisations and commissioners
- h. Keep the LINK informed on health and social care news, consultations and events



## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

### Policy Statement

The Black Health Agency (BHA) Equality and Diversity Policy covers all aspects of employment (recruitment, selection, training and promotion), procurement and service provision. Its purpose is to affirm BHA's commitment to equality and diversity and makes a clear statement to job applicants, employees, volunteers, Board members, contractors and service users about our expectations in this area.

BHA recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and therefore breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action. BHA is committed to action to ensure equal access to relevant services for the whole population; the eradication of unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities with respect to ethnicity, age, culture, gender, sexuality, mental ability mental health, geographical location, offending background, physical ability, political beliefs, religion, health or status or any other specific factors which result in discrimination.

- BHA as part of this commitment aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and seeks to ensure that equality and diversity principles underpin all areas of the organisation's work and service provision.
- BHA recognises that many people and groups suffer discrimination and face serious barriers when trying to fulfil their true potential. It also recognises that not all forms of unreasonable and unfair discrimination are the subject of legislation. It is the aim of this organisation to take positive steps to redress discrimination, to improve equality of opportunity and to combat any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reasons not directly related to their ability to do a job for BHA or to their eligibility to receive services from us.
- In most cases, it is unlawful to discriminate against people on grounds of gender, pregnancy, race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin, sexuality/sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because they are disabled, married, a member of a trade union, work part time or on a fixed term contract. However, we recognise that people may experience discrimination for many additional social, educational and economic reasons such as their language, health, physical or mental disability, HIV status, caring responsibilities, age, where they live, how they speak and whether they work flexibly. This policy will apply equally to all these circumstances.
- BHA will not tolerate behaviour in the form of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying. Legislation and associated regulations exist to protect employees, and there are a number of policies and procedures in place to support the legislation.

The policy will succeed only with the understanding, support and commitment of everyone involved – management, staff, volunteers and Board Members.