



Carers Issues Working Group Terms of Reference

Direction of Work

The work of the group will support the aims and objectives of Gateshead LINK, which are to improve health and social care in Gateshead.

This will be achieved by:

- Gathering and responding to information on local needs and services.
- Identifying and promoting good practice
- Keeping the local community informed on progress

The specific direction of work of the group will be reported to, and agreed by, the LINK Steering Group.

Code of Conduct

It is expected group members will adhere to the LINK Code of Conduct and agreed LINK policies.

This will include demonstrating commitment to the principle of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, marital status, sexual preference, ethnic origin, disability or religion when undertaking Gateshead LINK activities.

Group remit

The starting point for the working group was determined by the LINK event held in October 2008. The key issues identified are listed below:

1. Carers Assessments – the LINK could monitor how many are actioned by Gateshead Council and monitor progress of the Carers Assessment Review.
2. Advocacy for Carers – LINK to promote the need of this service for Carers – this is a gap that needs to be addressed, not just in relation to Carers Assessment, but other issues that affect Carers. There is also a need to clarify how advocacy is funded and to monitor the progress of the Advocacy Review.
3. Carers Register – LINK to examine how this register is used by GPs – does it influence appointment and treatment times, or are people simply ‘flagged’ as a Carer on the GPs database.
4. Carers Strategy – LINK to monitor that agreed actions from the Carers Strategy are achieved.
5. LINK to promote the Carers Assessment.
6. Direct payments and individual budgets - there appear to be not enough options available in terms of social care.

Work Priority

The initial task for the group is to evidence a particular issue(s) as a priority and to set a work plan to address this priority, as agreed by the Steering Group.

Membership

Any individual or organisation can join a Gateshead LINK Working Group. It is anticipated group members will be registered with Gateshead LINK.

Frequency of meetings

The group will meet every six weeks.

Facilitation / Chairing of the group

The Host organisation will facilitate the group whilst it is setting up. When the group is established a Chair will be selected from the membership. Training will be available to support those who would like to Chair meetings.

Role of the Host organisation

Members should bear in mind a key role of the Host organisation is to support the work of the group. This could include any number of activities: letter writing on behalf of the group; information gathering; researching relevant health and social care documents; planning appointments and interviews; offering guidance on research / consultation methods etc.

Host staff will be in attendance at meetings.

Where there are financial and resource implications for the work the group wishes undertake, Host staff can assist in presenting information to the Steering Group.

Invitations to partner organisations and officers

Under certain circumstances the work of the group may be helped by gaining information from health and social care commissioners and service providers. Host staff can assist with this process. This may involve inviting organisations or agencies to present information to the group and facilitating discussions.

Delegation of responsibility

Specific responsibility can be delegated to members to progress the work of the group. Members should only accept responsibility for pieces of work they feel they have the time and commitment to complete. Host staff will support members with their work, as appropriate. All delegated work must be approved by the Steering Group.

Role of Enter and View

In time, Gateshead LINK will have a number of members who can act as LINK authorised representatives to 'Enter and View' specified health and social care services.

Please be aware of this option, there may be occasions where it is appropriate for the group to utilise 'Enter and View' with Steering Group approval.

Timescales and work plan

Gateshead LINK working groups will have a work plan to guide their work, agreed with the LINK Steering Group. The groups are expected to be time limited, although work objectives will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Membership of the LINK Steering Group

Gateshead LINK Working Groups will have representation on Gateshead LINK Steering Group. The selected group Chair is likely to be the representative, although another group member may be nominated in their absence.

Agreed March 2009