

Hot Topics

This issues LINKs Hot Topics:

Personal Budgets – Have you been through or about to go through the Personal Budgets process? If so we would like to hear about your experiences. We are going to work together with Middlesbrough Council to see if there are any issues and look at how these can be resolved.

Carers – Are you a carer? Are there issues that affect you with regards to health and social care services? Good or bad we would like to hear from you.

If you would like to be a part of either of these groups then please contact the Middlesbrough LINK office on:

Freephone: 0800 141 2642

Textphone: 0752 523 7741

Email: enquiries@middlesbroughlink.org.uk

Freepost: Middlesbrough LINK

We would also like to hear about any issues that you have with health and social care services. We like to hear positive ones as well as negative ones. Your issue could be the next Hot Topic that we are looking into!

**'Hearts & Minds'
Stamp Out Stigma**

Middlesbrough 'Hearts & Minds' are a group of people with experience of mental health issues from communities, the voluntary sector and statutory services. They campaign for better mental health services but also for positive change in attitudes towards mental health. They organised a fantastic event in Middlesbrough Town Centre on 2nd September with Middlesbrough LINK taking part to get the messages out there that we all need to take responsibility as individuals for 3 things: tackling negative attitudes about mental health, accepting mental health as a real issue not to be feared or shunned, and doing what we can to support positive mental health and wellbeing in our communities. We spoke with over 500 people on the day and gave out a massive amount of self-help information on various mental health conditions and advice around what agencies are available locally for support. If you want to get involved with 'Hearts & Minds' and come along to the monthly meetings to help plan and action what we can do in Middlesbrough you would be very welcome. Ring Dawn on 01642 649099 or Lol on 01642 516027.

Personal Budgets event

On the 22nd September Middlesbrough LINK held an event in partnership with Middlesbrough Council to discuss Personal Budgets. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness and widen the knowledge to those who would use them now and in the future.

During the event the people in attendance were split into two groups. They were asked to think about what they would use a Personal Budget for and if they could think of any advantages/disadvantages of Personal Budgets.

Here are some of the questions which were asked on the night.

Q. What's the difference between a Direct Payment and Personal Budget?

A. A Direct Payment is cash in lieu of services and Direct Payments have been available since 1996. A Personal Budget is where all of the services you need are given a cost and you are given the option to continue to use those services, to take money in the form of a Direct Payment or use a combination of these to meet your needs, it is up to you what services you spend the money on, provided your support plan meets your identified needs.

Q. Can people with mental health problems have a Personal Budget?

A. Yes there's no reason why they can't go through the same process.

Q. How does a Personal Budget accommodate people with fluctuating care needs?

A. It is more difficult but you must describe, on application, all of the situations that can arise.



The Personal Budgets event was well attended

Q. Can the Budget be topped up in a crisis situation?

A. Yes, you can ask for a review of the budget at any time.

Q. Can you still use the same services if you change to use a Personal Budget?

A. Yes, if you're happy with the services you currently use.

Q. Will everybody who uses Direct Payments have to change to Personal Budgets?

A. Ultimately anyone who receives care through social care will have it go through Personal Budgets.

Q. What if the Personal Assistant calls in sick?

A. A contingency plan can be put in place where you can request a personal assistant come from an agency.

New publication informs patients and families what standards to expect from the regulation of their NHS hospital



Following the introduction of a new law, all NHS hospitals in England must now be licensed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). To be licensed hospitals must show that they are meeting new essential standards of quality and safety. CQC continuously monitors them to make sure standards are kept or improvement action is taken. Now CQC has published a leaflet which informs patients, their carers and families, what they can expect from the essential standards. The leaflet also explains how important it is that patients or their carers tell the regulator about their experiences, both good and bad, to help CQC make the right decisions. Called 'What standards to expect from the regulation of your NHS hospital' the leaflet can be read or downloaded from the CQC website.

At the same time the CQC website publishes an up-to-date directory of all licensed NHS hospitals. You can now look up the current status of any NHS hospital trust in England.

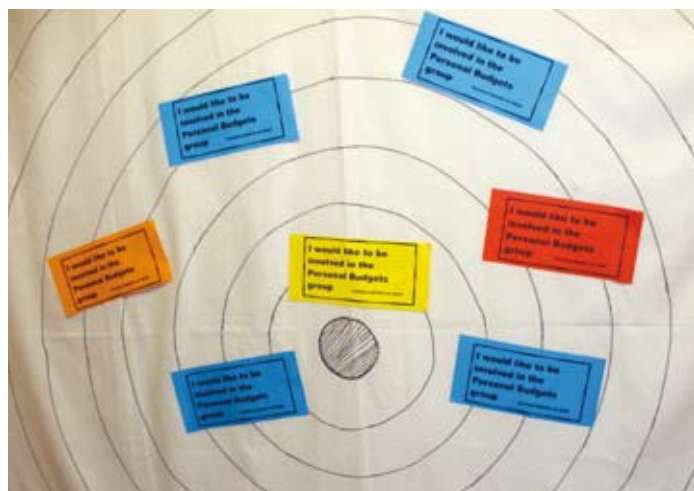
The licensing of NHS hospitals is just the first step in a programme which will see new essential standards of quality and safety gradually rolled out across all health and adult social care services in England. In October this year all adult social care services must be licensed by CQC and providers must demonstrate they are meeting essential standards of quality and safety; so too must all providers of independent healthcare. You can find out more about the programme and how it affects the care you and your family receives by visiting CQC's website at www.cqc.org.uk. Or you can contact the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161.

Q. Is there help throughout the application process?

A. Yes the Personal Budgets team will assist throughout the process

Q. Where do I start in the application process?

A. You first have to put together a Support Plan which outlines what your needs are and how the budget will support your independence in society. Anyone can help you put your support plan together, although it is suggested to use people who know you well and have an understanding of what your needs are. Your support plan then needs to be signed off by your social worker and then submitted to the council for assessment. If you are deemed eligible the budget will be worked out based on your need. Personal Budgets are reviewed on a yearly basis.



The event was well attended with many people wanting to work further with Middlesbrough LINK. If you would like to share your experiences and would like to get involved in a group to look into any issues around Personal Budgets then please contact the LINK office.

Carers Rights Event

Middlesbrough LINK are hosting an event on the 2nd December for Carers Rights Day. If you are a carer and would like some information or help then please come along. This will be a joint event with Middlesbrough Council. If you would like more information please contact the LINK office on:

Freephone: 0800 141 2642

Textphone: 0752 523 7741

Email: enquiries@middlesbroughlink.org.uk

Helping You to Help Yourself

If you are off work, claiming Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance and wondering if you'll ever return to work again, then the Condition Management Programme (CMP) could be for you.

For lots of people it's not just their health condition that makes life hard but the way it makes them feel as well. This is why the Condition Management Programme was launched. Its aim is to help you achieve a fuller and more satisfying life. You can still claim your full benefits whilst taking steps to help you return to work.

What is the Condition Management Programme?

It is a programme of support, delivered by a team of healthcare staff, including nurses, occupational therapists and health psychologists. It is available in local venues and deals with a wide range of conditions.

How will it help me?

The Condition Management Programme can help you to deal with the obstacles that are stopping you from returning to work. It will help you to cope better with your health condition, think positively and improve your quality of life. Its aim is to build your self confidence, your sense of independence and help you look forward to returning to work.

How do I find out more?

The Condition Management Programme runs until March 2011 and you need to be referred from either the Jobcentre or your GP. You can talk to your advisor at the Jobcentre, ask your GP next time you visit or telephone us on 01740 661233

Dates for your diary

Carers Rights

2nd December 2010

Contact us for venue

LINK Carers Working Group

28th October

2.30pm

Broadcasting House, Newport Road

Healthy Deaf Minds Forum

1st November

10.30am

The Southlands Centre



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Middlesbrough

LINK

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Middlesbrough LINK

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