

## Hot Topics

This issues LINKs Hot Topics:

**Falls Working Group - Falls in the Community, Hospitals and Care Homes were identified in the Middlesbrough LINK Work Plan as a key area for further investigation during 2009-2010 and a Falls Working Group was established in January 2010.**

**Sensory Impairment Working Group - The Sensory Impairment working group was initially set up as a joint working group between Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland LINKs with LINK members and other interested individuals in attendance. It then became apparent that the same issues were affecting people in other areas so Stockton-on-Tees LINK became involved in the working group.**

**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!**

## 'Mental Health Working Group'



Middlesbrough LINK Mental Health group discussed a range of issues brought to them by people living in Middlesbrough and decided to gather more evidence about the experiences people with mental health issues had with GPs. We carried out a survey at Stamp out Stigma, an event promoting positive attitudes to mental health and making information about mental health available to the general public.

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### Middlesbrough LINK AGM

**12th May 2011**

**5.30pm – 7.30pm**

Trinity Centre,  
North Ormesby

Book a place by  
contacting us at the office

**on:** 0800 141 2642 /  
0752 523 7741

**email:** [enquiries@middlesbroughlink.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@middlesbroughlink.org.uk)



## 'Mental Health Working Group' continued...

We found that most people we talked to had experience of mental health issues themselves or through a friend or family member and that they had accessed their GP for help. Although most people were happy with the service provided by their GP a significant minority were dissatisfied.

People who considered that their GP discussed their needs and treatment with them were most likely to be satisfied with their treatment. Talking was perceived to be helpful and, to a lesser extent, so was medication.

Middlesbrough LINK recommends that talking therapies continue to be considered a priority by commissioners, that there is a suitable level of mental health knowledge and expertise within each GP practice so that the needs of individuals are met and that the assessment process is simplified so that referral to primary and secondary mental health care is achieved more efficiently.

## More hot topics!

### Sensory Impairment Working Group

**The Sensory Impairment working group was initially set up as a joint working group between Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland LINKs with LINK members and other interested individuals in attendance. It then became apparent that the same issues were affecting people in other areas so Stockton-on-Tees LINK became involved in the working group.**



The group decided to investigate the issues for people, who have a hearing or visual impairment, in accessing health and social care services. Then make recommendations to any relevant health and social care providers.

They found that the issues for people who are deaf are significant and could put people at serious risk. The inability to get an interpreter for an urgent GP appointment for example is not only a disincentive to seek medical advice or to inappropriately use family or unqualified interpreters, it also risks misdiagnosis or misinformation about treatment.

Interpreters are vital for the full understanding of medical conditions. Urgent appointments such as a mental health assessment should be interpreted by someone who has particular skills in this area. These are issues that need urgent attention from the commissioning agents.

Most of the problems faced by people with visual impairment could be addressed by staff training but the inability to read information on medication is a significant risk for people and needs to be addressed urgently.

For a full copy of the report please contact the LINK office.

Middlesbrough

LINK

**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

# Falls Working Group

**Falls in the Community, Hospitals and Care Homes were identified in the Middlesbrough LINK Work Plan as a key area for further investigation during 2009-2010 and a Falls Working Group was established in January 2010.**



The purpose of the investigation was to understand the incidence of falls in the Borough, to identify which groups of people are most at risk and highlight what actions are being taken to prevent falls or reduce their effect. Also to make recommendations to help prevent / reduce the number of falls in Middlesbrough.

**Some of the recommendations include:**

That the gritting policy review currently underway by Middlesbrough Council resolves to amend the criteria to allow gritting bins near to sheltered housing complexes. Furthermore that dispensation is granted to sheltered

communities, regardless to location in regard to the assessment of Salt/Grit bin requests.

Falls training should be acknowledged as a priority in order to ensure the spread of best practice and continue the excellent work that has been achieved in the community, hospitals and Care Homes.

The integrated partnership that exists between the Falls Team and the Care Home Sector should be developed further in order to ensure that communication and best practice is shared across all agencies working in this area.

The group was impressed with the scale of progress that had been made on falls and osteoporosis, it is reassuring to note that Middlesbrough Redcar and Cleveland has a flag ship service and excellent resources in this field. Falls prevention information and resources are available via the internet for the public and professionals. The Falls & Osteoporosis Strategic Group provides a periodic opportunity for professionals to implement new developments and share best practice.

**For a full copy of the report please contact the LINK office.**

## **Middlesbrough LINK**

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# Other places to have your say..

## A little help from your PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides on-the-spot help or information for patients, families and carers. This service covers The James Cook University Hospital and the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton.

If people have any questions, problems or concerns about their care or the care of the person they are looking after they can contact the team via main reception (weekdays between 9am to 5pm).

They can also be contacted on [0800 0282451](tel:08000282451) or email [pals@stees.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stees.nhs.uk) and a member of the team will aim to get back to them within a 24-hour working day. The service, which covers both hospitals, is free and if a member of the team cannot help immediately, they will



take the details and respond as soon as possible.

PALS can help people with health-related questions, resolve their concerns or problems and show them how to get more involved in their own healthcare.

PALS can provide information about:

- The NHS
- The NHS complaints procedure
- Support groups outside the NHS

PALS also helps to improve the NHS by listening to your concerns and suggestions.



You can also have your say on the NHS Choices website



[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

You can find and choose NHS services as well as rating and leaving comments on the service.

## Facebook and Twitter

Middlesbrough LINK now has a Facebook and Twitter page. Get instant updates on issues and events and join us by logging on to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and searching for Middlesbrough LINK or [www.twitter.com/borolink](http://www.twitter.com/borolink).



They have a growing membership and are some of the many ways in which Middlesbrough LINK are trying to reach everyone in the community.

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