

Middlesbrough LINK AGM

Middlesbrough LINK held its AGM on the 12th May at the Trinity Centre in North Ormesby. The AGM was publicised throughout various newsletters and networks in Middlesbrough and it was a great success.

Various organisations brought along information to share including the Independent Complaints Advocacy Services (ICAS), Mental Health Matters and the Personal Health Budgets Team.

The evening began with a presentation from Catherine Haigh, Middlesbrough LINK Chair, which showed the LINK's achievements over the last year, highlighting the reports produced on Falls, Sensory Impairment and the Mental Health GP Access Report. Catherine also discussed the year ahead.

The LINK will complete any current pieces of work, continue to listen to and help the people of Middlesbrough to get the services they need, continue to work in partnership with all who have the best interests of Middlesbrough at heart and develop a model for HealthWatch which can meet the people of Middlesbrough's needs.

It was then time for the LINK members to celebrate the LINK's achievements with a buffet and workshops to discuss any further issues the LINK could look into.

Middlesbrough LINK is also in the process of planning the next two events. The first one is to be held on the 26th September to discuss Sensory Impairment,



this is a joint event with Stockton on Tees and Redcar and Cleveland LINKs. The second event is to be held in November to launch the Mental Health reports.

Please look out in future newsletters for further details, alternately contact the LINK office.

Future Events

Sensory Impairment

Come along to find out all about the LINKs report on Sensory Impairment

Monday 26th September

10am- 1.30pm

Trinity Centre, North Ormesby

BSL Interpreters in attendance

Contact the LINK office to book a place.

Catherine Haigh - Chair

This is my second year as Chair of Middlesbrough LINK. In the past year we were enormously successful in growing our membership and improving our partnership working with other organisations.

We also published reports with recommendations to improve health and social care services for a number of vulnerable sections of our community.

This year we have many more challenges to face and I am confident that, with the involvement of the people of Middlesbrough, we can overcome them all.

Some of our Working Groups have already started to investigate new issues. These include:

- How can the mental health crisis services better meet the needs of service users?

- Personalisation: how can we make this work for us?
- How can GP services best meet the needs of carers?

Middlesbrough LINK is also working to evolve into a HealthWatch. As Middlesbrough HealthWatch we will have further powers to ensure our community has access to the best in health and social care services.

If you have an interest in any of these concerns, or in any other health and social care topics, please contact us.

Your level of involvement is up to you, from joining the LINK database and receiving information, to attending meetings and making decisions.

Make a difference!

Carl Cummings Vice Chair

I am very pleased to be the Vice Chair of Middlesbrough LINK for the second year running and build upon the LINK's success over the previous year, which saw the LINK producing reports on Falls, Sensory Impairment and Access to GPs for people with mental health issues.

I am happy to be part of a LINK that take real pleasure of making the right changes and have the communities' best interests at heart.

There are many challenges in the year ahead as the LINK moves into HealthWatch as well as continuing to strive to improve Health and Social Care services, making recommendations to providers also highlighting areas of good practice. I look forward to continuing to work with the people of Middlesbrough.

Elaine Durose Treasurer

As a member of Middlesbrough LINK I am proud to be part of a team which encourages the opinion of the local community, carers and their families.

I am passionate about community justice and support towards our fellow man.

I like the idea that LINK is one of few in the Middlesbrough area that works and researches with the public, for the public, in the view of a long term vision which promotes standards and equality for all.

HealthWatch

Your LINK will be undergoing some big changes in the near future. The government has published a white paper to improve the whole of the NHS.

In the paper it is proposed that HealthWatch will be established as a new independent consumer champion for health and social care. Local HealthWatch is to be created by extending the role of existing LINKs (Local Involvement Networks). HealthWatch is due to be established from October 2012.

Local HealthWatch will:

- Listen to views and feedback from people who use services, carers and members of the public
- Have a say in the commissioning of local services
- Provide information and support to people and help them to make choices about services
- Monitor the quality of local services to make sure they are working well

Middlesbrough LINK has held two development days to investigate how we will evolve into a HealthWatch. Members of the LINK agreed that the new organisation might work like the CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau).

Middlesbrough HealthWatch hopes to have a central base that people could visit but it could visit community venues throughout the town so that everyone could access it. The service would be staffed by well trained volunteers and employees.

LINK members have now started to work and develop a model which would make HealthWatch a reality.

We hope that as many people and organisations as possible will join in so that Middlesbrough HealthWatch represents us all. Contact Middlesbrough LINK and we can tell you what opportunities there are to get involved.

Middlesbrough Hearts and Minds

One in four people experience Mental Health issues at some time in their lives. This means that of the 143,777 people in Middlesbrough 35,676 will either experience mental health problems themselves or know someone who does.

Middlesbrough Hearts and Minds is a social inclusion group in Middlesbrough made up of a group of positive and committed individuals who regularly meet and take action to stamp out stigma against Mental Health.

Middlesbrough Hearts and Minds is proud to offer FREE audio files for anyone to download on a large number



of mental health related subjects for men and women.

To access these audio files please check out the Middlesbrough Hearts and minds website.

www.middlesbroughheartsandminds.org

Thank You

Middlesbrough LINK and the Host team would like to say a big thank you, goodbye and good luck to Rukhsana Rauf.

Rukhsana was a valued member of the Host team and unfortunately her post was made redundant at the end of May.

She was of great support to the LINK especially in the work around mental health. We all wish you good luck for the future!

Annual Report

Middlesbrough LINK has continued to work hard with great successes over the year 2010 -2011. This is highlighted in the Annual Report 2010 – 2011. If you would like a copy of the Annual Report then download it from the Middlesbrough LINK website www.middlesbroughlink.org.uk

Alternatively please contact the office and the Host staff will be happy to send you one.

Telephone - 01642 230434

Free phone - 0800 141 2642

Text phone - 07525 237741

enquiries@middlesbroughlink.co.uk

Volunteering Opportunities!

Have you got an interest or experience in writing newsletters or press releases?

Middlesbrough LINK is looking for volunteers to help with their Communications Working Group. This would be for a small amount of time, a few hours per month, and will be great experience to add to a CV.

Contact the Middlesbrough LINK office for more information.

Middlesbrough LINK would also like to hear from anyone who has an interest in health and social care issues and would like to be involved in one of the working groups. Please contact the Middlesbrough LINK office for more information.

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 and searching for Middlesbrough LINK or 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.

Middlesbrough LINK

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