

Communication and Engagement Strategy

Document Owner

Executive Committee

Lewisham Local Involvement Network

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Introduction

Lewisham LINK gives everyone in the community, from individuals to voluntary and community organisations, the opportunity to say what they think about local health and social care services and experiences. The LINK is a way of telling the people who commission, provide and manage local services what is and isn't working, as well as suggesting ideas which could improve services.

The LINK will provide flexible ways for local people to be involved, it will support and strengthen existing networks and involvement mechanisms and help build relationships with the statutory organisations that commission and provide services.

This policy will set out the basic components required to achieve effective and appropriate communication between the LINK (including the Host) and the public, the voluntary and statutory sectors and all other stakeholders. It will also address internal communications within the LINK including its Participants and various work groups and the Host.

1 Communication Policy Objectives

- 1.1 To communicate the purpose of the LINK as widely and effectively as possible
- 1.2 To use the most appropriate methods and media to achieve this
- 1.3 To develop methodologies for engaging and involving people and organisations
- 1.4 To increase the quantity and quality of Participation
- 1.5 To build positive relationships with commissioners, providers and scrutinisers of local health and social care services
- 1.6 To ensure the flow of information to aid planning and decision-making

2 Principles

The following best practice will underpin the communications of the Lewisham LINK.

2.1 Openness

All information should be communicated in an open and honest fashion. In the light of the Freedom of Information Act, all information should be open to access by any member of the public except where it would contravene data protection.

2.2 Relevance

Information should be clearly relevant to the audience to which it is delivered. The needs of the audience should be put first in all communications activity and information should be tailored to ensure that it is relevant to different audiences. If the recipient is expected to act on the information they have received this should be made clear to them.

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2.3 Simplicity

Simple, straightforward language should be used in all written and verbal communication. The use of jargon and "management speak" should be avoided. Messages should be carefully thought out and constructed so that the point is clear. Any actions expected of the recipient should also be clear. Messages should not be overly long or complicated and all communication should be consistently of a high quality.

2.4 Clarity

All communication should be clear in its aims. Message senders need to tell their audience in direct terms the status of the information they are communicating.

2.5 Planned and timely

Information should be prioritised and planned so as to avoid overload, duplication of messages or long periods of non-communication. Communication and engagement with the public should be at the heart of all planning within the LINK. To this end, the Executive Committee should ensure that they consider the most effective ways to communicate their decisions and information needs.

2.6 Two-way communication

All communication should ensure that there are as many opportunities for listening and receiving questions as there are for sending messages out. In this way communication will be positively encouraged and the public will feel that they can influence the work and progress of the LINK.

3 Communication and Engagement Planning

3.1 The Executive Committee with the support of the Host will take overall lead and responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy.

3.2 Communication and engagement will be achieved through a variety of methods and media, within the LINK's resources, commensurate with the information or message concerned and the intended audience or recipient:

3.2.1 In person

Through outreach and engagement activities, at meetings and events this is best for ensuring clear understanding. The purpose and strategies of the LINK can be more effectively explained.

3.2.2 Existing Channels

Local voluntary and community groups, networks, newsletters, GP surgeries, Libraries. The format used should be appropriate to the setting.

3.2.3 Printed Matter

Posters, leaflets, flyers, reports, banners, advertising boards, invitation letters and agendas produced in accessible formats and published and displayed in a timely fashion.

3.2.4 The Press, Radio and other media

The LINK Media lead will have overall responsibility with support of the Host to make use of opportunities to communicate widely and effectively and to respond to issues through editorials, letters and articles.

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3.2.5 Information and Communication Technology

The internet is probably the most effective and cheapest form of communication and can communicate all LINK information, activities and policies. The host will provide and maintain a LINK web site with facilities for information exchange for all LINK participants and the public. However it must be remembered that not all have access to the internet and hard copy should always be available on request and communicated as such.

3.2.5.1 Email should be used whenever possible. It is a quick and effective means of disseminating and requesting information and responses and asking and answering questions.

3.2.5.2 The host will provide an E-Bulletin at least monthly to effectively disseminate relevant information on a regular basis, and can inform and signpost recipients to other sources.

3.2.5.3 The host will produce a quarterly newsletter that will be distributed by post to all LINK participants.

4 Community Engagement

4.1 The LINK will utilise community development activities in order to engage with, and facilitate the involvement of, individuals and organisations especially those who are seldom heard. That is to say people who do not have a voice in the planning and decision making of local health and social care services, who are excluded from local democracy and the usual consultation opportunities.

4.2 The LINK will gather information from all groups with which it succeeds in engaging and take into account their views, needs and issues and if necessary make representation to the relevant statutory body. The LINK will use this information to inform its work plan. The LINK may decide that it needs more information or clarity so it could undertake a survey or a consultation exercise.

4.3 Communication with diverse groups and individuals will have to be carefully managed to ensure that any information given is in accessible formats, that meetings are held in appropriate locations and that feedback is given. Contact will often take place over a period of time to ensure that effective relationships are built and that the involvement of the community in the work of the LINK is developed. This will lead to a diversity of Participation and involvement in the LINK and its activities.

4.4 Appropriate communication is the key to effective engagement and ensuring that the LINK represents the views of all citizens in its work to improve local health and social care services.

5 Internal Communication

5.1 The Executive Committee and the Host undertake to ensure that internal communication is appropriate and effective.

5.2 The Executive Committee has the responsibility for receiving intelligence from LINK Participants and through other channels, of establishing a work plan and ensuring that this is communicated effectively throughout the Network.

5.3 The Executive Committee should ensure through the Host that all information

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regarding meetings and activities is communicated in a timely and effective manner.

- 5.4 The Executive Committee takes on board that its Members will have different preferred methods of receiving information and their availability to attend meetings and respond to communications will vary according to their personal and professional responsibilities.
- 5.5 The Executive Committee Members have a responsibility to read and where appropriate to respond to communications from other Members and the Host.
- 5.6 Participants who are involved in LINK work plan activity have a responsibility to ensure that they read and respond to communications from other Members and the Host.
- 5.7 The Host must ensure that it's communication methods are appropriate and timely and meet the needs and wishes of Participants.
- 5.8 The Host must maintain the website, post relevant information and articles and ensure that the Members' section is updated.
- 5.9 The Host will ensure that the office and ICT equipment is kept in an operational condition.
- 5.10 The Host will ensure that all emails and telephone messages are responded to within 48 hours and where this is not possible, (for example at weekends) as soon as possible thereafter.

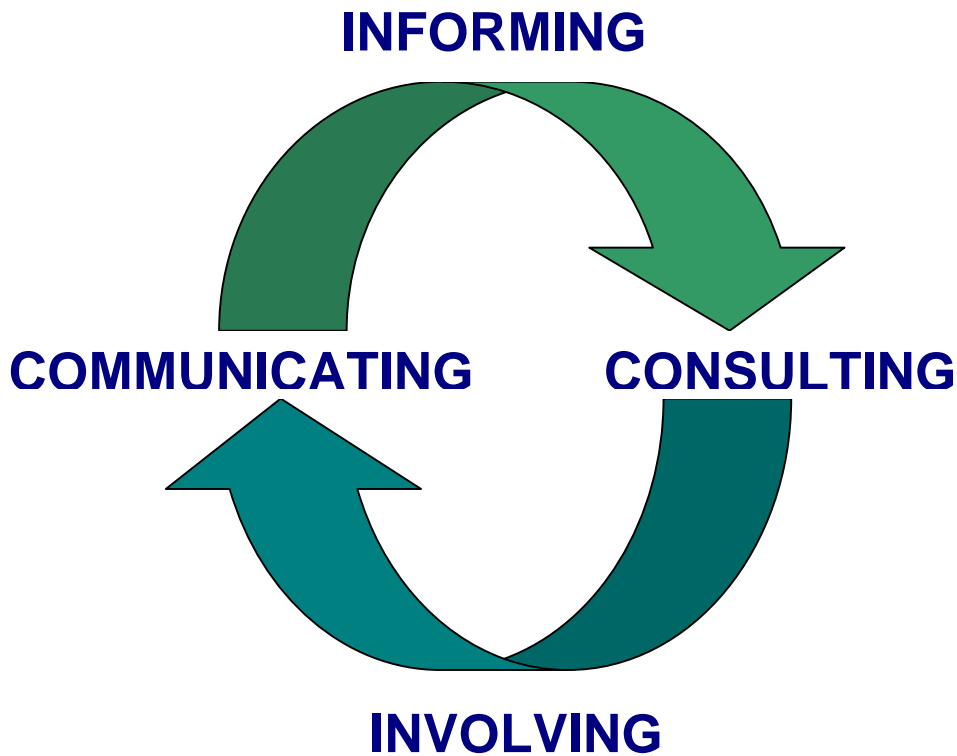
6 Measurement & Evaluation

- 6.1 The Communications policy of the Lewisham LINK will need ongoing monitoring and evaluation to identify what is working (and not working) and to develop and improve the strategy.
- 6.2 Success in communication and engagement will be measured through a variety of means including:
 - Returned reply slips
 - Logging phone calls and messages to the Host office
 - Logging email enquiries
 - Website hits
 - Monitoring press exposure
 - Attendance at Meetings
 - Attendance at and feedback from events
 - Feedback from outreach to community groups and public places
 - Numbers of Participants (and the growth)
 - Satisfaction surveys

Quantity and quality of intelligence leading to LINK work plan items.

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The Four Steps of Community Engagement



Objectives of the Community Engagement

- To identify and map local community and voluntary groups in the London Borough of Lewisham and build a community profile
- To ensure the people and communities in Lewisham Borough are well informed and have a good understanding of the function and priorities of the LINK
- To develop opportunities for involving and consulting people so that they can contribute to the development and improvement of local services
- To ensure that a wide range of consultation tools are available to engage different communities and groups in the borough
- To ensure inclusivity of activities and that the LINK reaches out to all sections of the community
- To enable feedback from the community to inform the work of the LINK
- To promote the involvement of local people in all aspects of service planning, delivery and scrutiny
- To ensure that outcomes from engagement activities and changes to service delivery are communicated and publicised widely and appropriately.

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Guiding Principles Underpinning the Strategy

- Engagement opportunities are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the area
- Engagement activities are accessible and flexible in terms of methodology, location and timing
- Consultation opportunities take a variety of forms, which suit the purpose and audience
- There is clarity about the purpose of the engagement activity and this is communicated to participants
- The scope of the engagement activity is clear to everyone; what can be influenced and / or changed and what cannot and why
- Where appropriate capacity building initiatives are supported so that participation is possible
- There is partnership working with existing networks and statutory sector bodies
- Participants are provided with regular feedback if actions are being pursued
- Consultation opportunities are evaluated for their effectiveness and to avoid duplication
- Recognition from members and participants that developing effective engagement and involvement takes time
- Information gathered through engagement activities adheres to the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act

Measuring Success

A number of methods for measuring success will be utilised including:

- Feedback from participants on the effectiveness of engagement activity
- Number and quality of outcomes from engagement activities
- Changes to service delivery
- Percentage of membership engaged
- Number of participants gained
- Networking opportunity
- Promotion of the Lewisham LINK

Community Development

Community engagement is an important part of community development. Maintaining strong relationships with communities is dependent on supporting and empowering groups. A key aspect in this process is capacity building. Capacity building will help ensure that communities participating in LINK activities are given the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence and secure their ongoing participation.

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APPENDIX 1

Healthcare Questions

- Have you had an equal and fair chance to use the healthcare services you need?
- Have you been treated fairly and equally?
- Have the services been made available for everyone?
- Have you been offered choices in regards to services and treatment?
- Have the healthcare services you received treated you with dignity and respect?
- Have healthcare services got systems in place so that patients, relatives and carers are able to complain and feedback on services?
- Have healthcare services given you clear information about how to make a complaint or feedback on quality of services?
- Have healthcare services made sure that you are not discriminated against if you have made a complaint?
- Have healthcare services acted on your concerns in the correct manner?
- Have healthcare services engaged with patients and carers to get their views when designing, planning delivering and improving services?

Social Care Question

- Have you ever accessed social care services?
- What kind of services did you access?
- Did you find social care services easy to access?
- Are you aware of all the social care services that are available?
- Do you find the information easy to understand and useful?
- Do you find the information about social care services accessible?
- Did you receive the information in your required format?
- How were your needs identified?
- Were **all** your needs identified?
- Did you receive the correct level of support?
- Are you aware of the council's plans to increase choice and flexibility of social care support?
- What is your view of the change and how might it affect you?
- Do you feel that health and social care services deliver a holistic service?
- Have the social care services you received treated you with dignity and respect?
- Have you been given clear information about how to make a complaint or feedback on quality of services?
- Has the complaints system made sure that you are not discriminated against if you have made a complaint?
- Have complaints officers acted on your complaints/ concerns in the correct manner?
What would you like changed?

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Lewisham LINK

Your Local Involvement Network

The Lewisham Local Involvement Network (LINK)

The Lewisham LINK is an independent network funded by the Government to scrutinise local Health and Social Care services so that services can be improved to better meet the needs of patients and service users.

This questionnaire has been designed so that you can tell the LINK what you think about local health and social care services. The questionnaire has two sections; healthcare and social care. Please complete any or all of the sections. The feedback obtained through the questionnaire will be analysed by members of the Lewisham LINK and used to write a report, which will be shared with health and social care providers with the aim of improving services.

By participating in the questionnaire you will be contributing to the improvement of services and ensuring that the patients' needs are at the heart of all services provided by the NHS.

All information gathered through the questionnaire will be analysed and stored confidentially. None of the questions can be traced back to patients, service users or their families/ carers. All information will be subject to the Data Protection Act. Our final report will use any examples given in the questionnaire but will not make reference to any specific patient, as this level of detail is not asked for.

If you would like to contribute further to this work in anyway, please email us lewishamlink@parkwoodhealthcare.co.uk

Lewisham LINK aims to support the health and social care commissioners and providers in putting the needs of local people at the heart of services and your input will help us accomplish this vision.

This questionnaire is independent of NHS Lewisham, University Hospital Lewisham and Lewisham Council

Help with this questionnaire

This questionnaire is available in different formats.

If you need this questionnaire in another language, Braille, large print or on a CD, please can you contact us on 0208 690 3900.

If you need help completing this questionnaire please contact the Lewisham LINK team on 0208 690 3900.

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1 ABOUT YOU

Preferred Name:

Is English your first Language? YES NO

WHITE

White British Any other White Background
 White Irish

MIXED

White & Black African White & Indian Asian
 White & Black Caribbean White & Pakistani Asian

Black or Black British

Black British African Other
 African Somali Caribbean
 African Nigerian Any other Black Background

Asian or Asian British

Asian British Bangladeshi
 Indian Any other Asian Background
 Pakistani

Other

Chinese Any other Background
 Vietnamese

Do You Live? Alone with Family with Friend

HEALTHCARE

2 FAIR AND EQUAL CHANCE

Have you had an equal and fair chance to use the healthcare services you need? YES NO

Have you been treated fairly and equally? YES NO

Have the services been made available for everyone? YES NO

Have you been offered choices in regards to services and treatment? YES NO

Please give us details about the services you use e.g. Name of service, when you last used it and what happened to make you feel that you are fairly treated or otherwise.

3 DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Have the healthcare services you received treated you with dignity and respect? YES NO

Please use the space below to expand further if you wish to do so

4 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Have the healthcare services engaged with patients and carers to get their views when designing, planning delivering and improving services? YES NO

5 COMPLAINTS SYSTEM

Have healthcare services got systems in place so that patients, relatives and carers are able to complain and feedback on services? YES NO

Have healthcare services given you clear information about how to make a complaint or feedback on quality of services? YES NO

Have healthcare services made sure that you are not discriminated against if you have made a complaint? YES NO

Have healthcare services acted on your concerns in the correct manner? YES NO

Please use the space below to expand further if you wish to do so

SOCIAL CARE

6 ACCESS

Have you every accessed social care services? YES NO

What kind of services did you access?

Did you find social care services easy to access? YES NO

7 INFORMATION

Are you aware of all social care services that are available? YES NO

Do you find the information easy to understand and useful? YES NO

Do you find the information about social care services accessible? YES NO

Did you receive the information in your required format? YES NO

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ASSESSMENT

How were your needs identified?

Were **all** your needs identified?

YES

NO

Did you receive the correct level of support?

YES

NO

Please use the space below to expand further if you wish to do so

8 TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Are you aware of the council's plans to increase choice and flexibility of social care support?

YES

NO

What is your view of the change and how might it affect you?

Everyone who receives social care services will be entitled to a personal budget. What would you like to spend on social care services with a personal budget?

9 DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Have the social care services you received treated you with dignity and respect?

YES

NO

Please use the space below to expand further if you wish to do so

10 HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Do you feel that health and social care services deliver a holistic service?

YES

NO

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11 COMPLAINTS

Have you been given clear information about how to make a complaint or feedback on quality of services? YES NO

Has the complaints system made sure that you are not discriminated against if you have made a complaint? YES NO

Have complaints officers acted on your complaints/ concerns in the correct manner? YES NO

Please use the space below to expand further if you wish to do so

12 OTHER COMMENTS

Other Comments/ What would you like changed?

Outreach Form

Name of Group		Ward	
Membership Size		Attendance / Respondents	
Outreach Method	<input type="checkbox"/> Introductory Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Meeting/Gathering <input type="checkbox"/> Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Public Event		
Organised By	<input type="checkbox"/> Lewisham LINK <input type="checkbox"/> Community/Voluntary Group <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Subject of Engagement			
Details of Group (aims, objectives, members)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Group <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Group <input type="checkbox"/> Network			

Key Issues / Points Raised

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