

PF - Links Transition

From the Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP
Minister of State



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Councillor Lynne Hale
Chair, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee
London Borough of Croydon
Members' Room
The Town Hall
Katherine Street
Croydon CR0 1NX

Ms Councillor Hale,

28 March 2007

Thank you for your letter of 13 March enclosing correspondence from Ms Melanie Box, Facilitator, and Mr Malcolm Alexander, Chair of the London Ambulance Service Patient Forum, about patient and public involvement.

The Government is committed to creating a stronger voice for service users and members of the public at every level of the health and social care system, creating a truly user led health and social care service which reflects user experience throughout the user journey.

We know from the consultation leading up to the publication of the White Paper *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services* and from listening to people during the review of user and public involvement that more people want to have a greater say about their local services. We are committed to empowering citizens to give them more confidence and more opportunities to influence public services in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them, and in ways that will make a real difference to services.

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) will enable genuine involvement in a much wider range of ways, ensuring local communities have a stronger voice in the process of commissioning health and social care and making key decisions about local health and social care services.

LINKs will gather people's views and experiences of health and social care services in their area. They will look at the entire journey from primary care to acute services and any continuing social care needs rather than just focusing on services provided by one institution.


Funding will be allocated to local authorities according to a formula that takes into account factors such as variations in size and population of local authority areas, deprivation levels and density, such as that used in other local authority funded services like social care. We will ensure adequate funding is available to local authorities to begin the process of establishing LINKs once the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill has received Royal Assent.

The Bill was introduced in Parliament on 12 December. It sets out the concept of the new LINKs system and will help clarify and strengthen Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, which places a duty on the NHS to involve and consult users and the public.

Further details of how we expect LINKs will operate can be found in the document *Government response to 'A stronger local voice'*, on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk.

I would like to reiterate my appreciation of the work done by Forum members, and their many successes. We are keen to encourage those engaged in the current system to become involved in LINKs, as the experience gained over the last three years will be vital to the success of LINKs.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,


ROSIE WINTERTON

27 APR 2007



Melanie Box
Shaw Trust
St Peters Centre
Reardon Street
London E1W 2QH

5th April 2007

Dear Ms Box,

Re: Proposed formation of LINKs

Further to my letter of 13th March, I have now received a response from Rosie Winterton MP, Minister of State at the department of Health regarding patient & public involvement.

x x [I enclose a copy for your information.

I am not convinced that you will find the response particularly helpful as it does little if anything to address the many pertinent points raised by patient forums and others regarding the Government's proposals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lynne Hale'.

Cllr Lynne Hale
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