

Get involved! Help improve health and social care services in Reading.

**Reading LINK e-bulletin 16
August 2010**

- **Reading LINK Community Survey – last chance to have your say!**
- **Reading LINK Reference Group Event – Interested to Involved**
- **Reading LINK Annual Report 2009/10**
- **Reading LINK invites volunteers to become involved in Home Care Task & Finish Group**
- **NHS Berkshire West consultation on local GP Surgery at Underwood Road Shopping Centre, Calcot**
- **Free Telephone Befriending Groups Launched in Reading**
- **White Paper Consultation Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS**
- **General Optical Council – Want to know what you think about information on their register of Opticians**
- **Find out more about Reading LINK**

Reading LINK Community Survey – last chance to have your say!

Over the past 6 months Reading LINK have been gathering the views of local people about their health and social care services. Over 200 surveys have been completed and we are urging anybody who would like to give their views to complete and return their survey form to Reading LINK by 31 August 2010. Surveys can also be completed online at <http://www.readinglinkcommunitysurvey.co.uk/>. To obtain a survey form or to arrange for a visit to your group please contact Elaine Holloway on 0118 9584849 or at elaine.holloway@rva.org.uk. The results of the survey will be available in early Autumn and will help to inform the work of the Reading LINK going forward.

Reading LINK Reference Group Event – Interested to Involved

This event hosted by Reading LINK took place on 14th July 2010 and was attended by 33 Reference Group members. Reading LINK were delighted with the response to the event and the willingness of people to find out more and want to be more actively involved – which was the purpose of the event.

The event comprised of a series of short presentations providing an overview of LINKs from a national, regional and local perspective.

Participants then took part in group discussions and activities around 4 areas of potential involvement in LINKs.

A full report from the event will be sent to the participants shortly to outline the suggested next steps. However, already we are pleased to report that 2 Reference Group members have volunteered to become involved as Patient Representatives in the ThinkGlucose project currently running at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Reading LINK Annual Report 2009/10

Our Annual report for 2009/10 has now been published and can be viewed on the Reading LINK website at <http://readinglink.org.uk/governance.aspx>

Reading LINK invites volunteers to become involved in Home Care Task & Finish Group

Provision of care services to people in their own homes is something that is important to more and more people, especially older people, yet the service people get is not always perfect. The Reading LINK board has been looking at this issue for a while and Reading Borough Council has recently put in place a new system for choosing and monitoring the performance of contractors who provide home care services on their behalf.

There are some important questions that remain to be answered about how the quality of home care services is checked and improved and what home care clients' actual experience of the service is.

Reading LINK is getting together a small group to look at the information we have so far and what further action might be needed.

Do you want to be part of this group? You don't need to be an expert, but you might have some experience of how home care services are delivered. This group will be a 'task and finish' group, so this is not an open-ended commitment but you do need to have some time to put into this over the next few months.

If you are interested, want more information or an informal chat about what is involved, please contact the LINK Team on 0119 9584849 or via e-mail at info@readinglink.org.uk

NHS Berkshire West consultation on local GP Surgery at Underwood Road Shopping Centre, Calcot

NHS Berkshire West is asking patients for their comments and views on its proposal for the future of the branch surgery at 1a Underwood Road in Calcot. Bellway Homes has recently bought the site of the Underwood Road precinct in Calcot, Reading. It plans to redevelop the area, providing 70 homes and a redeveloped shopping centre.

As part of its planning application, Bellway Homes has asked the PCT if it would like the current branch surgery at Underwood Road to be replaced by a new small GP surgery as part of the new development.

The PCT has decided that its preferred option is not to support the inclusion of a small surgery in the development of the Underwood Road site.

Before a final decision is made at the end of October, the PCT is asking patients and local residents to give their views and comments (By 4th October 2010). Please see the consultation document and how to comment at:

<http://www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk/page.asp?fldArea=6&fldMenu=2&fldSubMenu=3&fldKey=820>

Or you can talk to NHS Berkshire West in person, at a drop-in session at Kennet Valley Free Church, Carters Rise, Calcot, Reading RG31 7YT, on Tuesday 21st September 11am to 2pm.

Free Telephone Befriending Groups Launched in Reading

Supported by Reading Borough Council, Community Network has launched telephone befriending groups for older people living in the borough. The project aims to tackle loneliness and social isolation among older people and help them access advice, information and support services where required.

If you are over 50 years old you are most welcome to join the telephone befriending groups by filling an application form. If you require further information concerning this project and to obtain an application form, please contact:

Belay Gessesse on 020 7923 5260 or by Email: belay@community-network.org

White Paper Consultation Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS

The Government's White paper "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS" was published on 12th July 2010, setting out its vision for the NHS.

The proposals represent some of the biggest changes to the NHS in the

last 60 years. The Department of Health are consulting on a range of options contained in the consultation papers stemming from the White Paper:

1. Transparency in outcomes: a Framework for the NHS – Seeking views on the creation of national outcomes which will provide an indication of the overall performance of the NHS.

2. Liberating the NHS: Commissioning for Patients – Seeking views on plans to put local consortia of GP practices in charge of commissioning non-primary health services.

3. Liberating the NHS: local democratic legitimacy in health – Seeking views on plans for local authorities to lead on integration of local services across boundaries. Also the creation of Local Healthwatch from the existing Local Involvement Networks (LINKs).

More information can be found on the Department of Health website <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/LiberatingtheNHS/index.htm>, where you can respond to the consultations, or Reading LINK can collate any comments/feedback, you may wish to send to info@readinglink.org.uk

General Optical Council – Want to know what you think about information on their register of Opticians

About the General Optical Council Register

Anyone can search for a registered optician, student optician or optical business on the GOC online public registers, to check that they are properly registered and fit to practice, train, or carry on business in the UK. The registers can be accessed on the GOC website at http://www.optical.org/en/our_work/Registration/search_the_registers.cfm. More information about the registers and the requirements for registration is also available on the website.

Tell the GOC what you think about the online registers

The GOC are interested in your views about the information you would expect to have available about a GOC-registered optician, student or optical business.

Their aim is to improve the role, content and usability of the registers.

They are seeking views on what information is and should be available, and your experiences of using our public registers.

Your feedback will help them tailor the content and functions of the registers to fit the needs of patients, members of the public, employers, registrants and all other users. It will also help them to ensure that they are taking appropriate steps to publicise the registers and the other information that they hold.

The closing date for the survey is 27 August 2010. You can complete the survey online at <http://www.optical.org/en/utilities/public-survey-about-the-goc-registers.cfm>. Alternatively, if you would like to receive paper copies, please contact Matthew Tait on mtait@optical.org or 020 7307 3923.

Find out more about Reading LINK

Visit our website by clicking here: <http://readinglink.org.uk/>

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