



# Bath and North East Somerset Local Involvement Network

## Report to B&NES Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel, 18 November 2011

### 1. Hillview Lodge -AWP High Dependency Unit

Since the discussion at the October meeting of the PDS Panel, members of the LINK have attended a meeting that provided information on the planned changes. Members had been under the impression that this was to be an Impact Assessment meeting, and afterwards expressed concerns that this had not been reflected in the running of the meeting. Members subsequently took up this concern with AWP, and were assured that a separate meeting would be arranged for the purposes of an Impact Assessment. The LINK is concerned that there had been no previous indication of a separate Impact Assessment meeting until LINK Members had voiced their concerns about this following the meeting on 31 October, and that all the discussion that had taken place with AWP had confirmed that this was to be a meeting to conduct an Impact Assessment. They feel that the original commitment to bring the decision back to the November PDS Panel could not have allowed for this additional meeting. We have been told that it will now be presented to the January meeting of the Panel.

### 2. HealthWatch

The Health & Social Care Bill continues its way through the Lords' "Committee of the - Whole-House", and has so far occupied three sessions. At the Second Reading, there had been two critical proposed amendments, one of which would have rejected the Bill altogether, the other would have referred the Bill to a Select Committee of the House (potentially delaying its passage significantly). Both amendments were rejected by the Lords.

During the Committee stage, many detailed proposed amendments have already been tabled. The most significant of these for Healthwatch, proposed that Healthwatch England should be set up as a corporate body independent of the Care Quality Commission, and that Healthwatch England should be responsible for setting up and providing resources for Local Healthwatch organisations. There has, so far, been no companion amendment to remove Local Authorities' duty to contract for Local Healthwatch. The fate of these proposed amendments will probably not be known for a month.

### 3. Autism Meeting

The LINK and the National Autistic Society combined in calling a meeting on the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. About 20 people attended the meeting, and they

included people with autism, carers, parents and friends, and some professionals. The purpose of the meeting was to update people on the current situation in B&NES, and on

the National Autism Strategy and plans for the future. Another aim was to explore the possibility of a B&NES Autism Group.

A follow-up meeting will be held on 30 November, to discuss ways forward and ways of facilitating the formation of an Autism Group for B&NES, with the possibility of a further meeting to which commissioners could be invited.

#### **4. PCT Clustering and Joint Commissioning**

The LINK has growing concerns over the future of the great progress in Joint Commissioning made in Bath & North East Somerset, when the B&NES and Wiltshire PCT's are joined together in a new PCT Cluster. We feel that Joint Commissioning is considerably further advanced and embedded in system in B&NES than it is in Wiltshire, and are worried that this could be lost in any combining of policies and strategies across the two areas. The recent resignation of the Chief Executive of NHS B&NES has increased this concern. We have written to the Chief Executive of NHS South of England (the new clustering of South West, South Central, and South Coast SHA's) to express the LINK's concerns about this, and will report on his response to the Panel when it is received. A copy of our letter is attached to this report, and has also been provided for the full Council.

Diana Hall Hall

**Chair, B&NES Local Involvement Network**

7 November 2011