



BIRMINGHAM LINK STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government & Public Involvement Act 2007 made provision to abolish the Commission for Patient & Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) and Patient & Public Involvement Forums (PPIFs) and replace them with Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to be established in each area of England with a Social Services responsibility.

The unique feature of this new structure was to bring social care into the public domain for the first time, alongside the existing Health Services. The Act also extended the rights to enter and view premises financed through Social Services as well as Health Services.

The LINKs work within a Regulatory Framework introduced through Statutory Instruments in 2008. Birmingham LINK is hosted through Gateway Family Services under a contract awarded by Birmingham City Council, funding for which comes as a direct payment to the City Council from the Department of Health (DOH). Funding is guaranteed until March 2011.

The original purpose as outlined by the DoH was listed as:

- ask local people for their views on local healthcare services and provide a chance to suggest improvements
- investigate issues that are of concern to the community
- use its powers to hold services to account and get results
- ask for information and get an answer in a specified amount of time
- carry out “spot-checks” to ensure services are working well (carried out under safeguards)
- make reports and recommendations and receive a response
- refer issues to the local ‘Overview and Scrutiny Committee’
- to monitor and be involved in the commissioning of services

VISION

To help create a LINK through which every citizen of Birmingham, from every section of the community, has the opportunity to say what they want from local health and social care services.

The Core Group in itself as a body is too large for it to take on and process all of this work effectively. Major decisions about priorities, finance, direction etc., will need to be taken there but if the Core Group is to function as a working body it is absolutely essential that the various sub-groups, however organised, are immediately established and set to work. In order for this to happen it may be helpful if the Core Group itself only meets once every two months at least for an initial period. The basic method of working is around much smaller groups of people who are willing to give greater amounts of time and energy.

MISSION

1. To encourage and support more people to get involved in shaping local health and social care services; from helping to decide what services should be commissioned, to influencing the way they are run;
2. To actively canvas every section of the community for their views and experiences of local health and social care services;
3. To provide the community with a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing local health and social care services;
4. To inform those who commission, run and scrutinise local health and social care services.
5. To monitor and check the delivery and commissioning of local health and social care services.
6. To 'Enter and View' premises delivering health and social care where appropriate.

VALUES

- Make sure that everything we do is for the good of the public and patients.
- Ensure our work takes into account all aspects of health and social care.
- Value the experiences and background of all LINK members, local communities and the support team.
- Go about our work in a way that encourages all people to take part and ensure everyone has the same opportunity to do so.
- Respect everybody's opinions and contributions
- Be accountable to the general public
- Make sure everyone feels able to take part in our activities.
- Ensure that all of our activities are accessible and transparent.
- Encourage active participation from all LINK members.
- Adhere to the values of the LINK whilst striving to maintain best practice.

ROLES

The host organisation will provide support in developing the LINK until it is established. It will respond to identified training needs, ensure the programme meets network regulations, and manage LINK finances within its contract funding. It will provide administrative support to all groups which are established within agreed resources, and will ensure that resources are available for mapping existing networks, and agreed information and research needs.

The Core Group constitution states that it will Elect 15 Individuals; Elect 10 Group or Organisation Representatives and there is the provision to co-opt up to a maximum Core Group of 30. Co-options will be used to satisfy shortfalls in the diversity and representation of the City's population and communities.

All members of the newly elected Core Group will serve for 2 years, and elections will be held annually thereafter with 50% standing down (by lot or inclination) and seeking re-election for a maximum of 2 terms. Co-optees will be co-opted until the next election.

All Core Group members will need to adhere to agreed policies and performance standards or they may lose their position on the committee.

All Core Group members are expected to participate in at least one Action Group. There is no restriction on Core Group members participating in more than one Action Group. Permanent and short term groups will be established as needed. Each Action Group will have a representative from the Core Group. All groups will report to the core committee and function within an agreed framework.

SPECIFIC AREAS

LINK Structure

The structure will include:

- Functional sub-committees of the Core Group (permanent)
- Task and Finish groups (short term groups)
- Specialty committees (Action Groups) – the Core Group will appoint one of its members as a Core Liaison Officer (CLO) to each Action Group.

Permanent groups, temporary committees and Action Groups will agree their terms of reference with the Core Group annually. Action Groups can establish short term task and finish groups to be agreed with the CLO.

Permanent Functional Committees are:

- The CLOG will consist of the liaison officers and facilitators and will be responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Action Groups.
- Administration will include operations and operational policy, HR, performance management, general administration and finance. This committee will also include Governance, strategy, performance evaluation and developing standards. The final element will be engagement. This includes external relations with citizens, mapping, communications, publicity and training.
- Enter & View will oversee Enter & View organisation and policy.

Action Groups

Action Groups exist or will be established as needed, will function within a framework agreed with the Core Group, and report to the CLOG on a regular basis. The groups will have to meet agreed standards in line with Core Group vision and values while demonstrating viability in their areas. Membership will include Core Group members and members of the public. A framework will be agreed under which such groups will establish links and *Work Plans* to maximize their impact in their areas of concern.)

Communications

A communications strategy is being developed and will cover internal and external communications. This will include access to those whose first language is not English, or who may require access to specific modes of communication such as those with hearing or visual problems. Resources to support this may need to be separately identified.

Governance

This includes:

- Model/ rules of engagement/performance management and risk assessment
- Methods of working covering a variety of relationships
- Dispute codes of conduct which will include methods for coping with problems arising in the committees or sub groups

The Code of Conduct and vigilance over inclusivity, diversity and representation are the Core Values of the LINK. Any dilution of these or acceptance of inappropriate behaviour, language or attitude must be acted against,

Training

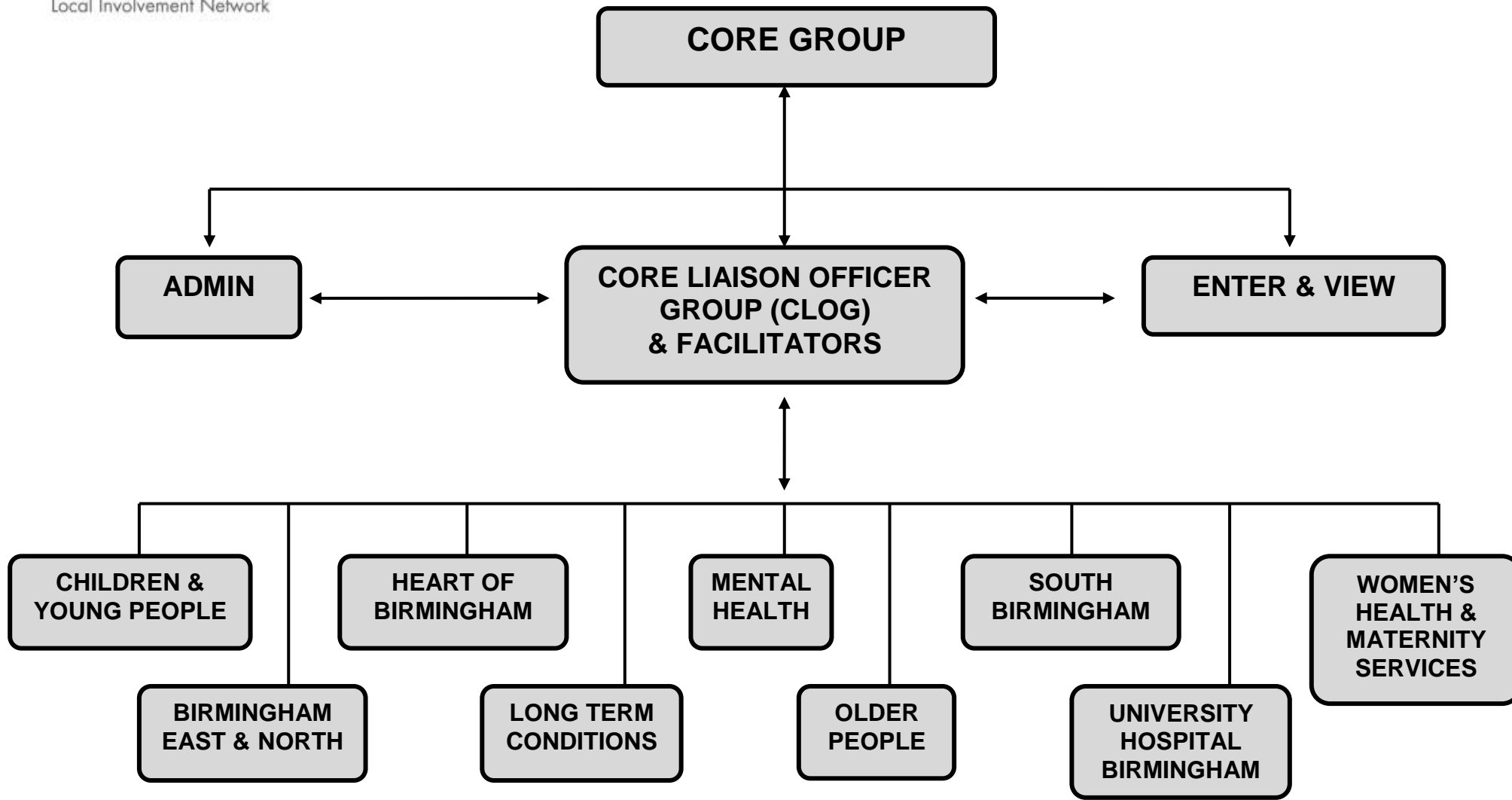
Birmingham LINK has already started basic training. Core Group members will be required to attend key events based on a skills audit and training needs analysis.

Strategic Plan

A structured proposal will be updated annually in agreement with the Advisory Group and Birmingham LINK.

Appendices

1. Overall structure plan
2. Core Group membership
3. Role of the Chair / Vice-Chairs
4. Functions of the Administration Committee
5. Functions of the Core Liaison Officer Group
6. Code of Conduct





BIRMINGHAM LINK CORE GROUP ELECTION RESULTS (updated 03.05.2010)

INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIVES:

- BARRY ABELL
- JOHN BARNES
- RITA BAYLEY
- BRIAN HANSON
- NICK HAY
- RUTH LEECH
- JEAN LUCAS
- PETER MAYER
- RAJINDER RATTU
- JEAN ROOKES
- MICHAEL TYE
- SHAZAD ZAMAN

INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING A GROUP OR ORGANISATION:

- CHARLES ALLDRICK (*Birmingham Centre for Inclusive Living*)
- MARK BENT (*Cherry Orchard Neighbourhood Forum*)
- NICHOLAS FLINT (*Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kidney Patient's Association*)
- NORMAN HOWELL MBE (*Birmingham Older People's Reference Group*)
- HARDEEP KAUR (*Birmingham Sandwell & Solihull Cardiac Stroke Network*)
- SALMA LOKAT (*Mashriq Challenge Resource Centre*)
- PETER ROOKES (*Birmingham Council of Faiths*)
- PAT THOMAS (*Birmingham Carer's Association*)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

- ELSIE GAYLE
- STEPH KEEBLE
- MAISIE SAUNDERS
- MANJIT SINGH

ROLE OF THE CHAIR/VICE-CHAIRS

1. The Chair and Vice-Chairs should be elected from the membership of the Core Group. Nominations should be invited ahead of the meeting at which the election takes place. Nominees should give their agreement to stand for election and provide a brief résumé of their appropriate experience and reasons for standing.
2. The role of the Chair/Vice-Chairs is firstly to ensure that meetings are conducted in a business-like manner, facilitating the expression of views from all members in a concise manner and guiding meetings towards arriving at decisions, if possible by consensus, if not by taking a vote. Secondly, the Chair/Vice-Chairs will guide the operation of LINK between meetings by agreeing appropriate representation at meetings of other bodies with which LINK has a legitimate relationship. Thirdly, the Chair/Vice-Chairs will work with other members to facilitate good relationships with all stakeholders.
3. The Chair and Vice-Chairs will initially take office for a period of 2 years and may stand for election for a further period of 2 years, subject to their continued membership of the LINK Core Group.
4. The Chair/Vice Chairs, as part of the administration group, will ensure that appropriate action is taken on issues agreed following each meeting and prepare the agenda for the next meeting.

Operation of the Core Group

1. Core Group meetings should take place no less frequently than every 2 months.
2. The agenda should be sent to members not less than 7 days prior to the meeting taking place, with copies of all papers to be discussed.
3. The meeting will be chaired by the Chair, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair.
4. Members should endeavour to attend all meetings or send their apology. In the event of a member not attending for three meetings in any period of twelve consecutive months, and if no satisfactory explanation is received their membership of the Core Group will cease.
5. The administration and minutes of the meeting will be dealt with by the host in conjunction with the Admin Sub-Group.
6. All Core Group members should participate in at least one Action group. There is no restriction on Core Group members participating in more than one group.
7. Members of the Core Group attending conferences and other external events should report back the main points to the Core Group.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The following tasks will be included in the functions of the Administration Committee: the method of carrying out these functions will be determined by the Committee and might include, for example, establishment of specific Task-and-Finish Groups or delegation to a particular person or people.

The membership of the Administration Committee will be formed from the Core Group although it may include and co-opt non-Core Group members who have particular experience and expertise which would be of benefit to the Committee, subject to the majority on the Committee or any sub-group always being formed by Core Group members.

Admin

1. To involve all members of the Core Group in the work of the LINK.
2. Follow up any appropriate issues from Core Group meetings and prepare agendas etc.
3. Ensure that all correspondence and requests for involvement are appropriately actioned.
4. Develop a recognised ID system, appropriate stationery and business cards.
5. Ensure Core Group has copies of the BeBirmingham 2016 Summary and the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA).
6. Develop efficient and effective record-keeping and administrative systems paying particular attention to records of stakeholders worked with and how/why they have been worked with; this will include developing as comprehensive contact lists as possible.
7. Determine draft operational policies for agreement by the Core Group.
8. Carry out a skills audit and build a database of skills.

Finance

1. Maintain financial viability, use resources effectively and control and report on finances in accordance with the requirements set by Secretary of State for Health, the Birmingham Health OSC and the LINK project manager (lifted from Board responsibility suggestions!).
2. Ensure that budgets and income and expenditure statements are prepared and presented to the Core Group.
3. Draft financial standing orders which will determine responsibility for approving expenditure.

Engagement

1. To engage the communities of Birmingham to put forward their views of health and social care in the City and work towards improving the percentage of people who feel they have the ability to influence decision-making in Birmingham.
2. To ensure that the LINK is promoted and new members attracted.
3. To develop surveys and research as needed.
4. Add individuals and groups to the database and facilitate their involvement in the work of LINK.
5. Work with the host in developing future engagement activities and determining the criteria to be collected.

6. Agree the mechanism for enabling people on the data base to be involved with action groups and other LINK activities.
7. Develop a marketing and communications strategy.
8. Develop the public interface through electronic and other means.

Performance and Strategy

1. Formulate a draft strategy, in consultation with the host for approval by the core group and deal with any future issues related to the strategy: Strategy to be revised as required but at least annually.
2. Work with the LINK Project Manager to ensure regular performance evaluation of the LINK and its various committees and the Host organisation.
3. Develop training packages as required by the results of (1) or other needs which may arise.
4. Meet all statutory requirements and guidance, legal and contractual obligations, safety hazard notices and advice relating to the safety of the public, health and social care staff and patients, personal privacy and patient confidentiality.
5. To develop a protocol and flow-chart for what should happen in the events of problems or conflicts arising within an action group, to disseminate this information to LINK members and to act as arbiter in such situations.
6. Develop standards for engagement, communication and representation.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CORE LIAISON OFFICER GROUP (CLOG)

The CLOG would be composed of

- a) all CLOs
- b) all Host facilitators

The functions of the CLOG would include, among the general task of ensuring co-operation between Action Groups

1. To share Workplans and look at areas of common concern which may be referred to the Core Group and to prevent duplication.
2. To discuss any problems which have arisen.
3. Build up relationships with relevant authorities, concentrating particularly on Commissioners, Be Birmingham (and especially the Health & Well-Being Partnership), relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committees, JSNA and the LINK Advisory Group.
4. To discuss methods of 'scoping' which the groups are employing.
5. To discuss relationships with Stakeholders.
6. To ensure maximum information sharing and co-ordination.
7. To decide upon priorities which could be recommended to the Core Group.
8. To determine how areas not covered by existing Action Groups should be dealt with and make appropriate recommendations to the Core Group.
9. Evidence the LINKs success in affecting the commissioning and provisioning of health and social care services.
10. Evidence success and changes effected through the involvement of the Birmingham LINK.
11. Evidence failures to effect when effort has been made and to record why LINK was unsuccessful.



BIRMINGHAM LINK

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct sets out what you can expect from the LINK and what is expected from you as a Birmingham LINK member.

If the Link Host does not meet your expectations please speak to us about your concerns. Our complaints policy can also be referred to.

Adherence to the 'Public Service Values' (the Nolan Principles) is integral to the membership of the LINK and this Code of Conduct will help to clarify and set out the details of this duty. A condition of membership to the LINK is close adherence to the Code of Conduct. Any breaches of the code could lead to action being brought under the Birmingham LINKs Standards of Conduct Policy.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

I understand that as a member of Birmingham LINK, I will:

- Seek out and listen to the views of patients, carers and the public, especially those individuals and groups whose voices are not usually heard.
- Conduct myself and act in a reasonable way in relation to staff or volunteers or members of the public I work with or meet as a member of the Birmingham LINK.
- Raise issues for consideration by the Birmingham LINK which are based on evidence from patients or the public which demonstrate that this is a matter of wider concern
- Not disclose confidential and sensitive information unless there is a legal duty to do so, for example, in the interest of public safety.
- Ensure that people are aware of who can deal with complaints about personal or individual treatment, such as the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service (ICAS), Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Care Quality Commission.
- Endeavour to attend training and other opportunities to develop my understanding of the Birmingham LINK and health and social care structures.

- Let the LINK know of any changes to my employment or personal circumstances which could affect my membership of the Birmingham LINK.
- Declare any possible conflict of interest, or anything that might be perceived by other people as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises to the LINK who will keep the Register of Interests updated.
- Comply with relevant legislation including equal opportunities, discrimination, human rights, data protection and freedom of information.
- Not accept gifts of hospitality which could be seen as trying to influence the independence, decisions or activities of the Birmingham LINK.
- Treat all people with respect and behave in a way that does not discriminate against or exclude anyone.

WORKING IN THE LINK

It is likely that your participation in the LINK will vary at different times. You may want to have a permanent membership, interested in everything that the Birmingham LINK undertakes and become part of any working group, or you may only want to be active when particular issues important to your group / organisation arise. You may wish to be kept up to date via newsletter so that you feel informed and involved. It's up to you how and when you get involved.

The following provides an outline of general rules of conduct which may apply depending on your current level of involvement.

I understand that as a member of the Birmingham LINK, I will:

- Be committed to playing an active role in the Birmingham LINK, contributing to meetings and being involved with working groups and other projects.
- Prepare for meetings and events and send apologies when I cannot attend or will be late.
- Listen to and respect the views and experiences of the Birmingham LINK members, and support fellow members to contribute to the work of the LINK.
- Ensure that if I am going to have difficulty undertaking work or meetings associated with the Birmingham LINK that I let the relevant person know as soon as possible.
- Promote and present other relevant views which may not always be the same as my own.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

- Not go against the majority view of the Birmingham LINK once a decision has been democratically taken, but I may request that my viewpoint, if it varies from the majority, is recorded in the minutes.
- Only undertake work and carry out visits in line with the action plan and protocols agreed by the Birmingham LINK and only when I have taken part in and passed the necessary training.
- Have the general agreement of the Birmingham LINK before speaking, writing or attending meetings on behalf of the LINK.
- Ensure that when I am representing the Birmingham LINK at a meeting or event, that I am speaking on behalf of the group and not myself
- Feedback to other members of the Birmingham LINK when I attend anything on the LINKs behalf. A 'meeting report' feedback form to be completed within two weeks of attending the activity

I understand that Birmingham LINK will endeavour to provide me with:

- Assistance to undertake my work with the Birmingham LINK.
- Appropriate support and materials to carry out my LINK activities.
- Advice and guidance in dealing with any difficulties I am having and support in situations that are new to me.
- Appropriate re-imbusement for the help I need to take a full part in the work of the Birmingham LINK such as interpreter, translations, advocate, carer support and travel.
- An introduction to the Birmingham LINK when I join which may include meeting relevant individuals and organisations. Extracting the right information including annual reports, work plans and minutes of previous meetings.
- Training in areas I have highlighted which will help me in my involvement with the Birmingham LINK.
- Accurate and current information sent in a format (such as email or post) that I have agreed.
- Meetings held at an accessible venue and at an appropriate and convenient time as requested by members of the Birmingham LINK.
- An appropriate level of insurance when taking part in Birmingham LINK activities which are carried out in line with SLS support, guidance and regulations.
- Relevant ID for those members appointed by the LINK working group for the purposes of entering and viewing premises in accordance with the Local Involvement Network Regulations 2008.

GENERAL CONDUCT DURING MEETINGS

- Switch mobile phones off or turn to silent throughout the duration of the meeting.
- Keep in mind the agenda when making contributions and also content and length of contribution.
- Raise points of discussion, questions and remarks, through the Chair so as not to prolong the meeting any more than necessary.
- Show courtesy and respect for others opinions-all members have the right to be heard on matters relevant to the agenda items discussed, members of the Birmingham LINK treating colleagues, staff and visitors with respect.
- Do not use sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic or any other language that may be considered offensive to any group or individual.
- Members to observe time limits for discussions.
- The Chair has the power to curtail discussion as appropriate. A member dominating the discussion may be asked by the Chair to give way to other members wishing to speak.
- No member should complain on behalf of the Birmingham LINK without prior discussion and agreement at a meeting of the LINK working group.
- A binding vote to be taken on issues upon which members disagree. The Chair does not have an individual vote unless it is necessary for the Chair to enter a casting vote in the event of a split decision.
- If the Code of Conduct is breached during a meeting, the Chair / Host has the right to suspend and withdraw support for the meeting.