

The Reading Compact

Alan Magness

The Compact has only met twice so far this year - 17th Feb and 16th June - and most of the discussions have centred on 2 sets of issues:

1. The revised grants & commissioning process being implemented by Reading BC, and issues that have arisen in relation to the de-commissioning of services that were previously grant-aided (in particular services provided through RCRE)
2. Revised terms of reference for the Compact group itself. In summary:
The Reading Compact is about promoting understanding and co-operation between the town's numerous voluntary and community groups and the statutory agencies and partnership bodies'.

To do so it will:

- promote the Compact with all groups, act as champions of Compact Principles
- act as a critical friend
- set up appropriate mechanisms to share innovation, engagement and action
- by conversing to acknowledge issues and to take a journey through debate
- development of appropriate Compact appendices as pages or links e.g. How to handle de-commissioning of services

The next meeting of the group is on Thursday 15th September at which these 2 themes will continue to be the focus of discussions. There is some question over whether there really is the appetite to implement the proposed new role for the Compact as outlined above, in the context of statutory agencies focussing inwards on their own structures, costs and levels of service as cut-backs in funding really begin to bite.

Reading Local Involvement Network (LINK) Report

John Rogers

Work Plan Focus for 2011/12

A Reading LINK Community Engagement Survey was carried out in 2010, which was a valuable tool for exploring the issues that matter to people in Reading. As a result of what local people told the LINK in the survey and by feeding back their experiences, Reading LINK have agreed the focus of their work for 2011/12. The over arching themes will be on Access (to information and services) and Customer care (treating people appropriately and leaving people feeling satisfied).

The focus will be around 1 or 2 social care services such as:

- Preventative services (including reablement)
- Needs to Carers

- Review of personal care needs
- Non personal Care needs and support
- Provision of information, advice and support
- Personal Budgets

And 1 or 2 mental health services such as:

- BHFT Next Generation Care Proposals
- Older People's Mental Health Services
- Dementia services
- Access to Talking Therapies for patients in Reading
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Access to mental health services

Work is underway with local groups to further define the areas to look at in more detail.

The survey also identified out-patient appointments as an area for concern, the LINK will review this later in the year.

LINK Reports and Recommendations

LINK has completed work and made recommendations to commissioners and providers about local services in the following areas:

Appointments at the Eye Clinic at the Royal Berkshire Hospital

Access to consultant for Multiple Sclerosis at the Royal Berkshire Hospital

Aspects of Quality of Domiciliary Care Services

Access to NHS Dentists

Full details can be found on the LINK website www.readinglink.org.uk

LINK Host Staff Changes

Elaine Holloway retired at the end of March 2011. Merlyn Barratt has joined the host team as a Part Time Development worker supporting the mental health work. Sheena Masoero has changed her role to Part Time Development Worker to support the social care work. A new Involvement Manager, Mandeep Sira joined the LINK team in August 2011. From 14th September the LINK team will be based in the RVA offices in Cross Street.

NHS Reforms

The Reforms called for LINKs evolution into Local Healthwatch and this was originally planned for April 2012, then delayed to July 2012 due to the Government Listening Exercise, this has now been further delayed until October 2012. The Reading LINK Transition Group continues to monitor the changes and has had early dialogue with the GP Consortia (now to be called Clinical Commissioning Groups, as they have to include other professionals not just GP's) and is making preparations for early involvement in the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board.

Building for Strength

Tom Hudson

There have been a number of notable successes this quarter in the Faith Forum's development work. Overall, 10 groups have been worked with on 14 different occasions. Whilst this is slightly down in terms of numbers to previous months, the quality of that work has been encouraging.

Below are some of the highlights:

Project Support:

- Working with a shared enterprise between Hexham Road community centre and a church, a football club for local children has been started. Funding of £4000 has been gained and support provided in registering with the FA, setting up the club and ensuring members have the right training and clearances and the development of the volunteer base.
- Support provided to a group running a summer-camp for the Muslim community. This included provision of training, CRBs, support with ensuring good monitoring and feedback was attained, and on-the-day support.
- Following brokerage by the Faith Forum development worker, an African Church is now housing SPARK, an educational charity in Whitley.

Training:

- Overall training numbers have exceeded targets considerably. Fifty-one training places have been attended by members of 5 groups in training sessions on fire safety, first aid, planning and writing funding bids and universal safeguarding training. The annual target for the project is 21 training places.
- The Faith Forum development worker has now been trained by DECS team at Reading Borough Council to train voluntary, community and faith groups in Universal Safeguarding. If your group wants to be accredited as having attended this training, get in contact. Training for Faith Forum members is free.

Integration and access of services:

- Whilst efforts to build relationships between a number of African churches and the local police through encouraging the delivery of crime stats for prayer has been slow in implementation, an incidental side-benefit has been one particular church getting to know the Police a lot better and becoming the only African or Christian members on the Independent Advisory Group.
- During Ramadan, an interview was arranged to be held on the Ramadan radio station, to explain the opportunities available for care for older people and how to access that care
- A health trainer, Ukonu Obasi attended an iftar meal (communal fast-breaking) to speak about the health trainer initiative