



South Gloucestershire Local Involvement Network LINK News

January 2009

The LINK so far

LINK has been working hard since it signed its contract with The Care Forum in July 2008. The Care Forum will act as the 'host' organisation providing staff and facilities to support the LINK in its work.

There is an Interim steering group in place. Its meetings are open to all until April 2009 and many members from different parts of South Glos community have come along to meetings. However, some local communities are not yet well represented: Black and Minority Ethnic Communities; Disabled People; Young People; working people. Whilst the steering group is still an interim group (until spring 2009) the meetings are still open to anyone who is interested to come along.

The LINK's

Communications group has been meeting and is ready to make a decision on who will provide the website for the LINK and also design the logo and 'look' of the LINK. The website will be launched in the next couple of months so look out for it!

The LINK is planning its big launch event for the spring of 2009, when it will showcase its work so far to South Gloucestershire. The event will include a chance to meet some LINK participants, information about NHS South Gloucestershire and about adult community care, there will also be free refreshments and a Question and Answer session with a panel of local health and social care commissioners and providers.

If interested in finding out more about any of the above contact the LINK

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Commission
Survey
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Working Task Groups

So that the LINK has the strongest voice possible in influencing health and social care it needs groups of people who have a common interest to work together on looking at specific services.

The LINK is setting up the following groups:

- Community Care and Housing
- Direct Payments
- NHS South Gloucestershire (South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust)
- Frenchay Hospital Group
- Yate Community Health and Social Care Centre Group
- Great Western Ambulance Services
- Mental Health Services
- Communications Group
- Community Engagement Group
- Governance Group
- Equalities and Diversity Group
- Chinese sub-group: C-LINK

The life of the groups vary and the work involved is

voluntary but your expenses will be paid.

Each group will decide its own objectives and time scales. Each group will also elect someone to sit on the LINK's core group from April 2009 onwards.

If you think there are any other issues or aspects of health and social care that the LINK should look at

let us know and we will see if anyone else also has that concern and a working task group is needed to look at it.

The LINK can also look at issues in other ways: by raising issues in its e-bulletin (also sent out in paper copy); through surveys of its existing participants; holding meetings or workshops to find out other people's views; using the internet (when its web page is developed) to find out what people think.



Interim Steering Group

The LINK's interim steering group meets every month in a variety of locations across South Gloucestershire and at different times of day.

The steering group is an interim group until Spring 2009 and so anyone can come along to any steering group meeting.

The next few meetings are on:

Wednesday February 4th; 2pm until 4pm; Hawkesbury Parish Hall,

Hawkesbury Upton

Monday March 2nd; 7pm until 9pm; venue to be arranged

Tuesday April 7th; 10am until 12pm; venue in Easter Compton

Contact the LINK for more information

Representing the LINK

Its very important that the LINK is represented at some of the meetings held by the local NHS Trusts and the local authority. This is what Sean Bolton had to say about representing the LINK:

I was involved in the set up of LINKs. So far I have represented South Gloucestershire LINK at the Cossham Hospital reference group. I have also worked with the South Gloucestershire PCT, being involved in the tendering process of services.

My experience so far is that that we seem to be on track to be fully set up by the end of March 2009. The staff have been very helpful with putting together reports for the various meetings.

The LINK Chair Bill Flook says this about representing the LINK:

What I hope is that with the extra powers which we now have through the LINK, we will be able to make the statutory bodies carry out the things that we have been telling them that we need for more than a decade.

Margaret Adams—LINK Participant said this:

Over the past year I have been attending meetings of the Frenchay Project Board since its inception with their re-introduction of stakeholder meetings. This is an ongoing project which originally would have been completed in March 2009, but which has been given an extension due to the complexity of the assignment.

In due course we intend to have a further stakeholders meeting once we have crossed the T's and dotted the I's of the material we wish to present.

Other LINK participants have represented the LINK on the following groups and meetings:

- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust's LINK stakeholder Group
- Frenchay Project Board
- Bath and North East Somerset Primary Care Trust's Gynaecological Cancer Review
- NHS South Gloucestershire's Improving Patient Experience Committee
- Yate Community Health Centre Local Involvement Group
- Great Western Ambulance Trust's LINK stakeholder Group

If you would like to get involved with the LINK by supporting its representation on any of these groups please let us know.



New opportunities come along all the time or there may be an NHS Trust or Local Authority group that you think the LINK should be represented on—if so tell us about it.



The LINK out and about in 2008

The LINK has been out and about a lot in 2008 telling people about the LINK and how they can get involved.

Sarah Booker (Development and Information Worker) has been to several Safer & Stronger groups around South Gloucestershire including Yate; Downend and Bitton. Sarah also spoke at the South Gloucestershire Chinese People's Associations information day in November.

The LINK also recently had a display at the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust's

Equality and Diversity Event

The LINK had stands at the Older People's event in Staple Hill, the Bradley Stoke Coffee morning and at several Annual General Meetings including the Alzheimer's Society; The Care Forum, People First and the Disability Equality Network.



If there are any local events that you think the LINK should be at, or if you would like to take LINK information to an event or display it at one; please let us know

The LINK team:

Sarah, Pat and Genise



Would you like the LINK to come and talk to your community or voluntary group?

We are very happy to come out to talk to any group who is interested in the LINK.

Give us a call and let us know where and when and we will do our best to come and see you.

Could you write for the LINK newsletter?

If you would like to write something about your experiences of LINK or a health and social care issue concerning you, please email or send it to us in paper copy.



We cannot promise that all articles will be published, and articles may be edited.

LINK Events in 2008

The LINK put on several events in November 2008; in two of these it collaborated with the Bristol LINK

On November 21st the NHS ratings event took place. The purpose of this was to let LINK participants know about the work of the NHS's watchdog, the HealthCare Commission. LINK participants also spent some time discussing ways that the LINKs can be involved in the HealthCare Commission's 2009 ratings. Karen Taylor—one of the HealthCare Commissions Assessors – came to talk to the LINKs. Her presentation is available from the LINK. She was asked several questions by LINK participants, including:

Q: Who are the team of assessors?

A: Karen explained she is one of them, and that the Health Care Commission also employs the other assessors. The team has a mixture of qualifications

Q: Are the assessors given targets?

A: Yes

Q: What about complaints?

A: Complaints systems are very hard to access, but complaints is an area included in the NHS ratings reports

On November 26th the LINKs invited representatives of all the community and voluntary groups working with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities across both areas. This was really well attended by a variety of organisations including Dhekbahl, the South Gloucestershire Asian Project; South Gloucestershire Chinese Association, and Cancer

Help for Ethnic Communities (CHEC). It included speakers from Bristol Primary Care Trust and South Gloucestershire Council. Bill Flook (South Gloucestershire LINK Chair) and Andrew Yerbury (Bristol LINK participant) talked about their experiences of the LINKs. As a consequence both LINKs are now working more closely with the groups that attended and that work will continue to develop in 2009.



Finally the South Gloucestershire LINK had its Visioning Event on December 17th. This was to give everyone involved a chance to take stock, look at how far we have come and where we need to get to in 2009.

The LINK now has a list of broad priorities for its work in 2009, including: Increasing participation and representation; a good balance of activities across health and social care. These were discussed at the January Interim Steering Group meeting and will be taken forward by the Governance group when it begins to meet in February.

If you would like more information about any of these events contact us.

About the LINK

The LINK is a network of local people, organisations and groups that want to make health and social care services better.

You can become part of the new way for local people to have their say about local health and social care services and about the way they are run and developed by joining the new South Gloucestershire Local Involvement Network.

The LINK will be expected to represent everyone and will work with health and social care professionals to make sure your voice is heard. This includes, for example, day centres and care homes, hospitals and GP surgeries, as well as health

promotion.

The LINK will be able to make reports and recommendations and get a reply within a set amount of time, go into some types of services to see what they do, comment on local services and receive a response from local authority commissioners and overview and scrutiny committees.

You can participate in the LINK as much or as little as you wish from receiving information regularly to being involved in working groups.



Want to find out more about how you can participate in the South Gloucestershire LINK?



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info@linksouthglos.org.uk/sarahbooker@linksouthglos.org.uk

Fill out the tear off slip below & post it, or drop it in to us at:

The Care Forum, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Bristol BS16 2QQ



I would like to find out more about the South Gloucestershire LINK

Name:

Address:

Contact telephone No.

Any information you give us will remain confidential & will not be passed to any individuals or other organisations without your express permission.