

Telford & Wrekin Local Involvement Network
Annual Report: 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010
Summary

Overview

Over the course of the last year Telford & Wrekin LINK helped the community to make its voice louder. In surveys, focus groups, meetings and other events the public, service users and carers told us about their experiences and concerns about health and social care; they gave praise when services were excellent — and suggested improvements when they were lacking.

Chief executives, directors and commissioners from the local authority, the primary care trust and the hospital trust met the LINK to discuss this feedback and gave commitments to improve services where needed, especially in relation to:

- acute care in local hospitals
- the accident and emergency service at the Princess Royal Hospital
- hospital maternity services
- family doctors and dentists
- the out-of-hours emergency health service (Shropdoc)
- the future of services at the Princess Royal Hospital and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital
- the emotional support that is essential when permanent sight loss is diagnosed
- the provision of end-of-life palliative care
- safeguarding and supporting vulnerable adults, and older people and their carers
- foot care for older people and people with diabetes
- support for people with dementia, and for their carers.

Some real changes were made. For example, NHS Telford & Wrekin said it would use feedback from our Values Exchange online survey when it reviews the contract for out-of-hours emergency care later this year, and it has also agreed to fund a part-time eye clinic liaison officer for a 12-month trial period following lobbying by the local association for blind people, which the LINK supported.

Making a difference: activities and achievements in 2009/10

Meetings

The first annual general meeting of Telford & Wrekin LINK took place on Monday 18 May 2009 in Meeting Point House in Telford. It was attended by 27 members of the public and nine representatives from local voluntary organisations including Telford & Wrekin Senior Citizens' Forum, Listen not Label (the newly-formed user-led organisation) and the Urostemy Association, as well as the local authority, Telford & Wrekin Primary Care Trust and the West Midlands Ambulance Service. No election was required because the founding members of the LINK's Central Management Group (CMG) were elected until March 2010.

The CMG met seven times. Its sub-groups also met, as follows: acute services (5); enter and view (3); end-of-life group (2); social care (2); and work planning (3).

A public meeting was held on 29 January in Meeting Point House to inform people about the forthcoming inspection of adult social care by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We invited feedback from service users, and this led to over 50 responses which we shared with the CQC inspector and the borough council.

The CMG's goals for 2009/10

The LINK's work plan for 2009/10 was agreed at the annual general meeting. A list of potential priorities was presented by the CMG and endorsed by those present, which led to the following six key goals being set:

- **Key goal 1:** To make the LINK stronger and more effective.
- **Key goal 2:** To raise awareness of the LINK among community and voluntary organisations and encourage more of them to participate in its work.
- **Key goal 3:** To develop a database of issues in adult social care services based on evidence of need and gaps in provision.
- **Key goal 4:** To develop effective working relationships with policy makers, commissioners and providers in areas where feedback from service users indicates that improvements are required.
- **Key goal 5:** To exercise the LINK's statutory powers: (i) to seek information when scrutinising health and adult social care services; (ii) to visit premises where health and social care is being delivered; and (iii) to contribute a third-party commentary on the annual health checks submitted to the Care Quality Commission.
- **Key goal 6:** To scrutinise the provision of palliative care services and of accident and emergency services at the Princess Royal Hospital.

How the LINK worked towards achieving each of these goals is set out in detail in the full version of the annual report, which is available from the address on page 4.

Publicising the LINK's activities and promoting community involvement

Telford & Wrekin LINK worked hard in 2009/10 to raise awareness of the role of the LINK throughout the local community. Our programme of engagement activities included:

- distributing thousands of leaflets, flyers and information packs
- publicising our work on local radio and in the local press using full page advertisements and tear-off feedback forms
- erecting information stands in supermarkets, shopping centres and libraries, and at carnivals and other public events
- setting up our own website and Values Exchange, an online survey tool
- publishing *Voicing your views*, a quarterly newsletter (the first issue launched our '*Don't just grumble — praise or rumble!*' campaign to further encourage feedback from the public)
- organising public meetings
- making presentations to local community groups, voluntary organisations and parish councils
- carrying out face-to-face and telephone surveys and holding focus groups.

In 2009/10 we carried out the following surveys:

- April–June 2009: The *Have your say* survey, which invited the public to identify the services that work well and those that need to be improved.
- May–June 2009: A ‘spotlight on acute services’ survey of patients’ experiences of the care they have received in hospitals.
- October–November 2009: A survey to gauge public awareness of the proposals for the future of local health services.
- October 2009–ongoing: A survey of mother-and-toddler groups about maternity and family health services.
- January–February 2010: A survey of vulnerable adults and older people and their carers about their experiences of adult social care services.

In February and March 2010 the public took part in a series of nine ‘*Ask me another!*’ focus groups to help develop questions for the Patient Experience Tracker system for use in acute and community settings.

We also added our presence to a range of local events and promotions, including:

- Telford’s Big Care Debate (August–November 2009) to raise awareness of the government’s national consultation on options for the future funding of social care.
- ‘Community champions’ campaign (December 2009–January 2010): a recruitment drive for people who want to work with the LINK to improve local services.
- Your Community Matters (March 2010) to raise awareness of the LINK.

Working with our partners

From the outset we have encouraged all voluntary organisations and community groups in Telford to see themselves as members of the local network even if they are not directly involved in health and social care since what they do contributes to community well-being.

We currently have 37 local organisations on our database. Towards the end of the year four additional organisations indicated that they would like to become more actively involved — Accord Housing Association, Age Concern Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Senior Citizens’ Forum, and Listen not Label.

Organisations on which the LINK was formally represented in 2009/10

- Telford & Wrekin Borough Council
- Telford & Wrekin NHS Trust
- Shropshire County PCT
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust

Some of the other organisations the LINK engaged with in 2009/10

- Care Quality Commission
- South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- West Midlands Ambulance Service.
- Telford & Wrekin Council for Voluntary Services

How the LINK is funded and what it spent

The full version of the annual report contains five tables showing in detail where the LINK's funding comes from, and how it was spent in 2009/10.

The total amount available to the LINK in 2009/10 was £160,465; this included the underspend carried forward from the 2008/09 budget and a rate rebate in addition to the grant.

Taken together, the cost of running the LINK (£33,586.23) and the cost of operating the hosting service (£87,158.66) meant the amount actually spent in 2009/10 came to £120,744.89, resulting in a balance at year end (to carry forward to 2010/11) of £39,720.11.

What the LINK plans to do in 2010/11

The annual report is rounded off with a summary of the LINK's draft work plan priorities for the coming year. These are:

Key goal 1: To continue to raise public awareness of the LINK.

Key goal 2: To ensure that people who are 'seldom heard' have a stronger voice.

Key goal 3: To ensure that people who need dialysis or a kidney transplant receive the care and support they need.

Key goal 4: To ensure that patients in the Princess Royal Hospital and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital receive the best care possible.

Key goal 5: To ensure that people who use mental health services receive the care and support they need when and where they need it.

Key goal 6: To ensure that people who need social care and their carers receive a fair and thorough assessment of their needs and a care 'package' that meets their needs.

This summary is also available in Braille and large print. The full version of the 2009/10 annual report is available upon request from the address below. It can also be downloaded from our website.

If you would like to receive our newsletter, *Voicing your views*, please let us have your contact details.

To find out how you can get involved in the LINK please request an information pack from:

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Donnington, Telford TF2 7BF**

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