

Telford & Wrekin LINK

Press release

13 May 2010

Local health watchdog to hold public meeting on 19 May

The Telford & Wrekin Local Involvement Network (LINK) will hold its annual general meeting on Wednesday 19 May 2010 at Meeting Point House in Telford. The meeting is open to all members of the public and press and will start promptly at 7pm.

After launching the organisation's annual report for 2009/10 and presenting its draft work plan for 2010/11 there will be elections to the LINK's 16-seat governing body — the Central Management Group — for the coming year.

Election nomination forms and information packs can be obtained by calling **01952 614180** or e-mailing **enquiries@telfordandwrekinlink.org.uk**. They can also be downloaded from the LINK website — **www.telfordandwrekinlink.org.uk** — from where the annual report will be available later in the month.

Jean Gulliver, current chair of the LINK, said: "The LINK is the voice of local people on health and social care. It's not just a talking shop — we really make things happen. In the last year we've put pressure on the authorities to make changes to the emergency GP service to provide more out-of-hours home visits, and we've helped to secure funding for an eye clinic liaison officer at the Princess Royal Hospital. We've also helped to ensure that people who are terminally ill are treated with greater dignity and respect at the end of their lives. Everything we did last year — and the difference we made — is set out in detail in the annual report."

Following the launch of the report the meeting will be addressed by the Reverend Pam Bickley, director of patient and community engagement at NHS Telford & Wrekin (the local primary care trust). Rev Bickley will talk about the increasing importance of patient and public involvement in healthcare planning and how people can get more involved in influencing the decisions that are made.

She will also give an update about the long-term strategy for local healthcare, the next phase of which will be a public consultation exercise on the options for the way services are delivered at the Princess Royal Hospital and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

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For more information please contact Linda Seru, director of the LINK hosting service, on 01952 614180. If you intend to come to the meeting please let us know so that we can make sure that seating and refreshments, etc, are available.

Notes for editors

Telford & Wrekin LINK is one of 152 local involvement networks ('LINKs') that were set up by Act of Parliament in 2008 to give everyone who uses publicly-funded health and social care services in England a stronger 'voice' and powers to influence the kinds of services that are provided and the way that they are delivered.

LINKs have legal powers to look into any aspect of publicly-funded health and social care regardless of whether it is delivered by the National Health Service, the local authority, a 'not-for-profit' organisation (such as a voluntary organisation) or an independent provider (such as a private business). In terms of healthcare the LINK can look at any service that is provided for any age group, but its powers are limited to services for adults when it comes to social care.

The right to scrutinise local services means that the LINK is effectively the independent local 'watchdog' for health and social care.