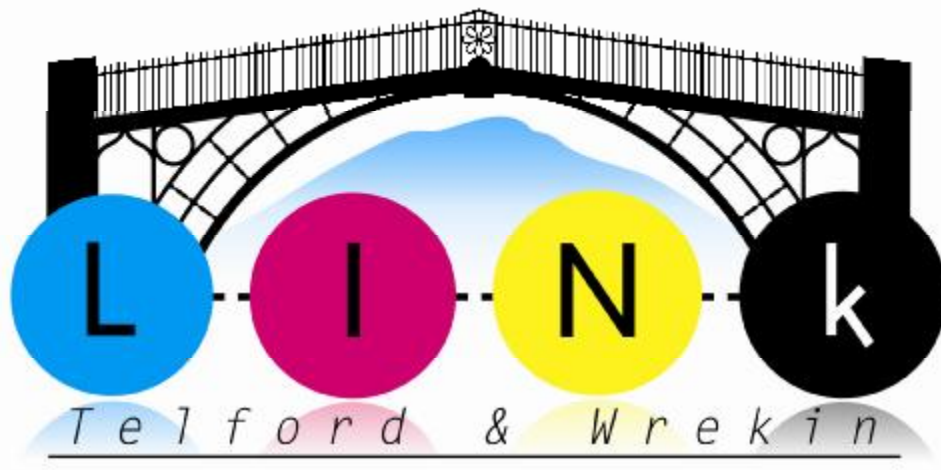


**Telford & Wrekin
Local Involvement Network**



Annual Report

1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009



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This annual report is available in two versions: a full version (this one) and a summary. Both can be downloaded from the website or supplied as an attachment to an email, and both are available in a range of alternative formats including Braille, large print and audio tape. Translation into a number of languages other than English can be arranged on request.

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Introduction

Whenever you hear the results of a public opinion survey on the news, are you one of those people who retorts: 'They never asked me what I think!'

Have you ever wondered who decides what services are provided by your family doctor or your local hospital?

Do you get annoyed at seeing waste and duplication, or frustrated at the fact that the quality of health and social care services is excellent in one area yet poor in another?

Do you think that some people don't get the support they need from social services to help them lead more independent and fulfilling lives?

Armed with statutory powers to ensure that health and social care services are planned, commissioned and delivered in the best interests of local people, Telford & Wrekin LiNK has been set up to address precisely these kinds of questions. We are determined to use the LiNK's unique powers to ensure that the people of Telford receive the best services possible.

Our aim is to make a real and lasting difference to the way that publicly-funded health and social care is provided. We will do this by:

- n asking local people what they think
- n looking into specific issues of concern to the community (for example, the range and quality of health and social care services, including gaps in provision, and other inequalities)
- n giving everyone who uses services — patients, carers, and their families and friends — the opportunity to suggest improvements to the services they receive
- n obtaining information about how services are planned, commissioned and delivered
- n visiting premises where publicly-funded health and social care services are delivered
- n referring matters that need investigating to a regulator such as the Quality Care Commission or the local Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At the moment our impact is limited as we are only a small number of individuals who have been trying to get the LiNK set up and running. Some of us are already involved in voluntary or community groups, others are individuals with an interest in health and social care — but what unites us is our desire to improve services for the people of Telford.

If you are interested in health and social care — and you must be, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this annual report! — why not take your interest a step further and join us to make Telford and Wrekin an even better place to live in. You will be made very welcome, so please do get in touch and find out more about how you can help us to make a real and lasting difference.

Bob Kiernan

Chair

Telford & Wrekin LiNK Central Management Group, 2008/09

About Telford & Wrekin LINK

Telford & Wrekin LINK is one of 152 local involvement networks ('LINKs') that were set up by Act of Parliament in 2007 to give everyone who uses (or has used, or may use) 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.

Assisted by a small group of professional staff known as the 'hosting service' (see *page 5*) each LINK is run by volunteers: ordinary people with first-hand experience of health and social care services who have been elected by their local communities to ensure that the services that are provided meet the needs, wants and aspirations of local people.

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 health care 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.

How Telford & Wrekin LINK is organised

Every LINK in the country is organised slightly differently, though the geographical boundaries within which each LINK operates are based on the boundaries of the unitary authority that is responsible for providing social services. (That is why in this area there is one LINK covering the Borough of Telford and Wrekin and another LINK covering Shropshire, though the Shropshire LINK calls itself by a different name: Community Involvement in Care and Health, or 'CInCH'.)

Telford & Wrekin LINK covers:

- n Telford South (Coalport, Ironbridge, Madeley, Sutton Hill, Coalbrookdale, Tweedale, Woodside)
- n Telford Central (Lawley, Dawley, Lightmoor, Aqueduct, Hollinswood, Town Centre, Randlay, Stafford Park, St George's)
- n North West Telford (Wellington, Shawbirch, Dothill)
- n Telford North East (St George's, Priorslee, Oakengates, Ketley, Leegomery, Hadley, Hortonwood, Trench, Donnington, Wrockwardine Wood)
- n Newport and the rural area of north Telford.

The Central Management Group and its sub-groups

The LINK's Central Management Group (CMG) is like a board of governors: it is responsible for determining policy and strategy but is accountable to the public. It consists of up to 16 elected or co-opted members — all volunteers — who have committed their time to run the LINK. In 2008/09 these were:

- n Roland Brown
- n Elizabeth Evans
- n David Edwards
- n Ann Fletcher
- n Lyn George
- n Jean Gulliver
- n Jo Havell (co-opted member)
- n Bob Kiernan (chair)
- n Val Lindley
- n Cliff Murray
- n Derek Tremayne
- n Dag Saunders (vice-chair).

The CMG was formed at an open public meeting on 25 September 2008 when 11 members were elected to stand until March 2010. Since then it has met on five occasions: on 8 October, 28 October (when an additional member was co-opted) and 9 December 2008, and on 11 February and 25 March 2009. The first annual general meeting took place on 18 May 2009 at Meeting Point House in Telford.

The CMG has set up three sub-groups that deal with all matters relating to:

- n the LINK's 'enter and view' policy which governs visits to health and social care premises by its authorised representatives
- n the strategic healthcare review consultation process
- n palliative ('end-of-life') care.

Each of these sub-groups will continue to meet to develop recommendations for service commissioners and providers. (A fourth sub-group has been set up to look at acute hospital services in 2009/10.)

The hosting service

In 2008 a three-year contract to provide the LINK hosting service was awarded to Staffordshire University. The role of the host is to enable the LINK members to carry out their activities by providing them with advice and organisational support. In 2008/09 the hosting service team consisted of:

- n Linda Seru, director
- n Jamie Christian, co-ordinator
- n Marie Jones, administrator.

The team's contact details are on page 11.

LINK workplan and achievements, 2008/09

The main focus of the LINK's work in 2008/09 has been to build a firm foundation for the future. Its priorities were:

- n to form a working group (the LINK Working Group) to establish robust governance structures and processes, including a constitution and code of conduct
- n to hold elections for the CMG, and to nominate a chair and a vice-chair
- n to develop an understanding of the powers, role and purpose of the CMG as the governing body of the LINK
- n to agree operational procedures and policies (for example, on members' declarations of interest, Criminal Records Bureau disclosures, expenses, and visits to premises)
- n to create a database of organisations with an interest in health and social care
- n to raise awareness of the LINK and encourage people to get involved in its work (for example, through issuing media releases, distributing flyers, and making presentations at community events)
- n to set up a website and an online survey tool called Values Exchange (to be used to promote public debate about ethical issues)
- n to identify the key 'stakeholders' from a range of statutory bodies, community and voluntary sector organisations and independent providers, and to develop a working relationship with them.

Setting up the LINK Working Group

The purpose of the working group was to develop robust and ethical governance arrangements for the LINK and to recruit staff for the hosting service. Initially 22 people responded to a call to set up the working group, including representatives from the following organisations:

- n Age Concern
- n Bridge House Care Ltd
- n Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)
- n Impact Alcohol Advisory Service
- n Madeley Parish Council
- n Newport Cottage Care Centre
- n South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- n Telford & Wrekin Senior Citizens' Forum
- n Telford Disability Forum
- n Telford Patient and Public Involvement Forum
- n Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership
- n Wellington Town Council
- n Wrekin Housing Trust.

Four meetings took place between May and July 2008 at which a constitution for the LINK and a code of conduct for members were drafted. Following consultation with local primary care trusts (PCTs), acute and mental health trusts, Telford Borough Council and community and voluntary sector organisations, the final drafts of these documents were agreed on 1 September 2008, after which elections were held for the CMG. The LINK constitution was formally adopted in December 2008.

The Central Management Group

Once the CMG was up and running it was invited to nominate representatives to sit on various committees of local health trusts and other bodies, such as the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Telford & Wrekin Council, which monitors the performance of the council's services. (A full list of the organisations on which the LINK is now formally represented is on page 8.) It also embarked on a programme of engagement, making contact with (or responding to expressions of interest from) a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations, either by giving presentations or attending conferences, meetings and similar events. (A list of some of the organisations the LINK engaged with 2008/09 is also on page 8.)

Influencing the strategic healthcare review

On 16 January 2009 the LINK was asked to co-chair (along with Shropshire CInCH) the Shropshire NHS Trusts and Shropshire County PCT Engagement and Communications Governance Group (ECCG), a group set up to influence the quality of the consultation process on the strategic healthcare review (*Developing health and healthcare: A strategy for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin*) that will determine the shape of local health services for the next 12 years. This review, which was developed during 2008 by senior medical and nursing staff and the directors of commissioning from the two primary care trusts and two acute trusts in the area, will cover every aspect of health and social care, from maternity and children's health services, planned care and mental health services to health promotion, long-term conditions, acute care and end-of-life (palliative) care.

So far the PCTs have held roadshows in Bridgnorth, Telford, Church Stretton, Wellington, and at the Princess Royal Hospital and the Oakengates Theatre.

Improving palliative care in Telford

On 2 March 2009 the Palliative Care Sub-group initiated a series of meetings with Shropshire County PCT's End of Life Team on current practices and national standards for caring for people at the end of their life with a view to informing the LINK's strategy for improving palliative care in Telford.

The LINK's use of its statutory powers

Requests for information

The LINK made no formal requests for information from health and social care providers in 2008/09. This was because the information it required was already in the public domain or was willingly supplied whenever an informal verbal request was made by the CMG or the hosting service.

Visits to premises

In December 2008 the Enter and View Sub-group formally adopted *Visiting service providers: policy, procedures and code of conduct for authorised representatives*, which sets out the LINK's statutory powers to enter and view premises where publicly-funded health and social care is delivered. (This document is available on request from the address on page 11; it can also be downloaded from the website.)

However, the sub-group decided to pilot the policy using CMG members and existing lay visitors before recruiting its first authorised representatives, so no formal visits were undertaken in the remaining three months of 2008/09.

Annual health check (third-party commentaries)

Because the LINK did not become fully operational until late December 2008 it was unable to make third-party commentaries to the Healthcare Commission's annual health check. The CMG wrote to the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust, Telford & Wrekin NHS Trust and the West Midlands Ambulance Service to explain this. (The intention in 2009/10 is to involve a wider range of local organisations and networks in the health check process, and a meeting has already been arranged with the Care Quality Commission to progress this.)

Working with partners

Organisations and bodies on which the LINK is formally represented

- n Joint Shropshire County and Telford & Wrekin PCTs GP Performance Committee
- n Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust Community Engagement Forum
- n Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Programme Governance, Membership and Constitution Steering Group
- n Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Stakeholder Steering Group
- n Shropshire NHS Trusts and Shropshire PCT Engagement and Communications Governance Group (co-chair with Shropshire CInCH*)
- n Shropshire County PCT Palliative Care Group
- n Telford & Wrekin Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- n Telford & Wrekin NHS Trust.

*Telford & Wrekin LINK co-chairs this committee with CInCH because their respective communities use some services that are provided in Shropshire and some that are provided in Telford and Wrekin.

Some of the organisations that Telford & Wrekin LINK engaged with in 2008/09

- n Care Quality Commission
- n Care Services Improvement Partnership
- n Healthcare Commission
- n National Council for Palliative Care
- n Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust
- n Shropshire County PCT
- n Shropshire County PCT Palliative Care Group
- n South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- n Telford & Wrekin Council for Voluntary Services
- n Telford & Wrekin PCT
- n Telford & Wrekin PCT Sponsor Group for Telford Town Centre Health Centre and Princess Royal Hospital GP Practice
- n Telford & Wrekin Senior Citizens' Forum
- n West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Financial statement, 2008/09

The funding made available to Telford&Wrekin LINK in 2008/09 by Telford Borough Council was £113,050.00.

The costs of running Telford&Wrekin LINK in 2008/09 are set out below:

LINK running costs

	Budget (full year 08/09)	Actual expenditure in year to date (March 09)	Actual (better/worse) than budget*
Advertising	11,500.00	36.72	11,463.28
Printing	7,500.00	235.00	7,265.00
Equipment	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
Meetings/room hire	3,000.00	1,187.07	1,812.93
Members' expenses	5,500.00	772.58	4,727.42
Members' training	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
Contingency	900.00	780.00	120.00
Website	6,325.00	6,900.00	-575.00
Quality assurance (ISO 9001)	800.00	0.00	800.00
Total	39,525.00	9,911.37	29,613.63

Host operating costs

	Budget (full year 2008/09)	2008/09 actual year to date	Actual (better/worse) than budget*
Salaries and NI	52844.00	24819.57	28024.43
Travel (staff)	3,000.00	1,051.83	1,948.17
Rent & Rates	11,750.00	15,177.97	-3,427.97
Stationary /consumables	1,700.00	1,932.24	-232.24
Training	£0.00	512.00	-512.00
Other Support	11,032.00	11,032.00	£0.00
Redundancy	0.00	£0.00	£0.00
IT	0.00	2,633.38	-2,633.38
Office Furniture	£0.00	£3,243.67	-3,243.67
Total	£80,326.00	£60,402.66	19,923.34

*The 'underspend' will be rolled forward to 2009/10

What the LINK will do in 2009/10

In the year ahead the CMG intends to engage with as many people as possible to find out:

- n what you like — or dislike — about health and social care services locally
- n what you would like to change, and why
- n what ideas you have for the future of health and social care in Telford and Wrekin.

In addition to exercising its statutory powers and making improvements to the way it is run (organisational development), the LINK's workplan for 2009/10 will focus on the following main areas of activity:

Key projects

As part of the local strategic health review the LINK will continue to play an active role in the ECCG (*see page 7*) by focusing on the quality of the consultation process. It will also work to improve the provision of palliative care in Telford, and will look into the way that acute services (especially accident and emergency services) are commissioned. More projects will be developed as the local involvement network gets larger.

Engaging with the community

The LINK will engage with the community to enable it to collate and analyse evidence of needs and concerns and gaps in provision, and to develop the LINK issues database. It will hold more community engagement events and develop stronger relationships with community groups and voluntary sector organisations, and it will develop protocols for cross-boundary working with local involvement networks in Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke, Wolverhampton and Birmingham, since people living in Telford and Wrekin also make use of health and social care facilities in those areas.

Engaging with policy makers, commissioners and providers

The LINK's representatives will continue to play an active role on the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the boards of NHS trusts and various other bodies.

Throughout the year the LINK will exercise its statutory powers by making a series of announced and unannounced visits to premises where publicly-funded health or social care is delivered, and by submitting formal requests for information from service commissioners and providers. It will also contribute to the Care Quality Commission's annual health check (third-party commentary on the core standards of health services) in partnership with other community and voluntary sector organisations.

Getting involved in the LINK

Who can get involved?

The LINK is run by volunteers so anyone who uses local services, or may use them in the future, or is a carer of someone who uses them, can get involved. And if you have health or social care needs that aren't being met because there is no service that caters for you at present, or the service is not easy to use, you have all the more reason to take an active interest in the LINK. You don't need any special qualifications or prior experience — just a desire to help improve health and social care services locally.

If you would like to participate as an individual service user or as a representative of a local voluntary organisation or community group there are several LINK projects you could help to develop. The CMG does not want to duplicate activities that are already taking place, so if you are in a local network it makes sense to get involved in the LINK as it will give you greater power and influence.

What do LINK members and participants do?

Members of the CMG need to commit some time to attending meetings or representing the LINK on local panels and forums, but everyone else can choose to get involved as often — or as little — as they like. All skills and interests can be utilised: from organising events and displays to helping with administration and marketing. Or if you want to set up a project of your own or organise a survey we can help you do this — just let us know that you are interested. Expenses are reimbursed for approved activities.

How can I get involved?

You can get a membership form from the website or from the hosting service at the address below. If you are interested but don't want to be actively involved you can register your details and ask to be kept informed of activities and events in your area. You can also take part in LINK surveys by post, email or telephone.

When does the LINK meet?

All LINK meetings take place in public approximately every six weeks, usually at the LINK office in Donnington. There is also an annual general meeting. (A list of dates for the coming year is available from the hosting service or the website, as are the minutes of all previous meetings.) Anyone can attend, though space is limited. If you would like to come to a meeting you should always check with the hosting service first as the venue, time or date of the meeting may have to be altered at short notice.

How can I find out more?

You can find out more about Telford & Wrekin LINK in the following ways:

- n via the website: www.telfordandwrekinlink.org.uk
- n by email: telfordandwrekinlink@staffs.ac.uk
- n by telephone: **01952 614180**
- n by writing to: **Telford & Wrekin LINK, Suite 1, Conwy House, St George's Court, St George's Road, Donnington, Telford TF2 7BF**

