



Voicing your views

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Don't just grumble - praise or rumble!

Telford & Wrekin LINK is inviting everyone who uses health or adult social care services to ring its new 'praise or rumble' hotline.

"If you've experienced something going wrong with the NHS or a social care service ring the hotline and 'rumble' them," says LINK chair Jean Gulliver.

"Equally, if you've had excellent service ring the hotline to praise them and say 'thank you'. Your acknowledgement that a service is making a difference may mean that it can be developed to reach more

people in other parts of Telford. "Only people who use these services can help us identify those that deserve a gong — and those that need a shake up."

If there is a service that you think needs to be looked at by the LINK ring the hotline and give the following details:

- the service you are grumbling about (or praising)
- what happened (or did not happen)
- where and when it took place
- who was involved

Hotline number

Ring the hotline on 07833 400472 and tell your independent watchdog what needs to be watched more closely.

New standards for health and social care

Regulations will focus on 'outcomes' rather than targets

From 1 April all NHS hospital services in the Telford and Wrekin area will have to meet new 'essential' standards as part of a national drive to improve the quality and safety of health and social care in hospitals and in the community.

The essential standards will cover key aspects of personal care and treatment, patient safety, the 'safeguarding' of vulnerable individuals, and involvement by and information for patients and carers.

From October the standards will be applied to all providers of non-medical care for people over 18 years of age. Over the next two years the standards will also be phased in to cover all providers of 'primary' and community-based health care, such as family doctors and dentists.

You can find out more about the new essential standards of quality and safety at www.cqc.org.uk or by contacting the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161.

WILL THE NEW STANDARDS BE A BREATH OF FRESH AIR — OR JUST HOT AIR?

CAN YOU HELP THE LINK TO MONITOR WHETHER THE NEW STANDARDS MAKE ANY REAL DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND? WE NEED TO KNOW IF IT IS JUST A LOT OF HOT AIR — OR WHETHER THE REALITY MATCHES THE RHETORIC. PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU NOTICE STANDARDS SLIPPING OR IMPROVING.



Your LINK: involving the whole community

Telford & Wrekin LINK is calling on local voluntary organisations and community groups to help it reach more people.

Tenants' associations, mother-and-toddler groups, youth clubs, sports associations and the like are being encouraged to work with the LINK to ensure that community needs are being met by health and adult social care services.

"The LINK is best described as a network of local organisations and individuals," explains Jo Havell, a member of the LINK's Central Management Group. "We really want to work closely with local voluntary organisations and community groups because they can help us reach more people."

The LINK has statutory powers that can open doors and help groups to influence what services are planned, commissioned and delivered in the local area. "We'd like all community groups and voluntary organisations in Telford to become active members of the LINK", says Jo, "and help us make sure that community needs are being identified and met. So if community wellbeing is important to you, give us a call or drop us a line and we'll work together to make a difference."

Calling all community champions

Anyone with an interest in helping to improve the way that publicly-funded health services or adult social care services are planned, commissioned or delivered can get involved in the LINK.

"If you are only interested in taking part every now and again in the LINK's community surveys or focus groups, that's fine with us," says LINK member Laura Tullett. "But if you want to become a regular volunteer and have a few hours when you'd be happy to distribute leaflets or carry out a survey in your neighbourhood or at work, then you could become a community 'champion'.

"If you enjoy writing or are good at photography or organising events, or even doing internet research, we can put those skills to good use too."

The LINK is especially keen to recruit young people and people from black and minority ethnic groups as these are currently under-represented.



The LINK's priorities for 2010–11: Tell us what we should look at next

The LINK is currently identifying what we should look at next and would like to hear about any concerns you may have about any health or adult social care services in the local area. We are especially keen to hear about your experiences of:

- assessments for social care (Putting People First)
- foot care and chiropody
- the quality of nursing care
- hospital discharge arrangements
- maternity services
- end-of-life care
- renal services
- obtaining information in your preferred format.

And if you have an idea for a 'snapshot' survey that you would like the LINK to carry as a way of identifying a gap in provision, or levels of satisfaction with an existing service, please get in touch and tell us more about it.

Calendar of events: April - July 2010

We will be at the events below - so please come and say hello!

Date:	Monday 10 May
Event:	Senior Citizens' Forum
Venue and time:	The Place, 10am–1pm
Date:	Saturday 22 May
Event:	Madeley Parish Council on the map community event
Venue and time:	Anstice Square, all day
Date:	Saturday 12 June
Event:	Newport Carnival
Venue and time:	Newport showground, all day
Date:	Saturday 19 June
Event:	ICAN2 event
Venue and time:	International Centre, all day
Date:	Saturday 3 July
Event:	Dawley Day
Venue and time:	Dawley Park, Doseley Road Playing Fields, all day

LINK annual general meeting

The LINK's annual general meeting and elections

will be held on Wednesday 19 May at 7pm in

Meeting Point House, Southwater Square. If you are

interested in standing as a board member please

ring for an information pack or download one from

www.telfordandwrekinlink.org.uk

(available from mid-April).

Shropdoc 'a good service overall' say locals

The majority of people who took part in the LINK's recent survey about Telford's unscheduled care service (Shropdoc) rated it as a good service overall.

However, a few people said they had experienced difficulties, including arranging for a doctor to visit them at home. Their comments have been forwarded to the Telford & Wrekin PCT, which has told the LINK it will address these concerns by making changes to the contract for the new service provider that will be appointed later this year.

You can still provide feedback about your experience of Shropdoc by using the Values Exchange survey facility on the LINK's website. Alternatively, you can call the office on 01952 614180 and give your comments over the phone. If you use the online survey you can also view the feedback from people who have taken part so far.

'Ask me another!' says the LINK

What gets measured stands a better chance of being improved

What questions would you like to be asked after you've visited your doctor, or your dentist, or the hospital? That's the question Telford & Wrekin LINK has recently been asking local people as part of a new drive to help the NHS identify ways in which local health services can be improved.

Throughout March the LINK held a series of *Ask me another!* focus group sessions to help it find out what questions patients and carers would really like to be asked when they use local health services.

Linda Seru, director of the LINK support team, said: "Cast your mind back to the last time you used the National Health Service. Did the experience leave you feeling that everything was as good as it could have been? Were there aspects of the visit or the treatment that you feel could have been better? Or did you receive a first class service and could find no fault?"

"That's what we want to find out."

At the end of March the LINK will look at all the suggestions it has received and draw up a list of questions that the NHS can ask patients and their carers in hospital settings, and another list of questions it can

ask patients in doctors' surgeries, dentists' practices and other health services based in the community.

Over the next twelve months the questions will be posed in a wide variety of healthcare settings using small keypad devices known as Patient Experience Trackers (PETs) to record people's responses. All responses are anonymous and cannot be linked to an individual. However, the feedback will help Telford & Wrekin Primary Care Trust (the PCT) to measure patients' levels of satisfaction with services and identify where changes are necessary.



Do you have a medical condition that makes you use more water?

A LINK member has discovered a little-publicised scheme to cap the water bills for people with certain medical conditions.

To find out more go to www.stwater.co.uk or ring Severn Trent Water on 08457 500 500.

WaterSure: in summary

The WaterSure scheme is intended to help customers who pay for their water charges via a water meter who experience difficulties as a result of high water usage or low income. You may be able to apply for this scheme if a member of your household is in receipt of certain benefits and has a specified medical condition that makes you use more water, or you are in receipt of benefits and have three or more children under the age of 19.

Voicing your views

Please help the local involvement network fulfil its role as the independent local watchdog for health and social care by:

- working with us to identify unmet needs
- reporting any concerns about the quality of local services
- highlighting examples of good practice
- identifying ideas for surveys and focus groups
- informing us of your ideas for improving services

How to contact the LINK

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In accordance with the Data Protection Act, Telford & Wrekin LINK will store your personal information securely and will not share it with any other organisation without your express permission.

Voicing your views is published free of charge four times a year by Telford & Wrekin Local Involvement Network (Telford & Wrekin LINK), Suite 1, Conwy House, St George's Court, Donnington TF2 7BF. The information in the newsletter is also available on the LINK website www.telfordandwrekinlink.org.uk

Opinions expressed in Voicing your views are not necessarily endorsed by the Central Management Group of Telford & Wrekin LINK or Staffordshire University.