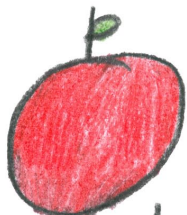


Happy!



apples



flowers



skipping



ANNUAL REPORT

Nottinghamshire County Local Involvement Network. April 2008 to March 2009

Congratulations to Holly Mitchell who won our competition to design the front cover. We'd also like to say a big thank you to all the children who participated in the competition on the Robin Hood Ward at Kings Mill Hospital in Ashfield.

Contents

Introduction from the Chair	3
What is the Nottinghamshire County LiNK?	4
Why is a LiNK needed?	5
How we engaged with the community	6
What you told us	8
Issues and themes	10
What we did with your issues	12
Executive Board and LiNK Support Team	14
Keeping you informed	16
What's happened since March 2009	17
Consultations	21
How can you get involved?	22
Frequently asked questions	24
Finance	30
Thanks	31

Introduction from the Chair

Welcome to the first Annual Report of the Nottinghamshire County Local Involvement Network or "LiNK". The LiNK is a publicly funded organisation aimed at helping improve local health and social care services in Nottinghamshire. Over the last year, we have been working hard to set up the LiNK and getting the community to speak up about the issues they face when accessing health and social care services. We are making great progress in establishing the LiNK as a first port of call for people who want to be involved in how local services are run. Alongside the LiNK Support Team, we've gone out into the community and had some great feedback from the public about services that need improving in the Nottinghamshire area.

I am the Chair of the Executive Board, which is the management committee for the Nottinghamshire County LiNK. The Executive Board are a group of volunteers who all have a real interest in improving health and social care. We all bring different skills, expertise and experience to the group and we are able to come together and tackle health and social care issues. I have been involved with the LiNK from its beginning and was Chair of the transitional Steering Group that helped set up the LiNK. All of us on the Executive Board are determined to make the LiNK a successful way for our community to influence our health and social care services and make those services the best that they can be.

We cannot do it alone, though. The LiNK is a network made up of volunteers living or working in Nottinghamshire County. People who use



Shirley Inskip, Chair of the Transitional Steering Group

health and social care services. People like you.

So, whether you would like to join a group which actively investigates the services available to us, if you would like to tell us what you think is working really well and what needs improving, or whether you would just like to receive our newsletter telling you about the work that we are doing, I hope that this Annual Report will inspire you to join the Nottinghamshire County LiNK. The more participants we have, the stronger we become.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and I look forward to welcoming you to the Nottinghamshire County LiNK.

Shirley Inskip
Chair of Transitional Steering Group 2008/2009
Nottinghamshire County LiNK

What is the Nottinghamshire County LINk?

Local Involvement Networks, or LINks, have been established to enable communities to shape their own health and social care services. Since April 2008, a Local Involvement Network has existed in every Local Authority area of England with a responsibility for Social Care.

Nottinghamshire County LINk is an independent network made up of local individuals, community groups and organisations that work together to raise community concerns about any publicly funded health and social care services in the county.

Nottinghamshire County LINk exists to investigate issues important to its community, propose improvements and use its powers to hold service providers to account.

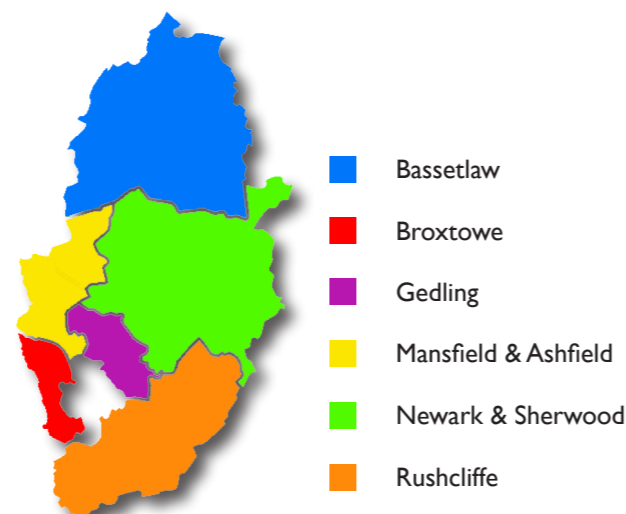
Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums – LINks were introduced following the PPI Forums being dissolved. LINks are different to the PPI Forums because the PPI forums looked at just health care, whereas LINks look at both health and social care services for communities.

The LINk also has good relationships with other organisations such as the Patient Advice and Liaison Service and the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service so it can point people towards the correct service. What makes the LINk different from these

organisations is that the emphasis is on whole communities, rather than concerns of individuals. The Nottinghamshire County LINk works with residents and people who work within the county to find out what issues matter to them and also offers a way to influence change by working together.

The LINk is managed by their newly elected Executive Board. Due to the size and diversity of Nottinghamshire's population, there is a Board member representing each of the areas on the map below. This is to ensure that the LINk can appreciate each area's individuality and the issues particular to its residents.

Anyone who lives, works or uses services in Nottinghamshire can join the Nottinghamshire County LINk.



Why is the LINk needed?

Everybody will use Health or Social Care services at some point in their lives and many of us have similar obstacles to face when we do. For example, if you may have difficulties getting to hospital.

The whole point of having the LINk is to ensure that the health and social care services are right for your community. So, if you have had a problem with any of your health or social care services and you know that other people have had the same problem, we would like to know.

If you have a problem that only applies to you, the LINk might not be the most appropriate organisation to help you. However, we can direct you to other organisations that can (see Frequently Asked Questions). The LINk has been set up to help solve problems within Health and Social Care that affect more than one person within the area where they live. We focus on community issues, rather than individual complaints.

There are 150 LINks throughout the Country. For example, there is a separate LINk for Nottinghamshire County than for Nottingham City. Each LINk is set up to reflect the uniqueness of its local area and satisfy the needs of its community.

Alternatively, you may feel particularly proud

about a service in your area and you would like to make sure that as many people as possible know about it. The LINk would like to hear from you. If, for example, you tell us about an outstanding service that is being offered at a particular Care Home in the county, the LINk could pay a visit to that Care Home. We could talk to the staff, talk to the patients and see exactly how the service is run so that the LINk use this as an example of good practice and recommend that it is used in other areas.

It may be that you haven't had any problems with your services but you know someone that has, or that you know of problems with your services but do not have time to join the LINk to work towards solving them. That's fine. All you have to do is give us a call on 01 15 975 4647 or write to us telling us what is working and what needs improving in your community.

“If it's health and social care, we want to be involved. . . we can make a difference!”

Glen Swanwick

How we engaged with the community

Each community was asked to decide how their LiNk should be structured to best engage with and meet the needs of the local people. There was no national structure or 'one size fits all' model for a LiNk so our first piece of engagement was to find out how the public wanted their LiNk to work in Nottinghamshire.

Firstly, two public consultation events were held so that the people of Nottinghamshire could get together to discuss how their LiNk should work – this included deciding upon a name for the LiNk, how the steering group should be structured, and nominating a transitional steering group to guide the LiNk through its initial stages.



The LiNks Support Team at the Mansfield Consultation event

During its transitional stage, the LiNk developed governance documents, put insurance in place to ensure volunteer safety and indemnity and, with the support of the Electoral Reform Services, developed the process by which the Executive Board would be elected. Before these decisions

were made, two further public events were held so that people of Nottinghamshire could continue to be involved in making these key decisions about their LiNk.

At the same time, the LiNk set up a Communications and Engagement Working Group which chose a logo and publicity material. Since then, they have been developing the LiNk brand using publicity materials and newsletters to keep people in Nottinghamshire informed about the LiNk. The LiNk has also taken part in local radio interviews, and written articles for local newspapers and newsletters to raise awareness of the LiNk across Nottinghamshire.

In November 2008, the LiNk wrote to voluntary organisations, parish and town councils, patient participation groups and other key community groups across Nottinghamshire asking them to what community concerns they were aware of regarding health and social care services. The LiNk used these responses alongside what the public told us at various community events to shape the work plan.

In January 2009, the LiNk began working with Nottinghamshire Listens Citizens' Panel Users Group to decide on which questions to ask 8000 members of the public to get their opinions about health and social care services. For more information about the LiNk's work with the Citizen's Panel, please go to the 'What's happened since March 2009?' section of this report.

The LiNk Support Team attends East Midlands host meetings so that staff can meet to share experiences and best practice across the region. The team also supports the LiNk volunteers in all of their engagement activities.

The LiNk relies on its engagement with local volunteers and information sharing in order to function; if no one tells us what needs to be improved, the LiNk wouldn't know what issues to investigate.

The LiNk already meets with a number of local forums. However, meeting with everyone already doing work to improve health and social care in Nottinghamshire is a great challenge so please help if you can! If there is a group in your area that discusses Health and Social Care-related issues and the LiNk hasn't already been in touch, please contact the LiNk who will arrange for someone local to that area to meet with them. Also, if there is an event or meeting in Nottinghamshire which you think the LiNk should attend, let the LiNk know.

By working together, the many groups across the county that have a huge amount of experience and local knowledge can achieve much more in improving local services for their own group as well as the wider community.

The LiNk distributes information packs

that include forms to get feedback from the public about services in their area – these can be compliments as well as concerns and recommendations.

The LiNk Executive Board holds monthly meetings which are open to the public and discusses and evaluates the progress of its engagement in Nottinghamshire. So, if you want to come and hear what the LiNk is talking about, contact the LiNk Support Team to find out the date and venue of the next meeting and book yourself a place.

If you cannot make these meetings, the LiNk Engagement Team hold drop in sessions across the County, which are a great opportunity for an informal chat. The LiNk will be happy to answer any questions you may have. You do not need to register as a participant of the LiNk to raise an issue. Just simply fill in a CARE (Concerns And Recommendations) Form from the LiNk Support Team.



What you told us

Thanks to the feedback we received from the community, the Nottinghamshire County LINK has been able to identify over 50 issues across the County in health and social care services.

- Difficulties in getting transport when travelling to hospitals, particularly in the numerous rural areas in Nottinghamshire
- Concerns about the support available for older people in relation to health and social care
- Difficulties with hospital discharge and the inadequate provision of aftercare packages to support a patient when they return home from hospital
- Concern over the lack of respite services for carers

Here are just a few examples of the many varied issues which you have told the LINK about:

The LINK has set up an Issues Panel that specifically looks at all the issues that are brought to the LINK. These issues will be divided roughly into 3 areas - those that the LINK can move forward immediately, those that need more information, and those that are not within the LINK remit where the LINK will notify the person sending in the issue or direct them to the appropriate organisation.

Where possible, the LINK tries not to duplicate any work that is being done by other people. Therefore, when an issue is raised, the LINK then gets in touch with the person or organisation raising the issue and with all of the LINK participants to find out if a forum or group already exists that has done some work on this issue or is dealing with a similar issue. If there is a group that has been dealing with this or a similar issue, the LINK might propose doing a joint piece of work together. The LINK understands the value of partnership working and the importance of other people's experience to achieve the best possible solution for the community.

“ The districts in Nottinghamshire County differ widely, with a wealth of issues and needs specific to each of these districts as well as needs that are common to all of Nottinghamshire. ”

Laura Thomas

Nottinghamshire

Mansfield & Ashfield

I don't know any other small town that has three hospitals. The healthcare facilities in Mansfield and Ashfield are second to none.

Jane Stubbings

Gedling

Gedling is already benefitting from improvements being implemented throughout the NHS with a new state of the art walk in centre, which is successfully pressure away from hospitals

Marceline Powell.

Broxtowe

I love the diversity and range of people within Broxtowe. It has the richest mix of cultures within Nottinghamshire.

Tariq Khan

Bassetlaw

Bassetlaw is located within the boundary of North Nottinghamshire. However it has strong clinical links across both South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

Emma Ducker

Newark & Sherwood

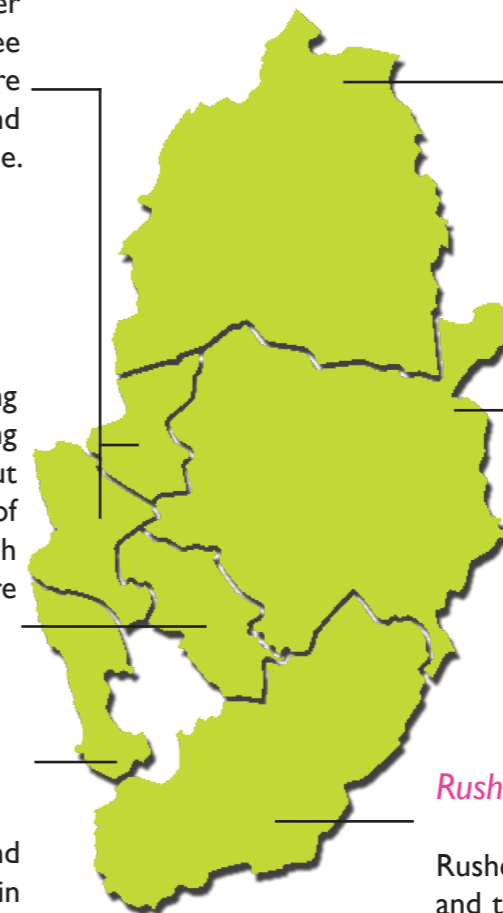
Newark is unique because it has the highest percentage of older people in any district in the County and it also has a large proportion of rural communities.

Katy Jeffery

Rushcliffe

Rushcliffe has an active community and they are very involved in trying to get the best health services for their area with the formation of many local engagement groups.

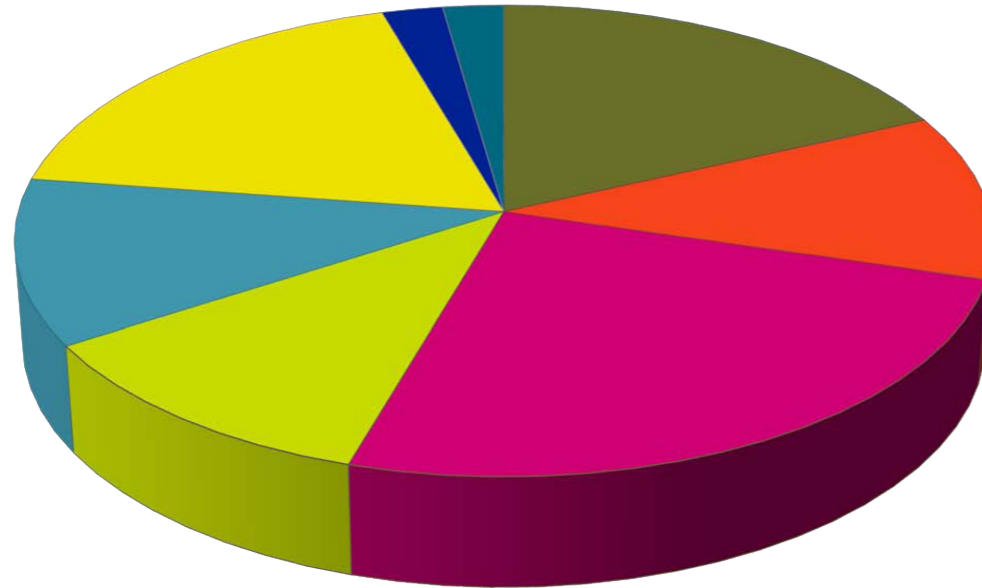
Inderpal Dhillon



Issues and themes you told us about

This pie chart shows how the issues which have been raised to the Nottinghamshire County LINk by the community fit into the themes of the Nottinghamshire Service Review. The Nottinghamshire Service Review is a review of NHS services in Nottinghamshire which began in 2007 to help shape the services over the next ten years. For more information about these themes visit <http://www.nottinghamshirecountyteachingpct.nhs.uk/shapingyournhs/ONOF/ONOFabout.aspx>.

If you would like to let the Nottinghamshire County LINk know about an issue affecting your community, please contact the LINk Support Team to request a CARE form.



- Staying Healthy 19.51%
- Urgent & Emergency Care 12.19%
- Long Term Conditions 26.82%
- Planned Care 12.19%
- End of Life Care 12.19%
- Mental Health and Learning Disability 19.51%
- Children and Young People 2.43%
- Maternity & Newborn 2.43%

“The LINk is working closely with Newark & Sherwood CVS to ensure views about local health and care services are heard and have already picked up on two big local issues and taken them forward.”

Val Gardiner, Partnership Officer,
Newark & Sherwood Community and Voluntary Service

What we did with your issues

The idea of the LINk is to identify the elements of health and social care that could be improved as well as celebrating the things that are working really well in our area. Whenever a participant of the LINk or a member of the public identifies something that needs improving, a record is made of that issue. The issue is then referred to the LINk Issues Panel.

Anyone who has actively contributed to the work of the LINk can take part on the Issues Panel. Chances to be part of the Issues Panel will come up every three months to ensure that everyone who would like to be part of making decisions about the issues that have been raised will get a chance to be involved.

The Issues Panel meets at least once a month to go through the issues that have been raised. They consider:

- Whether a raised issue is a priority issue that needs to be dealt with straight away
- Whether it is an important issue, but further information needs to be requested from the person raising the issue
- Whether this is an issue that can be best dealt with by an organisation that already exists, e.g. a voluntary organisation or a support group. If so, the Issues Panel will “signpost” it on to that existing organisation

- Whether this issue is not appropriate for the LINk to deal with, e.g. if it does not relate to health or social care, or is for a privately funded clinic. In this case, notification of the decision and an explanation will be sent to the person or organisation raising the issue.

With issues that are prioritised as urgent, the first step is for a letter to be written to the organisation providing the service, e.g. if we are asking about an issue at a particular care home, we would write to the manager of that Care Home, to Social Care and the Care Quality Commission. Those people are then required by law to respond to that LINk letter within 20 working days.

The LINk can also authorise their volunteers to visit premises when necessary to find out more information about a service. These LINk volunteers are called “Authorised Representatives”. Due to the nature of the services which Authorised Representatives may be entering, it is necessary for every representative to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau Check and relevant training before they can start any work on behalf of the LINk. They give a full report of what they saw and what they were told to the Executive Board (the management committee) of the LINk.

At the end of the LINk investigations, a full report will be written. That report will set out what work has been done by the LINk and what the Authorised Representatives have been told. The conclusion of the report will recommend changes that can be made by the people who fund and run the services in order to make them the best services possible for our communities. That report will also be published on the website for all LINk participants and members of the public to read.

If, for any reason, it does not appear that the people who are providing the services are taking the LINk recommendations seriously, the matter will be referred on to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Issues Panel are working hard to decide which of the issues you have raised need to

be dealt with first. Work on those prioritised issues will begin in early 2009 and you will be invited to help out.

For every issue that has been prioritised, a Task and Finish Group will be set up. Invitations will go out to all participants of the LINk to see whether you would like to join that Task and Finish Group and contribute to the investigation work that is being carried out. Hopefully, there will be at least one project that will interest you enough to want to get involved.

The more people working on LINk business, the more varied and inventive the recommendations we make to the people providing the Health and Social Care Services are likely to be. And the larger the number of people that have joined the LINk, the greater the weight any LINk recommendations are likely to have.

The aim of the health and adult social care Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to improve public services and promote health improvement. They do this by:

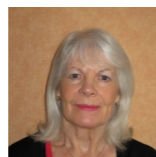
- Monitoring the performance of public authorities and public sector organisations
- Ensuring public services react appropriately to the needs of the public
- Engaging with the public as citizens to find out their views
- Promoting community wellbeing at a local level

Nottinghamshire County LINK Executive Board

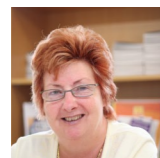
Following the elections, the Executive Board took over from the Transitional Steering Group in March 2009. Below are the Board members and a brief description about their roles.



Shirley Inskip, Chair
Shirley was the Chair of the Transitional Steering Group. She has now been elected as Chair of the Executive Board



Jean Lewis
Jean is the Press Officer for the Communications and Engagement Working Group since the formation of the LINK.



Jane Stubbings, Vice Chair
Jane is the Vice Chair of the new Executive Board and is also a member of the Communications and Engagement Working Group.



Glen Swanwick
As well as being a member of the Executive Board, Glen is also a member of the Communications and Engagement Working Group.



Vanessa Gent
Vanessa is the Executive Board member for Newark and Sherwood.



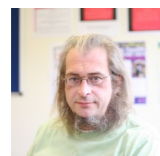
Tom Turner
Tom is the Executive Board member for Gedling and also on the Communications and Engagement Working Group.



Sandra Horton
Sandra is the Executive Board member for Bassetlaw and is also a member of the Communications and Engagement Working Group.



Barbara Venes
Barbara is an Executive Board member and has been involved through the transitional stages of the LINK in the Steering Group.



Mark Hunter
Mark is a new member of the Executive Board and joined the LINK after raising an issue and getting involved.



Mick Warner
Mick is a new member of the LINK and is the Executive Board member for Broxtowe.



John Kerry
John is a member of the Executive Board and has raised issues around transport to healthcare services.



Rushcliffe
At the end of June 2009, the seat for Rushcliffe remained empty. The LINK anticipate this position to be filled in July 2009.

Nottinghamshire County LINK Support Team

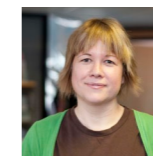
The LINK Support Team are employed by the Carers Federation (Host Organisation) and it is their role to support and promote the work of the Nottinghamshire County LINK.

Operations Manager



Kath Soanes

Team Leader



Helen Hodgkinson

Senior Community Engagement Workers



Marceline Powell - Communications



Laura Thomas - Research

Community Engagement Workers



Inderpal Dhillon
Mansfield & Ashfield



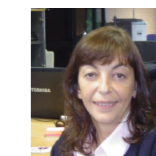
Kerry Flynn
Bassetlaw



Katy Jeffery
Newark & Sherwood



Tariq Khan
Broxtowe, Gedling & Rushcliffe



Ebru Ince
Black & Minority Ethnic Groups

Keeping you informed

The work of setting up the LiNk is now complete. The majority of our efforts throughout 2008/9 have involved writing all the documentation to make sure that the LiNk runs properly as an organisation.

The LiNk has written a Governance Document. This is the document which sets out the roles and responsibilities of all active LiNk participants as well as the way that the LiNk will function. A copy of this document is available on our website www.strongerlocalvoice.com.

The LiNk has also been through an election process. When the LiNk was originally set up, it had a Transitional Steering Group to make decisions about what kind of work the LiNk should be doing. Then, in March 2009, the LiNk asked for participants to nominate themselves to sit on the Executive Board, the new name for the Steering Group. The Executive Board is the management committee of the LiNk.

There were 12 spaces on the Executive Board. Four places went to people who had been on the Transitional Steering Group to ensure that the Executive Board would have the advantage of advice from people involved in the LiNk from its beginning. The other candidates were chosen by way of an election process. Whenever a seat was contested, a vote took place and was overseen by the Electoral Reform Services. By the end of March 2009, we had 11 of the 12

seats on the Executive Board filled and we are confident that the final place will be taken very shortly. The LiNk would like to say a big thank you to everyone who put themselves forward to be on the Executive Board.

The Communications and Engagement Working Group is responsible for preparing a newsletter to keep the LiNk participants informed about work being done. From now on, the newsletter will be produced every other month and will include a brief summary of all work being carried out, along with any successes or good news stories that the LiNk is aware of.

The Communications and Engagement Working Group is continuing to find new ways to keep you informed about the work that the LiNk is doing, and to find out what you think needs its attention. Drop in sessions are being held across the County and the LiNk Support Team can arrange to attend meetings or events going on throughout the County. If you are having an event, or you would like the LiNk to give a presentation about the LiNk to any meetings that you attend, please contact the LiNk Support Team to make the necessary arrangements.

The Nottinghamshire County LiNk is still in its early stages. Your help and suggestions about how to keep in touch, and your continued support by raising issues, is greatly appreciated.

What's happened since March 2009?

So, looking ahead to 2009/2010, what plans do the Nottinghamshire County LiNk have for the future?

The newly elected Executive Board are meeting at least monthly to move forward the work of the LiNk. They work alongside the Communications and Engagement Working Group, which is the group responsible for producing the LiNk newsletter and press releases, the Issues Group who decide what investigations the LiNk should be carrying out into health and social care, and all the separate Task and Finish Groups that are carrying out the work of the Nottinghamshire County LiNk.

Below are some examples of the work the LiNk has done since March and the work it plans to do over the next 12 months:

In March 2009, work was being done by Joint Commissioning which is made up of Nottinghamshire County Council, NHS Nottinghamshire County and Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust to review health and social care services being offered to people across Nottinghamshire. They produced a consultation called "Improving Lives in Nottinghamshire" and the LiNk was asked to comment upon it. A group of LiNk volunteers met with Charlie Keeney, who is the Assistant Chief Executive of NHS Nottinghamshire County, to discuss

the consultation. As a result of the discussions between the LiNk and Charlie Keeney, the draft report contains the following statement: "It is clear that the new Nottinghamshire County LiNk has a valuable role to play in supporting the monitoring of delivery of the joint commissioning strategy, [namely the Improving Lives in Nottinghamshire project]". The LiNk has been asked to help develop the monitoring and evaluation process for the project and therefore our involvement in this will be ongoing.

The LiNk was asked to contribute to the Annual Health Check. Nottinghamshire County LiNk wrote a commentary on the following NHS Trusts: NHS Nottinghamshire County, Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust, East Midlands Ambulance Service, Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust.

"The annual health check, first used by the Healthcare Commission in 2005, is designed to assess, on their behalf, whether NHS organisations are meeting the Government's standards such as those on safety and the quality of clinical care. More than that, it aims to encourage improvement by highlighting excellence and by tracking progress over time." *Healthcare Commission Developing the annual health check in 2008/2009*

What's happened since March 2009?

The LINk has already started to create a work plan from the issues that have been raised by people in Nottinghamshire in relation to health and social care concerns and compliments.

The "Good News" Stories

In March 2009, the LINk had the opportunity to nominate the Bassetlaw Hospice for a Dignity in Care Award for the Health and Social Care Awards 2009, run by the Department of Health. The Hospice asked its patients and carers to comment on the quality of the service that they were receiving and whether they felt any improvements could be made. As a result of what the Hospice was told, they implemented the Bassetlaw Carers Support and Service Programme, helping to give emotional support to the people who devote their time and energies to caring for someone with a terminal illness.

The Dignity in Care Award is the only People's Award to be offered at this ceremony and the LINk took great pleasure in nominating a scheme that has been running in Nottinghamshire since 2007. LINk representatives were shown around the Hospice, given lunch and had the chance to chat to staff, volunteers and patients. They were also interviewed for a film to be shown at the Awards Ceremony.

Congratulations to Joan Mercer, Gill Bradley and the whole team at the Hospice who were named Runners Up for the whole of the East Midlands area.

The "Could Do Better" Stories

You asked us to look at various health and social care issues to see if there were any issues the LINk could improve on. Amongst the issues that the LINk Issues Panel has prioritised, it is looking at the lack of respite services for carers and the waiting time for dentistry services for people with a Learning Disability.

To start these pieces of work, the LINk has been writing letters to the people that commission and provide these services, in order to find out what services are already available for people; whether there are any gaps in the services currently provided; and whether the people providing the services are planning to make any changes. Once we have found this out, we will be working with the people who provide the services and those who use the services to find out what improvements can be made. If you know of a community group who is already looking into this issue, if you have had problems yourself using these services or who someone else who has had problems or good experiences,



or if you would like to be involved in the process of investigating what is already out there and how it can be improved, please contact the team. Now that the Issues Panel has prioritised a number of issues to initially look at over the next year, a Task and Finish Group will be set up for each of those issues. Each Task and Finish Group will be led by a member of the Executive Board or Issues Panel and every participant of the LINk who has expressed interest in the area concerned will be invited to join that Task and Finish Group. Hopefully you will find at least one subject that will be of interest to you.

Once a Task and Finish Group is formed, the group members will decide how to carry out the work, when and where to do the work and how much time to allocate to it. Any subsequent recommendations will be sent to the people who provide and commission the services.

The LINk is currently working on the following issues. If you would like to join any of the Task and Finish Groups, please contact the LINk Support Team on 0115 975 4647.

Disabled access to GP surgeries across the county

This is a piece of work which was started by the Patient and Public Involvement Forums that existed before the LINk began. The work is being carried forward by the LINk. Letters have been sent to the Primary Care Trust to find out what progress has been made with this issue.

Respite services for carers

This is a newly prioritised piece of work around the lack of respite services currently available for carers. Related enquiries are being made around the decommissioning of some carers' support services in Nottinghamshire.

Hospital Discharge Schemes

The LINk is carrying out research relating to this through a LINk consultation and the Nottinghamshire Listens Citizens' Panel Survey. Results from this survey will be available in July 2009. Following research by Nottinghamshire County Council, a proposal for improving hospital discharge schemes across the county and launching a hospital discharge scheme in Newark and Sherwood is being made to Joint Commissioning. The LINk has submitted a report of the comments we have had so far relating to hospital discharge schemes in support of this proposal.

Access / Barriers to services

The issue of people struggling to access services has been raised a number of times. Initial research is being undertaken through a LINk consultation and the Nottinghamshire Listens Citizens' Panel Survey to find out what the general public of Nottinghamshire think are the barriers to accessing health and social care services in the County. Results from this survey will also be available in July 2009 and will shape future LINk work surrounding this issue.

What's happened since March 2009?

Newark Strategy

Participants of the Nottinghamshire County LINk and the Lincolnshire LINk will be working together to put forward their views on the NHS Nottinghamshire County's review of health and social care delivery in Newark.

Dentistry provision for people with a Learning Disability

This is a newly prioritised issue relating to the length of time that patients who require a general anaesthetic for dental work have to wait before receiving treatment. The LINk has sent a letter to the organisations that commission and provide these services, so that it can find out initially what services are already being provided. They are currently arranging to work on a review of these services in partnership with NHS Nottinghamshire County and Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust to ensure that communities have their say.

Shortage of Health Visitors for people with young children in Bassetlaw

The LINk has written to the people who provide Health Visitors in Bassetlaw. There is a shortage of Health Visitors throughout the county and the LINk is hoping that by asking the groups working with children or groups in small rural communities, there can be a better way of using the number of Health Visitors that already exist in the area.

Look out for updates on all of these issues on our website, www.strongerlocalvoice.com and please contact us if you would like to take part in

any of our Task and Finish Groups. Also, please keep the issues coming in.

Did you see the LINk at Market Square in Nottingham on 22nd April 2009?

Another of the issues that has been brought up a number of times is the lack of awareness generally of illnesses that affect Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BME Groups). The Nottinghamshire County LINk joined with the Nottingham City LINk to hold two "Culture in Care" events, the first on the 17th April 2009 at the Council House in Nottingham where there were speakers and workshops to ask people from these minority groups to talk about what issues were facing minority groups and whether anything could be done to improve the situation.

On 22nd April, the event moved outside into the Market Square with stands to attract passers by to tell them more about the LINk. As well as LINk stands there were salsa taster sessions, reiki, head massages, tai chi, sessions and seated yoga as well as health information stands to attract as many people as possible.

Salsa lessons at the BME Culture in Care event, April 2009



Consultations

The Nottinghamshire County LINk and LINk Support Team took the opportunity to review the priorities and issues already submitted by the public and quickly found some general themes. These themes centred around access to health and social care services (and the barriers to accessing these services), hospital admissions and hospital discharge, dentistry, drugs and GP services.

Consequently, the LINk has conducted some research to ascertain people's experiences across the county of the themes mentioned above. This research has been undertaken in two ways:

Nottinghamshire Listens Citizens' Panel Wave Four Survey (Health and Wellbeing)

Nottinghamshire County LINk took the opportunity to design a number of questions for the "Health and Wellbeing" wave of the Citizens' Panel Survey based around investigating barriers to accessing health and social care services and patient experience of hospital discharge. This survey has been commissioned by

Nottinghamshire County Council and focuses on partnership working with nine different partners currently involved with this wave of questionnaire. The questionnaire will be produced and delivered by Ipsos MORI, with the content designed by the nine partners. Results from this survey will be released on the 17th July 2009 and the results will be used to inform the future work of the LINk.

Culture in Care Consultation

This consultation will take place at the two LINk "Culture in Care" days where both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County residents will attend to discuss BME issues in health and social care. This consultation was also undertaken to supplement the Citizens Panel Survey with a focus on BME groups as they are currently under-represented on the Panel. The consultation results will be analysed in June, and will help to inform some of the future work of the LINk.

Coming Soon... LINKs in your Community!

The LINk will be coming to your community so that you can see firsthand the positive changes that we are making. The events will take place throughout summer and autumn this year at a location near you. Come along, talk to us, and let us know what you think! The LINKs Event Committee would like to welcome your suggestions about how you think these events can be tailored to best suit your Community.

How can you get involved?

The LiNk is made up of local people wanting to discuss local issues. We want to hear the views and experiences from everybody in the community and the LiNk gives everyone the opportunity to voice their opinion on how their health and social care services are run.

You can contribute as much or as little as you like to the LiNk! There are varying levels of participation, from simply filling out questionnaires every once in a while and receiving our newsletters, all the way through to joining the groups that decide how the LiNk is run and the work it does.

There are four general levels of involvement with the LiNk:

Participants – Everyone who joins the LiNk automatically becomes a participant. If you become a participant, as well as being invited to send in your views and opinions of health and social care in your community, you will receive updates about the LiNk activities and, every now and again, will receive a questionnaire in the post or online to fill in and send back to us to let us know what your opinions of local services are.

Task and Finish Groups – This is where participants get a little more involved. When the LiNk decides to focus on a particular community concern, the Task and Finish Group will look into this issue. Those volunteers involved with the Task and Finish Group may be required to

have some formal training around the topic e.g. training for Enter and View. They will collate the necessary information and formulate a letter to go to the service managers regarding the issue.

Communications And Engagement Working Group – The Communications and Engagement Working Group look after all the LiNk’s promotional work and public relations. They meet regularly to discuss how the LiNk presents itself and work with the LiNk Support Team to design merchandise, marketing materials and discuss the LiNk’s responses to issues in the press.

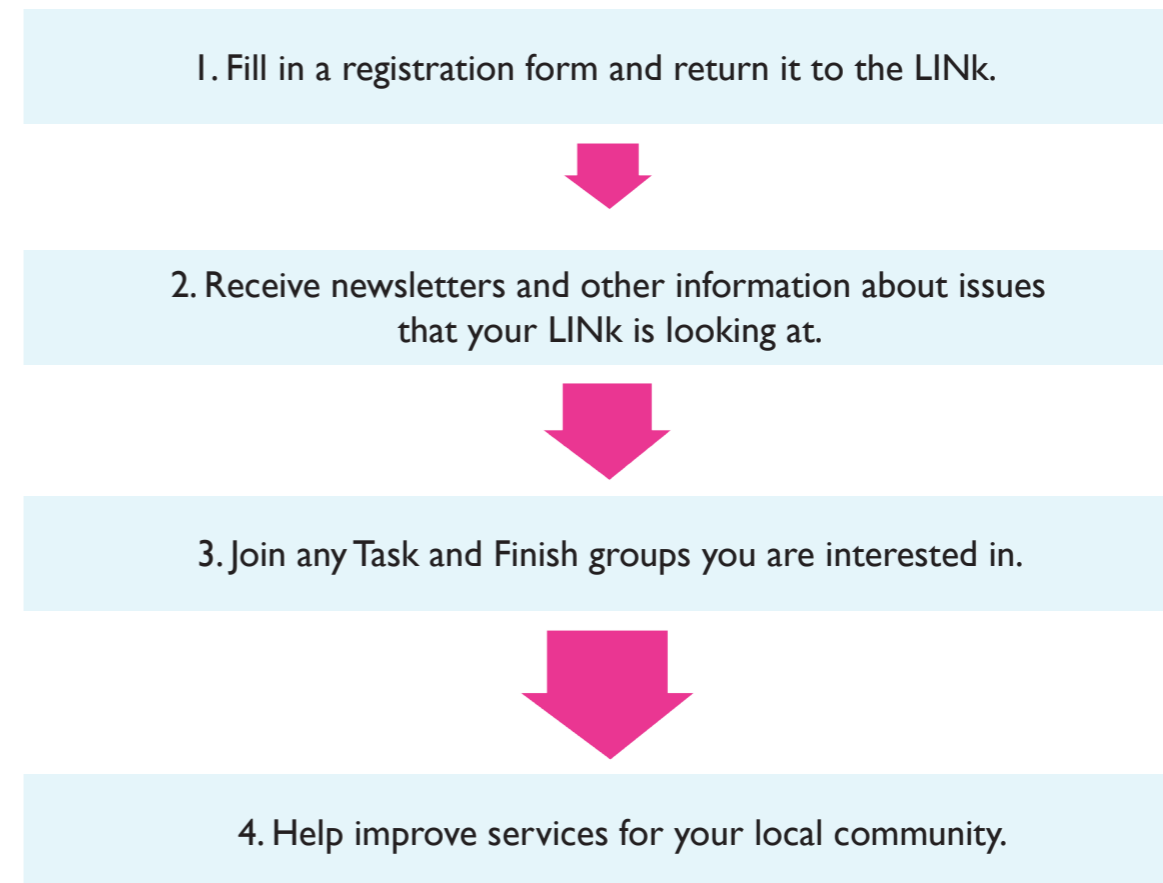
Executive Board – The Executive Board is made up of local people, all volunteers, who have been elected to represent the LiNk. They govern the LiNk and its activities and are accountable for the LiNk as a whole. They meet once a month to discuss the LiNk’s activities and to manage the day-to-day running of the LiNk. The Executive Board are also responsible for over-seeing and approving the work done by all the other groups working on LiNk business. Elections for the current Executive Board were held in March 2009.

For further information on joining the LiNk or any of its working groups, please fill out a Registration Form, give us a call or have a look at our website www.strongerlocalvoice.com and look for the Nottinghamshire County LiNk.

“I joined the Steering Group for the Nottinghamshire County LiNk in August 2008 and feel proud and honoured to have been involved from the initial stages with such a dedicated and resourceful group of people in this new and innovative venture. It has been a very interesting and exciting time to be involved and I have enjoyed every minute. The Local Involvement Networks are the future to enable individuals to have a say in the future of health and social care.”

Christine Precious, Member of Transitional Steering Group

Four steps to getting actively involved in the LiNk:



FAQs

Is the LiNk a complaints service?

No. The LiNk has been established to look at concerns around health and social care services in your community. If you have an individual complaint about services you have received, the following organisations are better placed to help you:

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) - PALS will answer any queries about NHS services
www.pals.nhs.uk

ICAS (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service) - ICAS are an independent organisation which supports anybody wishing to make a formal complaint about NHS services. Tel: **0845 650 0088**

Social Care Customer Services - Contact this number if you wish to raise a query or make a complaint about your social care services. Tel: **08449 808080**

Why does the LiNk need a Host Organisation?

The LiNk has a Host Organisation to ensure that the reports they produce and the issues that they investigate are made separately and independently of the Government, the Department of Health and the NHS. The Host Organisation for the Nottinghamshire County LiNk is the Carers Federation.

Who are the Carers Federation?

The Carers Federation is the host organisation for a number of LiNks across the country including Nottinghamshire County LiNk. For more information about the Carers Federation visit www.carersfederation.co.uk

What powers does the LiNk have?

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill gives certain powers to the LiNk:

- Whenever the LiNk writes to request information from an organisation that provides publicly funded health or social care, that organisation is under a legal obligation to respond to that written request within 20 working days. The LiNk sent out their first 20 day letters in May 2009.
- The power to “Enter and View” publicly funded health or social care services. The LiNk appoints certain volunteers to be “Authorised Representatives”. These Representatives are required to have a Criminal Records Bureau check and relevant training before visiting premises to investigate the complaint or problem raised by the community.

During the period of this report, the LiNk has not yet needed to use its powers of Enter and View.

- If the LiNk makes a recommendation for changes to the people who commission health or social care services but does not feel that those recommendations are being treated seriously, the LiNk has the power to refer those matters to the local Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

How is the LiNk funded?

The LiNk is a publicly funded organisation. The Department of Health decided that they wanted local communities to be more involved in decisions about their health and social care services. In order to set LiNks up throughout the Country, they gave money to local Councils. The money for the Nottinghamshire County LiNk comes via the Nottinghamshire County Council. It then passes to the Carers Federation who then holds it on behalf of the Nottinghamshire County LiNk. It is the duty of the host organisation to ensure that money given to the LiNk is spent in a way that is beneficial to all members of our community and to always keep in mind the aim of improving health and social care.

If you do not have a breakdown of money that was received by the LiNk for the financial year 2008/09 and what was spent, and you would like this information, please contact the Nottinghamshire County LiNk Support Team for further details.

Are volunteers paid?

The participants of the Nottinghamshire County

LiNk are all volunteers, whether they just receive a newsletter or they sit on the Executive Board. Volunteers are entitled to claim expenses where, for example, they are attending a meeting on behalf of the LiNk but they do not receive payment or wages at any time for acting on behalf of the LiNk.

How do active LiNk participants know what their roles and responsibilities are?

There is a Governance Document which sets out the roles and responsibilities of active LiNk participants. It also discusses the Election Process and the procedure for becoming an “Authorised Representative”. If you would like a copy of this document, it can be found on our website at www.strongerlocalvoice.com or can be requested by telephoning the LiNk Support Team on 0115 975 4647.

FAQs

Consultations

A consultation is a method of seeking and exchanging advice, information and people's thoughts and experiences. Consultations can take many different forms, one of which is in the style of a self-completion questionnaire, which has been used in the two consultations detailed below.

Why did the LINk hold elections?

When deciding who should be on the Executive Board, the Steering Group decided that they would like to retain four original Group members to ensure continuity. They also decided that there should be representatives to cover each of the following geographical areas: Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield and Ashfield, Newark and Sherwood, and Rushcliffe. The final two seats were awarded to representatives on a non-geographical basis. All contested seats went through an election process which was overseen by the independent body, the Electoral reform Services

How does the LINk ensure it involve everybody in the community?

The LINk has a dedicated Community Engagement Worker whose job it is to contact those groups and sections of the community that are traditionally hard to reach. In addition to that, in conjunction with the Nottingham City LINk, we have planned a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Day to raise awareness of the

issues being faced by minority groups within the County. This event took place in April 2009. If you are part of a BME Group or would know someone you would like to contact us, please call the LINk Support Team.

However, it is important to note that it is not only BME groups that are hard to reach. We are also aware that we need to reach the kind of people that use health and social care services but do not usually have any interest in joining community groups or committees. This might be Mr Average who has a full time job and a wife and two children and who does not want to join the LINk. To try and encourage this type of person to get involved, we are doing things like organising evening meetings at various venues throughout the County for presentations on Health and Social Care issues. If you have any ideas or suggestions about how to contact the maximum amount of people throughout the County, please let us know.

Can I raise an issue even if I haven't joined the LINk?

Yes, you can. Either telephone us to request a CARE Form or speak to a Community Engagement Worker or LINk participant when we are out and about in the Community. Hopefully, if we make a good job of improving your services, you will then feel inspired to join the LINk!

Can I attend an Executive Board meeting?

Executive Board meetings are held in public and currently alternate between venues in Mansfield and Nottingham. If you wish to attend as a participant of the LINk or a member of the public, then you are welcome to do so. Please note that you will not be able to actively participate in the meeting and you will not be able to speak during the meeting, however. Attendance by members of the public at these meetings is for information only. Active participation in the Executive Board meeting by non-Executive Board members will be by invitation only.

Can I ask a question at an Executive Board meeting?

Yes, you can. Questions can be raised by LINk participants or members of the public provided they are submitted to the LINk Support Team at least 15 working days before the date of the Executive Board meeting. The LINk Support Team will ensure that the question goes to the Executive Board to be answered. If you are unable to attend the Executive Board meeting but would like written confirmation of the answer to your question, please notify the LINk Support Team when you tell them what question you would like to ask.

How do I join a Task and Finish Group?

Whenever the LINk are setting up a Task and Finish Group, an invitation will be sent to all participants of the LINk asking whether they

would like to be involved in investigating the chosen issue. If you are interested in finding out more about joining a Task and Finish Group, contact the LINk Support Team.

How do I get involved in Consultation Work?

In a similar way to joining a Task and Finish Group, invitations will be sent out to all participants of the LINk. If you would like to be contacted by some other method than email, please let us know.

Can I volunteer to help promote the LINk? (Events Committee)

Yes. We are currently in the process of setting up an Events Committee so if you are interested in getting involved, now would be the perfect time to do so.

FAQs

What is the difference between health and social care?

Healthcare

Health care refers to the treatment and management of illness, and the preservation of health through services offered by the medical, dental, pharmaceutical, clinical laboratory sciences (in vitro diagnostics), nursing, and allied health professions. Health care embraces all the goods and services designed to promote health, including “preventive, curative and palliative interventions, whether directed to individuals or to populations”.

For example healthcare might include:

GP services, dental services, hospitals, opticians and podiatry.

Social care

Social Care is about helping people live their lives. People who have physical or psychological problems often require practical help coping with the everyday business of living. The LINK can look at all care services funded by Nottinghamshire County Council and covers a huge variety of services.

For example, Social Care can involve the following services:

- Services that allow people to continue living at home like homecare, meals at home or occupational therapy
- Services that provide people with a place to live like residential care or care homes, extra

care housing or foster care

- Services that help people to manage their money such as welfare rights advice or information about direct payments
- Services that help people to get out and about such as the Blue or Green Badge schemes or dial-a-ride
- Services that assist people with disabilities such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or those who have a sensory impairment for example, visual or hearing.
- Social care also supports people with managing emotional issues and relationships

The key to social care work is building relationships with people and helping them take control of their lives. Social care benefits those who receive support, and wider communities.

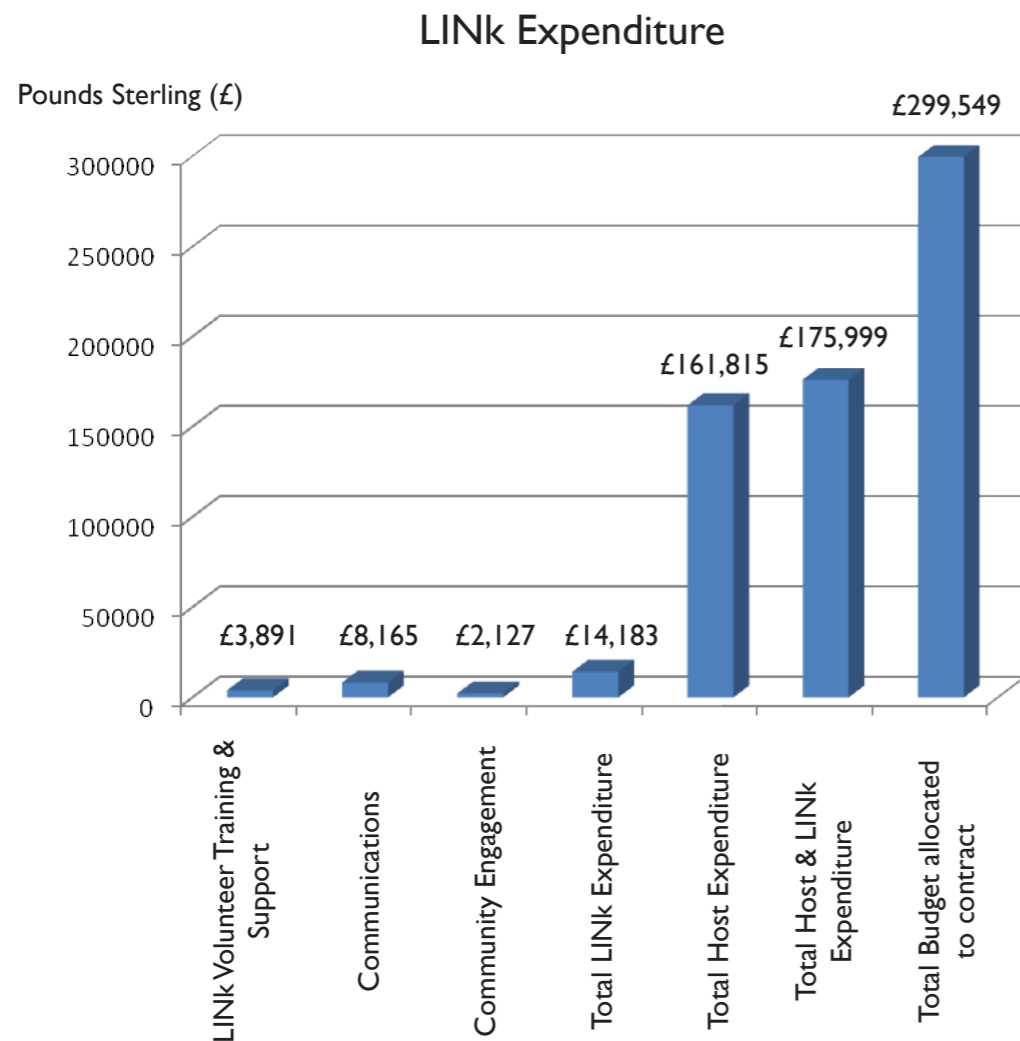
If you have any further questions, please contact the LINK on 0115 9754 647

“Social Care is giving people the opportunity to live their own life but to have support where needed to help them do that.”

Dave Bacon
Retford Action Centre

Finance

Below is the breakdown of the Host and LINk expenditure over the last financial year. For more information about the LINks finances, please contact the Host Organisation at the address on the back cover of this report.



Thanks

The Nottinghamshire County LINk would like to thank the following:

Transitional Steering Group

We would like to thank and congratulate the members of the Transitional Steering Group for all their hard work and commitment over the last twelve months. These people are:

Shirley Inskip
 Barbara Venes
 John Kerry
 John Sewell
 Jean Lewis
 Iris Parker-Smith
 Adrian Hartley

Co-opted Members

Secondly, we would also like to thank the co-opted members of the Transitional Steering Group for their dedication and support throughout the initial stages of the LINk. These members include:

Rachael Clark – NAVO
 Julie Bryant – NHS Nottinghamshire County
 Helen Cooper – Advocacy Alliance
 Val Gardiner – Newark & Sherwood CVS
 Jas Hundal – Nottinghamshire County Council
 Emily Knowles – Bassetlaw CVS
 Katie Moore – Nottingham University Hospitals Trust
 Paul Nicholas – Nottinghamshire County Council
 Christine Precious – Self Help Nottingham
 Mick Rimington – East Midlands Ambulance Service
 Paul Sanguinazzi – Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Teresa Seymour – NHS Nottinghamshire County
 Penny Spice - NHS Nottinghamshire County

Communications and Engagement Working Group

We would next like to thank the following members of the Communications and Engagement Working Group for 2008/9 for all their hard work:

Helen Cooper
 Shirley Inskip
 John Kerry
 Jean Lewis
 Christine Precious
 John Sewell
 Teresa Seymour
 Steve Shaw
 Penny Spice
 Jane Stubbings
 Glen Swanwick
 Tom Turner

Members of the Public

We would finally like to thank all the members of the public and organisations that have participated in the LINk or raised an issue with us so far.

If you would like to contact the LINK or the LINK Support Team to make an enquiry, send an issue to the LINK or to request a registration pack please contact us at:

Nottinghamshire County LINK
Unit E2
Southglade Business Park
Cowlairs
Nottingham
NG5 9RA

Tel: 0115 9754647

E-mai: info@strongerlocalvoice.com

Web: www.strongerlocalvoice.com

The registered office for the Carers Federation is:

The Carers Federation
1 Beech Avenue
Sherwood Rise
New Basford
Nottingham
NG7 7LJ



LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK

Your Stronger Local Voice