

Worcestershire

LINK

**MAKE IT
HAPPEN!**

Worcestershire Local Involvement Network

Annual Report

April 2009- March 2010

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Introduction

This year has passed so quickly! Through our community development programme we have met so many people, engaged them in discussion about health and social care issues, and attracted new members, both individuals and voluntary organisations. We have carried out surveys through our website, and received interesting, helpful responses to key issues. We have explored lots of issues and achieved some satisfactory outcomes. Thank you to all of you who have helped us this year, through discussion, responding to surveys, and for giving us feedback about the issues that you would like us to know about.

The following are our highlights of the year:

- Head and neck cancer services. The move to a whole county cancer policy by both the PCT and Acute Trust, and the intention to have a radiotherapy unit within the county by 2012 are both excellent outcomes.
- The carers' survey. We received 131 responses to this. The results indicate that more work is needed to be done within the county to support carers.
- Out of hours service. We undertook about 11 visits to the service during the year and were pleased to hear that there is an opportunity to build a better service with Harmoni taking over in April 2010 from Take Care Now. We intend to continue with unannounced enter and view visits through the coming year.

However, we can only do so much, as volunteers, and would love more people to come forward to help with the work. Do look at our work programme for next year. Is there something here that you would like to help with? Is there an issue that needs investigating that we do not know about? Please tell us!

Finally, we must say a big thank you to everyone who has helped us. The list is too big to name individuals, but please accept our thanks: our members; staff from trusts and social services; the voluntary organisations who have worked with us; individual members who have contacted us; members of the public who have talked to us; to all three community development officers; and to our Shaw Trust staff who deal with the office and ensure that all runs smoothly.



Ann Montague-Smith
Worcestershire LINK Chairperson

Contact Details

LINK

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Membership and Structure of Worcestershire LINK

Management Committee Members

Ann Montague-Smith	Chairperson
Bob Norfolk	
David Montague-Smith	
Eve Meredith	Finance Chair
Fred Kaler	
Jan Adams	
Jill Edwards	Finance Committee
John Kessell	
Liz Lloyd	
Mark Lawley	Vice Chair
Pat Fisher	
Paul Crawford	
Richard Cassling	Vice Chair & Finance Committee
Rosemary Smart	
Sheila Neary	

Worcestershire LINK has a management committee which is made up of 15 individuals from various locations across Worcestershire. Not only does the committee represent the areas of Worcestershire it represents various groups and voluntary organisations. This enables the LINK to receive and give feedback to members and groups. A list of these groups can be seen on Page 5. The Committee has a Chair, two Vice Chairs and Finance Sub-group. The wider active membership of the LINK also represents a variety of geographical locations across Worcestershire including extremely rural areas where access to services can be limited. Each member of the management committee is part of a sub-group which investigates topics from the work programme. Each sub group has a lead person who co-ordinates the work and is responsible for communicating with the host organisation. Inclusiveness and a strong commitment to supporting a wide diversity of people are some of the key values of Worcestershire LINK. Worcestershire LINK conducts themselves in accordance with the Nolan Principles. These principles are:

- Selflessness
- Objectivity
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

Decision Making Procedure

Decisions of the Management Committee, any group or sub-group of the LINK are taken by consensus or show of hands, by simple majority of those voting. If the group is small and has difficulty in reaching consensus, the decision will be referred to the Management Committee for debate and decision. All decisions are recorded in minutes.

Authorised Representatives for Enter and View

Ann Montague-Smith	John Kessell
Richard Cassling	Mark Lawley
Paul Crawford	David Montague-Smith
Jill Edwards	Sheila Neary
Pat Fisher	

Groups and Forums Represented by Management Committee Members

Arden Cancer Network Group for Bromsgrove and Redditch
Bewdley Youth Café and the Community Transport Helpline Limited
Carers Association
Diabetes Workforce Sub Group
Disability Group
Droitwich Area Forum for Older People
Health and Community Facilities Group
Health and Social Care Sub Group
Hereford & Worcester Head & Neck Cancer Support Group
Herefords Learning Disability Group
Learning Disability Group
NHS Retirement Fellowship
Older Peoples Voluntary Sectors Network
Patient Participation Group
Patient Participation Group at Bewdley Medical Centre
Practice Based Commissioning Group of the Wyre Forest PPG Group
Radiotherapy Group
Redditch Older Peoples Forum
Worcestershire Association of Voluntary Organisations in Community Care
Worcestershire County Council Carers Consultative Group
Worcestershire County Council Learning Disability Partnership Board
Worcestershire Partnership – Health and Wellbeing Theme Group
Unscheduled Care Group
PCT
PPI Sub-Committee of PCT Board

West Midlands Ambulance Service

Patient and Public Engagement Group
Infection Prevention and Control
Governance – Southern Division
Research and Development Committee
Equality and Diversity Committee

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust

Patients Forum
Patient Safety and Quality Committee
Patient Experience Committee

Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust

Partnership Forum
Community Forum
Carers Forum

Worcestershire LINK's membership has risen significantly from 150 members in 2009 to 310 members in 2010. The LINK has a diverse membership of individuals who have interests in many different health and social care services. All members inform the LINK of their interests. They are also asked for equality and diversity details but most individuals choose not to provide this information. We know that around 80 members have a specific interest in social care. Worcestershire LINK has around 73 interest groups which represent under-represented sections of the community and there are around 20 members who are involved in management boards, sub groups and represent the LINK externally. During 2008-2009 1000 individuals had participated in Worcestershire LINK activity, this has risen to 3000 throughout 2009-2010.

Community Engagement

Worcestershire LINK carried out a variety of successful engagement activities over the past year. Some of the most successful activities were stands in town centres as these enable the LINK to get feedback from a wide range of people from a variety of backgrounds such as gender, age, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation. This was also successful when engaging with individuals in rural areas on the border of the County as it gave them the opportunity to give their feedback. Worcestershire LINK used a variety of activities and methods to get feedback from the people of Worcestershire. Examples of these activities include:

- Community events
- Health and Social Care events
- Newspaper adverts asking for feedback on issues from the work programme
- LINK quarterly newsletters
- Distribution of LINK leaflets
- Attending various support groups and networks for service users and carers

Through these activities Worcestershire LINK has engaged with around 50,000 people on a variety of health and social care issues. Due to the success of the LINK on influencing change within health and social care services around 150,000 people will have been affected by these changes and played a part in influencing them

Worcestershire LINK Community Engagement Activities

The Old Library Centre, Droitwich

The LINK had a stall and gave out leaflets and booklets to passers by in the street. BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester interviewed one of the LINK members.



Fresh fruit was handed out and local people talked about their experiences and views of health and social care in Worcestershire.

The Guildhall, Worcester – Health Event

The LINK had a stand inside the Guildhall alongside other health and social care related exhibitors. Leaflets and booklets were given out and new members were signed up.

Race Course, Worcester – Carers Event

The LINK had a stand and gave out leaflets and signed up new members.

Evesham Market – Local weekly market

LINK members had a stall all day at Evesham Market and gave out a large number of leaflets and balloons. New members were also signed up and the majority of people we talked to were young families.

Round Market, Tenbury Wells

LINK members had a stall at the local Market in Tenbury Wells. As it is such a rural area people felt that this gave them a voice that they do not usually have and there were a large number of young families and older people who were interested in receiving information.



Autumn Show, Malvern – Agricultural Event

LINK members had a stand for the whole weekend at the Autumn Show in Malvern. The LINK used a tree and leaves to enable people to provide feedback on their experiences. Hundreds of leaflets, pens and bags were handed out and we also we gained new members.



People wrote their feedback on a leaf and then hung it on the tree.



Many young people enjoyed taking part in this and also people who felt uncomfortable talking to someone found it easier to write.

Redditch Democracy Day – Younger Persons Event

This event was run by Redditch Borough Council for the young people from the local schools in the area. The LINK had a stand and gave out leaflets and bags to a large number of young people and also signed up some younger people to become members.

BiCon 2009 held at the University of Worcester

Worcestershire LINK agreed to run a stall at this event for bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people. We were really welcomed at the event, and the delegates came from all over Britain which meant that the message about LINKs' work was taken back to other communities in England. There were opportunities for a LINK member to join in the forums that were held, and LINK views were well regarded. We felt that LINK learned much from this event, as well as spreading the word about what LINK does.



Giving a talk about LINK's work at a Carers' Meeting

Worcestershire LINK was invited to talk about LINK at a carers' meeting. As well as explaining what LINKs are about, we also asked the members to talk about their experiences as carers. The stories that they told made us realise that carers really do have needs of their own, and that these are not being met well at the moment. This experience led us to undertake our carers' survey.

Relationships with Providers and Stakeholders

Worcestershire LINK enjoys productive relationships with many health and social care providers throughout Worcestershire. Over the past year the LINK has developed its relationships with NHS Worcestershire, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service and Commissioners for these services. This means the LINK can give feedback and request information without difficulty. The LINK has a relationship with Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership and will be working more closely with them over the next year especially Admission and Discharge procedures. The LINK is working increasingly with the Social Services and will continue to build this relationship over the next year as work begins on the issues that came to light from the carer's survey. Staff from these organisations regularly attend LINK meetings. This enables the LINK to provide the feedback collected from local people and get answers to questions.

The LINK works closely with around 73 voluntary and user led organisations across the County. A number of representatives from these organisations attend monthly LINK meetings and provide feedback to the LINK and the LINK provides feedback to the representatives to pass on. Some of the organisations which the LINK work with frequently are Worcestershire Association of Carers, Worcestershire Association of Service Users, Worcestershire Association of Voluntary Organisations in Community Care and Community First.

'NHS Worcestershire enjoys a very constructive relationship with the Worcestershire LINK. This relationship has grown considerably during the last 12 months, as the LINK has been able to become properly established with a stable and very motivated Management Committee and support team. They provide challenge, insight and suggestions to improve services, all of which are welcomed by the commissioners of health services for the county. We have been able to work closely together on a number of projects, including reviews of out of hours primary care services and our new draft Cancer Strategy. In both of these examples the LINK have been able to very successfully articulate the patient's perspective and this has been able to directly influence decision making. We are looking forward to working with them on more similar projects to improve health services during 2010/11'.



Simon Trickett

Head of
Communications and
Community
Engagement
NHS Worcestershire



"Maintaining a positive working relationship with Worcestershire LINK is an important part of our efforts to involve local people as much as possible in discussions about the planning, development and delivery of their healthcare services.

I have been greatly impressed by the valuable and well-informed contributions that LINK members have made to debates about vital issues affecting their local NHS. Your support for our efforts to keep head and neck cancer services in Worcestershire, for example, undoubtedly helped to protect this high-quality and extremely important local service for the benefit of many vulnerable patients.

LINK members have followed closely our progress on improving quality, safety, waiting times and efficiency, while also providing a robust challenge on areas where we need to strive for further improvements.

There are even more significant debates ahead about the future of healthcare in Worcestershire, not least a major public consultation on the restructuring of community health services. I believe your detailed knowledge of the local health economy puts you in a strong position to comment with authority on the best options for future management of community hospitals and other community services as we enter what could be one of the most challenging years in recent times for the NHS".



John Rostill

Chief Executive
Worcestershire Acute
Hospitals NHS Trust





West Midlands Ambulance Service **NHS** NHS Trust

WMAS has an effective relationship with Worcestershire LINK which provides an excellent opportunity for representatives of the public to raise any queries or questions into the provision and delivery of the service. We hope to further develop these arrangements for the future.

Nick Henry

Divisional Manager
Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire Locality
West Midlands Ambulance Service

LINKs have been given the challenging task of extending their remit to cover social carer issues as well as health issues. This will give a valuable joined up overview of services. The challenge however lies in the nature of social care provision, with its diversity of services, as well as the more wide-spread locations, including people's homes.

It is exciting that Worcestershire LINK has risen to this challenge by initiating a research project looking at the pathway of carers through health and social care services. A questionnaire developed by The University of Worcester will explore the carer's experience; the nature of the available support and its effectiveness.

To obtain an effective range of replies from carers in the county around 1000 questionnaires have been distributed. This has included a randomised sample of 500 carers of the Worcestershire Association of Carers' database, plus distribution at events; members of Worcestershire Association of Service Users and Cross Roads.

The final report is due from the University by the end of March. Its findings should influence the development of services for carers in the county.



Elizabeth Lloyd

Chief Officer
Worcestershire
Association of Carers



The list of organisations and groups below demonstrates the range of community engagement and work carried out by Worcestershire LINK.

- Wyre Forest Multi Agency Group
- North Headway
- Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum
- Redditch Nightstop
- Alzheimer's Society
- Community First
- University of Worcester
- Bromsgrove and Redditch Network
- Speak Easy Now
- Stourport High School
- Redditch & District Age Concern
- ICAS
- Youth Worcs
- Sight Concern
- Worcester Volunteer Centre
- Community First Befriending Scheme Network
- The Friendly Firm
- Vinvolved
- Redditch Walking Group
- Windmill Community Centre
- Arrowvale Sports Centre
- Time 4 U Centres

Training

All LINK members who want to take part in enter and view projects receive relevant training. Nine members of the LINK management committee and two wider members have received enter and view training. The LINK also held an away day in 2009 and received training on Working with the Media and writing press releases, Mental Health and Carers.

Requests for Information

Between 2009 and 2010 **Worcestershire LINK made 26 requests for information 24** of which were answered within 20 working days and 4 of which were related to social care.

Enter and View

The authorised representatives of Worcestershire LINK carried out a **total of 23 enter and view visits**; 22 of which were related to health care and 1 related to social care. Letters of intent are sent to the relevant organisation giving a period of time during which the LINK will carry out the visit, following the visit reports and recommendations are then made. The table below shows the number and variety of enter and view visits which have been carried out between 2009 and 2010.

Enter and View Locations

Work Programme Topic	No. of visits	Venues Visited	Health/Social Care	Date
Out of Hours	5	Redditch, Evesham, Malvern, Worcester Kidderminster	Health Care	May 2009
Out of Hours	6	Redditch, Evesham, Malvern, Worcester Kidderminster, Tenbury Wells	Health Care	Nov/Dec 2009
Winter Pressures	11	Community Hospitals: Evesham, Malvern, Pershore, Tenbury Wells Wyre Forest 6 GP surgeries	Health Care	Jan/Feb 2010
Day Care Centre	1	Kidderminster	Social Care*	Jan 2010
Total	23			

*During 2010 and 2011 a sub group of Worcestershire LINK will be looking closely at Community Care. The LINK will be carrying out a number of enter and view visits to care homes, nursing homes and day centres.

Reports and Recommendations

Worcestershire LINK made four reports/recommendations to commissioners of health and social care services this year. All four reports were acknowledged within the required timescale and two of the reports. Out of Hours and Head and Neck Cancer Services led to a service review. The Out of Hours report led to a service change. Three of these reports were related to health and one report was related to social care services.

Referrals to OSCs

Worcestershire LINK enjoys a very productive relationship with the HOSC (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and has worked closely on a number of issues. The HOSC asked the LINK to contribute to a piece of work they were carrying out on Winter Pressures at the beginning of 2010. The LINK carried out a survey to give local people an opportunity to give feedback on their experiences of health and social services over the winter period and also carried out a number of enter and view visits to community hospitals and GP surgeries. A report was submitted and presented to the HOSC which then formed part of their final report. Worcestershire LINK made three referrals to the HOSC: Emergency Ambulance Response times; Head and Neck Cancer Services and Out of Hours. All three of these referrals were acknowledged by the HOSC and the Out of Hours referral led to service change and NHS Worcestershire are currently consulting on a new Cancer Strategy for Worcestershire.

CQC

Worcestershire LINK works closely with the local CQC representatives by reporting information and feedback from LINK work. The LINK Chair and the CQC representatives meet every three months and the LINK will be taking part in a pilot project to monitor the quality and safety of health and social care service.

Case Studies

West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS)

We heard complaints from members of the public about poor 999 response times in rural areas. WMAS's main Emergency Operations Centre, which covers Worcestershire, was asked to supply the statistics for all ambulance responses for the last 3 months for Worcestershire. Staff at stations and HQ levels were interviewed. The statistics supplied enabled the LINK to establish that in part some postcodes appeared to be disadvantaged. These surprisingly were not, as alleged, the rural areas but those postcodes that included an ambulance station. The explanation from WMAS about this was that the first line vehicles are either out attending an incident or standing by in accident black spots, so they are seldom on station within that postcode. WMAS provides Rapid Response Vehicles and Community First Responders which offer 999 emergency cover in those areas where the number of incidents is small. The ratio of achieved Category A8 (most serious) responses has significantly improved. The Category A19 results for these rural areas very rarely miss the required 95% figures, and often exceed them. What is increasingly apparent is that the problems experienced by WMAS at point of delivery are not in the rural areas where the sparse demand is well contained by the alternative first response measures deployed. Their problems are in the urban conurbations where the efficient use of resources is being hindered by other pressures from outside their control. At the LINK Christmas meeting we had a Community First Responder visit us to explain his role in attending emergencies and to give a better understanding of the service these amazing people give to their communities.

Out of Hours Services

Concerns about the Out of Hours Service were brought to the LINK by individuals. We issued two Enter and View notifications to the PCT, which were forwarded to the then provider of out of hours services, Take Care Now. The first visit was in May, and the second late November to early December 2009. We worked in pairs or small groups of three or four and spoke to patients, relatives, friends and carers, as well as to the staff as they became available, and over time visited all sites where Out of Hours Services were held. Our first visit uncovered very little which needed attention. However, at our second visit, which was to just one site initially, we found that matters were far from well. We were so concerned about what we saw and heard that we formed small groups and covered all sites bar one within five days. What we saw at those sites included Emergency Care Practitioners (ECP) seeing very young babies and children, which is not considered safe practice; patients expecting to see a doctor when they would, in fact, see an ECP; the service being run with only two doctors which led to patients calling 999 for an emergency ambulance because the doctors ran out of time for making home visits. We reported our deep concerns to the PCT. The PCT were already undertaking a review of TCN's performance and the findings from our second visit became an important component of this. Following on from this review, Take Care Now decided it could not continue to offer a service in Worcestershire. LINK was part of the stakeholders' group which had the opportunity to question Harmoni, a possible new provider, about the service it proposed to offer. Harmoni took over the contract from 1st April 2010.

Worcestershire LINK is working with the PCT to monitor the service and is carrying out enter and view to ensure that it is fit for purpose for the 150,000 people which use the service each year.

Head and Neck Cancer Services

We were contacted by a group of patients with regard to proposals for changes to the service. We received an input by Acute Trust staff in order that we understand the position with head and neck cancer. LINK members asked lots of questions and discovered that this service was to be moved to Gloucestershire Acute Trust even though the service that was offered in Worcestershire was of a very high standard. The particular issue was to do with how many complex cases of head and neck cancer the staff dealt with during a year. We wrote letters to key health service personnel and to local MPs. We discussed the issues with the PCT Commissioner responsible for these services. We met with Gloucestershire and Herefordshire LINKs in order to share views about the proposed service changes. We have just met with the Chair of the 3 Counties Cancer Network, and two of her staff, in order to discuss the issue fully from Worcestershire patients' viewpoints. Meanwhile the PCT and the Acute Trust have agreed in principal a new whole county cancer strategy, which takes account of the whole of Worcestershire. It is planned to locate three Linac machines (radiotherapy) in a centre in Worcestershire, oncology services too, and to search during 2010 for a provider for these. This will mean that patients, families and carers will be saved from long journeys into other centres in the West Midlands, or Gloucestershire. **These proposals have gone out to public consultation and will effect the entire population of Worcestershire (550,000 approx).**

Winter pressures

Worcestershire LINK was asked by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the County Council if we would give evidence about the effects on people's health and social well-being from the hard winter we have experienced. We issued Enter and View notices to the community hospitals and GP surgeries. We placed a survey on our website, and informed members and voluntary groups through WAVOCC, WASU and WAC, that the survey was there. We visited five community hospitals and six GP surgeries. The key issues that arose were: improving access to hospitals for staff during bad weather; ensuring that there are sufficient beds in the community hospital sector to cope with the demand; planning for another winter like this one in advance, including gritting of roads and pavements to try to reduce falls and accidents. Through the survey we found that some people had quite long periods of time on their own when nobody could visit them due to the snowy conditions. Some people felt quite isolated and lonely. We suggested ways in which the situation could be improved for everybody during bad weather: neighbours to check that those who are cared for in their own homes have been visited and cared for. If not, there needs to be a 'hot line' that neighbours and friends can telephone to ask for help on behalf of someone who is in need of help; asking that the local authority hubs carry leaflets about keeping warm; advice on how to cope during the bad weather. This could include stocking up on non-perishable food; asking relatives and friends to telephone regularly those who live on their own but cannot be reached in bad weather. This could be a pull-out guide in a local newspaper so that people can keep it handy. We shall not know for a little while what impact our survey has had on the health trusts and Social Care.

Finance Report 2009 – 2010

Amount allocated to the local authority by the Department of Health	£223,000.00
Amount of funding received by the host from the local authority	£211,000.00
Amount of funding received by the LINK from the host	£28,500.00
Amount of funding carried over from previous year	£29,232.00
Other income	N/A
Total spend by host and LINK for 2009/2010	£190,393.00
Total spend by host organisation	£147,544.00
Total spend by LINK	£42,849.00