



'What's Your Issue?'

**Findings from the first
Hull LINK Members Forum**

**Tuesday 10th February 2009
The Octagon, Walker Street, Hull**



What's Your Issue?



Hull LINK – A Stronger Voice In Health and Social Care Services

Hull LINK is the City's Local Involvement Network, an independent body which gives people a stronger voice in how health and social care services are planned and run. Hull LINK aims to help local people influence the way that publicly funded health and care services are delivered in the city.

Hull LINK is an independent network made up of individuals (patients, service users, carers and people interested in health and social care) and voluntary and community groups. Hull LINK's role is to find out what local people think about services and work closely with the people who plan and run them (such as the NHS Trusts and the City Council) in order to develop them.

Hull LINK has legal powers to: request information from service providers; make reports and recommendations to improve services; to visit premises to see how services are being delivered; and to refer issues to the City Council's Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Commission if it seems action is not being taken.

LINKs have been set up across England under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The host organisation for Hull LINK is Hull CVS. The host's role is to support the LINK as it develops, provide professional services and to hold its finances.

Aims of the Forum

It's vital that Hull LINK involves the local community in its work and gives people a chance to have their say.

This was the first public forum organised by Hull LINK. We will be holding a minimum of four public forums a year. There will be other mechanisms for people to give their views, including: via our website; by letter and email; surveys and comments cards; at public presentations and community events; at one to one meetings; at the Hull LINK AGM.

This forum aimed to:

- Let people know about Hull LINK's progress so far.
- Give people a chance to meet members of the new Hull LINK Steering Group.
- Enable people to have a say in which priority issues Hull LINK should investigate.



What's Your Issue?



Welcome and Introductions

Steve Kimberley, Hull LINK Manager, welcomed participants to the event and gave an overview of how the LINK has developed so far. This covered: role and powers of LINKs; how to get involved; Hull LINK's work to date; and plans for the future.

Over 100 members have been recruited so far and this is rising steadily. The LINK's Governance Framework, a set of rules and procedures which sets out how Hull LINK will operate, has been approved. A launch event in November 2008 was well attended and provided a good platform to tell the community about the new LINK. A lot of time has been spent building links with public bodies which have an interest in the LINK's role, such as the City Council, NHS Trusts and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. Recently an election was held to elect a Steering Group, a body which will direct the work of the LINK and decide how its resources will be used.



Questions and Views

There were a number of questions and viewpoints put forward.

- Some people received more than one invite to the event; can this kind of duplication be prevented?

Response – we don't wish to bombard people and will try to avoid duplication, but we are keen to involve as many people as possible and this means using a variety of methods to let people know about our work.

- Is Hull LINK going to be the same as the old PPI (Patient and Public Involvement) Forums?

Response - The LINK needs to build on the legacy of the outgoing PPI Forums. We have studied their legacy reports and will build on their work when picking up issues. However Hull LINK has a wider remit as we cover both health and social care issues and we will be involving both groups and individuals, so we will be working in a different way. We are working closely with the NHS Trusts to avoid duplication

- There is a lot of engagement going on, particularly over health services, and this work needs joining up. The local NHS Trusts are all developing membership schemes – is there a risk of duplication with Hull LINK?

What's Your Issue?



Response – The LINK has some key differences from membership schemes. It is independent and led by local communities; it has a remit to cover health and social care issues; and it has statutory powers. Hull LINK will need to stress these differences.

Other points raised included:

- Hull LINK covers a wide range of issues and will need to recruit people with specific knowledge for working groups which will investigate issues. LINKs will have more freedom than the old PPI Forums to investigate issues of concern.
- There are opportunities for Hull LINK to make an impact. The PCT have made a commitment to consult on any service change. There is already evidence that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission are asking questions to providers about LINK involvement.
- When Hull LINK can show that it has changed something it will be viewed more positively and people will feel more inclined to join. Hull LINK will need to operate flexibly and respond to issues as they arise.



Hull LINK Steering Group

Gabriel Doherty, Chair of Hull LINK, introduced himself and the other members of the Steering Group present. Gabriel explained that he is Chief Officer of HANA (Humber All Nations Alliance) and has a background in community involvement through roles with Humberside Police Authority, Area Housing Boards and the Local Strategic Partnership.



Gabriel said that the powers of the LINK are a key factor which distinguishes it from other schemes. The LINK's independence will be crucial in holding services up to public scrutiny. He has personal experience of hospital services and feels that user concerns are not high enough on the agenda. LINKs can bring common sense and the experiences of users and use this to promote consistent standards of service.

Finally Gabriel stressed that the Hull LINK is not just the Steering Group – it will need members to be active to ensure success.

What's Your Issue?



Hull LINK Priority Issues

Steve explained that the LINK has been gathering people's views on what issues should be priority issues to investigate. This has been done at our launch event, via an online survey, through comments cards, and at public events. This process has produced a shortlist of the most commonly raised issues of concern.

It is now time for the LINK to focus on delivering progress in services and to help with this process a simple straw poll was conducted whereby participants could vote on their top issues.

The results were as follows (most popular issue first):

1. Hospital Discharge
2. Respite Care and Support for Carers
3. Personalisation Agenda in Social Care (Personal Budgets)
4. Learning Disabilities – Access to Services
5. Mental Health Services for Young People
6. Dementia Care
7. Care at Home for Older People
8. Mental Health in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
9. Disabled Access to Premises
10. Waiting Times for Cancer Treatment

Further voting can be done online or through a postal survey for people who were not able to attend the forum.

For more information visit the Hull LINK website.

Next Steps

Results of the poll will help the new Steering Group as they decide on the LINK workplan for the coming months. Task and finish groups will be formed to investigate and report on the main priority areas, and their progress will be reported to future forums.



What's Your Issue?



Appendix 1 - Delegate List

Attendees

Hazel	Allen	
John	Allison-Walsh	
Jonathan	Appleton	Hull LINK
Ken	Baker	Hull Civic Society
Mavis	Bilton	
Danny	Brown	Age Concern Hull
Sally	Browne	
Wayne	Buckton	Cornerhouse (Yorkshire)
Martin	Craven	Hull LINK
Barbara	Dalby	
Jacqueline	Dobson	
Gabriel	Doherty	Humber All Nations Alliance
Joyce	Earle	
Graham	Gedney	
Karen	Hillison	
Wendy	Ibbetson	Rethink Carers Service
Steve	Kimberley	Hull LINK
Tish	Lamb	Cornerhouse (Yorkshire)
John	Lawrence	
Helen	Laws	nCompass
Judy	May	Carers Centre Hull
Peter	Nicholas	Second Chance
Terry	Quinn	Goodwin Development Trust
Susan	Raettig	
Michael	Rouse-Deane	
Luana	Smith	

Apologies

Greg	Harman	Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council
Sue	Harper	Mencap Advocacy Service
Maggie	Harris	Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Peter	Kitson	The Carers Federation
Barbara	Onley	
Gill	Poole	
Jane	Popplewell	Anchor Staying Put
Penny	Stephenson	
Karen	Stretton	Choices and Rights Disability Coalition

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Appendix 2 - Presentation Slides



What are its powers?

- Make reports and recommendations to service commissioners and get a response
- Ask commissioners for information from services and get a response
- 'Enter and view' premises to observe service provision
- Refer issues to Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and get a response



What is a LINK?

- A Local Involvement Network of people and groups that want to influence local health and social care services
- Enables people to have a say in how services are planned and run
- Covers all publicly funded health and social care services, whoever the provider is – NHS, local authority, private company, charity



Why get involved?

- Get attention for neglected issues
- Influence those making decisions on health and social care services
- Help the community speak with a stronger local voice
- Help services provide better care



What is a LINK?

- One LINK in every area of England
- Made up of both local people and local organisations
- Independently run and funded
- Supported by Hull CVS as 'host'
- Specific powers to help do its job (legislation)



Its up to you how and when

- Attend an occasional meeting on an issue of interest to you
- Complete a questionnaire (online or by post)
- Become an 'enter and view' representative
- Join a working group on a regular basis



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Progress

- Over 100 members and rising
- Website www.hull-link.org.uk , e-news
- Governance Framework
- Launched 7 November by Alan Johnson MP
- Links to City Council, NHS Trusts, Overview and Scrutiny
- Elected Steering Group



The Future

- Consult and engage community on priorities
- Investigate issues
- Do research and produce reports
- Enter and view training and visits



www.hull-link.org.uk

