

Staffordshire LINK: Major turnaround and development as a social enterprise



County Councillor Matthew Ellis recently wrote to all LINK participants and organisations thanking them for their tremendous contribution to the LINK placing it at the forefront of how public involvement in shaping health and care services should be done and achieving an amazing turnaround since December last year.

Cllr Ellis advised that because of the progress made and extraordinary increase in the number of individuals and voluntary sector organisations now involved with Staffordshire LINK it is right to start the process of truly making the LINK fully independent and an entity in its own right and, for that reason, Cllr Ellis terminated the work by the Department on re-tendering, via the EU, for a new host organisation to facilitate the LINK until March 2011 as it is his belief that when it is working so well and with such a limited term left on the contract it would be wrong to make fundamental changes.

Instead, Cllr Ellis is commissioning some work around establishing a social enterprise model for Staffordshire LINK meaning it would be an entity entirely in its own right and totally free from any governmental interference. In the meantime the support for the excellent work being done will continue, unabated, in the way it has over the past few months.

The future arrangements being considered by the coalition Government are likely to embrace this type of approach and Cllr Ellis believes this will further underpin the Staffordshire LINK's excellent work.

What is a Social Enterprise?

'A business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for the purpose in the business or in the community rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for the shareholders and owners'.

Inside this issue:		Special points of interest:	
What is a Social Enterprise?	1	• Staffordshire LINK as a social enterprise.	
West Midlands Ambulance Service 999 Patient Survey	2	• NHS White Paper: 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS.'	
Out and about with LINK	2	• Workplan priorities for 2010/2011—the results.	
Introduction of HealthWatch England and local HealthWatch organisations	3		
Contact us	4		

LINK Co-ordinating Group: Update

Following the appointment of 6 members to the LINK's Co-ordinating Group, as reported in the June issue of the LINK Bulletin, there has been continued interest from LINK participants and representatives of voluntary and community sector organisations who have submitted applications to be considered in respect of the 5 vacant positions on the Co-ordinating Group.

As a result, a second selection workshop is being arranged in order that those who have submitted applications can be considered and, if successful,

will be appointed in order to fill the 5 vacancies on the Group and enable it to be formalised as a fully quorate and representative group for Staffordshire LINK.

The selection workshop will take place on Tuesday 27th July in Stafford.

Further details of any appointments made to the Co-ordinating Group will be reported in the next issue of the Staffordshire LINK Bulletin.

West Midlands Ambulance Service: 999 Patient Survey

West Midlands Ambulance Service has developed a patient survey for anyone who has dialled 999 for medical assistance. The survey will be another avenue (in addition to PALS, Complaints and Compliments) of measuring patient experience so they can improve the service that they deliver.

The survey can be accessed via the home page of the Trust's website at

www.wmas.nhs.uk

and look out for the box which is illustrated below:



Out and About with LINK

The LINK Support Team have been busy visiting organisations and groups across the County in order to raise awareness about the LINK and what it can offer to local communities.

Events the team have attended recently:

6th July— Tamworth CVS

7th July—Mothers' Union, Norton Bridge.

14th July—Chase CVS.

If your group would like the LINK Support Team to give a talk or presentation, please contact us.

LINK Work Projects 2010/11

Work is now starting in order to develop the LINK work plan projects in respect of the top 6 priority themes identified (see page 4 of the Bulletin) and we are undertaking a survey on respite care provisions for people under age 65. If anyone would like to take part in the survey, please call the LINK Support Team on 01785 887990.

Further workshops are also taking place in early August for the Stroke and Dementia projects. If you would like details, please contact the LINK Support Team.

NHS White Paper: 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS'



Secretary of State Andrew Lansley has set out the Government's ambitious plans to reform the NHS during this Parliament and for the long-term. The White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' details how power will be devolved from Whitehall to patients and professionals allowing professionals to focus on improving health outcomes and giving patients more choice and control, backed by an information revolution, so that services are more responsive to patients and designed around them rather than patients having to fit around services. The principle will be "no decision about me without me".

The NHS White Paper and supporting documents can be found at:

www.dh.gov.uk/liberatingthenhs

Introduction of HealthWatch England—LINKs will become local HealthWatch organisations

National and local HealthWatch

Under proposals contained in the White Paper, HealthWatch England will be established as a new independent consumer champion within the Care Quality Commission (CQC). HealthWatch will provide leadership, advice and support to local HealthWatch organisations and will be able to provide complaints advocacy services on their behalf if the local authority wishes.

HealthWatch England will provide advice to the NHS Commissioning Board, Monitor and the Secretary of State. It will also advise the Health and Social Care Information Centre on the information which would be of most use to patients to facilitate their choices about their care.

Based on information received from local HealthWatch organisations, HealthWatch England will also have powers to propose CQC investigations of poor services.

At local level, **LINKs** will become **local HealthWatch** organisations and will continue to ensure

that the views and feedback from patients and carers are an integral part of local health and social care commissioning.

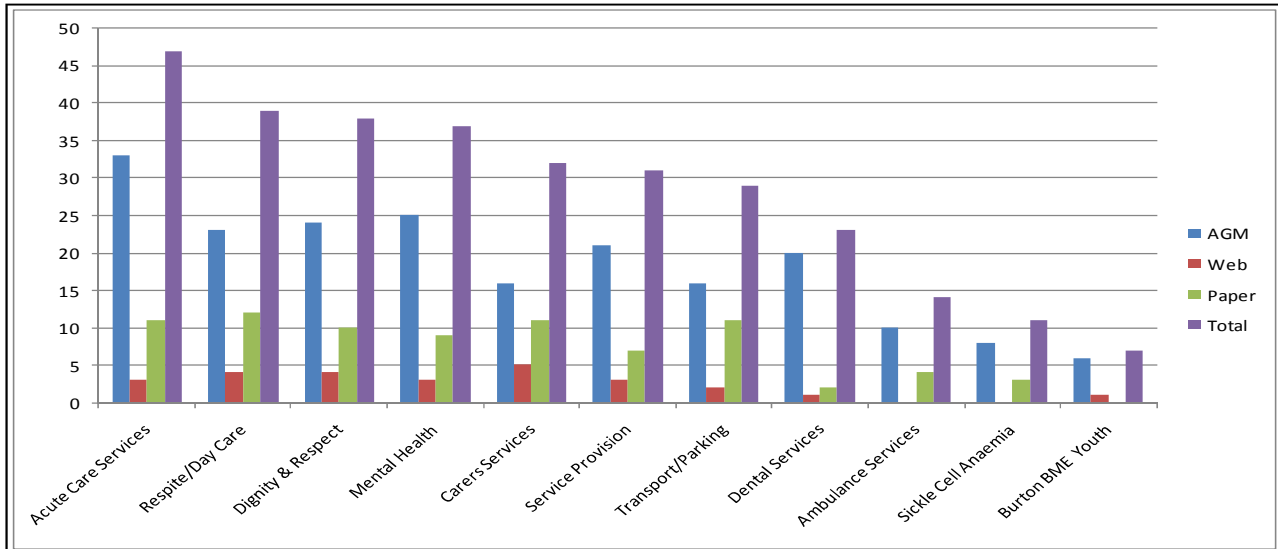
Local Authorities will be able to commission local HealthWatch or HealthWatch England to provide complaints advocacy and support, helping local people access and make choices about services, and supporting individuals who want to make a complaint.

Local HealthWatch will be funded by and accountable to local authorities, and will be involved in local authorities' new partnership functions. To reinforce local accountability, local authorities will be responsible for ensuring that local HealthWatch are operating effectively, and for putting in place better arrangements if they are not.

Local HealthWatch will also provide a source of intelligence for national HealthWatch and will be able to report on concerns about the quality of providers, independently of the local authority. More detailed information will be disseminated when this becomes available.

Staffordshire LINK Workplan Priorities – The Results

The consultation period for voting on the LINK's workplan priorities for 2010/11 from the 11 themes below concluded on Monday 19th July. LINK participants have been able to vote at the LINK AGM; on-line voting on the LINK website and paper votes cast at community engagement events and by post.



From the results, the top 6 priorities identified are:

Acute Care Services
Respite/Day Care

Dignity & Respect
Mental Health

Carers Services
Service Provision

A work programme is now being formulated in order to progress these themes and details will be included in next month's LINK Bulletin. If you are interested in being involved in any of the above work plan priorities, please contact the LINK Support Team to register your interest.

Contact Staffordshire LINK at:

Unit 30 Staffordshire University Business Village
Dyson Way
Staffordshire Technology Park
Stafford ST18 0TW
Tel: 01785 887990 (and answerphone)
Email: enquiries@staffordshirelink.staffs.com
Fax: 01785 887820 Freepost available

Find us on the web at

www.staffordshirelink.org.uk