

Cumbria **LINK**

MAKE IT HAPPEN!



Cumbria Local Involvement Network (LINK)

Annual Report
2008 - 2009



Cumbria CVS supports the Cumbria LINK

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Introduction

The introduction of the Cumbria Local Involvement Network in April 2008 gave a new opportunity for Cumbrians to have the power to influence health and care services. It is part of a National plan to develop local networks in each Local Authority Area to local communities, to listen and to hear what members of those communities have to say and to use these views to help shape the local health and social care services.



Our network of people and organisations is steadily growing. By working together we are **stronger together**



The ideas, comments, local information and involvement of members of the local communities will help inform changes in health and social care, as well as spread the word about the good parts of our local health and social care organisations.

In Cumbria we want to encourage as many people as possible to join Cumbria LINK. We believe that, by offering a range of ways to get involved, many people will join the network.

Our network of people and organisations is steadily growing.

By working together we are **stronger together**.

For our first year, we have concentrated on:

- building a structure for the Cumbria LINK that local people can relate to and understand.

- communicating the LINK message throughout the County to grow and strengthen our membership
- making connections with the service providers and public engagement groups in both the NHS and Cumbria County Council Social Care

To encourage people to get involved with Cumbria LINK we offer a range of ways that people can engage.

- By simply letting us know who you are, we will send you our newsletter that will inform you of what issues are being worked on and opportunities to contribute.
- We work through Task and Complete Groups which allow people with specific areas of interest to contribute their expertise.
- We offer training and support to people who want to become Authorised Members, and undertake Enter and View visits (see page 6) on behalf of the Cumbria LINK.
- Anyone living in Cumbria can contribute to our on-line surveys, and, in the future, our on-line polls.

After five months of being operational we are beginning to see the benefits of our foundation work. People and Organisations are beginning to tell us of their concerns and issues. We have a developing network to contact for their views and to identify areas for more in-depth work.

We have a small Governing Body to plan, direct and co-ordinate the work of Cumbria LINK. We will be reviewing how this has worked early in the financial year 09/10 and setting in place a clear election process for future Governing Body membership.



The Story So Far

Transitional arrangements

Cumbria County Council contracted with Wingspan Consultancy to provide support to establish and support transitional arrangements for the period of May 2008 to September 2008.

A Transitional Steering Group (TSG) made up of nine members representing a diversity of specialist interests and districts across the county undertook the following tasks.

Communications with various bodies (including attending meetings on behalf of the TSG):

- Cumbria Action for Health
- Cumbria County Council Adult Social Care – Working Together Steering Group
- Cumbria County Council Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel
- Cumbria County Council Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee
- Cumbria County Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee Mental Health Strategy Task Group
- Cumbria Mental Health Group
- Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (Community Involvement Committee)
- NHS Cumbria, former Primary Care Trust (Board meetings, Patients' Voice Group)
- North Cumbria Acute Trust (Board meetings)
- North West Ambulance Service (Critical Friends Group)

Responding to Consultations

- The TSG took part in NHS Cumbria's consultation on the future of mental health services in Cumbria. TSG members attended all 7 consultation events. TSG made a formal submission to the NHS Cumbria
- The TSG made a formal response to NHS Cumbria when consulted on the application of J N Murray Chemist Ltd "for preliminary consent inclusion in the pharmaceutical list" for Ormsgill, Barrow. A TSG member visited the area to assess local access to GP and pharmacy services and drafted a report on behalf of the TSG.

Supporting the Development of the Cumbria LINK

A Workshop was held on 9 May 2008 which was attended by various interested parties (eg former members of the Cumbria PCT Patient Public Involvement Forum) and representatives of key stakeholder organisations. The workshop event provided participants with an opportunity to share information and ideas on the development of the LINK.

The TSG was engaged and involved in the early development of the Cumbria LINK and took part in the recruitment selection process of the first Cumbria LINK Governing Body Members.



Developing the Cumbria LiNk

Involving people

Engagement and Involvement are at the heart of what we do and care about, so it was important to us that people had a say in our own structure and terms of reference. To help us do this we held an open event to ask people what they wanted. Our work shop in June 2008 was well attended both by our key stakeholders and members of the public. We asked people what they thought of our proposals for the Cumbria LiNk. They told us that;



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- it was important the LiNk was governed by the guiding principles of openness, honesty and fairness.
- a governing body should not be so big that decision making was hindered and that the skills of those charged with governance were very important.
- there needed to be a range of ways that people could get involved with and take part in LiNk activity
- the idea of undertaking work through Task and Complete Groups was very much welcomed.

These key elements formed the basis of our Public Consultation which took place during July, August and September 2008.

Our public launch in October introduced the 7 Governing Body Members and gave the opportunity to the audience to begin to develop and shape the first Cumbria LiNk work plan.

Cumbria LiNk Governing Body

Our first Governing Body were appointed through a recruitment selection process for one year. They are tasked with guiding the Cumbria LiNk through a set of core principles based on fairness, openness and transparency.

The Governing Body have been responsible for developing the policies and procedures that underpin the working practice of the Cumbria LiNk. All our Policy documents are available on our web site www.cumbrialink.org.uk

Our Governing Body Members are:

- Alan Alexander
- Liz Clegg
- David Day
- Neil Hughes
- Becky Pearson (resigned January 09)
- Janet Pitman
- Juan Shimmin



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Communication

Letting people know about the Cumbria LINK is an area we focussed on throughout the early stages of our development and we will continue to promote the Cumbria LINK at all times. We are pleased that our circulation list now stands at 664 and continues to grow.



Nurturing productive relationships with our partners in health and social care has been another key element of the emerging Cumbria LINK.



Every two months we send our members a news bulletin either by email or post. The bulletin has a range of information:

- Local and national health and care news
- Updates on what we are doing
- Opportunities to get involved
- Events and training opportunities
- Updates for our local health and care organisations

We were delighted to launch our web site in March which will soon feature on-line polls and surveys. Anything you need to know about the Cumbria LINK is held on the website as well as useful links to key organisations.

Developing Relationships

Nurturing productive relationships with our partners in health and social care has been another key element of the emerging Cumbria LINK. We have welcomed our colleague's involvement and input to our structure and terms of reference.

Our Governing Body have met with representatives from:

- Healthcare Commission
- NHS Cumbria
- Integrated Health and Social Care Team
- University Hospitals of North Cumbria NHS Trust
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Our work with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees has resulted in a constructive working agreement which has helped inform the National Guidance. We have made no referrals to Overview and Scrutiny but have a clear process to do so in place. It is our practice to keep the Scrutiny Panels informed about the work we are doing and share relevant information.

NHS Cumbria invites members of the Cumbria LINK Governing Body, together with members of their Patient Voice Group and the Cumbria Joint Hospital Leagues of Friends, to attend pre NHS Cumbria Board meetings with Peter Clarke (Deputy Director: Communication and Engagement), to discuss the Board agenda items and reports. A representative from the Patient Voice Group, who is also a member of the LINK Governing Body, attends the Board meetings and is able to raise issues identified at the pre Board meeting and to contribute fully to discussions at the meeting. In addition, NHS Cumbria has identified a lead member of staff, Judith Deft, to act as contact for Cumbria LINK to ensure that requests for information are provided in a timely manner.



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Enter and View

Cumbria LINK has the authority to enter and view services that are provided by health and social care organisations within the County. We have provided training to support our volunteers in this role, and CRB checks are in the process of being completed. We are now well equipped to undertake enter and view visits in the coming year.

Our Authorised Visitors to date are:

- Evelyn Bitcon
- Anna Brooks
- Anne Glazebrook
- Janet Pitman
- George Watson

By May 2009 we anticipate that there will be 17 Authorised Cumbria LINK Members

Our Work

Listening and Acting

During this short period of operation people have contacted us with issues of concern to them these included:

- The poor provision of NHS dentists in the County
- Concerns about Individual Budgets for social care support, and the implications of Individual Budgets for health services
- People expressing their concerns that the number of free incontinence pads provided are not enough to meet their needs

NHS Dental Provision in Cumbria

The Cumbria LINK contacted NHS Cumbria for information about their plans to increase the current level of NHS dentists

So far we have had a formal meeting with David Tyson the Commissioning Lead for Dentistry and Oral Health, where he spelt out the timetable for new dental provision to be undertaken. The Cumbria LINK also has a representative on the Oral Strategy group of the Overview and Scrutiny committee of the County Council which recently met David Tyson. We talked about what looked like a very positive future. Also we talked about the new funds that have been made available for dental provision and about the timetable by when the new surgeries especially in West Cumbria would be open and ready for business.

We passed on the concerns raised about people being unsure if they were still on the waiting list, given the length of time since they first registered. Initially NHS Cumbria intended to contact people on the dental database who do not have a dentist at the moment. We have been assured that a joint letter from NHS Cumbria and the Oasis Dental Group, will be going out to people on the database at the end of April 2009 in batches of 1000.



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Provision of incontinence pads

Carers and Service users contacted us to highlight their concerns about the provision of free incontinence pads. We were told that many carers found that free supplies of pads were not enough to meet their user's needs and that many people were suffering from sores, rashes and reduced social confidence. We have invited people to take part in a survey about the provision of free incontinence pads through our news letter and our web site. This work will continue into the financial year 2009/10.



During this year there have been opportunities to work with our partners in health to strengthen the public voice and engage people in planning services.



We contacted NHS Cumbria who gave details about the service they provide, how it was developed and their current policy.

Individual Budgets

Individual Budgets are designed to bring about independence and choice for people receiving care or support. It gives people a full understanding of the finance that is available, in order to empower them to take control and make decisions about the care that they receive.

Major change such as this provides many opportunities but also many questions and concerns, some of which have been raised with the Cumbria LINK.

We intend to explore your issues in the coming financial year and work with our partners in health and care in Cumbria to address concerns. We will work with the Action for Health, Network in Cumbria and Skills for Care North West, to host our first event on this issue to be held on 20th April 2009.

Working Together

During this year there have been opportunities to work with our partners in health to strengthen the public voice and engage people in planning services.

In Barrow in Furness the Cumbria LINK held a street survey to find out what would help people lead healthier life styles. We found that:

- People found it difficult to find useful health information including information about healthy eating
- Young people told us they found it difficult to find out about contraception and how to access contraception services and advice.
- Some people said they would like to walk more but felt vulnerable and afraid
- People lose motivation to join the gym because of the lengthy waiting list

We have informed NHS Cumbria about our findings and hope that they are fully considered when planning the future of health services



Cumbria LINk Income and Expenditure April 2008 – March 2009

	Income	Expend
Cumbria County Council	£220,000	
Staffing		£103,900
Staff Travel		£3,684
Staff Training		£2,000
Management Fee		£18,616
Organisational Overheads		£12,772
Events		£4,567
Publicity		£1,689
Vol Expenses		£2,318
General Running costs		£14,325
Capital Expenditure		£3,800
Total	£220,000	£167,671

SURPLUS SUM OF £52,329 TO BE CARRIED FORWARD TO YEAR 2 -

THIS HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION,

VOLUNTEER EXPENSES & TRAINING, AND PROJECT FUND



Contact details

Cumbria LINK can be contacted via the Host Organisation, Cumbria CVS

Cumbria LINK
Cumbria CVS
27 Spencer Street
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA1 1BE

01228 512513
link@cumbriacvs.org.uk
www.cumbrialink.org.uk

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Registered Charity No 1119671
Company Limited by Guarantee No 6178269

Registered in England at
12a Selby Terrace, Maryport, Cumbria
CA15 6NF



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