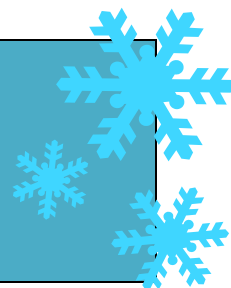


LINK Up!

The newsletter for participants in the Cambridgeshire Local Involvement Network

Winter 2012



Welcome to the Winter Newsletter

Hello once again. This is our first newsletter of 2012 and, although it's a little late, may I wish you a Happy New Year.

This New Year promises to be one of big changes for almost every LINK in England. The recent Government announcement that Local HealthWatches (LHW) will be delayed until April 2013 will not delay the plans of those Local Authorities, including our near neighbours in Essex, who are starting Shadow LHWs this spring. Their plans continue unchanged and others will announce similar plans in the coming months. LINKs must legally continue until March 2013 but they can reduce their activities, freeing up resources to set up Shadow LHWs.

The other big change underway in health and social care is of course the setting up of Shadow Health and Wellbeing Boards and Shadow Clinical Commissioning Groups; everything is in Shadow form – the new Government 'in' word I guess. Cambridgeshire is at the forefront here and our LINK is already working with the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. I attend that Board to develop a role for Cambridgeshire and will say more in future newsletters about how LHW will influence strategic care planning.

Moving from strategic planning to the sharp end of delivery I am delighted by our success in getting people to tell us what they think. We now have over 600 comments from Cambridgeshire people about their health and social care. I thought it would take at least a year to get 600 comments so congratulations to our Participants and our Host Staff for your hard work. Now your challenge is to use that information by attending to the things that people tell us concern them, even if it surprises us.

At a different sharp end of delivery we are using our Enter and View powers to see how well hospitals and residential homes respect the privacy and dignity of older people; initial results look good. This work has also brought us closer to the Care Quality Commission and we are working closely with them for the first time since our LINK started.

That is all from me and I leave you to read the articles that follow.

Mike Hewins - President of Cambridgeshire LINK



Cambridgeshire
Local Involvement Network



Follow us on Facebook

Cambridgeshire LINK now has its own Facebook page. We are keeping it up to date with LINK engagement activities and other events of interest.

 [Become a fan on facebook...](#)

Follow us on Twitter

Cambridgeshire LINK is now on Twitter. Why not become a follower to get the latest news?

 [Follow us on Twitter...](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

New start date for Local HealthWatch

The Secretary of State, Andrew Lansley, announced on the 3 January 2012 that Local HealthWatch will now begin in April 2013 rather than October 2012 as was previously thought. Subject to parliamentary approval, Local HealthWatch will replace LINKs to become the local consumer champion for patients, service users and the public.

The new date will support the alignment of the start of Local HealthWatch with the start of local health and wellbeing boards. It also gives more time to support preparations for implementation and it will enable HealthWatch England, which begins in October 2012, to provide leadership and support to Local HealthWatch organisations.

In addition it was announced that some extra funding will be available in 2011/12 to support those LINKs that are HealthWatch pathfinders. This includes Cambridgeshire LINK.

Finally, extra funding will be made available to support the start up costs of Local HealthWatch such as staff recruitment/training, office set up costs and branding.

Each Local Authority has the responsibility of setting up its Local HealthWatch and some are already in the process of setting up a shadow organisation. Our next Newsletter will give more information about the plans for Cambridgeshire HealthWatch.

LOCAL NEWS – SOCIAL CARE



A series of roadshows about Staying independent, safe and well

- ▶ information about local care and support
- ▶ presentations of assistive technology resources to help you remain independent
(Every Tuesday of each roadshow - times vary check with the library for details.)
- ▶ information on Trading Standards recommended trader scheme - Buy with confidence
- ▶ demonstrations of Your Life, Your Choice Cambridgeshire's adult social care information and advice website
(Will take place on the last Saturday of each roadshow.)
- ▶ computer buddies to help you use the website to find the information you need *

For more information about the roadshows:

- ▶ email:
yourlifeyourchoice@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- ▶ Tel: **01223 699650**
- ▶ Visit:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/libraries

* Contact the library to arrange a time for their computer buddy to help you.

Library	Dates (all 2012)
Ramsey	24 th January to 18 th February
St Ives	20 th February to 17 th March
Huntingdon	16 th April to 12 th May
Cambourne	14 th May to 9 th June
Central (Cambridge)	11 th June to 7 th July
Ely	10 th July to 4 th August
Chatteris	6 th August to 1 st September
Wisbech	3 rd September to 29 th September
March	1 st October to 27 th October
St Neots	29 th October to 24 th November

Contact your local library

Your Life, Your Choice

www.yourlifeyourchoice.org.uk

LOCAL NEWS – HOUSE OF LORDS SEMINAR



On the 4 November 2011 Mike Hewins, President of Cambridgeshire LINK, addressed a seminar held at the House of Lords which was part of the 'Health Service Best Practice Programme'. The seminar was attended by senior executives from the Department of Health, NHS, Local Authorities and the Private Sector.

Mike opened the discussion by speaking about the frustrations experienced by patients, who often feel that speaking to the NHS is pointless as their feedback is not taken seriously and ultimately leads nowhere. Mike emphasised that not only is it important to take patient feedback seriously, it is equally important to let patients know what has been done with their input.

To assist the discussion the seminar attendees were given the following question to consider: 'How will things have to change to ensure patients share in decisions about their care and the public have greater involvement in service provision'?

A number of points emerged and a full account of the meeting can be accessed on the LINK website [here](#). Here are some of the observations:

- Staff and patients are often scared to speak up – the culture needs to change and dialogue must be encouraged.
- Front line staff know what their patients need but do not have the freedom to act on it.
- People should be asked about their experience while they are on the ward – not weeks or months later.
- Individual accounts are important, but it is difficult to change something without data – how can data about the patient experience be effectively gathered?

Mike said:

“It was a privilege to be able to address the seminar and raise such important issues directly with leaders of NHS services. I hope they can take some of their ideas forward. “

LOCAL NEWS – MAJOR TRAUMA CONSULTATION

The East of England Specialist Commissioning Group is consulting the public about proposals for major trauma care in the East of England. The closing date for the consultation is the 6 February 2012. Information and a questionnaire can be obtained [here](#).

Cambridgeshire LINK will be making a response so if you wish to contribute to this please contact Bev Woolmer.

CARERS' STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust is inviting carers of people with a mental health need or learning disability to join them to finalise its consultation on the carers' strategy.

It is hosting a number of events in January and February and details can be found [here](#).

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LINK – DIGNITY AND CARE IN HOSPITAL

Cambridgeshire LINK volunteers who are Authorised Representatives have also been working on a project that focuses on whether local hospitals are protecting the dignity and privacy of older patients. To date we have been developing the best way to undertake visits to hospitals to ask patients for their views. So far visits have been made to Brookfields hospital in Cambridge and the Princess of Wales hospital in Ely. Once we have reflected on the learning from these visits we will be undertaking further work with the other hospitals in Cambridgeshire.

If you have had a recent experience in a Cambridgeshire hospital, or a close family member has been an in-patient you can give us your assessment of the treatment and care received by filling in our questionnaire which can be accessed [here](#).

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LINK – IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

Cambridgeshire LINK has expanded the way it communicates with its members and stakeholders recently. At the start of this newsletter you will find links to our Facebook and Twitter pages. We know that these social media do not appeal to everybody but we also want to communicate with those who use social networking as part of their daily life.

Our Facebook and Twitter pages are an easy way to keep up to date with LINK activities and local and national news. Since opening a Twitter account just before Christmas we have been pleasantly surprised at how many organisations in the health and social care field have chosen to follow us.

We have just launched a weekly e-bulletin which pulls together the many different communications we receive which are of interest to our members. This should reduce the number of emails our Active Participants receive. There are a couple of technical issues to sort out to enable access to documents - we are working on this! We will extend the circulation of our weekly e-bulletin to other participants as it is a convenient way of keeping up to date with health and social care issues.

The Host team is going to survey Active Participants who use the internet to see what they think about these developments and whether they need any help to get to grips with the new technology.

We will continue to send hard copies of information to the small number of Active Participants who do not use the internet. The newsletter will also continue and hard copies will be sent out to those who need them.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LINK NEWS - EVENTS

The next **General Assembly is on the 28 February at 1.00 pm**. For details of the invitation, venue and how to reserve a place please click [here](#).

The **LINK Annual General Assembly will be on the 23 May in the evening**. It will be held at the Dolphin Hotel in St Ives. Details of the agenda and how to book a place will be available in the next newsletter. In the meantime please hold this date in your diary.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LINK ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Cambridgeshire LINK Active Participants and the staff from the Host team undertake a number of public engagement events around the county throughout the year. We use these events to ask members of the public what they think about health and social care using our questionnaire. Although it would be good to see you when we are out and about you can also let us know your views by filling in the form online by clicking [here](#).



John (AP) with Joan from the Host team at Addenbrookes

LINK Participants have continued with their busy engagement schedule during the cold winter months, visiting both Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and the Cambridge University Hospitals, to talk to local people about their care experiences.

In November 2011 we took our display stand along to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital for two days, spending one day in the main hospital and one day at the Treatment Centre. This event was supported by seven LINK Participants, many of whom are active members of the Hinchingsbrooke LINK Liaison group.

A wide range of individuals including patients, their companions, staff and some hospital volunteers spoke to us about their own care experiences; 149 Our Health, Our Care, Our Say questionnaires were completed over the 2 days and 5 were posted back after the event.

We repeated this fantastically successful formula on 18th January when we visited Addenbrookes and the Rosie Hospitals with our display stand, which we put up in the shopping concourse. The event was supported by five LINK Participants, who talked to more than 70 individuals about their care experiences.



Bev from the Host team at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital

A further LINK engagement session has already been planned at Addenbrookes on 2nd February, one at North Cambs Hospital in Wisbech on 9th February and we are in the process of arranging dates to visit the Princess of Wales in Ely and Doddington Community Hospital later in the spring.

Here are some of the dates of our forthcoming engagement events. Other dates are added as opportunities arise. Check out our Facebook page or Twitter to find out more.

26 January 1 to 4pm	Cambridge Central Library 1st floor
2 February 10am to 4pm	Addenbrookes concourse
9 February 10am to 4pm	North Cambs hospital - Wisbech

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LINK - FOCUS ON CARE HOMES



Cambridgeshire LINK Authorised Representatives visited five registered care homes in the autumn of 2011. The LINK can make visits to places where people receive NHS services or social care services funded by the County Council using the statutory powers set out in the Local Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The aim of the visits is to check that care homes are meeting their residents' needs and offering a good quality of life. Recommendations are made to the care homes if improvements are necessary and the LINK checks to make sure they are followed up.

LINK volunteers trained as Authorised Representatives, supported by Host team staff, visited the care homes to talk to residents and staff. The reports from these visits are shared with the care homes, the Care Quality Commission, Cambridgeshire Community Services and Cambridgeshire County Council. They are also available on the LINK website [here](#). In general all five of the care homes visited were felt to be offering good levels of care.

Ann Russell, who is a volunteer for LINK and the project lead for this work, said:

“By visiting care homes using our statutory powers Cambridgeshire LINK volunteers bring a fresh perspective to find out if standards of care and the care home environment are as we would expect for ourselves or our family members. Our reports and recommendations are welcomed by the Care Quality Commission and the County Council as an additional source of information about the services they regulate or contract with”.

If you have a family member or friend living in a care home, or who has lived in a care home in the last year, you can give us your views about the care home by completing our on line survey [here](#). If you would like a paper copy of the survey, or need help to complete it, please contact the LINK office using the contact details at the foot of the page.



CAMBRIDGESHIRE LINK - OUR HEALTH OUR CARE OUR SAY: THIRD REPORT FROM OUR QUESTIONNAIRE



602 completed questionnaires have been returned in the last nine months. We have now collated these into a report which can be accessed on our website by clicking [here](#).

The use of the information we gather from our survey forms a core part of the Community Engagement Pathfinder project. Cambridgeshire LINK is one of 75 LINKs that are Pathfinder HealthWatches, each exploring improved ways of working to inform the development of Local HealthWatch by sharing the learning with other LINKs.

We are working to ensure that the information we are gathering is presented in a way that is useful to providers and commissioners, and organisations such as the Care Quality Commission. The format for our quarterly report is therefore evolving, for example our latest report provides some thematic analysis based on the comments people make. We are also looking critically at the questionnaire to make sure it is fit for purpose – either the range of questions asked, or in the detail of each question. This will mean that we are better able to identify issues that require follow-up.

The views and comments expressed by people completing the questionnaire are passed to decision makers and managers in health and social care services. Your voice matters – so if you have a recent experience of health or social care services, good or bad, let us know by [completing our questionnaire](#).

LOCAL NEWS – EQUALITY DELIVERY SYSTEM (EDS)

The Equality Delivery System is a new toolkit to help NHS organisations to treat patients and staff fairly. It supports the full compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

An event was held in Cambridge on the 12 January 2012 which was attended by representatives from Addenbrookes, Hinchingbrooke and Cambridgeshire Community Services, LINK representatives and members of the public. The focus of the meeting was for providers to share their assessment of how well they are performing and where they need to improve.

THE HOST TEAM



From left to right: Angie Ridley, Kate Hales, Bev Woolmer, Joan Harding and Sarah Prentice

<p>Joan Harding LiNk Host Team Leader Direct Line: 01353 865045 joan.harding@cambridgeshirelink.org.uk</p>	<p>Kate Hales LiNk Facilitator Direct Line: 01353 865028 kate.hales@cambridgeshirelink.org.uk</p>
<p>Angie Ridley LiNk Facilitator Direct Line: 01353 865022 angie.ridley@cambridgeshirelink.org.uk</p>	<p>Bev Woolmer LiNk Facilitator Direct Line: 01353 865044 beverley.woolmer@cambridgeshirelink.org.uk</p>
<p>Sarah Prentice Project Officer Direct Line: 01353 865036 Email: sarah.prentice@camsacre.org.uk</p>	<p>Don't forget to follow us on Twitter....tweet tweet!</p>

