



**Cambridgeshire**  
Local Involvement Network

**A NEW WAY TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON  
IMPROVING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  
SERVICES**

**Welcome** to the first issue of the Cambridgeshire LINK newsletter.

In this issue we introduce the LINK, tell you what it is and what it can do.

If you have an interesting story, comment or piece of information you wish to share please contact us using the details on at the back of the issue.

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# What is the LINK?

The Cambridgeshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a new government initiative made up of people and organisations with an interest in health and social care. A LINK will be established in England by every local authority responsible for social services

LINK participants will look at all aspects of NHS and social services, except most children's social care services (which are monitored in different ways). It will help communities within Cambridgeshire have a stronger voice in their health and social care services.

Cambridgeshire County Council has provided, through a competitive process, a "Host" which will support the LINK. Cambridgeshire ACRE, with the support of their delivery partner Age Concern Cambridgeshire, was appointed as Host from 1st April 2008 (more information about this can be found on page 3).



## Get ready for launch

The official launch of Cambridgeshire LINK will take place on 25th September from 6.30pm at the Burgess Hall, St Ives. In addition to the formal beginnings of the meeting two keynote speakers will give details of developments in health and social care.

The launch is open to

everyone and will give you the chance to learn more about the LINK as well as meet other participants.

Parking is available outside and the Hall is situated close to public transport links.

In preparation we are busy seeking a chair and

vice-chair. If you know someone who would be interested, please contact Mike Cornwell on the number at the back on the newsletter.

If you would like to attend the launch please contact a member of the team.

# What will the LINK do?

The LINK will:

- Ask local people what they think about their health and social care services and give them a chance to suggest ideas to help improve services.
- Investigate specific issues of concern to communities.
- Use its powers to hold services to account and get results

- Ask for information and get an answer within a specified amount of time.
- Carry out spot checks to see if services are working well.
- Make reports and recommendations and receive a response, and
- Refer to higher authorities, issues where service providers seem reluctant to accept findings and take action appropriately.

By regulations, LINK participants will have the power to enter and view service delivery in provider premises but must do so under conditions which reflect the individuals' rights.

How to get involved is explained below.



## How will LINKs work

The LINK has the potential to:

- Provide a single approach to monitoring health and social care. Cambridgeshire LINK will be tasked with finding out the views of local people and holding the Local Authority, the NHS and providers to account.
- Provide a stronger, more independent voice. A LINK is truly independent. Hosted & supported by community organisations with experience of engaging a wide

range of people.

- Be more representative of the community. Cambridgeshire LINK will ask every section of the community for their views and experiences. It won't just amplify the views of more groups & individuals, but also provide a platform for those who might not often have their voices heard.
- Make community involvement more convenient. Many people who receive health or social care services would

like to influence services but do not have the time to join groups etc. We will provide more ways for more people to be heard & work harder to engage with people who may be easier to ignore. We will provide more opportunities for everyone to express their views.

## Registration

The LINK offers 3 styles of participation.

- **Active Participant.** This means you have time to commit to the LINK and will undertake visits and work as required.
- **Interest Participant.** This means you are interested in the work we do at the LINK and wish to be made regularly aware of progress and work. In addition you will be contacted for your views and opinions.

- **Stakeholder Participant.** This means you represent or are employed by an organisation that has a pecuniary interest in health and social care & want to be made aware of the work & progress of Cambridgeshire LINK.

You can register with the LINK either as an individual or as an organisation. The choice is yours.

Contact us and we will get a registration form out to you.

"We want the project to be a success and give everyone—patients, users and carers alike—every opportunity to improve health and social care." Mike Cornwell, Host Manager

### If you are already registered...

As a registered participant, we want to know which area in health and social care you are interested in.

In addition we would really appreciate your thoughts and comments on any topic. After all this is your chance to improve local services.

# Benefits of getting Involved

By getting involved in Cambridgeshire LINK you will be able to help your community.

- Your time & effort will result in better and more appropriate services in many areas.
- LINK will provide opportunities for individuals, groups & organisations across communities to work together to make a difference.

- LINK will create a stronger local voice. We need the expertise of people who use health & care services and campaigners if we are to reach our potential.
- LINK will help councils, the NHS and health & social care providers to listen and respond to a wide range of views so that people, groups & organisations can influence all

health & social care services in Cambridgeshire.



## Cambridgeshire ACRE

Cambridgeshire ACRE was awarded as the Host for the new Cambridgeshire Local Involvement Network.

The contract, which runs for 3 years initially with the possibility of an extension for a further 2 years, was awarded by Cambridgeshire County Council following a tendering process.

The tender was convincingly won in the face of strong opposition, scoring 94.3 per cent on assessment—35 per cent ahead of the nearest challenger.

As host, Cambridgeshire ACRE will

provide a number of systems and facilities to collect the views and experiences of patients, users and carers, including:

- An interactive website
- Newsletters
- Talks to community organisations
- Targeted contacts with hard to engage and seldom-heard groups.
- Countywide mapping database and secure individuals database for inbound and outbound

communications.



## Partnership with Age Concern Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire ACRE tendered with a delivery partner, Age Concern Cambridgeshire, chosen because they are a strong organisation with a number of countywide initiatives and because they have a huge amount of experience working within social care fields, particularly with older people.

This partnership resulted in the Social Care Facilitator, Kate Hales being employed by Age Concern but being a full time member of the Cambridgeshire LINK team.



## What's on offer from the LINK

As part of the Recruitment and Promotion plan 'Get LINKed Up' the team has developed a new logo, leaflets, posters, comment forms and a website (currently under construction) to gain your all important views.

We also offer presenta-

tions and talks that can be delivered to organisations and groups interested in knowing more about Cambridgeshire LINK.

In addition we have set up a lo-cost telephone number and a freepost address to make it easier for you to contact the LINK.

## Cambridgeshire LINK

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**A NEW WAY TO  
HAVE YOUR SAY**

[www.cambridgeshirelink.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeshirelink.org.uk)

If you have a story you wish to tell or an event you would like us to attend please contact Zoe Johnson.

Likewise we would like to feature in your newsletters so please let us know before your next issue goes to print.

## Useful Information

### Re-Branding of the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust

Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) has recently rebranded itself to NHS Cambridgeshire to better reflect its increasing role as local leader of the NHS. As of 15th August all emails will be as follows [firstname.surname@cambridgeshire.nhs.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@cambridgeshire.nhs.uk) and the website has changed to [www.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk)

Cambridgeshire Community Services, the provider business unit of NHS Cambridgeshire, will continue with its existing name and contact details.

## HELP US

If you would like to help us by distributing posters, leaflets & comment forms, please contact the office with what you would like and where you will be placing them.

## Who's Who in the Cambridgeshire LINK team

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Zoe Johnson, Communications & Administration Officer

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From L-R: Kim Armitt, Zoe Johnson, Kate Hales & Mike Cornwell



## Diary of Events

### Dates to put in your diary:

- Thursday 25th September - **Launch of Cambridgeshire LINK** held at the Burgess Hall, St Ives. 6.30pm start
- Thursday 9th October—Age Concern Cambridgeshire's Autumn meeting on "Growing Old in England" held at The Meadows Centre, Cambridge 10.30am—1.00pm. Please contact Age Concern Cambridgeshire if you wish to attend this event.