

Herefordshire Local Involvement Network (LiNK) Update

Report By: Team Leader of the Host Organisation

1) **Introduction**

This report provides committee members with an update of the operational performance of the Host organisation (Carers Federation) performance to the end of March 2009, together with the key developments of the LiNK during this period.

2) **Setup**

2.1 Host organisation setup

Team Leader Mike Vials recruited and began on 2nd June 2008. ½ time Community Engagement Worker, Richard Gallagher appointed on 23/06/08. Full-time secondment via Herefordshire Council enabled Richard to take up his post at October 1st.

In November 2008 Mike Vials promoted within Carers Federation and Team Leader Richard Gallagher was recruited and began on 2^{1st} December 2008.

½ time Community Engagement Worker, Esther Grisenthwaite started 26/01/2009.

Sarah Epps employed temporarily 05/01/2009 for 15 ½ hours P/W The review in April took place and the LiNK agreed to fund the position for a further 12months to provide extra resource to the LiNK.

2.2 Office accommodation

Premises found at Berrow's House and lease was being processed by Carers Federation solicitors. But at June 12th we were informed by landlord that this could not be progressed.

Alternative premises found at the Rural Enterprise Centre Rotherwas and moved in at 29th August 2008. The building is fully DDA compliant and has meeting and training rooms on the ground floor.

3) LINK Development

3.1 Establish LINK

In partnership with Herefordshire PCT Involving People Team and Herefordshire Council 16 engagement events across the county were held to gain nominations for the LINK steering group. This resulted in 51 applications from individuals and organisations to serve on the LINK Steering Group.

3.2 Consultation with community regarding appropriate model for the LINK

The community was consulted at the events leading to a general meeting on September 11th, where proposals were carried to enlist 20 people onto the steering group and that members must be Herefordshire residents. All nominations were split into postcode area they came from, with the aim of producing 'local champions' to give representation and a voice to their locality. Voting at this meeting elected the full Steering Group of 20. The group consisted of a 60/ 40 split of individuals and local organisations and was representative of Herefordshire.

3.3 LINK Governance

The issue of Governance was considered by the Full Steering Group at its first meeting on October 15th. The LINK elected its Chair and decided upon Sub-Groups to deal with Finance, Governance, Marketing and Communications and Delivery to the Health and the Social Care Scrutiny Groups.

Draft documents were developed by Host and considered by the Governance subcommittee and in accordance with Statutory Instrument 2008 number 528 Herefordshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) consulted on and completed all necessary governance within the specified timescales of 31st December 2008, which included;

- Role of the Host
- Code of Conduct

- Procedure for dealing with Conflicts of Interest
- Code of Conduct for Enter and View
- Expenses Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Complaints Policy
- CRB Policy in place and implemented
- Health & Safety Policy
- Procedure for identifying and reporting abuse with supporting guidelines.
- Agreement of Roles and Responsibilities
- LINK Terms of Reference
- Register of Interests

3.4 AGM and Elections

The Host supported the LINK Steering group to move from an interim group to a fully elected Management Committee prior to the LINK AGM and launch on the 24th March 2009. From the 20 places available a management committee of 15 people were elected with the further option to co opt members to the Management Committee which the group feels bring further representation and knowledge to the LINK.

3.5 Membership

Herefordshire LINK's main aim is to reach out to as many members of the population of Herefordshire as possible. The LINK has 67 full members and a further 161 people have registered their interest in joining and participating in the LINK. All of these receive a regular newsletter and updates on LINK activities. If they wish to become more involved there is an opportunity for members to join a working group or a group looking at a specific work stream in the work plan.

3.6 Enter and view

Currently Herefordshire LINK has 4 authorised representatives to carry out 'Enter and View' activity. This group will expand throughout the year with more training for those members who are interested being planned. The LINK have an 'Enter and View ' policy in place and anyone interested in becoming an authorised representative needs to undergo a CRB check and the relevant training provided by the Host team. In addition, all representatives also undergo 'Safe guarding adults' and 'Community hospital

visit' training from Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire PCT respectively. Any member can be an authorised representative and those with specialist knowledge of a particular area will be chosen to enter and view that particular area.

4) Finance

4.1 Budget

Herefordshire Council allocated Herefordshire LINK a budget of £118,977 per year. Of this £54,627 was allocated to the Host team and has been used to hire premises for the LINK office and to pay for office overheads, salaries, equipment and stationery. The remainder of the money was allocated to the LINK. This has been spent on things such as advertising, work planning, training, volunteer expenses and printing.

4.2 Expenses policy

Expenses policy has been agreed and new working procedures are currently being rolled out which will provide a local bank account for more prompt payment of volunteer out of pocket expenses.

4.3 Budget monitoring

With support from the Host, the Finance Sub group review the budget on a monthly basis. This group agree budgets for Marketing and Communication activities, volunteer expenses, delivery and operational running of the LINK and training and support in conjunction of priorities from training matrix issued by the Host.

5) Promotion of the LINK

5.1 Communication

As mentioned, the Host initially, working in partnership with the PCT/Council and also independently contacted over 190 organisations three times and advertised for three weeks in most of the local papers to encourage both individuals and those representing organisations to attend the 16 events held across the County.

Additionally over eighty thousand copies of a leaflet describing the new Herefordshire LINK were sent out in local papers, and the Council produced 'Herefordshire Matters'.

Additionally we benefitted through articles in the local media and in newsletters published by local organisations and 'Herefordshire Matters', September issue. Articles have also been published in a number of parish magazines.

The LINK communicates with all members and interested parties via the quarterly newsletters and promoted the election special newsletter produced by the Host organisation.

A freepost address is established for Herefordshire LINK and a new leaflet on Herefordshire LINK is to be produced. This will also provide a self sealing survey for any issues which the public can raise issues for the LINK to consider.

The LINK AGM was also heavily advertised in the local press. The Joint Chief Executive Chris Bull gave his support and a presentation and the LINK was formally launched by the Mayor of Hereford.

Information is also found on the Herefordshire LINK website which launches officially in June 09, which as well as info, newsletters etc will also have videos and adverts about the LINK giving information in another accessible format. Herefordshire LINK also has a Facebook group, this will hopefully engage with those younger citizens of Herefordshire and is useful for promoting activity and asking for short meaningful feedback on issues raised. The LINK has also been trying to engage with those not normally part of a project such as this. We have a pitch side advertisement at Hereford United football ground giving details on the LINK and how to contact them or raise concerns. This has provided both advertising in the local press but also nationally on TV.

The Host has also produced, in conjunction with the LINK, two radio adverts detailing the LINKs work and how to get involved. One of the adverts features an Eastern European voice to engage with that hard to reach group and encourage them to also raise concerns or issues.

5.2 Networks

The Host has mapped and contacting 160 groups in Hereford to arrange talks and consultations to look at issues around Health and social care. The Host

with LINK members have also attended over 20 events across Herefordshire to display and promote its activities.

The LINK is starting to raise its profile in Herefordshire and the numbers of interested parties who wish to be a part of this is encouraging for a new 3rd sector organisation.

Whilst remaining independent, we are working in close association with the PCT and Council involvement teams to determine how people wish to be involved and we are active as a member of the Joint Involvement Working group.

During the past 10 months the Host has also been working with other Hosts and through LINK exchange and monthly, regional CSIP meeting to benefit through best practice and with potential working associates such as ICAS, PALs, CSIP, CSCI and the newly formed CQC.

6) Consultation and engagement with the public

6.1 Engagement with the public

As mentioned the previous 16 events across the County gave a steer of issues both across the county and also concerns particular to the communities where the events were held.

Also legacy work from previous PPI forums has been used to inform and request information from Herefordshire PCT, Hereford Hospital and Herefordshire Council.

The LINK during this summer is also rolling out a number of 'Road shows' to further promote the LINK and its activities. The other purpose of these is to further ask the citizens of Herefordshire for feedback on services which contribute to the work plan of the LINK.

6.2 Engagement with 'Hard to reach' and 'Seldom heard' groups

Herefordshire LINK has been working hard to make sure seldom heard and hard to reach groups have a voice on services in Herefordshire. We have been engaging with a number of Learning Disabled groups, Deaf Direct Herefordshire and National College for the Blind and feedback from this has led to accessibility being a key work stream for the LINK next year. Herefordshire has very rural demographics and has been working in

partnership with Age Concerns Rural outreach team to make sure all of Herefordshire is aware and engaged in the process. Herefordshire also has a small and seasonal BME community. One of our Management Committee members is from this community and is a valuable conduit for feedback and information from this normally seldom heard group. One to one conversations with the community have raised commentary and issues taken up with the PCT around language barriers and treatment.

7) **LINK work**

7.1 Requests for information, reports, recommendations and work planning

Herefordshire LINK has made a number of requests for information. These have been made to Herefordshire PCT, Herefordshire Hospital and Herefordshire Council around a number of issues raised by both members of the public and the board. All responses from both Herefordshire PCT and Herefordshire Hospital were received in writing within 20 working days of receipt. The answer to the request sent to Herefordshire Council was not received within 20 working days but they have since sent a formal reply to the request.

Information and responses requested are:

MRSA Infections

Requesting information on:

- The total number of MRSA bacteraemia in past quarter
- The total number of MRSA infections at sites other than the bloodstream
- The total number of MRSA isolates in this period/ total number presenting with MRSA in this period

The total number of patients discharged with non-bacteraemia MRSA in this period

Question around the continuation COMPIC (Communication and Public Involvement Committee)

Requested information on:

- Why is COMPIC finishing?
- What will take COMPIC's place?
- What will happen to the ongoing work?

- How will communication with the public continue?

What is the effect on the PCT's involvement policy?

Concerns around the treatment of sexually transmitted infections in Herefordshire in a community pharmacist setting.

Requested information:

- The confidentiality issues associated with discussions/ diagnosis in a community pharmacist setting.
- The accuracy of diagnosis, especially of mixed infections (for example Chlamydia plus gonorrhoea) in the community setting.
- The accuracy of disease surveillance in this setting to ensure that accurate local and national statistics are collected.
- How to ensure treatment compliance.
- The training of community pharmacists in this difficult area.
- How will the PCT ensure quality, choice and cost effectiveness.
- How will the PCT ensure that, in line with government policy, that genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic access remains a priority.
- What is the current waiting time for an appointment at the local GUM clinic?
- How will the PCT ensure that sex and Relationships education is monitored in county schools

Bowel Cancer screening programme

Requested information:

The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme will offer screening every two years to all men and women aged 60 to 69. People over 70 can request a screening kit by calling a freephone helpline when the programme reaches their area.

The screening centres should provide endoscopy services and specialist screening nurse clinics for people receiving an abnormal result. Screening centres are also responsible for referring those requiring treatment to their local hospital multidisciplinary team.

The Link members wish to know the following:

- When will this service be rolled out in this county?
- Does HCH have the necessary nursing and endoscopy resources?
- Do general practices been informed of these plans and do they have the necessary resources to implement them?

Influenza immunisation programme

The promotion and awareness raising of male health issues

Request for Project lead at Herefordshire Council to talk to the group about the personalised agenda.

7.2 Working Groups and Work Plan groups

Herefordshire LINK has working groups that look at finance, governance and marketing and communications for the LINK. The role of the work plan groups is to look at particular community issues and concerns. Members or individuals can join any group if they have a particular interest in an issue or have experience or knowledge in the area. The work plan groups aim to both work on and resolve community concerns and issues. At the moment Herefordshire LINK has 4 working groups which are:

- PCT
- Hospital
- Social Care
- Accessibility

7.3 LINK 3rd Party Commentary on PCT and Hospital Declarations

The LINK has been able to provide 3rd party commentary on both the Hospital and PCT declarations.

7.4 Work with Herefordshire PCT and Herefordshire Council

The LINK through meetings with senior members of the new Quality and Clinical Leadership Directorate have been asked to be part of the new group replacing COMPIC. The LINK have agreed and the role and protocols are currently in production.

The LINK and host have also been asked to have representatives EAPMC Clinical Quality group to look at the performance of the Primecare contract supplying out of hours service. The LINK has also been asked to have input into Primecare's Public and Patient involvement strategy.

8) Challenges

8.1 Volunteer participation and recruitment

As with any 3rd sector organisation participation and recruitment is a major challenge. The LINK aims to encourage participation at all levels, be it as an individual with a concern or an interested party who has knowledge of or indeed wishes to be part of a sub group that may interest them. The Host and LINK as well as promoting its activities at events is also holding a number of road shows across the county during the summer.

We are also currently looking at a training opportunities program to offer relevant training opportunities to LINK volunteers. The aim is to increase the skill sets of those engaged in the process to produce viable and meaningful work for the LINK but also contribute to volunteers' skills. This may encourage and help those out of work looking to increase their skill set and be involved but will also, hopefully, encourage volunteer participation.

The Host has also started on looking at involvement from young people and following recent meetings with students at Herefordshire Tec college we are looking forward to in Partnership with them producing a piece of work highlighting concerns for younger adults in Herefordshire.

8.2 Community engagement

The LINK needs to create a platform to create meaningful community engagement at any level. It is key that information and consultation work are accessible with many points of entry so citizens can engage at levels that best suit them.

Key priorities for the LINK are to also ensure 'buy in' of the project from Herefordshire. The group are currently working on identifying 'quick wins' which will be used to publicise and promote the LINK's work and also show citizens that through their involvement positive results can ensue as a result of their feedback. The new Community engagement strategy for year 2 is

currently in production and will be fed back to members along with the end of year report sent to the Secretary of State later this month to consider.

8.3 Cuts to LAA budgets

The LINK has been advised of the proposed reductions in spending for area based grants, as the levels of grant being given to the LA is to be reduced. The LINK has been asked to present options for 10%, 15% and 20% reductions to current levels. These equate to £11,875.50 for 10%, £17,813.25 for 15% and £23,751 for 20%. Any reductions would have repercussions on both the Host and LINKs ability to work effectively. A report has been written and forwarded for consideration.

8.4 Year 3 Host exist strategy and LINK sustainability

Funding for the LINK has been agreed for 3 years but as a Host it is vital that, in collaboration with the LINK together we look at ways to find extra funding and make the LINK sustainable and embedded in the community. To look at this a meeting of all LINKs with the Carers Federation as the Host (12 in total) will be meeting in July to look at and discuss organising ourselves to increase overall local community engagement through partnership working. It will look at the wider community and even wider involvement beyond health & social care.

Also the Host can, and intends to, investigate and apply for external funding and look into the idea of 'contract' work where possible and necessary, in order to supplement the funding given through the Council from central government, as that amount is already fully committed to contractual costs including existing levels of engagement work.