

# DONCASTER LINK ANNUAL REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

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## Introduction

The main task of Doncaster **L**ocal **I**nvolvement **N**etwork is to provide a channel of communication between the general public and the commissioners and providers of health and social care services and to make recommendations in order to influence improvements to service provision for the benefit of all.

During the past year, since the change of Government and the subsequent White Paper on proposals for the future of the NHS, there have already been several changes taking place in the structure, the staffing and the provision of services, which have a direct influence on health and social care.

Reduction of Government funding to local authorities has also resulted in the need for a review of social care provision and of how increasing needs are to be addressed.

With this in mind, and with uncertainty about the future of LINKs, Doncaster LINK has continued to carry out its role and responsibility throughout the year in engaging with and informing the public via regular and frequent events arranged by the Information Communications and Engagement (ICE) group. Efforts have also been made to address issues that have been brought to the attention of the LINK e.g. chiropody concerns, access to dental care services, communication needs for the autistic.

The LINK has also worked with partner agencies - DMBC, NHS Doncaster, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals Foundation Trust and several third sector partners, DIAL, SYCIL, NTNCC and the Disability Cluster; working together to inform the public and to try to ensure that they have a voice in the planning and provision of health and social care services.

We are informed that LINKs are to continue for a further 15 months until the end of July 2012, when it is proposed that Local HealthWatch will take over the work with added responsibilities. Doncaster LINK will continue to fulfil its responsibilities during the transition period in order to ensure that the public voice is heard and is influential in the future developments in health and social care.

## Doncaster LINK Executive Board Members



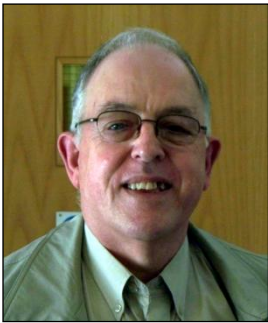
Sheila Barnes  
(Chair)



Debbie Osborne  
(Vice Chair)



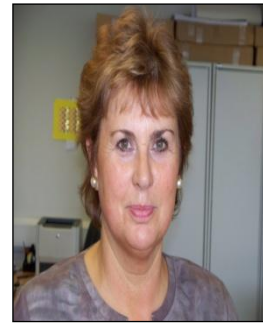
Glyn Jones



John Burke



Karen Wardman



Kay Kirk



Paul Morton



Rita Holdsworth



Joyce Parrott



Ron Hughes



Dunlop Griffith

## 2011 Election

In March 2011 an election was held by postal vote for a total of four vacancies on the Doncaster LINK Executive Board. There were six nominees in total. The votes were opened and counted at the Executive Board meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011. The results were as follows:

- Joyce Parrott 37 votes
- Paul Morton 28 votes
- Ronald Hughes 17 votes
- Dunlop Griffith 17 votes
- Meurig Pari-Jones 16 votes
- Eric Stowe 14 votes

Joyce Parrott, Paul Morton, Ronald Hughes and Dunlop Griffith were duly elected onto the Executive Board.

## LINK Representatives in Other Organisations

LINK has representation in other organisations in the health and social care field as follows:

- South Yorkshire Centre for Inclusive Living (SYCIL)
- Disability Advisory Service (DIAL)
- Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH)
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (DBHNHSFT)
- Doncaster CVS
- Doncaster Partnership for Carers
- North Trent Network of Cardiac Care (NTNCC)
- Doncaster Vascular User Group
- Doncaster Care-4-Carers

These links enable effective communication between the LINK, other agencies and the public.

## Wider Membership

The LINK is an independent group consisting of both individual and organisational representation with various health and social care interests from the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough area.

The current representation is from:

- Mental Health
- Voluntary Sector
- Older Peoples Parliament
- Disability Groups (Physical and Sensory)
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- Carers Groups
- Various Community Groups

In the last year the LINK has managed to recruit a total of 474 new members.

## Information Communications and Engagement (ICE) Sub Group

The ICE group's remit is to:

- Engage with the public to gather issues/concerns/comments/suggestions about health and social care
- Raise the profile of the LINK
- Increase membership
- Increase members' active involvement
- Design LINK branding (merchandise/literature etc)

The last year has seen changes to the membership of the group with Deirdre Coward being elected as the new Chair.

In addition to our regular monthly coffee mornings, each of which now has a theme, the ICE group has arranged the following significant events:

- 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010 - Carers Group Meeting
- 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010 - Highfields Community Day
- 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010 - 2 Day Strategic Event
- 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 - LBV TV Event
- 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011 - 1 LINK Social Event
- 21<sup>st</sup> January 11 - The Future of the NHS Event
- 11<sup>th</sup> February 11 - Question Time Re: The Future of the NHS

## **Information Communications and Engagement (ICE) Sub Group (continued)**

The six-day LBV TV event which began on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 was a great success featuring an advertising campaign in the Frenchgate Centre, Doncaster which resulted in 342 new members being recruited.

With the changes to the NHS in mind, the ICE group decided to hold an information event on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011 with Annette Laban (Chief Executive of NHS Doncaster) giving a presentation on her thoughts of how the residents of Doncaster may be impacted by changes to the NHS. Attendees were encouraged to complete a form with individual questions regarding changes to the NHS for use at an event scheduled for February 2011.

Following on from The Future of the NHS event the LINK held a Question Time event Re: The Future of the NHS on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Questions gathered at The Future of the NHS event were put to a panel of six. The event was a great opportunity for attending members of the public to be kept up-to-date with intended changes to date.

The LINK has also sponsored the Disability Awareness Day at the Deaf College on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and a Cardiac Network Information Event at the same venue on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

LINK members and Host manned an information stand at Castle Park, home of Doncaster Rugby Club at three of their home matches in November and February.

## **Discharge from Hospitals and After Care Sub Group**

In 2008 members of the public raised several concerns to the LINK around discharge from hospital and after care services. The Executive Board agreed to a sub group being formed to look into the concerns raised, with its first meeting taking place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009. A professional survey was undertaken and as a result of the findings the sub group produced and issued their Discharge from Hospitals and After Care Survey Report on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010. The report made recommendations to Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. During the past year the sub group has had meetings with the two service providers regarding implementation of our recommendations.

A total of six recommendations were made to the Hospital Trust who recognised there were concerns around patient discharge and stated the LINK report helped to confirm they were on the right track in identifying changes that needed to be made. The Trust has introduced several new systems and procedures. We are pleased to report that these changes mean that the majority of our recommendations have been implemented by the Trust

## **Discharge from Hospitals and After Care Sub Group (Continued)**

One recommendation in four parts was made to the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council regarding the review of client care after discharge from hospital into the community. The Social Services department informed the LINK that they are currently reviewing the entire discharge policy and pathway and have stated the Discharge from Hospitals and After Care Survey Report helped them to focus on some of the areas that needed to be improved. All our recommendations have been implemented except a discharged patient review taking place after six months. The sub group is in the process of producing a Report of Implementation by Service Providers of Recommendations which will be available and issued in June 2011.

## **GP Access Sub Group**

A survey of access to GP services throughout the Doncaster area was conducted by Doncaster LINK in the latter months of 2009. The report of that survey was published in April 2010 and was subsequently widely distributed and copies were sent to all GP practices. Six months later a letter was sent to all practices requesting information of any changes which had been made in response to the recommendations. Only three responses were received, expressing some of the difficulties and pressures faced by the practices whilst also endeavouring to meet patient needs as far as possible. The working group decided that the issue should be revisited later in 2011.

## **Podiatry/Chiropody in Thorne/Moorends Sub Group**

At a Doncaster LINK information sharing event held at Moorends Miners Welfare and Development Centre on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010, concerns were voiced about difficulties in accessing a chiropodist in the Thorne/Moorends area. The formation of a sub group to look into these concerns was subsequently agreed by the Executive Board. The first sub group meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

Initially, work began to establish meaningful background information regarding service provision by literature/policy reviews and discussions with the Head of the NHS Doncaster Podiatry/Chiropody Service. The sub group devised an evaluation questionnaire and face-to-face interviews were conducted on our behalf by an independent research company in the Thorne/Moorends area during the first three weeks in August 2010. Following data analysis, a draft report detailing the sub groups findings and recommendations was produced and discussed with the NHS Podiatry/Chiropody provider. The final report was then produced and widely circulated in January 2011. Responses to our report findings and recommendations are to be evaluated later on this year.

## **Dentistry in Highfields Sub Group**

In March 2010 the LINK attended the Tenants and Residents Association annual general meeting. At the event the LINK was made aware of difficulties experienced by residents of Highfields in accessing dental services. The Host informed the Executive Board who agreed to the forming of a sub group to look at the concerns highlighted to see if the LINK were able to help. The LINK contacted NHS Doncaster who agreed to attend a meeting at the Highfields Community Centre to discuss the concerns raised in greater detail.

As a direct result of the meeting, NHS Doncaster agreed to hold an 'Oral Hygiene Campaign' for the pupils of Highfields Primary School. The LINK Executive Board was informed and subsequently agreed to sponsor the campaign. The Executive Board also agreed to produce a flyer containing contact information on how to access dental services in the Doncaster area for Highfields residents to be issued at the event.

The campaign took place in May 2011 at Highfields Primary School. Children between the ages of four and eleven were given advice on how to improve their oral hygiene and toothbrushes and toothpaste were issued along with a 'goody bag' containing a flyer on how to access dental services. A catch-up meeting will take place later on this year to assess the success of the campaign.

## **Autism Awareness Sub Group**

In April 2010 Doncaster LINK attended a working in partnership event 'A Celebration of Autism' hosted by Little Rainbows at the Bullcroft Memorial Hall in Carcroft which was based around autistic awareness. At the event, concerns were raised regarding the service given to autism patients when attending appointments with service providers. In April 2010 the Executive Board agreed to a new sub group being formed to look into the concerns highlighted. The sub group contacted all Dental/GP Surgeries and the Admissions Department at Doncaster Royal Infirmary requesting information regarding policies and procedures currently in place in relation to the treatment of patients attending appointments who have autism.

The response indicated that many of the service providers do not have any policies or procedures in place but would welcome any information available to improve the service provided.

The working group are currently producing a report with recommendations for change to include a standard policy and procedure that will hopefully be adopted and adapted for use by service providers when a person with autism attends an appointment.

## Training

During 2010/2011 members of the LINK have had access to the following training programmes:

- Volunteering
- Self Awareness
- Communication Skills
- Understanding Diversity
- Working As A Team
- Running Effective Meetings
- Report Writing
- Engaging With Groups

The above training sessions were well attended with the LINK receiving positive feedback from members who participated.

## Cross Boundary Networking

Doncaster LINK has continued to maintain effective working relationships with its colleagues in neighbouring localities. This has been achieved through attendance at regional networking events held in various locations across the region including York and Leeds. Doncaster LINK has attended events hosted by the Care Quality Commission and has utilised these opportunities to network with its colleagues to share best practices and discuss work plans.

## 360° Evaluation of Host Performance

In order to assess the performance of the Host organisation (Carers Federation) the Contract Manager from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (John Leask) issued 360° Host Evaluation forms to the following LINK members:

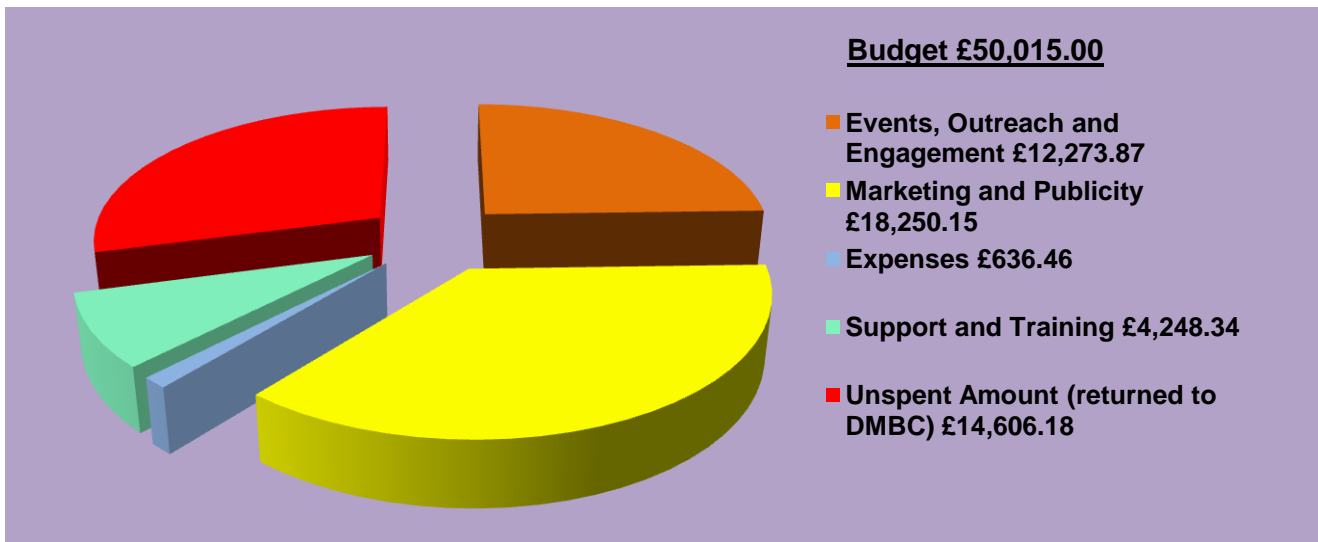
- Executive Board Members
- Sub Group Members
- Statutory Organisation Members
- Local Organisation Members
- Wider LINK Members

The LINK was informed the completed 360° Evaluation of Host Performance forms indicate that members are satisfied with the performance of the Host.

## Finance

Doncaster LINK Executive Board members continue to show the need for due care and diligence in its use of public money. The finance group has met monthly to ensure that expenditure is in line with the allocated forecast. All planned activities have been undertaken throughout the year within the budget allowance, resulting in an unspent amount being returned to the local authority.

Doncaster LINK was allocated a budget of £50,015 for period 2010/2011. The budget was used in the following areas:



## Future Plans

### Information Communications and Engagement Group

The LINK themed coffee mornings will continue to reach out into the communities of Doncaster borough in order to discover local health and social care concerns. The ICE group has arranged the following events:

- 12 July 2011 - Mental Health Awareness Event working in partnership with NHS Doncaster and Rethink at Doncaster Trades.
- 23 September 2011 - HealthWatch and Public Health Debate at the Salvation Army.
- 13 October 2011 - Coffee Morning at the Ivanhoe Centre based around cancer awareness working in partnership with NHS Doncaster.
- 11 November 2011 – Question Time Event based around changes to the NHS at Castle Park Rugby Club.

## **Future Plans (continued)**

### **Medication Sub Group**

Following concerns raised by members of the public and issues identified in the LINK Discharge from Hospitals and After Care Survey Report, the LINK Executive Board has agreed to the formation of a new sub group to look further into issues/concerns around medication. The first meeting is due to take place in August 2011.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Executive Board would like to thank all LINK volunteers, the Host team (Carers Federation) and all local agencies for their assistance during the last year and look forward to working together in the year ahead.