

The Newsletter of the  
North Yorkshire & York Local Involvement Networks

## SPEAK UP ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

*North Yorkshire LINK and York LINK are here for you to have your say on some of the most important issues in our region – our local NHS and social care services.*

Commissioned by, but independent from, local government, LINKs will grow to be an active network of local people, organisations and groups that want to make a difference to their area. The two Local Involvement Networks will provide everyone in the community – individuals, organisations and voluntary groups – with the chance to say what they think about local health and social care services and their experiences of them.

In York and North Yorkshire the North Bank Forum for Voluntary Organisations (NBF) has been appointed to act as the Host organisation for the two LINKs. NBF is a regional voluntary sector umbrella body and all its member organisations work in health and social care.

LINKs are a new project nationally in England, beginning right now. So if you, your group or organisation want to take part right from the start, get in touch with us at our York office on (01904) 621631. Full contact details are on page 4.

### BE HEARD: BENEFITS OF GETTING INVOLVED

There are a number of benefits to becoming involved in your LINK:

- bring attention to neglected issues or ideas
- positively influence those who make decisions about new or existing services
- come together for your community to speak with a stronger local voice
- help services provide better care
- The more people that support us the more influential we'll be.



Does Health and Social Care provision measure up to your needs? Get involved and have your say.

# THEN, NOW AND THE FUTURE: SETTING UP YOUR LINKs

Since April 2008 a Project Steering Group has been supporting the development of both LINKs, led by North Bank Forum, the Host organization for both LINKs projects.

Three coordinators and two admin support staff are now in post and are working from a team office in Skelton near York.

The Project Steering Group is made up of representatives from both City of York Council and North Yorkshire County Council, representatives from the York & North Yorkshire Primary Care Trust and a number of local voluntary sector infrastructure organizations including Selby AVS, North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations and York CVS.

Between April and October 2008 the work of the Project Steering Group has been looking at roles and functions for the working of the LINKs, including protocols and procedures.

This group will cease at the end of October 2008 and will be replaced by two LINK Steering Groups: one for York and one for North Yorkshire. The aim of each LINK steering group will be to provide a one stop shop for engaging local communities in improving health and social care services by finding out what local people want, investigate issues and use their powers to hold service providers to account.

## Current development

For the LINK steering groups to be effective it is essential that they

provide a mechanism for helping people who have real knowledge of local health and social care issues to come together and work with service providers to jointly identify things that need to change and work toward bringing about these changes.

The coordination teams for York and North Yorkshire are currently very busy gathering information about local health and social care issues, which organisations are delivering services and what services are being commissioned.

Both teams are also networking with other Host LINK organisations across the country to gather information on appropriate governance structures and policies and ways of engaging with communities.

Both teams are working on a series of events in September to raise awareness and invite discussion about the LINK for their area. For further details about these see the section on LINKs Launches opposite.

## Development from October

The process for identifying members of the final LINK steering groups will take time and at the moment consideration is being given to the formation of two interim groups to be established for a six month period. The work of each interim group will be to design a workable and democratic structure for the LINK to be able to govern and operate itself.

The formation of each final LINK steering group will be made up of people who have the time and energy to dedicate to the LINK and effectively feedback to the community they represent.

The knowledge and information

about local services and issues which will shape the work plans for each LINK steering group will be influenced by the existing priorities for the Health Service as well as those identified in the local authority local area agreements. In addition each LINK will need to draw on information from a community profile made up of existing consultations and identification of health and social care needs.

Each LINK steering group will implement a number of working sub groups to support the development of action in relation to the various elements of the work plan.

Each of the sub groups will then appoint task groups who will work on the various issues that need to be addressed. The task groups will be made up of individuals who have either been nominated by Voluntary and Community Sector organizations working in health and social care or who have experience, knowledge and interest in a specific care related issue.

**You can help the two LINK coordination teams in the York office by getting in touch to let us know if you or your organization have been involved in any recent consultations on health and social care in your area. This information will then be collated as part of the community profile.**

**You can also help by contacting us to let us know who you are so that we can ensure that you are kept informed about the development of each LINK.**

**You can also help by passing this information on to other organizations or individuals who you know will be interested and get them to contact us.**

# LINKs LAUNCH!

## York LINK Launch

York 15 Sept.

## North Yorkshire LINK Local Launches

Pickering 15 Sept.

Knaresborough 17 Sept.

Selby 18 Sept.

Scarborough 22 Sept.

Skipton 23 Sept.

Richmond 24 Sept.

Thirsk 26 Sept.

*“Meet the team, find out about the LINKs project and have your say.”*

These events are open to individuals and organisations with an interest in local health and social care issues

For more information and to book a place, please call (01904) 621631 or email [participate@yorklink.org.uk](mailto:participate@yorklink.org.uk) or [participate@northyorkslink.org.uk](mailto:participate@northyorkslink.org.uk)



# MEET YOUR LINKs PARTNERSHIP COORDINATORS



## Alison Rowlands, North Yorkshire LINK Partnership Coordinator

I live on a smallholding on the Yorkshire Wolds between two villages with a vibrant sense of community. We have a 2 primary schools, several well patronized shops, pubs and churches, and a rural communications network called Farmwatch, which is a local policing initiative. I worked for fourteen years as information manager at Humber Mental Health NHS Trust before taking a year out in 2000 to travel in North Africa.

More recently I have worked for the mental health charity Hull & East Yorkshire MIND, and for a company providing private care homes for people with profound learning disabilities. For the last four years I have been part of the support organization for the Patient and Public Involvement Forums, and I look forward to moving into the new LINKs agenda, with a wider remit for health and social care delivery.

## Kathy Donnelly, North Yorkshire LINK Partnership Coordinator

I came into post as one of the North Yorkshire LINK Coordinators on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July and at the time of writing have only been in post 8 days. However the North Yorkshire team is already very active and I feel as though I have been in post for several months already!

I have worked most recently in the Voluntary Sector in York and North Yorkshire. In this role I was involved with ensuring that Voluntary Sector Organisations had up to date information about European Funding and most recently I coordinated a learning and skills project for volunteers and people working in the VCS.

Previously I worked for Hull City Council as a play development officer leading on a city play policy and strategy.

I am very much looking forward to getting out and about in our beautiful, if vast, county of North Yorkshire and enabling people to get involved in shaping local health and social care services.



## Annie Thompson, York LINK Partnership Coordinator



I was born in Scotland and moved to London to train as a nurse at the Royal Free Hospital. I married, moved to Scarborough and continued my nursing career as well as having two sons. I achieved a MSc in the Care of Elderly People, Post Graduate Certificate in Education and a Diploma in Neurological Care. I also served as a Borough Councillor and was UNISON Branch Secretary. Moving to York, I continued nursing but left the NHS after 30 years and started work for Help the Aged to develop Older People's Forums. Later for Epilepsy Action I established and developed local branches (support groups). I have a strong sense of shared decision making, combined with my knowledge of the NHS and local government will help in the role of Partnership Coordinator for York LINK. I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to help develop this important part of local democracy in the City of York.

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If you would like this or other LINK publications in another format that is more accessible to you, please contact us.

A Local Involvement Network (LINK) has been set up in every area of England to help people influence or change the way their local NHS and social care services are delivered.

North Bank Forum, a registered charity, is host to North Yorkshire LINK and York LINK, and is contracted by North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council.

