

Happy New Year to everyone from the Somerset LINKs host team

Elections

In the November newsletter we said that the next step for the LINK would be to elect a Stewardship Group whose role will be to steer the work of the LINK. We are now asking people to nominate themselves for election to this group.

A self nomination form is enclosed with this newsletter, along with a list of Frequently Asked Questions which we hope will answer any queries regarding the role and responsibility of Stewardship Group members, a document outlining the principles of representation for the LINK and a code of conduct which we would expect Stewardship Group members to agree to.

The timescale for the election process is:

Nominations forms out – 6th January 2009

Closing date for nomination to the Stewardship Group - Noon 30th January 2009

Ballot papers to be sent to everyone who has registered an interest in the LINK – 4th February 2009

Election closing date – Noon 26th February 2009

Successful applicants notified – 27th February 2009

First meeting of Stewardship Group - March 2009

We look forward to receiving nominations from the diverse groups of people who make up the population of Somerset, if you have any questions regarding the election please contact us.



across the county towards the end of last year.

The LINK is run by the people, for the people so it is vital that your views help shape the foundations of the network and how it will work to improve health and social care services in Somerset.

According to those that went along to the events an elected body is needed to make decisions on behalf of the LINK.

Nomination forms to elect this group are included with this newsletter.

More comments from you.....

What you want from your LINK.....

- Support and information
- Clear communication
- Actions not words
- Accessibility and inclusion
- A local focus with local priorities

Events

‘Actions not words’ – that’s what people in Somerset want from their LINK.

People across the county had their say on the way the Somerset LINK will be run at a series of events held

- Change & improvement
- Transparency & accountability
- Clout
- Involvement from young people and former PPI members

What you will contribute to your LINK.....

- Local knowledge
- Local networks and contacts
- Expertise & experience
- Understanding & guidance
- Information
- Contact & access
- Commitment & perseverance
- Time
- Strategic and management skills
- Diversity
- New and fresh ideas

Your Stewardship Group.....

- Proportional representation from all five districts
- Training for members
- Needs guiding principles, values and aims
- Ensure meetings are effective and that people turn up
- Accountable
- Needs to be representative
- Retains its independence
- Balance between organisations and individuals
- Transparent process
- A range of experience and knowledge
- Patient focussed
- Max 7 – 12 people

OPTIONS FOR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE SOMERSET LINK AND SOMERSET HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Help and Care, as Host to the Somerset LINK, were seeking people's views on the future working arrangements between the LINK and the Somerset Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The options people were asked to consider were:

1 Representation.

A representative of the LINK attends HOSC meetings and/or Scrutiny Members attend the LINK stewardship group, reporting back to their specific groups at the next possible opportunity.

2 Joint working arrangements.

LINK members working alongside elected Members on topics identified by the LINK. Providing a picture of what is really happening for patients, carers and the public

Your priorities.....

- Identify gaps in existing regulatory bodies
- Assess short, medium and long term achievability
- Prioritise according to extent of impact and change - create scoring matrix
- Get some quick wins
- Linking the LINKs to share best practice
- Identify cross cutting issues
- Time critical – how long has an item been an issue
- Blog board around the county



and enabling the work of HOSC and LINK to complement each other.

3 Identification of Strategic Events.

The Host and HOSC Officer draw up a calendar of strategic events throughout the year from Trust Annual Plans, Parish Plans, LSP Reports, Public Health reports etc in order to identify areas of possible joint work for the OSC and LINK.

4 Use of the LINK Website

The facilitation of discussion groups, surveys etc on the LINK website on activities the HOSC is pursuing .The Scrutiny committee might have its own web page on the LINK website

5 Workshops

Joint workshops twice a year to air issues and areas of concern from communities, working together in coming to a conclusion on whether specific issues are part of a bigger problem and working on ways of identifying the cause

6 A fluid mix of all of the above

Opportunity was also given for people to make their own suggestions or comments.

What people told us

Information on the deliberation was distributed to over 920 people or groups; in addition it was published on the LINK website and forwarded to third sector organisations for cascading to their members.

We received a total of 27 responses with the majority of people indicating more than one option, suggesting that people wish to see a fluid mix of all the possibilities outlined above. The option least favoured was that of the Host and HOSC Officer drawing up a calendar of strategic events in order to identify areas of possible joint work.

Additional comments received were that there is a need to reflect the LINK's Social Care responsibilities in its working relationship with Scrutiny Committees and it was suggested that the arrangements be reviewed after 12 months in order to amend in line with experience.

Summary of responses received:

Option 1	13
Option 2	12

Option 3	5
Option 4	9
Option 5	13
Option 6	14

What happens next

The low return (3% of the distribution list), reflects the early stage of development of the LINK in Somerset which does not yet have its governing body elected. Once elected and functioning the LINK will have time to consider the ways of working with the Scrutiny Committees in Somerset. Perhaps the two important messages are:

- Social Care as well as Health issues must be effectively scrutinised and that the LINK has a part to play in the way that this might be achieved with the Council
- That representation on Scrutiny Committees will be required but alongside new and innovative ways of working together - some of which can be tried out in this next year.

Help & Care will put the outcome of this consultation before the LINK elected body in the New Year and support the development of ways of working with Scrutiny Committees from the menu above.

Spread the word - please display the enclosed LINK poster in your area

Contact us

Phone 0300 111 0102

Email somersetLINK@makesachange.org.uk

Visit www.makesachange.org.uk



**GOOD OR BAD?
YOU TELL US**



Your voice on local health and social care

Please note future editions of this newsletter will only be sent to those who have registered with the LINK