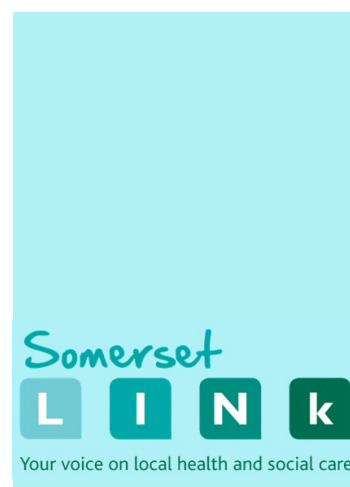


Somerset

Local Involvement Network



Annual Report
2010-11

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Front cover photograph of the Somerset Levels by www.flickr.com/MarilynJane

1. Hello and welcome!



Diane Jepson
Chair of the Stewardship Group
Somerset LINK

Chair of the Stewardship Group

There has never been a more important time in recent history as there is now for local people to have their say about health and social care issues. The landscape of our NHS is constantly changing and whilst we await the new Health and Social Care bill, the uncertain future of our services is both cause for concern and challenging.

As the Somerset LINK comes to the end of yet another year and braces itself for the transition year to HealthWatch the Annual Report enables us to review our progress and shape ourselves for the transition. Whilst it is a challenging time it is also an exciting opportunity for volunteers who have stepped forward to join those already participating in the Somerset LINK to take up this challenge whilst making sure the concerns of local people about health and social care issues continue to be heard.

At the end of this year our thanks must go to all those who have actively participated and contributed to the work of the Somerset LINK. Not everyone has continued to participate but their contribution is very much appreciated and our thanks go out to them. The number of individuals who have come forward to volunteer for this transitional year is encouraging. However, we would like to see more people take up the mantle and would welcome others to join us.

The Somerset LINK continues to be supported by Help & Care, who are the host organisation for a number of LINKs across the south and west of England. There is a small local team of staff who have worked hard to support the Somerset LINK's activities.

You will see from this report that the Somerset LINK carried out a number of worthwhile projects and has made a positive contribution to a number of key processes that determine local health and social care issues, that we have supported local voluntary groups with funding for projects to identify issues and support the local community.

There are always ways in which to improve. In these austere times it has never been more important to inform commissioners about the services. The people of Somerset need to know what is working well and to know what is working not so well. The Somerset LINK has carried out a great deal of work in this past year but can only continue to build on this work if it is supported by more volunteers who are willing to actively participate in 2011.

Diane Jepson, June 2011



Karen Rockell
Chair of the Priorities Panel
Somerset LINK

Chair of the Priorities Panel

As Chair of the newly formed Priorities Panel I have noticed the diversity of issues raised by the public with the Somerset LINK.

During the last year a number of good pieces of work were completed, and some have been carried over into this year. We wish to move these on and bring new projects forward to provide positive outcomes for the people of Somerset.

During this year we will carry on actively encourage people to come to us with their issues. Public requests for help or information will continue to be addressed on an individual basis. In addition, we will select significant topics to pursue further. Each of these will be scored against a decision making matrix. This matrix ensures that any decisions made by the Priorities Panel are responsibly prioritized and transparent. Ultimately we aim to make as large a positive impact as possible on the Somerset community we serve. Current issues we are working on are identified in this report under 'Future Plans'.

In these uncertain times, unless we the service users get involved, decisions about our health and social care in Somerset will be made without our views being heard. We hope that more Somerset people will join us so that we can increase our influence. There are a variety of ways in which you can lend a hand. If you want your views heard do please rally round.

The more people who help out the more we can achieve!

Karen Rockell, June 2011

2. How can you contact us?

Contact details for the LINK

The offices for the Somerset LINK are based at Hambridge, Somerset.

Address: Somerset LINK
Unit 2, Bowdens Business Park
Hambridge,
Taunton,
Somerset TA10 0BP
Telephone: 01458 250674
E-mail: somersetlink@makesachange.org.uk

Contact details for the Host

Although our staff are based in our Hambridge office in Somerset, the host organisation is Help & Care, a registered charity that hosts several LINKs in the south of England.

Address: Help & Care
The Pokesdown Centre
896 Christchurch Rd
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 6DL
Telephone: 0845 4500 418
Email: info@helpandcare.org.uk

3. How is the Somerset LINK structured?

The Somerset LINK is volunteer-led, with local volunteer residents supported by a small staff team. The Somerset LINK has two main volunteer groups that drive the work forward: the Stewardship Group and Priorities Panel. These groups consists selected members who come from many different backgrounds and experience, but all have an interest in local health and social care issues. We also have an Enter & View Team.

We ended 2010 by carrying out a wide publicity drive and attracting some new, enthusiastic volunteers. A selection event was carried out in March 2011 and all current LINK participants – as well as new people with an interest in health or social care - were made aware of the event and invited to take part in the selection process.

Although the selection event was organised and facilitated by the Somerset LINK staff team (the host organisation), the selection of volunteers for the groups was carried out by an independent selection panel. The selection panel comprised Caroline Toll from Carers U.K. (East Somerset branch), Alan Petchey, CEO of Mind in Taunton & West Somerset and Jill Geisgow, HR consultant and Chair of Quantock Surgery Patient Participation Group.

Stewardship Group: The Stewardship Groups is responsible for the overall governance of the LINK. It is responsible for making sure that things are done properly and that proper processes are in place to make the LINK fair and accessible to all. The current members of the Stewardship group are: (dates joined this group are in brackets)

- Diane Jepson (March 2011) Chair from March 2011
- David Boyland (November 2009) Vice Chair from March 2011
- Margot Parsons (March 2011) LINK Representative Officer
- Richard Buckley (March 2011) Governance Officer
- Anne Woodford (March 2011) Communities Officer
- Barry Derrick (March 2011) Equalities Officer
- Lorna King (March 2011) Communications Officer

Priorities Panel: The Priorities Panel is responsible for setting the work of the LINK, and looking at issues that are raised by members of the public. The current members of the Priorities Panel are:

- Karen Rockell (March 2011) Chair from March 2011
- James Bentley (March 2011)
- Elaine Hodgson (March 2011)
- Penny Rawson (March 2011)
- Bob Champion (March 2011)

Enter & View: The Enter & View Team comprises trained representatives who are responsible for our Enter & View visits of health or social care premises. The current Enter and View Team are:

- Brian Stother (March 2010)
- David Boyland (March 2010)
- Wendy Stother (March 2010)
- Elaine Hodgeson (March 2010)
- Eileen Tipper (March 2010)
- Brian Ducker (March 2010)
- Gillian Pearce (March 2010)
- Mary Clarke (March 2010)

Other volunteers: Over the course of the year, the following also served on the Stewardship Group:

- Carole Hounsell *Chair from December 2009 – March 2011*
- Rachel Witcombe *G.P. Practice Manager in Somerset*
- Brian Stother
- Brian Shipton
- Chris Evans

The Stewardship group has met 7 times over the last year.

4. How do we work?

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) were established under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The role of a LINK is to listen to local people, to monitor local health and social care services and to hold services to account. We also make sure that local people are involved in health and social care service design and planning, and feeding back their experiences wherever we can.

The role of the LINK is also to work with commissioning bodies, produce reports and make recommendations and participate in 'Enter and View' visits.

All our volunteers agree to adhere to the Nolan Principles - the code of ethics for those in public office in the UK.

5. Who is interested in the Somerset LINK?

We have 741 'interested parties' who have expressed an interest in the work of the LINK. They represent both individuals and groups. These contacts are all on our mailing list and receive our quarterly newsletter and monthly email news.

Somerset LINK registered participants:	
Total number of registered interested parties as of 31 March 2011	741
Total number of registered interested parties as of 31 March 2010	693
Number of persons requesting information only	632
Number of active participants involved in groups, work groups, representing the LINK externally etc.	20
Number of active participants that have participated in training events	18

Demographic of participants:

A demographic survey of LINK participants continues. During 2010-11 75 demographic surveys were sent to new participants, and 16 were returned (21%). While we do endeavour to record demographic information from our participants, we find that participants often feel that this is a sensitive area and prefer not to give personal detail in this way.

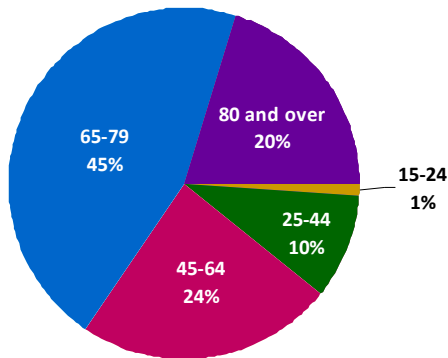
All respondents identified themselves as White British with a British nationality. All respondents had English as their first language. The majority of respondents were in older age brackets and there were no respondents under 24. 10 respondents out of 13 who answered the question said that they were living with long term health conditions. This shows that the participants in the LINK may be more likely to be those who are in regular contact with health and social care services.

Demographic information submitted in 2011	
Age Group	
Under 15	0
15-24	0
25-44	1
45-64	6
65-79	6
80 and over	2
Prefer not to say	1
Gender	
Male	6
Female	7
Prefer not to say	0
Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?	
Yes	12
No	0
Prefer not to say	1
Disability	
Disabled	3
Not disabled	8
Prefer not to say	1
Ethnic Group	
White British	13
Other	0
Nationality	
British	11
Other	0
Religion or belief	
None	2
Christian	10
Other/prefer not to say:	0
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	11
Lesbian/gay	0
Bisexual	0
Other	0
Prefer not to say	2
Health	
Long term health problems	10
No long term health problems	3
Prefer not to say	0
Caring: Are you a carer?	
Yes	8
No	5
Prefer not to say	0
Preferred Language	
English	13
Other/prefer not to say:	0

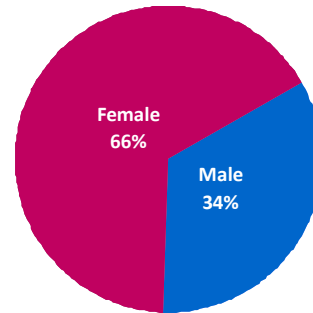
Transport Survey demographics

When carrying out the Transport survey in 2010-11 a demographic questionnaire was included with each survey. The number of completed demographic surveys returned from the transport survey was 348, which is obviously much higher than the respondents to the demographic survey sent to newly registered LINK participants. This gives a snapshot of the demographics of people who use patient transport and responded to the LINK Transport Survey. The results are shown below.

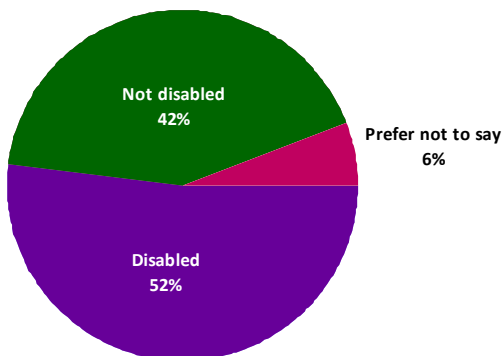
Respondents by age (Transport Survey)



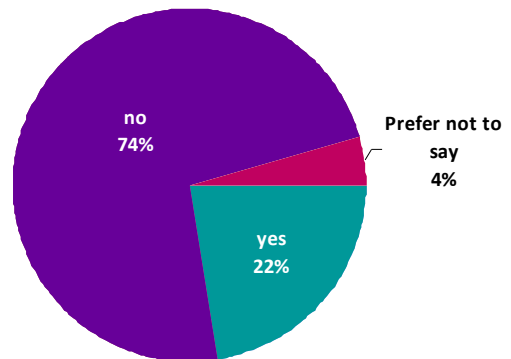
Respondents by gender (Transport Survey)



Respondents who are disabled (Transport Survey)



Are you a carer? (Transport Survey)



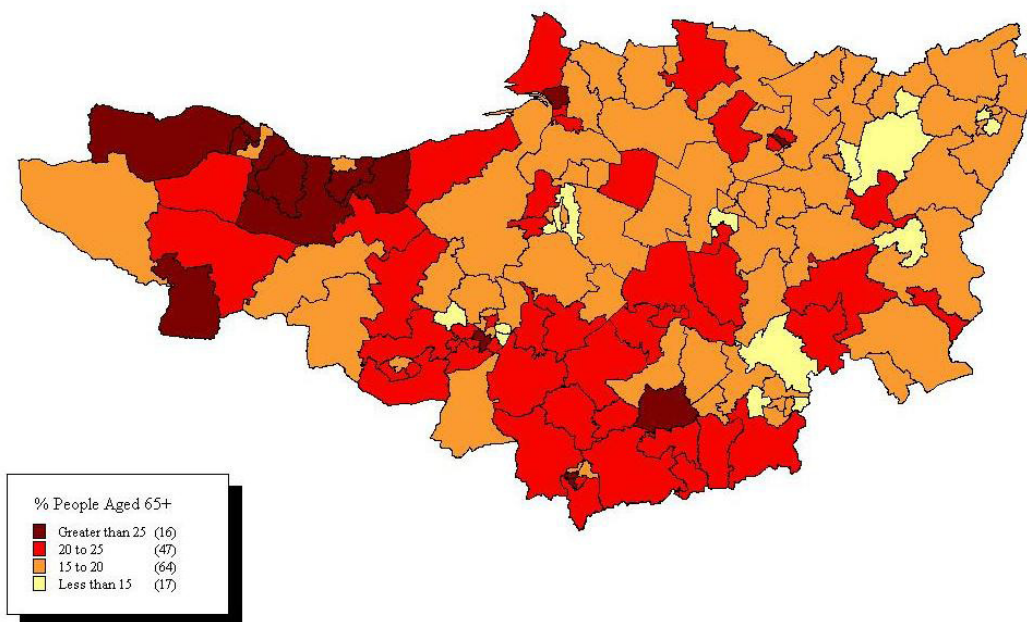
6. How have we engaged with the people of Somerset?

Background to our area – some facts and figures:¹

Somerset covers an area of 835,000 acres with a resident population of approximately 525,000². The population of Somerset is widely dispersed with approximately 150,000 living in the four largest towns - Taunton, Yeovil, Bridgwater and Frome.

The mean age of people in Somerset is higher than the national average (41.1 years against 38.6 years). Somerset also has 24.2% of its inhabitants over the age of 60, in contrast to the national percentage of 19.1%³. The average age of the population of Somerset is increasing rapidly: the percentage of people aged over 65 in Somerset is due to increase from 20% to 32% between now and 2027⁴.

The following map shows where people over the age of 65 live in Somerset. West Somerset, Sedgemoor and South Somerset have particularly high numbers of older people. (The numbers in brackets indicate the total number of wards that fall into each category.)



¹ Statistics from Government Office for the South West (GOSW) Regional Intelligence team and 2001 Census.

² Office for National Statistics, Mid Year estimates 2008.

³ Mean Age: Office for National Statistics, Mid Year estimates 2008.

⁴ Joint Director of Public Health Annual Report, NHS Somerset, 2006-7.

Nationally, around 11% of the population are carers⁵. One consequence of an ageing population is that the numbers of family or friends caring for an older person is also increasing⁶. As a result of national ageing population trends and the prevalence of community care policy, the number of carers is expected to increase by 60%, from 6 million to 9.4 million, by 2037⁷.

5.4% of the people living in Somerset are from a minority ethnic group (not classified as white British). This is below the national average of 7.9%.⁸

Engagement with our community:

Talks

The LINK Development Officers gave talks about the LINK at events and meetings over the last year for different organisations. Breatheasy (British Lung Foundation), Carers' Champion Reunion Day, Carers' Rights Day (St John & Carers UK), Compass Disability/Equality South-West Conference, Ilminster Joint Patient Participation Group, Patient Participation Group Chairs' Network meeting, Somerset College (Health & Social Care students), Somerset College (Senior Management Team) and the Somerset Partnership Members' Council. These talks were attended by approximately 300 members of the public.

Events

The LINK held its 2010 AGM on the 8 June 2010. Prior to the meeting a talk on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was given by Jo Purvis, the JSNA Project Manager from NHS Somerset. The LINK discussed its structure, work programme for the year, the previous year's Annual Report and how it could develop further. In March 2011 the LINK held a selection event to refresh its Stewardship Group and create a Priorities Panel in accordance with its newly agreed governance structure.

Stewardship Group meetings are all held in public. The Stewardship Group has met 7 times over the last year.

Stands & displays

Public information stands about the LINK were exhibited at Taunton Library for two weeks in June 2010. Information was also distributed at the Pride in Priorswood older people's information event at the Priorswood Community Centre, the Carers' information day at Bridgwater Town Hall which was run by the Bridgwater Federation, the Bath and West Show and Frome festival. LINK stalls were also held at a Mental Health event in Chard, which was run by Chard Intentional Peer Support Group, the Somerset Partnership Members' Day and the WyvernHealth.Com AGM at the racecourse in Taunton.

⁵ Office for National Statistics, based on 2001 Census information.

⁶ Joint Director of Public Health Annual Report, NHS Somerset, 2006-7.

⁷ Carers UK Policy Briefing, June 2009, citing Carers UK Report *It Could Be You*.

⁸ Somerset Intelligence Network Report on Somerset, Autumn 2009

Meetings & Visits

115 meetings and visits were held with organisations and service user groups across Somerset, including the following:

A4E	Re-think
Acorn	SCC Scrutiny Meeting
Active Living Centres	SHIFT
Advocacy in Mind	SHINE Somerset
Advocacy in Somerset	Somerset Care
Blackbrook Surgery	Somerset College
Breatheasy (British Lung Foundation)	Somerset Community Health
Bridgwater GP Federation	Somerset Community Health PPI Steering Group
Carers' Champions	Somerset County Council
Carers UK (East Somerset branch)	Somerset Partnership
Compass Disability	Somerset Partnership Members' Council
CQC	Somerset Skills and Learning
Diane Bardsley CSIP	Southlawns Care Home
Frome Health Forum	St John Ambulance
Gypsy & Traveller's Community	Strategic Health Authority
Ilminster Joint PPG	Stroke Association
Local Medical Committee	Sunrisers
Mendip Community Transport	Sydenham care home
Musgrove Park Hospital	Taunton CVS
NHS Somerset	Taunton Deane Borough Council
PALS	Taunton Deane Forum for Mental health
Patient & Carer Experience group (Somerset Partnership)	Taunton Disability Discussion Group
Patient Opinion	Total Somerset
Penn Hill Surgery, Yeovil	Victoria Gate Surgery
PPG Chairs' Network meeting	West Somerset Voluntary Council
Patients Association	West Somerset Voluntary Sector forum
Pride in Priorswood Older Person's Information Event	WyvernHealth.com
	WyvernHealth.Com Advisory Group

Communications:

Online and Social networking: The Somerset LINK website can be found at www.somersetlink.org.uk. A simple application form has been added to the website, which encourages people to register without having to go through the longer registration process online. In March 2010 the Somerset LINK also launched a Twitter account (www.twitter.com/SomersetLINK) and a Facebook Group page (Somerset LINK on Facebook). The Twitter account has 200 followers.

Blogging: In February 2011 we launched a Wordpress Blog at <http://datagoat.wordpress.com/>. This is a blog with basic data for Local Involvement Networks, covering areas such as Quality Accounts, Target Mapping and sources of patient stories. The Blog has had 1,110 views since its inception. It also has 10 subscribers, and we

have been contacted with comments about the blog from the Department of Health, NICE and the Care Quality Commission.

Broadcast media: The Communications Officer from the Host organisation has been a regular panel guest on the Emma Britton programme to promote and advertise the Somerset Link. We have shared information around LINKs, our patient transport survey, hospitals, NHS Reforms, and our volunteer re-launch.

Printed media: We produce regular Press Releases and have received coverage in the Somerset County Gazette, Burnham and Highbridge Weekly News and the Western Daily Press, as well as local newsletters such as Compass Disability's Networker magazine, NHS Somerset's PPG Newsletter and Who Cares? Magazine.

Patient Opinion: We have a subscription with Patient Opinion (www.patientopinion.org.uk) as a LINK and we receive notifications whenever comments are posted about health services in the Somerset area. The data from the Patient Opinion website is added to the information that we use about patient experiences in Somerset.

Newsletters: The Somerset LINK has produced quarterly newsletters which were sent to all LINK participants. (See appendix for newsletter.)

Relationships:

Relationships with 'key stakeholders' continue to be developed. Stakeholders such as NHS Somerset, the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Somerset Community Health, the Care Quality Commission, as well as some care home providers, continue to be supportive of the LINK. They have helped us by providing information, advice, support and presentations when requested, as well as offering opportunities for LINK representatives to get involved.

We have a good working relationship with NHS Somerset, particularly their Patient and Public Involvement Team, the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Somerset Community Health. The Chair of the Stewardship Group has a place as an observer at the Primary Care Trust Board meeting. The LINK has observer representation at the Members' Council meetings at Taunton & Somerset NHS Foundation Trust (Musgrove Park Hospital), Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and has been offered representation at Members' Council meetings at Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

The LINK has also had representation on:

- NHS Somerset Patient and Public Involvement Communications Group
- Somerset Community Health Patient and Public Involvement Steering Group
- Equality & Diversity Steering Group (NHS Somerset)
- Equality Delivery System Working Group (NHS Somerset)
- Age Audit Working Group (NHS Somerset & Somerset County Council)
- NHS Somerset Patient Transport Group
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Technical Working Group
- Patient Participation Chairs Networking Meeting (NHS Somerset)

- Somerset Carers' Strategy Group
- Priority Area Strategy Group (Somerset County Council)
- Frome Health Forum (NHS Somerset)
- West Somerset Health Forum (NHS Somerset)

Members of the Stewardship Group and Priorities Panel are also active on the Musgrove Partner Group at Musgrove Park Hospital.

Consultations:

We try to ensure that our registered participants receive as much information about national and local consultations as possible. We have distributed information about many consultations over the last year, including: Funding and commissioning routes for public health (Department of Health); Transparency in outcomes: Proposals for a public health outcomes framework (Department of Health); Healthy lives, healthy people: Our strategy for public health in England (Department of Health); Transforming Community Services (NHS Somerset) Health and Social Care White Paper consultations (Department of Health) and consultation on the review of changing eligibility thresholds for Adult Social Care (Somerset County Council).

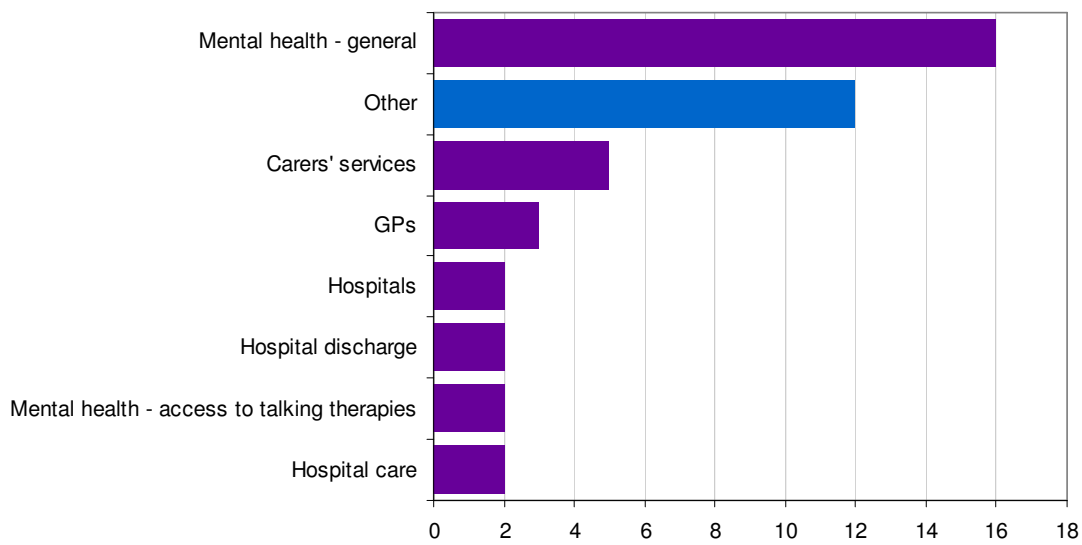
Gathering views:

The majority of our work this year was undertaking projects which were informed by issues gathered in the previous year. Further to our engagement activities above, 48 individual issues were raised by 43 members of the public or user-led/voluntary groups. This included issues raised via the telephone service which is provided by the host organisation. Several hundred comments were also received during the course of our Community Chest and Transport projects, but these were analysed separately.

During 2011-12 we will be focusing again on gathering views in our 'Patient Stories' project, as we believe that this is a crucial part of the LINK's work and want to focus more on this in the coming year.

The issues raised by individual members of the public in the course of our engagement work covered a number of areas and these are broken down in the following bar chart:

Issues raised during engagement work (2010-11)



(Example of 'Other issues' includes: supported housing, access to information, waiting times, mental health care, care homes, patient transport, hospital notes, prescriptions, mental health - inpatient care, medical equipment services and orthodontics.)

7. What project work have we done this year?

We are very proud of the work we have achieved over the last year. We have carried out a large number of projects and have written reports and recommendations about health and social care. We have responded to consultations and we have carried out Enter & View visits. A selection of some of our work follows.

Our Projects

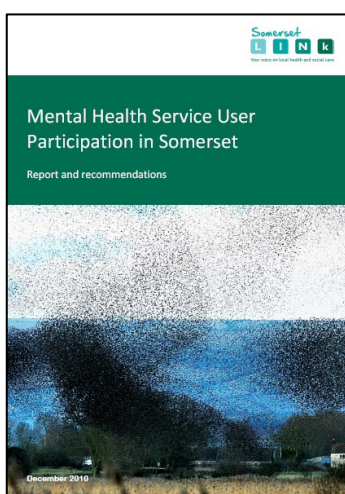


Carers:

WyvernHealth.com in partnership with Carers UK, St.John Ambulance, Somerset County Council, the Somerset LINK and a carer's representative have coordinated a carers Champion Scheme in GP practices across Somerset.

The LINK has undertaken an evaluation of the project, which has ensured that over 80% of surgeries in Somerset now have a Carers' Champion. We will be pursuing sustainable funding to continue this project over the next year, as well as keeping a close eye on how carers' services are developing across Somerset, in the light of the 2010 appraisal of carers' services in Somerset by Peter Fletcher Associates.

Over the last year we have also built relationships with carers and carers' groups across Somerset, and have attended Somerset Carers' Strategy Group meetings. We are keen to continue to work supporting carers over the coming year.



Mental Health:

In 2010, mental health service users, their carers and staff working in the sector in Somerset raised concerns with Somerset LINK that the county has no dedicated independent involvement or participation support service for mental health service users. The Somerset LINK formed a Mental Health Focus Group comprising nine volunteers with an interest in mental health services, including service users, carers and professionals. A public event '*A voice for your mental wellbeing*' was held and a survey was carried out. A report reflecting the voice of local people, identifying existing provision, gaps in service and describing the service elements that are needed to support and encourage mental health service user involvement was forwarded to commissioners and other interested parties.



Patient Transport:

From November 2010 the Somerset LINK carried out an independent evaluation of patient transport services, supported and informed by the Patient Transport Services Evaluation Task & Finish Group. Patient Transport Surveys were distributed to GP surgeries in Somerset, users of patient transport services, community hospitals, and the main county's hospitals, Yeovil District Hospital and Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton. The responses to the survey are currently being analysed and a full report will be published in the summer of 2011.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (West Somerset):

The LINK has made a significant contribution to the Joint Needs Assessment of West Somerset, as part of a wider needs assessment for the area lead by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment team at NHS Somerset. The LINK distributed a questionnaire to registered LINK participants and other user and carer groups in West Somerset. A report of the feedback received from this exercise was published in summer 2010 and formed part of the Joint Needs Assessment of West Somerset.

The Somerset LINK has been invited to be a part of the Technical Working Group for the 2011 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Community Chest:

The LINK made a fund of £10,000 available to local community groups and charities in order to undertake projects and research that promotes and reports the public's views about health and social care. A website was published, a set of criteria for application of funds was created and a maximum limit of £1,000 per application was set. A group of LINKs volunteers scrutinised the applications and decided which applicants should be awarded funding.

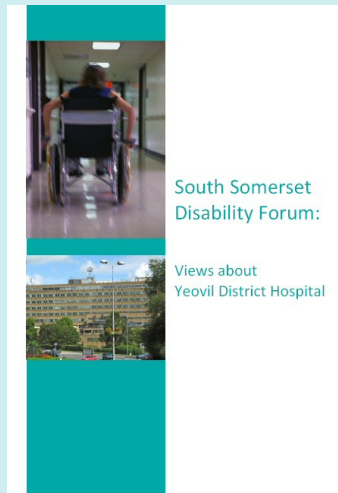
The successful applications were: Axbridge & Wedmore PPG for a survey of carers; Mind in Taunton & West Somerset for a service user survey; The Stroke Association for an awareness campaign; South West Training, Coaching & Health for a new website; Mind in Sedgemoor for a service user survey; South Somerset Disability Forum for a patient interview DVD; Compass Disability Services for a health feedback website; Chard Intentional Peer Support Group for their peer-led support desk in Chard; SHINE for a survey of parents about health services; South Somerset Mind for a survey of migrant workers and Pro-active Lifestyle Water Activities Club to survey their service users.

Somerset LINK Community Chest Projects: a snapshot

Mind in Taunton & West Somerset (Mind TWS) is a local mental health charity established in 1982, which campaigns for the right of people who experience mental ill-health and emotional distress to be treated with respect, to be given equal access to services and opportunities in the community and to have control over the care and treatment they receive. The aim of their report was to identify the needs and assess any gaps, both statutory and voluntary in the Taunton Deane and West Somerset district and more generally the wider Somerset. Various gaps were noted, including a lack of provision for young people with mental health needs.

South Somerset Disability Forum designed and conducted a survey to gather views about what was good and what was not so good with regards to the experience people with disability have at Yeovil District Hospital.

Information was gathered by video interview. The overall response from those with disability using YDH was positive. The main concern was points of refuge during emergencies and training of staff to direct and support those with disabilities in an emergency such as a



fire. The provision of volunteer at the main entrance to support those with disability, more seating and improved space for wheel chairs in the cafeteria and improved space for wheel chairs in the cafeteria would be welcome. Their final report was sent to Yeovil District Hospital for comment and action.

Shine Somerset Ltd.: Shine wanted to find out how local people in Chard perceived health and healthy living. Information was gathered from the following groups; a Somerset Skills and Learning Adult Literacy group made up by those with English as a first language, Somerset Skills and Learning group, a Family Learning group based

at a local Primary School that was made up of parents who used English as a second language, Clare House Children's Centre a 'Story Time' Group, a parent and toddler group in Tatworth.

South Somerset Mind: Research was carried out by speaking to members of the migrant community who were residing in the local area. Most of the people who were surveyed were clients receiving mental health support from South Somerset Mind. However, some were from the wider migrant community. Most of the respondents expressed that they are happy with the health services available. The translator over the phone seems to work quite well but in some cases people would prefer to have a translator sitting next to them. Some of the leaflets which people need to access are not available in other languages.

Chard Intentional Peer Support Group: Chard Intentional Peer Support Group is a group of mental health service users who run an information desk on a regular basis from Chard Town Hall. Through this they provide a signposting service for the local community to access mental health information. The group used the Community Chest Fund to help run the information point by meeting volunteers' travel costs, and encouraged users of the service to give their feedback about mental health services in Somerset.

The Stroke Association provides a Family and Carer Support Coordinator Service (FCSC) and wanted to raise awareness of this service across Somerset. The service is delivered by three co-ordinators who visit individuals who have had a stroke, their families and carers. The Stroke Association urged local teams to raise awareness of their services with health and social care workers and the voluntary sector. The funding from the Somerset LINK fitted the grant criteria of 'Improving access to Existing Services' and enabled a much wider distribution of posters and leaflets. As a result of this, the service received more referrals, including its first referral from a GP.

Learning Disabilities & Acute Trusts Peer Review – LINK involvement:

The South West Strategic Health Authority co-ordinated a peer review in Autumn 2010 looking at how acute trusts were meeting the needs of patients with learning disabilities. The Somerset LINK attended a briefing event on behalf of the LINKs in the South West and requested that a place be made on each Peer Review Team for a representative from each LINK. The Somerset LINK distributed information about the review and coordinated responses between the LINKs and the SHA. We worked with 14 south west LINKs to ensure that 94% of hospitals in the south west had a local LINK representative on their Peer Review Team. The results from the review will be published by the SHA during summer 2011.



Patient Participation Groups:

We have very much enjoyed working with the Chairs of Patient Participation Groups this year, by attending their quarterly meetings and giving talks about the work of the LINK and about the changing health and social care landscape. We have also given talks to several Patient Participation Groups at their surgery meetings. We also set up a PPG fund of £2,000 to help support the Patient Participants Groups by meeting running costs.

GP Commissioning Consortium:

The Somerset LINK has been working closely with the development of the interim GP Commissioning Consortium (iGPCC) and were part of the recruitment panel for two new 'Patient and Public Engagement Managers,' who will be working with the iGPCC to develop patient engagement in the new commissioning process. A LINK Representative will also be a member of the Interim GPCC Board for the transition period.

NHS Somerset Frome Health Forum:

The Somerset LINK participates in the Frome Health Forum and will be taking part in the West Somerset forum which is a new forum for 2011. These forums have been set up by NHS Somerset to promote relations between the public/patients and commissioners of health care and will be expanded to cover more GP Federation areas over the next year.

Requests for information:

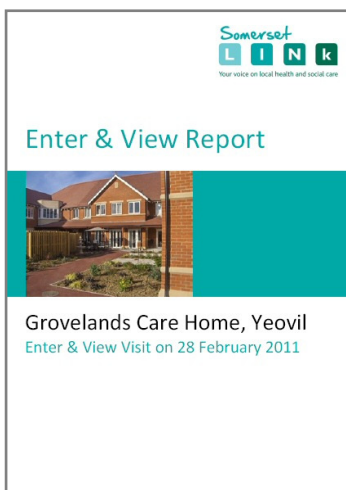
During the year we have made five formal Requests for Information during the course of our project and research work. These have covered requests for information including information from health service providers about hip replacements, information from Somerset County Council about advocacy services and information from SEAP about complaints numbers via the Independent Complaints Advisory Service. All were responded to within the required time frame. The majority of our requests for information are made informally and local stakeholders are generally very supportive in providing information for our work.

Enter & View:



The Somerset LINK has a number of authorised representatives trained to conduct Enter and View.

Looking at 'dignity in care', the Somerset LINK's Enter & View team has embarked on a rolling programme of visiting care homes in Somerset. The purpose was to observe dignity in care and identify best practice. Three care homes have been visited: Sydenham House, Bridgwater, Chelston Park, Wellington and Grovelands, Yeovil. Reports have been compiled using the Dignity Care Factors as identified by the Social Care Institute for Excellence. These activities have been supported by the care home providers Somerset Care and Netherclay Care homes, with both providers offering and providing additional training and insight to the authorised representatives.



Our reports have been shared with the CQC. The response from the CQC has been that, not only have the report provided very useful information about the services provided but that the CQC will pick up on the issues raised about hospital discharge with the NHS Trusts concerned. The reports will provide additional information for the CQC's quality and risk profiles.

The Enter & View team are formally trained and have also been provided with training in the Short Observational Framework for Inspection which provides an insight on how to observe those with dementia, and hearing awareness by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf.

8. How was it paid for?

Somerset LINK

Income in 2010/11:

Amount allocated to the local authority by the Department of Health	228,000
Amount of funding received by the host from the local authority	126,800
Amount of funding received by the LINK from the host	28,000
Amount of funding carried over from previous year	33,421
Total budget for 2010-11:	160,221

Spending in 2010/11:

Total spend by host organisation	141,457
Total spend by LINK	18,764

10. What are our plans for 2011?

The newly refreshed Stewardship Group and Priorities Panel have hit the ground running this year and have been meeting regularly to put together the LINK workplan for 2011. The areas selected reflect both the statutory obligations of the LINK (the things we have to do) and also comments received from people in Somerset. The projects will continue to be based on comments from members of the public and this year we hope to gather far more stories from people in Somerset about treatment provided by health and social care services.

1. Building and encouraging our volunteers

We have recently welcomed 14 new volunteers to carry out the work of the LINK over the next year. These volunteers form a Stewardship Group (overseeing the LINK) and a Priorities Panel (project managing the work of the LINK and forming working groups). Various stakeholders have offered to help with training these volunteers in patient involvement and in equality and diversity: a theme which is becoming a more important part of the work of the LINK as time progresses. We are also hoping to recruit more Enter & View representatives this year in order to continue this volunteer-led work. We are intending to extend and develop our network of LINK Representatives who are currently attending key meetings across the county on behalf of the LINK. This work will be more formally reported over the next few months and will feed back to our Stewardship Group and Priorities Panel via a formal process.

2. Meetings and events:

The Stewardship Group and Priorities Panel have already agreed dates for future meetings including public meetings and events which have been publicised. Along with the new volunteer structure, we have a more formal plan of quarterly public meetings over the next year, with the aim of ensuring that volunteers and participants feel comfortable in engaging with the complex issues of NHS and social care reforms. The new volunteers will set the agenda and the themes for these meetings, and the staff team will provide the practical and back office support needed to ensure that these are well advertised and well attended, in accessible venues. Please get in touch with us if you would like our list of events for the year.

3. Patient Stories

This is our big project for the year. We aim to collect stories from people across Somerset, in order to collect together first-hand experiences of using health and social care services across Somerset. We will be collecting patient stories from across health services and also stories from people in care homes across Somerset. While engagement and collecting of issues is a part of the LINK's ongoing work, this will be a more formal project, with volunteers acting as distributors and collectors for patient stories, ensuring as wide a distribution and collection as possible. Key stories will be grouped

into themes and written up into separate reports and individual issues will be followed up by the Priorities Panel and passed to the relevant providers or commissioners as required.

4. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a big document (or 'e-tool') that tells commissioners (the people who buy and plan services) what local people need in terms of health and social care services. The Somerset JSNA is being 'refreshed' in the summer of 2011. The LINK will assist by ensuring that individuals and community groups have a chance to make their views heard. The themes for the JSNA will be 'housing' and 'the over-85s'. We are working with volunteer and user-led groups and are hoping to work with Somerset County Council and NHS Somerset to develop proposals for a 'third sector forum' to enable meaningful dialogue and co-production between commissioners and providers, patient groups and the public.

5. The Equalities Delivery System

The Equalities Delivery System is the mechanism through which the NHS will meet its public duty in relation to the Equality Act 2010. We are part of the EDS working group that is organising and responding to the new Equality Delivery System and the relevant duties. We have passed reports to NHS Somerset and are making sure that we are as informed as possible about how community groups can play in part in having their voice heard. This work is likely to feed into the work of HealthWatch who will be required to monitor health providers' responses to the new equality duties.

6. Enter and View

This year we will continue the rolling programme of Enter & View Visits looking at dignity in care in care homes and we will continue to identify best practice and provide reports & recommendations. Our trained group of volunteers in our Enter & View Team will continue to carry out visits this year and will feed their findings to the CQC. We expect to carry out approximately eight Enter & View Visits over the next year.

7. Public representation in the new health and social care landscape

The world of health and social care is changing rapidly with the planning and eventual ushering-in of the Health & Social Care Bill. It is an important time for us to make sure that patients and the public have an opportunity to make themselves heard in the new organisations that are emerging, such as GP Commissioning Consortia (GPCC) and Health and Wellbeing Boards. The LINK has good relationships with the organisations that are involved with these developing boards. We have a patient representative on the new interim GP Commissioning Consortium for Somerset and we are discussing how we can help support a public representative on the emerging Health and Wellbeing Board, that will be up and running in shadow form in the autumn of 2011.

8. GP Patient Participation Groups

The Patient Participation Group Network now represents around 60% of Somerset surgeries and we will continue to work with NHS Somerset and the PPG Chairs Network and support the development of PPGs, particularly in surgeries where these are emerging. We will continue to support the Chairs' Network and monitor its progress as it discovers ways of making the most of opportunities for patient engagement in the new world of GP and clinically-led commissioning. We also hope to continue to provide a PPG fund to enable local groups to run their own small involvement projects and cover their running costs.

The Somerset LINK host team would like to thank all of the Somerset LINK volunteers who have put so much hard work into making the LINK a success over the last year. We are extremely grateful for your enthusiasm, dedication, patience, support and remarkably good humour.

Steve, Jono, Lucy & Theresa