

LINK NEWSLETTER

Working to improve social and health care in Essex and Southend



Welcome to our first monthly newsletter and thank you to the LINK members who have worked so hard to establish our network. The newsletter will include local, regional and national information about the planning, commissioning and delivery of health and social services. If you have any questions or views on health and social care please contact your local LINK office.

Announcing the LINK Launch Event

We need to involve the people of Essex & Southend in our work. To get this going we have decided to hold a major launch event between 10am and 4pm on Saturday 24 January 2009 at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford. Please put this date in your diary! The aim of this event will be to

spread far and wide awareness of our LINK, engage the people countywide (that means throughout the whole of ECC and SBC), and encourage community involvement in our LINK's activities. This will be followed shortly afterwards by a roadshow of launch events in our five Locality Group areas.

- LINK is a network of individuals, groups and communities working together to improve local health and social care services.
- If you are interested in being involved in the Essex and Southend LINK see the list of contacts on the back cover.

Your opportunity to have a say in how health and social care services are developed and run

By joining your local LINK you can make a difference to health and social care in your area. You can participate as much or as little as you want in the following ways:

- By receiving regular information about Essex and Southend LINK
- Participate in working task groups about the health and social care issues you are interested in.
- Join local, theme and issue groups that are responsible for developing the LINK.

Getting LINK Going

(Peter Blackman Chair, Essex & Southend LINK countywide coordinating group)

The Essex & Southend LINK got started at a well attended public countywide meeting on Saturday 28 June 2008 held at Chelmsford Football Club. People came from all parts of Essex & Southend to make the key decisions to enable this new organisation to improve the health and well being of people throughout the area.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find the text of our initial information leaflet which explains all the basics about our LINK so the Host Organisation initially provided a small number of interim staff which gave us two members of staff over the summer.

As well as operating at countywide level, on 28 June it was decided to have two offices and divide the county into five Localities (based on the boundaries of the Primary Care Trusts). In due course it is expected that we will also have some Theme and Issue groups.

In the first few weeks in July we worked quickly to establish the five Locality Groups, which had already had one or two meetings before 28 June on a temporary basis. We also established the countywide coordinating group, of which I was asked to take the chair in August. The Host Organisation arranged and ran all meetings until groups decided how they want to operate and appointed their officers.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find articles about all the five Locality Groups, plus lists of the members of the countywide coordinating group and the officers of the Locality Groups. The countywide coordinating group is an operational group which works with

the mandates given to it by the 28 June and other public meetings. Its job is to oversee things, look after administrative matters and ensure everything runs smoothly.

During the summer the main priorities were to:

- Find office premises
- Recruit staff, and
- Get all our organisational systems and resources in place.

These were our agreed priorities as without them we have not had the ability to start to get on with the real work to do with the provision of health and social care. However, we also did our best to start some of that activity as well.

I am very pleased to say that we have found good office premises in Southend and Chelmsford – full details about them are given elsewhere in the Host Organisation's article. You will appreciate this took time and care, to find suitable premises, negotiate favourable terms and get all the legalities completed so that we could take possession.

That then allowed us to equip the offices and staff with all the necessary Information Communications Technology (ICT), including computers and telecommunications, plus furnishings, fixtures and fittings.

We worked out the structure and numbers of staff in the Host Organisation. Job Descriptions and Personal Specifications were written and agreed. The jobs were then all advertised – because of the summer holidays we had to make the closing date towards the end of August. We were delighted with the quantity and quality of applicants.

Shortlisting was not easy because of the calibre of applicants. Interviews were held over five days and I am delighted with the great experience and expertise of the staff we have appointed. Allowing for the necessary notice periods for existing employments, most of our staff will be in place by the end of October. Full details of the staff appointments and a bit about them all is in the Host Organisation's article.

So in just four months since 28 June we will have set up the LINK as a viable and robust organisation. It will take a few weeks for everyone to settle in and get the basics up and running. We have all agreed our aim is that by the turn of the year the Essex & Southend LINK will be working at full capacity.

We need to involve the people of Essex & Southend in our work. To get this going we have decided to hold a major launch event on Saturday 24 January 2009 at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford. Please put this date in your diary! The aim of that event will be to spread far and wide awareness of our LINK, engage the people countywide (that means throughout the whole of ECC and SBC), and get their engagement, commitment and involvement in our LINK's activities. This will be followed shortly afterwards by a roadshow of launch events in our five Locality Group areas.

Locality Groups have already started work looking at health and social care issues in their areas. Their articles elsewhere in this newsletter tell you all about what they have been doing. At countywide level we have made submissions on consultations about: the East of England Strategic Health Authority's strategic plan for the next ten years; the proposals for a pan Essex approach to neonatal services; and, the Department

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Getting LINK Going *continued*

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of Health's proposals for a national dementia strategy. We have made contact with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of ECC and SBC for health and social services. We have also made contact with a large number of health and social care organisations which operate throughout the county. We have had some initial training to help us get organised. There is a regional group to help LINKs and we have attended some of its meetings.

We can be proud of all we have achieved in such a short time. We are amongst the leading LINKs in England. We are building on the firm foundations we have already laid. We are going to be a real force for the improvement of health and social services in our communities and countywide and for the health and well being of the people of Essex & Southend. I am very pleased that we are being welcomed by health and social care providers and commissioners, who say they look forward to working with us. We will be critical friends, not afraid to praise things that are good and criticise things that are bad. Most importantly we will be constructive, practical and realistic with our ideas and suggestions for improvements.

This is the first newsletter we have produced ourselves. I would like to thank the ECC and SBC staff who worked so hard to ensure our LINK got started so well and so quickly. They absorbed the inevitable frustrations and criticisms which they faced with fortitude and good humour. We owe them a great debt of gratitude. They produced regular newsletters up to June.

I am sorry there has been a gap in such newsletters. I have visited all the recent Locality Group meetings to give an update on progress. I apologise that we have not had the resources until now to spread this information wider. We aim to produce a newsletter on a monthly basis after this one.

If you have not already registered as a participant/member and to receive regular information about our activities and events please complete the form at the end of this newsletter and return it to our Host Organisation. Please be patient with us until Christmas as we get ourselves set up and fully operational. Please contribute to our work in whatever way suits you best.

Here's to ever improving health & social care in Essex & Southend!

*Peter Blackman
Chair, Essex & Southend LINK
countywide coordinating group*

On 28 June 2008 Essex & Southend LINK decided in public meeting to adopt governance arrangements for the rest of 2008. It was envisaged that there would be another public meeting by then end of 2008 to review everything. As you will see from the article above, it has taken time to get things in place and so the launch event will now take place on 24 January 2009. The existing arrangements will run until then. The countywide coordinating group will undertake a full review of the governance arrangements and make recommendations to the meeting on 24 January 2009. That meeting will be asked to decide the governance arrangements for the future. In the meantime, regular public meetings are being held by all the Locality Groups.



The New LINk offices are now open

We are pleased to announce that our offices are up and running in both Southend and Chelmsford and most of the staff are in place. There will be minor hitches initially while staff are trained and IT systems are bedded in, so please bear with us for a little while. The Chelmsford Office is in Bond Street off Waterloo Lane and at the back of the Bond Street car park. The Southend office is in Nelson Street which is near Alexandra Road.

Our Host Organisation

CEMVO (Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations) is the Host Organisation for Essex and Southend LINk. The role and duties of the Host organisation are:

Help set up the LINk

- telling the community that the LINk is operating
- holding meetings so people can come and hear about what the LINk is doing
- encouraging local groups, organisations and individuals to
- get involved, especially those who are not always heard

Work with local people and groups on how the LINk will work locally.

This will include:

- how decisions are made
- how people can get involved
- what happens if people do not agree about things
- how people can have a say as a group or as an individual

CEMVO will also hold the finances for the LINk and be responsible for keeping records of how money is spent. We will be regularly letting local people know what the LINk is doing and asking them for their views. We will keep good records of what the LINk does and who is involved. We will provide advice and support to the LINk and make regular reports to the Local Authorities about how it is supporting the LINk. CEMVO will help the LINk to write a report every year about what they have done and how the money has been spent and work with other strategic organisations and partnerships locally.

Locality and Countywide Groups go into action

Locality Groups have already started work looking at health and social care issues in their areas. At countywide level we have made submissions on consultations about: the East of England Strategic Health Authority's strategic plan for the next ten years; the proposals for a pan Essex approach to neonatal services; and, the Department of Health's proposals for a national dementia strategy.

We have made contact with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of ECC and SBC for health and social services. We have also made contact with a large number of health and social care organisations which operate throughout the county. We have had some initial training to help us get organised. There is a regional group to help LINks and we have attended some of its meetings.

Working with Health and Social Care Providers

We are already one of the leading LINks in England, building on the firm foundations we have already laid. We are going to be a real force for the improvement of health and social services in our communities for the health and well being of the people of Essex & Southend. We are being welcomed by health and social care providers and commissioners, who are looking forward to working with us. We will be critical friends, not afraid to praise things that are good and criticise things that are bad. Most importantly we will be constructive, practical and realistic with our ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Do you work with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Essex and Southend?

Please contact us regarding the following:

- how you and the communities you work with can have a say in how local health and social care services are delivered and commissioned
- how you and your community can get involved in the Local Involvement Network (LINK) for Essex and Southend

Passing on the Essex and Southend LINK Message

If you have received this newsletter by email from someone else and you would like to be on the e-bulletin mailing list, or if you would like to be taken off this email list, please email Fahmida Ali at: Fahmida.Ali@cemvo.org.uk

If you would like this bulletin in hard copy, another format, a community language, on audiotape or in any other format please call 020 8432 0081.

Future Meetings/ Training/Workshops

A number of groups have recently been set up for Essex and Southend LINK. We welcome new people and new ideas at these meetings.

Please let us know if you would like to join any of these groups. The forthcoming dates for these are as follows:

Mid Essex Locality Group
(3/12/08) (2 to 4pm)
CHARMS, 20 Grafton Place
Montrose Road
Springfield Dukes Ind Est.
Chelmsford.

An updated list of meetings can be obtained by contacting any of the LINK staff listed below.

Turning Ideas into Action

Are you already involved in activities to support the development of health and social care services that the LINK should know about?

If so we would be interested in hearing from you and share ideas. Please contact: Rosalind.PEEK@cemvo.org.uk

Find out More

If you would like to find out more about Essex and Southend LINK contact your Area Co-ordinator at either the Chelmsford or Southend offices as detailed below.

LINK Offices and Contacts

Chelmsford office

1 Bond Street
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1GD
01245 490733

NE Area Co-ordinator
Post currently vacant

Linda Tubb
Mid Essex
Co-ordinator
linda.tubb@cemvo.org.uk

Tamanna Hoque
Administrator for NE & Mid
tamanna.hoque@cemvo.org.uk

Julie Harkus
SW and W Locality
Co-ordinator
julie.harkus@cemvo.org.uk

Fahmida Ali
Administrator for SW and W
fahmida.ali@cemvo.org.uk

Stratford Office:

Boardman House
64 The Broadway
Stratford, London E15 1NG
020 8432 0012

Anne Villegas
Project Manager
anne.villegas@cemvo.org.uk
020 8432 0117

Wondwossen Tadesse
Knowledge Manager
wondwossen.tadesse@cemvo.org.uk
020 8432 0415

Rosalind Peek
Research and Policy
Co-ordinator
rosalind.peek@cemvo.org.uk

Southend Office:

6 Nelson Street
Southend
Essex SS1 1EF
01702 350479

Gillian Dawson
SE Locality Co-ordinator
gill.dawson@cemvo.org.uk
01702 350479

Sharon Cohen
SE Locality Administrator
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Essex & Southend
LINK
For better social & health care
is hosted by

cemvo
Strengthening Communities
Tackling Inequalities