

Essex & Southend LINK NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER THREE - APRIL/MAY 2009



Bill Rammell MP and Dave Monk at the LINK launch event.

We're on the road!

Many thanks for the excellent response to our second newsletter in January 2009. We're glad you liked it. We will be producing a newsletter every two months and in due course, in between editions, we'll supplement them with electronic news briefings on our website and by email.

In this edition you'll find a report of our successful launch event which we held on Saturday 24 January 2009 at Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford. This was our second countywide (that's all of Essex and Southend) public meeting and started to 'put us on the map'. We were very grateful to Bill Rammell MP and Minister of State for delivering the keynote address on behalf of the Government. Dave Monk, from BBC Essex, was the excellent compere for the day and he kept us entertained as well as getting us through all the sessions on time and producing the work we needed and wanted to do.

Essex & Southend LINK covers one of the largest areas of a LINK in the country. It would be unwieldy to try to do everything countywide. That's why we have broken ourselves down into five

localities. There are some things we have to do as a whole LINK. By confirming our governance arrangements until March 2011 we have allowed ourselves to work as far as possible in localities and on themes and issues. Also, we will meet quarterly on a public countywide basis; our first countywide meeting took place from 3-7pm on Wednesday 22 April 2009 in Chelmsford.

You will find reports from our five locality groups elsewhere in this newsletter. These groups are holding their outreach launch events in the coming weeks. After that we will start holding neighbourhood events in villages and places all around the county. This will enable everyone to air their views on all the health and social care issues which are of concern. Together we can make a real difference to the health and social care services throughout Essex and Southend.



Peter Blackman
(Chairperson Countywide
Co-ordinating Group)

Achievements so far . . .

Most of our achievements have been made by our five locality groups and they are described in the reports from those groups which are elsewhere in this newsletter. At countywide level:

- We are working closely with Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council developing good working relationships on health and social care issues in conjunction with their Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Committees; we have held joint training days on commissioning of services and health inequalities with ECC
- We now have a theme group on mental health, including drug, alcohol and substance misuse; let a member of staff know if you want to join this group
- We have an issue group on discharge from hospital; again, let a member of staff know if you want to join this group
- Our first major outreach initiative is with gypsies and travellers, the largest minority community in our county
- We are working with the other eight LINKs in East of England to arrange for us to be represented on the Regional Boards for Specialist Health Services; our region is unique in commissioning 10% of the provision of health services at regional level so it's vital for us to be involved in this
- We are working with all the LINKs in the east of England to cooperate on cross border issues of common concern
- We are working with London's LINKs as we have cross border issues of common concern with them
- We have health and social care issues of concern which are dealt with nationally so we are investigating ways in which we can make our voice heard nationally
- We have very nearly completed all we need to do to get our staff and offices fully functioning
- We are keeping abreast of the EU proposals for healthcare across the borders of countries in Europe
- We have completed the first round of recruitment of representatives who will undertake 'Enter & View' for us; this will be an important way in which we can gather evidence and information to help our various projects
- We are taking part in the development of the plan for children and young people for the next few years in our county.

Moving forward . . .

Welcome to the 3rd issue of the Essex & Southend LINK Newsletter. Following on from the success of the launch on 24 January, members and participants of the LINK wanted something with a more local flavour and with this in mind it was decided to hold roadshow networking events across the county. These events are starting to take place in various locations throughout Essex; this is a real opportunity to find out what is happening and what the local issues are. Details on all upcoming events are contained elsewhere in the newsletter so please feel free to drop in at an event close to you. Staff will be on hand to listen to your concerns and issues and take your details so that information on future meetings/ events and news about what the LINK is doing can be circulated.

Also, if you get an opportunity please take a look at our website www.essexandsouthendlink.org.uk - it continues to be up-dated with useful information, reports from meetings, what's happening, consultation documents, etc. So is useful in terms of keeping you up to date with developments.

There are still plenty of opportunities to become involved with as little or as much time as you feel you are able to commit to. Please feel free to contact either the Southend or Chelmsford office and we would be happy to let you know how you can be involved with details of future events and meetings.



Report on the Public Launch of the Essex & Southend LINK



Panel session at the LINK launch.

The Essex and Southend LINK was officially launched on 24th January 2009 at Anglia Ruskin University campus in Chelmsford.

Over one hundred voluntary and community sector representatives, local residents and statutory sector partners attended the event.

The purpose of the launch day was to:

- Publicise Essex and Southend LINK to its participants/ members.
- Consider how the LINK can develop
- Consider how health and social care is working in Essex and Southend, including what is working well and should be encouraged.
- Discuss what are viewed to be the key health and social care needs for Essex and Southend.
- Consider what activities and work you would like to see Essex and Southend LINK doing.

The event was opened by our guest speaker, Bill Rammell Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and MP for Harlow, Nazeing, Roydon and Sheering. Dave Monk, BBC Essex presenter chaired the event. He welcomed the LINK as a network for all the people of Essex and Southend to have a voice and influence the way health and social care is delivered.

Bill welcomed the formation of the Essex and Southend LINK and urged it to ensure that peoples' views and concerns are communicated to the relevant

authorities in order to improve services.

He also stated that "LINKs will play a vital role in improving health and social care by giving local communities a real say in how services are planned and run". He also stated that it should be ensured that LINKs are well equipped to help them carry out this role and make sure that changes happen.

Hashmukh Pankhania from the LINK host organisation - Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) - stated that they were delighted to have been

chosen as the host organisation and that CEMVO will do its utmost to support the voluntary efforts of the LINK by providing advice, administration and research. CEMVO believes its substantial record of successfully working with communities to provide public services will make a significant contribution to ensuring the success of the Essex and Southend LINK.

Question and Answer Session

Bill Rammell MP was asked questions about many issues including: social care, education for travellers, patients' full medical records, home care issues, LINK and cross boarder workings.

LINK Business Session

Peter Blackman, Chair of the Essex and Southend LINK countywide co-ordinating group opened the session by explaining that the basics of the Essex and South-end LINK were now in place. He gave an outline of how the E&S LINK was set up and the roles and responsibilities of the LINK.

Election of independent members

Seven nominations had been received in advance. The ballot took place and the seven members with the highest votes were elected.

Vote on Policy Documents

Peter Blackman introduced documents which all participants had in their welcome pack for consideration and approval by the participants. A vote took place to agree these policy documents. Expenses policy, Complaints policy and Enter and View policy were approved.

Theme and Issue Groups

Theme and issue groups are being established for:

Mental Health, Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse.

Hospital Discharge and Planning.

Gypsies and Travellers Outreach.

Workshop discussion groups

Participants were allocated to four workshop discussion groups. During these workshops lively debate ensued in answering the questions and lots of good ideas were highlighted.

The discussion groups provided an opportunity to start gathering information on the issues people would like to see Essex and Southend LINK focus on in the months ahead to improve health and social care provision.



One of the workshops in progress.

Panel session

At the event there were representatives from health and social care providers who formed a panel to answer questions.

Community Showcase Stands

As well as the speeches there were also displays showcasing

the work of a number of groups and organisations that provide valuable services to the community, many of whom have been involved in setting up Essex and Southend LINK.



Business session.

Final address

Dave Monk thanked everyone for attending and for contributing their ideas and energy. He stressed that the launch was only the beginning for Essex and Southend LINK. He urged all voluntary and community groups and individual members of the public to affiliate to the LINK and help it to become effective in improving the health and well being of the entire populations of Essex and Southend.

A detailed report of the launch event is available to view at www.essexandsouthendlink.org.uk

Consultation in London

Healthcare for London is consulting on proposals to develop new, high-quality major trauma and stroke services in London. Introducing specialist care in London for people who suffer a severe injury (major trauma) or stroke could save hundreds of lives and significantly reduce disability for thousands. NHS South West Essex is

involved in this consultation exercise as some 10% of its residents travel to London to receive their treatment. The improvements will provide residents with a greater choice and ensure they receive the highest level of care.

Currently the standard of care varies considerably across London. Whilst some people in

London and the neighbouring areas are accessing good quality services, far too many are missing out. Everyone should receive the best quality care – no change is not an option. The consultation runs until 8th May 2009.

For a copy of the consultation document contact Stuart Haigh on 01268 705096 or stuart.haigh@swessex.nhs.uk

World Class Commissioning and the role of LINK

We had a highly successful joint workshop at County Hall on 4 March which was well attended by council members and LINK participants. The workshop was facilitated by Paul Cutler, an expert advisor from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).

The workshop aimed to:

1. Introduce and explore the context, purpose and elements of World Class Commissioning
2. Review the current policy context of commissioning for health and social care services
3. Consider a case study of public engagement in the commissioning cycle
4. Explore ways that the Essex and Southend LINK can engage with World Class Commissioning and contribute the voice of local people and groups

World Class Commissioning is described as a statement of intent, aimed at delivering outstanding performance in the way the NHS commission health and care services. An important responsibility of those that commission services is that they must fully engage with local communities throughout this process. Therefore, we need to be familiar with this concept and its implementation across Essex and Southend. Contact Rosalind Peek.

Email: rosalind.peek@essexandsouthendlink.org.uk

telephone: 01245 490733.

The Governance Steering Group

The Essex & Southend LINK is independent and must have its own decision making structure and accountability arrangements. This must be regularly reviewed to ensure the governance infrastructure is fit for purpose and encompasses views from the wider community, as involvement and participation within the LINK increases.

The Essex and Southend LINK Governance Steering Group has been established to make this happen and consider the recommendations made in the "Governance Tracking" document (December 08) and at the Essex and Southend LINK Launch (24 January 09).

The group aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Pilot virtual working arrangements to determine whether it is an effective and mutually agreeable way to manage specific LINK aims and objectives.
2. Produce a work plan to implement the recommendations of the Governance document including timescales;
3. Deliver the recommendations in the above work plan;
4. Produce the final report detailing the work of the group and outcomes of the pilot.

Update on Enter & View

To enable Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to carry out their activities effectively, there will be times when it is helpful for authorised representatives to observe the delivery of services and for them to collect the views of people whilst they are directly using those services. This process is called Enter and View.

An interim Enter and View task group, comprising of four LINK's members and two members of staff was established at the beginning of January. The main focus for this group has been to recruit 20 volunteers to carry out the Enter and View role. A widespread recruitment campaign was carried out in February with adverts placed in local newspapers, in libraries, via voluntary sector publications and on local radio stations.

The short listing process for interview has taken place and at the time of going to press, six interviews have been conducted. Successful applicants will need to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check and provide two referees. It is important that a comprehensive training programme is attended as this new role is unlike any other undertaken in the past.

Further recruitment will be necessary in order to meet the contractual requirements set by Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

Gypsy and Traveller Theme Group

Gypsies and travellers are often described as 'hard to reach' or 'seldom heard' and it is for this reason that we will be prioritising this community to actively promote their involvement and agree ways to prioritise their participation.

The aims and objectives of the project have been circulated for comment and we have attended a meeting with Site Managers. If anyone feels that they have any contribution to make to the project we would welcome contact from them. Please contact Gill Dawson or Rosalind Peak

Email: gill.dawson@essexandsouthendlink.org.uk - telephone: 01702 350479

Email: rosalind.peek@essexandsouthendlink.org.uk - telephone: 01245 490733

Report from the Groups

West Essex Locality Group

The locality had a "launch" meeting on Friday 3rd April at Harlow Civic Centre and approximately 30 people heard Bill Rammell MP give a key note speech on "What we can achieve together." Duncan Taylor, Strategy Development Manager Essex County Council and Alison Cowie, Director of Public Health NHS West Essex, gave an informative presentation on how LINKs fits into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Attendees posed some challenging questions to the speakers and voiced their concerns about local health and social care service issues. The group needs to set its work plan for the coming year and is using all of its public engagement opportunities to canvas opinion.

Emergency Planning

John Carr, locality Chairman, has attended a meeting of the West Essex/East Herts Emergency Planning Group and this has led to discussion on how the LINK can feed into emergency planning at county level. One of the members has almost completed a mapping exercise for the locality – looking at service provision and statutory/voluntary sector support services. Another member is looking into setting up patient participation groups in the Epping Forest GP surgeries. The group continues to have representation on Practice Based Commissioning committees, locality Consultative Forums and the Essex County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny committee.

Health Checks

The submission deadlines for third party commentaries for the annual healthcheck declarations for NHS West Essex and Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust have past and both commentaries have now been submitted.

The next meeting of this group will take place on Tuesday 5th May 7pm – 9pm at Foakes Hall,

Stortford Road, Great Dunmow. This is the first opportunity that the locality has had to visit the Uttlesford area and we hope that residents join us to give their views.

South West Essex Locality Group

The Roadshows

The locality group has organised five roadshow type events to engage with the communities of Basildon, Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford. At the time of going to press, the first roadshow, in Wickford, has taken place and was well attended thanks to the community café venue. As well as talking to visitors to the café we also spoke to parents and grandparents at the pre-school nursery in the same premises. Contacts are being forged with local voluntary organisations in the health and social care fields so that the roadshows have targeted attendees. After these events have taken place, a business meeting will be convened to elect Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Countywide representative.

Getting to know you

A productive "getting to know you" meeting took place in January between the locality Chairman, Project Coordinator and senior personnel of NHS South West Essex Provider Services. The organisation is very keen to work together and to do all it can to publicise the LINK to its staff and service users.

Health Checks

Members of the locality have attended meetings with the Compliance Manager's at Basildon & Thurrock Hospital and NHS South West Essex to discuss the annual Healthcheck Declaration process. Many questions were raised at both meetings and commentaries have been submitted for both trusts.

Charles Novis, locality Chairman, is leading for the locality on the

discharge from hospital theme group - a theme that is common to all five Essex hospitals.

Mid Essex Locality Group

At the January meeting of the Mid Essex Locality Group there was a presentation by Essex Air Ambulance. The Group also followed up issues raised at the previous meeting, including St Andrews Centre at Broomfield Hospital, MRI scans and the Patient Advice & Liaison Services (PALs). The Group held roadshows around the locality during March in Maldon, Braintree, Burnham and Halstead. The aim was to inform the public about the work of the LINK and encourage them to become participants.

The Locality Group met again on 8th April in the West Maldon Community Centre. At that meeting John Saxton was re-elected as Chair and three Vice Chairs were elected - Claire Beattie, Judith Wright and Michael Blackwell. The Group has continued to follow up issues around the availability of MRI scans and has received a satisfactory response from Mid Essex PCT, detailing arrangements for both inpatient and outpatient scans. John Saxton reported on the situation regarding DDA compliance at the St Andrews Centre, Broomfield Hospital and this matter is ongoing - he is awaiting a further response from the Trust.

It was agreed that the Group will look at the PALs service in local Trusts and a representative from Mid Essex PCT will be invited to a future meeting. The Group has agreed that work will start now on preparing themselves for next years submission of a commentary to the Quality Care Commission as part of the Annual Health Check 2009/10.

A timetable has been set for meetings up to October and the next meeting on 20th May will concentrate on producing a workplan for the Group for the coming year.

Mid Essex Locality Group Meetings

20th May 2009

Chapter House, Chelmsford
2.00pm-4.00pm

8th July 2009

Spring Lodge, Witham
6.00pm-8.00pm

2nd September 2009

Brickhouse Farm, Maldon
6.00pm-8.00pm

14th October 2009

Chelmsford (venue tbc)
2.00pm-4.00pm

North East Essex Locality Group

The locality group has organised four roadshow events to engage with the public. At the time of going to press the first of these in Colchester had taken place. This included presentations on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Future of Colchester General Hospital. We will also be having drop in events in Dovercourt and Walton-on-the-Naze and in conjunction with TACMEP (Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership) on their Multicultural Day in Clacton-on-Sea.

Elections

Keith Biggar has been elected as Chair for the locality and Reg McKenna has agreed to be Vice Chair in the interim whilst a panel of Vice Chairs are sought.

Working Groups

Working groups are getting started on Patient and Public Involvement Legacy, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Aspergers Syndrome and new areas of potential work are being considered.

Healthchecks

A submission for third party commentaries for the annual healthcheck declaration for North Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has been made. For any further information please contact Dana Richardson on 01245 490 733.

Mental Health and Substance Misuse Theme Group

The first planning meeting for the countywide Mental Health and

Substance Misuse Theme Group took place on 6 April 2009 in Chelmsford. At this meeting Reg McKenna, North East Essex locality Vice Chair, was elected Chair of this group.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18 May 2009 from 14.00 until 16.00 at Chelmsford CVS, First Floor, 47 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1SY. Please contact Dana Richardson on 01245 490 733 for more information.

South East Essex Locality Group

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Project 1001 - Recording details of the existing healthcare and social care assets in south east Essex. This will provide us with easily accessible and up-to-date details of all assets for use by members and the public using personal computers connected to the Internet. It will also give us the ability to provide information in simple user defined ways. This is a detailed collection of data which we hope to link with electoral wards.

Project 1002 Pilot Profile – Needs analysis of specific localities in south east Essex. A pilot project will explore the accessibility of local information to local residents. It will also seek to improve methods of local data collection for the public which in turn will inform their assessment of health and social care needs. The ultimate aim is to expand the approach across the area to improve the robustness of public engagement with commissioning decisions in south east Essex. Two electoral wards have been chosen in Southend and one in Rochford and Castle Point respectively. A bid for additional funding for this project was rejected by Castle Point District Council. A decision is awaited on a similar bid to the Together Partnership Team, Southend Borough Council (SBC).

Involvement with local authorities. Two LINK members are co-opted members of SBC Health

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). However we have, as yet, no involvement with Essex County Council (ECC). Members consider this to be unsatisfactory and have asked the Chair to take the issue further with a view to having south east Essex representation at ECC.

HEALTH ISSUES

Physical Access to Southend Hospital. The area is becoming increasingly congested and access to the hospital and patient safety issues have been formally raised with the NHS South East Essex (PCT) and with Southend Hospital. Interim solutions have been suggested by the LINK, but there is no progress to report about eliminating or reducing the problem at the present time.

NHS Choose and Book. LINK contribution concentrates on patient experience. The take up by GPs in south east Essex is at a record level (about 85%) and patients report increasing satisfaction with the use of the system to reduce waiting times at hospital specialist departments. Contact with about 30 local residents indicates that they want improved access to the local hospital and that choice is not an issue for most local patients. We will prepare a report on the recent Department of Health survey.

Phlebotomy Service. There are continual complaints from patients about this service, i.e. excessive waiting times and environmental issues (cold and drafty). It is our view that the current service is not fit for purpose. Improvements have been promised for patients on Warfarin and the PCT and hospital are attempting to provide a satisfactory service. A member is involved with a provider team to ensure that the patients' needs are fully understood.

Eye Clinic. Patients experience long delays and unsatisfactory experiences when attending the clinic. We have raised this with the PPI Manager who is looking at the most appropriate course of action to improve patient experience.

Patient Records and the use of Fax Machines. Patients have reported temporary loss of records in several specialities which delays patient consultation. There are also problems of loss of GP letters, the unsatisfactory process of getting letters from GPs to specialities and considerable delays in letters being available in appropriate clinics. We have raised this with the hospital and investigations are underway.

INVOLVEMENT WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY & NHS TRUSTS LOCAL AUTHORITY

South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT). A good foundation for progress has been established but, as yet, we have no attendance at board meetings until a joint approach to LINKs' representation with Thurrock LINK, South East and South West localities has been agreed. A joint meeting has been arranged to establish appropriate forms of engagement with SEPT. We are presently in communication regarding the proposed reduction in elderly continuing care beds.

Southend University NHS Foundation Trust. A Member attends the hospital board meetings and three preliminary meetings were held with the hospital Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Manager to agree the way forward for future contact. We have been pleased to observe that governors are now performing patient surveys using conventional

questions and we anticipate using the information to provide quantification to our future reporting.

NHS South East Essex (PCT). Two Members attend the PCT board meetings and we have regular meetings with the PPI Manager and Director of Communications. We have a commitment by the PCT to involve the LINK at a stage in the commissioning process whereby we can assist commissioning before the decisions reach the pre-board approval process.

CONSULTATIONS

Psychological Services. We have responded to a consultation on psychological services in the community and await feedback.

5 Year Plan. We have submitted a response to the PCT's consultation on the 'Proposed Strategic Plan for NHS South East Essex 2009-2014'.

Dementia Care. We have responded to the Department of Health (DoH) consultation in 2008 about the way forward for dementia care and await publication of their report and recommendations. Dementia is becoming a major problem in south east Essex and we are concerned that dementia patients and their carers are not treated appropriately by statutory social care organisations.

Healthcare Commission – Annual Health Checks. We have submitted our commentaries in

relation to each of the Trusts declarations for the period April 2008-31 March 2009. With regard to SEPT, which covers two PCTs and 3 local authorities, we agreed a joint response from the south east, south west and Thurrock LINK.

COUNTYWIDE INVOLVEMENT

We remain involved on county-wide basis in issues such as: Consultation on the NHS Constitution; Hospital Discharge Review; database and website specification; Information and Communications Technology for LINK infrastructure; Enter and View.

RECRUITMENT

We are continuing to make progress and have a membership of 61 with an average of 28 members attending our regular monthly public meetings. However, we are actively endeavouring to recruit more members to help us to fulfil our task.



Everyone can join in

Everyone who lives in Essex and Southend or who uses health and social care services in Essex and Southend is potentially a member/participant in our LINK.

Our website is now live www.essexandsouthendlink.org.uk You will find on it the reports of all we've done so far, and details of our present activities and future plans.

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