

Essex and Southend LINK



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LINks were established by act of Parliament to give local people a say in the improvement and organisation of Social and Health Care in their Area.



How it works

- Every local authority with a responsibility for social care received a grant to set up their LINK – 150+ in all
- Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council decided to work together



LINK Powers

- Established by the Government to encourage involvement in improving care
- Three important and unique powers:
 - Right to receive a reply to issues raised within 20 days
 - Referral to local authority overview and scrutiny committees - ultimately to the Secretary of State
 - Enter and view – authorised representatives may enter health and care premises to gather evidence in response to need

Involving local people

- The local authorities involved local people from the beginning
- This included writing the way in which the organisation would work locally and recruiting the host organisation – to give support and expert help to the work

Hosted by



Host organisation

Resources

- Essex and Southend decided to pool their grant for this work
- This allowed £1.8 million over the three years initial phase of the project
- Enabled the recruitment and equipping of 10 staff and two offices – in Chelmsford and Southend (staffing has now increased to run projects)
- Covers operating expenses including members expenses, project costs and events

Getting going



- Hard work by LINK members, the local authorities and the host resulted in everything being ready to go in June 2008
- At a launch event, logos were approved, together with a draft governance document and a structure for the organisation

Getting going

- Staff recruited
- Offices leased and equipped
- Inaugural locality and coordinating meetings held



Getting members

- Every local citizen and user of health and social care services in Essex and Southend is a member
- Recruit active members
- Publicity – newspapers radio etc
- Attend events
- Website, Newsletter and e-bulletin
- Promotional material



Success to date

- Over 2,000 individuals and organisations signed up to date and on our database
- Regular programme of events
- 6 newsletters issued
- Weekly e-bulletin produced and mailed to contacts
- Representation on many executive and operational boards of health and social care providers in Essex and Southend

Deciding on the work

- Members expressed areas of interest
- Observed what was happening in health and social care in Essex and Southend
- Discussed with:
 - local people
 - commissioners and providers
- All work and work plans decided on in public meetings

Learning

- To work LINKs members need to increase their knowledge
- Learning events held on many subjects:
 - Public involvement
 - Commissioning
 - Social care
 - Use of IT to assist care



Projects

- To date 48 projects have been have been or are being authorised in public meetings
- Six projects have been completed
- Seven are advanced and will be completed in the next month
- Progress is being made on the others including staff/worker recruitment, deciding on methodology and preparation of materials

Distribution of Projects

Locality	Number	Value £
SE Essex	11	16,950
SW Essex	6	7,200
W Essex	7	20,750
NE Essex	7	24,000
Mid Essex	6	22,000
Theme and Issue Groups	4	27,500
Countywide	7	118,000

Project Details

- These are available from:
 - www.essexandsouthendlink.org.uk
 - Locality and project coordinators (details on website)
 - Project manager or consultant (details on website)