

Your Local
Your Involvement
Your Network

DUDLEY LINK ANNUAL REPORT

2010-2011



Your Local
Your Involvement
Your Network

Front cover photograph of Dudley Castle

Attribution: David M Lear

 **Dudley
LIN^k**
Better Health and Social Care

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

I am definitely biased, but I think I ought to start off by saying "yet another successful year for your local LINK".

I am fortunate to be supported by a dedicated team of able volunteers who are ably backed up by our hosts, Shaw Trust.

We have been involved in many and varied projects as you will read in the report that follows:

- We have visited and inspected Care Homes both with the Local Authority and on our own 'Enter & View' authority.
- We have liaised with Medical Professionals to ensure Dignity and Respect Agendas are properly in place.
- We have continued to engage with other local LINKs where 'Cross-Border' Issues are concerned.
- Quality Accounts of The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the West Midlands Ambulance Service, the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership have all been examined in depth and commented upon as is our duty by Act of Parliament.

We are listened to and very well respected not only by all the Local Health and Social Care Commissioners and Providers, but also at national level by such as the Care Quality Commission and the Department of Health.

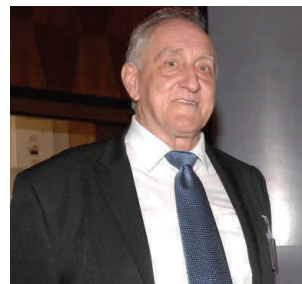
We have volunteered input on your behalf to the White Paper on changes planned for Health and Social Care, especially on the occasion when The Secretary of State visited Dudley on the 17th March, where he had a 45 minute question and answer session with the voluntary sector.

This was followed up more recently by our involvement with the "NHS Future Forum Listening Exercise" again when your views and concerns were communicated at top level.

We have been / are being consulted on the setting up of "HealthWatch England" and also the local HealthWatch.

So with the knowledge of a full work programme for the year ahead, I offer a very big thank you to the team for all their past efforts.

David Orme
Dudley LINK Chairman



**"Dudley LINK is
the voice of the
community"**

LINK VALUES AND VISION

Aim

By working together with the community and the providers in Dudley Borough, Dudley LINK will ensure that the voice of the community in Dudley Borough is heard and issues regarding the needs for good health and social care services are identified and reported to the providers to help implement improvements to services.

Objectives

Gather information from local residents, community groups, organisations, patients, friends and relatives of their experiences of the health and social care services they have received.

By working with groups, undertaking outreach work and listening to individuals, Dudley LINK ensures patients' and the community voices are heard and are carried to the decision makers, planners and service providers to improve services for the people of Dudley.

Make every effort to raise the profile and awareness of LINKs

Raising the profile and awareness of LINKs

Dudley LINK takes every opportunity to raise the profile of the LINK through media advertising and publicity, networking opportunities, event attendance, LINK Day, websites, drop in centres, group meetings and presentations. The LINK is proud to work with the community and the providers in helping raise the awareness of LINK and thereby improve services in the borough.

Utilise a combination of community engagement methods to ensure everyone has a voice.

Community engagement methods

Dudley LINK will continue to work with the Host organisation to ensure that community engagement methods and practices are continually being developed and improved to allow all members of the community in the borough of Dudley to be involved with the LINK and to enable people to bring information to the LINK regarding their experiences of health and social care.

Keep up to date governance arrangements

Governance arrangements

The LINK has established governance arrangements in place which are regularly reviewed and are publically available.

Continually improve on its marketing

Marketing approach

Dudley LINK has trained members who ensure that the LINK markets itself appropriately to all members of the community especially those who may be harder to reach. Opportunity for attendance at events and for the LINK to hold their own events is identified and planned by the LINK social marketing team members.

Improve on existing working partnerships and identify new partnerships that will allow the LINK to succeed.

Networking / partnerships

The LINK are committed to ensuring that all partnerships continue good working relationships with the LINK including: Care Quality Commission (CQC), The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (DGoH), Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust (DWMHPT), NHS Dudley, Dudley Adults and Community Housing Services (DACHS), Health and Adults Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HASC), West Midland Ambulance Service (WMAS), Community Renewal and DOSTI.[

The LINK continues to build partnerships and working relationships through its networking activities with both communities and providers.

Dudley LINK continually monitors progress on all current issues of work, reviews recent comments received from the community and considers any new issues. There is a need for continual consideration of new issues or concerns that are brought to light by the community and that may require LINK members to refer to providers to enable services to benefit from the feedback.

MEET THE MEMBERS

Dudley LINK is made up of 425 individuals and groups who have given their time this year to help your local LINK improve services and to find out what Dudley community feel about their health and social care experiences.

Below is a table of the active members this year who have given considerable time and effort to your local LINK and the positions they have held.

David Orme— Chairman , Finance Lead, DGoH Lead, Enter and View trained

Member of the health care forum, Member of the podiatric forum, Member of OSC Dudley (co-opted), Member of Dudley Health and Wellbeing partnership, Member of DGoHNHSFT, Member of Black Country cardiovascular Network, Expert Patient Tutor, Patient Safety Champion, Dignity Champion, Sits on Service User panel of National Voices, Member of the Black Country Cluster Committee.

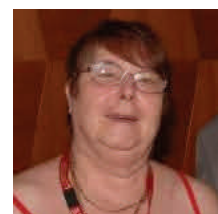


Gwen Timmins MBE—Vice Chair, Enter and View trained

Volunteer for Pain Relief Unit

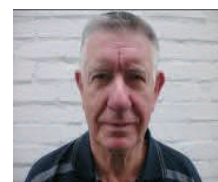
Charity work at Russells Hall Hospital

Visiting stalls, collecting funds and donations



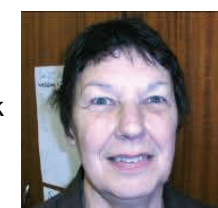
Vincent Keogh—Complaints Lead, WMAS Lead, Enter and View trained

Represents LINK at WMAS meetings and attends conferences and seminars to gather valuable information for Dudley LINK.



Sue Solly—NHS Dudley Lead, Enter and View trained

Represents LINK on PCT board. Involved in Pharmacy needs assessment. For Dudley LINK



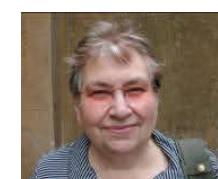
Angela Hill—Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust Lead, Enter and View trained

Chair for The Support Association for Mental Health in Dudley

Dignity Champion,

Director of Family Trust (charity)

Co chair with David Orme as from June 2012



MEET THE MEMBERS CONTINUED

Ken McClymont— Joint Social Care Lead, Enter and View trained

Dudley Carers Forum, CIL, Action for Disabled people and Carers (ADC)

Offsight, Vice Chair of Direct Payment User Forum

Dudley Health Care Forum Member, DGoH FT member, Sandwell and West Birmingham FT Member

West Midlands Regional Disability Network



Tracy McClymont—Joint Social Care Lead, Enter and View trained

Dudley carers forum, CIL,

Member of Offsight

Health care Forum member

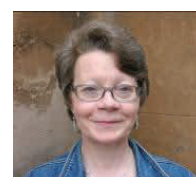
West Midlands Regional Disability Network



Maxine Fowler Marketing Lead, Enter and View trained

Member of DGoHNHSFT

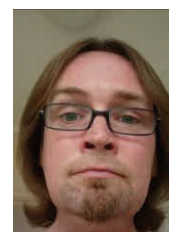
Quality Steering Group DGoH



Damian Nicell—Enter and View trained

Member of Support Association for Mental Health in Dudley

Marketing Lead for Dudley LINK from June 2012



Further Members Enter and View trained

David Gale

June Smith

Janet Derby

Stephanie Robinson

More active members involved in LINK activity

Peter Allen

Lynne Jankowska

Levene Bruce

Valarie Drew

Mr and Mrs Friesner

V Richards

Sandra Croot

Mr and Mrs Taylor

Zoe Yeomans

Mr and Mrs Down

Chris Barron

LINK CONTRIBUTES TO LOCAL AGENDAS

Dudley LINK acknowledge it is very important to be involved in the community and be aware of anything that they can contribute to that will have benefit to others in the community. Therefore the members regularly get to participate in activities which allow them to contribute to local agendas. This also gives them a 'finger on the pulse' of issues that may need following up.

Involvement in national and local consultations

Dudley LINK has had many opportunities this year to be involved in consultation exercises. These include commenting on the local provider Quality Accounts, responding to the governments requests for comments regarding HealthWatch and the new proposed Health Bill. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that Dudley LINK is responding to consultations to ensure the Dudley viewpoint is heard.

Dudley LINK Open Day 2010



Please see list below for contribution this year.

Transferring community services (TCS)

Cooperation and Competitions Panel (CCP)

Disability Living Partnership.

Dignity Champion

National Voices

LINK Members regional activity

LINK Advisory Group

Quality Accounts – The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (DGoH)

West Midlands Quality Review Service

Quality Accounts – Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust (DWMHPT)

Consultation - West Midland Ambulance service

Summary care records group event.

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment

Nursing Homes Appreciative Visits

Russells Hall– appreciative visit on nutrition

Direct Payment Forum

Members Tour of Russells Hall

White Paper consultation response - Healthwatch via Dudley LINK and regional LINKs

Practice Based Commissioning

Patient Panels

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - HASC

Dudley Health and Wellbeing Partnership Quality and Safety meetings

Health Care Forum

Non voting Member of PCT board

LINK attend public meetings of the Council of Governors DGoHNHSFT

Member of DOSTI

Wolverhampton University School of Health and Wellbeing - Strategy on 'Involving Service Users and Carers'.

DWMHPT non voting board member

Brierley Hill health and inequalities partnership

Brierley Hill health centre

Ambulance meetings

Care Quality Commission – response to survey

Community investor's development agency – completed questionnaire survey

Dudley LINK Day

User Lead Organisations

CQC West Midlands Pilot

Dudley Community Partnership

Community Renewal

DWMHPT Service User & Carer Reference Group

Quality Review Service - WMQRS who are viewing Urgent Care/Critical Care, Vascular Services and Stroke (Acute Phase)

Carers Week

Volunteers Week

Attendance at all provider Annual General Meetings

WMAS Consultation

Nursing Home Appreciative Visits with PCT

Wolverhampton University Wolverhampton School of Nursing – learning strategy

Quality Assurance Framework

REGULAR MEETINGS ATTENDED AND TRAINING / DEVELOPMENT

Dudley LINK is very active in your community making sure that they are represented and speaking on behalf of the community. Members have placed themselves very favourably within the community and are in a good position to be able to take information to many influential meetings throughout the borough as well as bring important information back to the LINK. They also attend cross boundary LINK meetings on a regular basis.

Please see list below of regular meeting attended by your LINK Members.

LINK Board Meetings - Decision and Direction of your LINK

LINK workshops - Discussion on issues raised and moving forward with items

LINK Focus Groups:

Dementia

Assessment of personal budgets and care services

Black Country Cardiovascular Network

Patient and Public Experience Steering Group

Health Care Forum

Co-opted member -Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - HASC

Transforming Community Services

CQC – LINKs Advisory Group

Cross boundary LINK meetings

Dudley Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Dudley NHS PCT Board

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust Board

Transforming Community Services – Programme Board

Attendance at the Council of Governors public meetings DGoHNHSFT

Attendance at WMAS meetings

Ambuline

Quality Account planning committee – DGoHNHSFT

Quality and Safety meeting

Regional LINKs meetings

Dudley LINK Members are all volunteers and it is important that their information is current, and that they are well informed and also feel confident and able in the tasks they undertake. Therefore opportunities for training and attending seminars and conferences that can contribute to their knowledge base are taken.

Please see below for a list of training and development opportunities taken by members this year.

Spending Review Seminar

DoH public engagement seminar

Mental Health Seminar - Rethink

Take Part- Active Citizenship

Being a good Chairman

Enter and View

Voice- influential tool

Understanding the Commissioning Cycle and Working Effectively with Commissioners

Survey of Local Involvement networks and CQC working together

National Conference of Dementia Care

Understanding Community Engagement

Social Care Mental Health Research Seminar

National Research Conference - funding concerns with government departments being slashed

NALM Building effective and powerful LINKs

Taking scrutiny forward in times of change (CfPS) - seminar

Personalisation Workshop

Marketing Training

Public Speaking Skills

Centre for Public Scrutiny – The

effectiveness of accountability to improve service delivery

Consultation Tools

Regional Voices

Training for chairperson

NHS White Paper - Equality and Excellence: Liberating the NHS.

National Voices Members' Conference & Annual General Meeting

Planning for an ageing population - Later Life seminar

GP commissioning consortia - Seminar

'Accountability, transparency and commissioning - delivering for people & places'. CfPS

Help us to improve trauma services across the West Midlands

Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Volunteers and Law



Members participating in Dudley LINK Social Care Workshop

RELATIONSHIP WITH PROVIDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Dudley LINK has continued its good relationships with providers in Dudley Borough from those delivering services in both the voluntary and public sector. The productive relationship with providers has meant that Dudley LINK has been able to move forward with items on their workplan and been able to obtain responses to any queries made by the LINK in order to help them further with their activities.

Information that is obtained by Dudley LINK regarding comments made on health and social care by members of the community is forwarded to the providers to inform them of concerns that the community may have. These are well received by providers and help support them in the development of any required changes to improve services.

Additionally LINK ensures that information about services provided by other groups and organisations in Dudley is available at LINK community engagement events.

Many examples of the outcomes of successful interactions with local providers are listed under the SUCCESES later in this report so the following is a synopsis of the partnership working that helped those changes occur.

Dudley LINK has worked closely with NHS Dudley to ensure that language interpretation services are available to residents and that patients are happy with the level of service that they experience. LINK/NHS Dudley has carried out a joint consultation exercise with local BME groups to ensure that their views and opinions are heard.

LINK listened to patients, residents and visitors at Russells Hall Hospital and they suggested a post box be made available. LINK took up this issue and we are pleased to say that The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust listened and subsequently a post box is now in place.

Also working with The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, improvements in services suggested to LINK have been to improve realised access to hearing aid batteries for patients.

Dudley LINKs relationship with the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services has also continued to grow and requests for information regarding topics that the LINK are looking into such as Personalisation and Dementia have been forthcoming as has opportunities to be involved in regular meetings helping Dudley LINK to be kept up to date with Social Care in Dudley particularly with Transforming Social Care.

West Midlands Ambulance Service regularly keeps Dudley LINK informed of their fact and figures on performance and attend meeting when necessary.

The relationship that Dudley LINK has with the community has also continued to grow. Please see below examples of work carried out throughout the year and compliments received from members of the community in Dudley.

Dudley LINK held an 'open day' on 21st August 2010 in which over 50 local organisation and groups had displays and stalls to raise awareness of their services to the local community. Again we had our film crew at this event and short films were made of many of the organisations attending. These may be viewed on our LINK TV page <http://www.ciptv.co.uk/V4.php?PLAYER=DudLink>

LINK encouraged local groups and organisations to contribute to the consultation on the NHS white paper concerning the modernisation of the NHS.

Dudley LINK held, as part of its workplan, two workshops covering Personal Budgets and Dementia. Interested residents, groups and the local authority joined these events to discuss and raise awareness of these two important areas of service that residents have expressed some concerns.

Dudley LINK contributed to Carers Week 2010 by producing a short film with volunteers from the Rethink Halesview carers focussing on the role of those who care for someone with a mental illness. The film is located on the Dudley LINK TV page (<http://www.ciptv.co.uk/V4.php?PLAYER=DudLink>) following this Dudley LINK were asked to submit a copy of the film to CarersUK as an example of an innovative contribution to carers week.

Due to the extent of participation in Dudley LINK and the excellent relationships that have been built, the knowledge of local organisations and voluntary groups has enabled Dudley LINK frequently provides residents to sources of help, advice and information.

LINK MEMBERS CONTRIBUTION

West Midland Ambulance Service LINK Lead

WMAS has had a busy year, not least with having to contend with some very inclement weather, but also seeking foundation trust status. If this initiative is successful then it will have an impact on the working and governance of the organisation (more details by logging on to www.wmas.nhs.uk). However, WMAS role as one of the public emergency services will not alter.

WMAS invited LINK to put forward a candidate to join the Members' Council of the Trust but this offer was declined as LINK felt that such an appointment might compromise its primary role, as an independent monitor of health and social care services. LINK, however, put forward the notion that it would consider being an independent observer (with no voting rights) on WMAS Board of Directors; no decision has been made to date.

During the year LINK had the opportunity to view the WMAS operation at its HQ at Merry Hill. LINK was very impressed with the organisation and efficiency and with its contingency plans which allow for the operation to be transferred to another site very quickly should a major incident close down its Merry Hill site; this option is reciprocal between several sites.

LINK has several queries from the community regarding the service supplied by WMAS and has followed these up with the organisation. A selection is as follows.

"How is cross infection prevented on sheets / blankets used in ambulances?"

Immediately after use by a patient, sheets / blankets are replenished by clean and the vehicle is also cleaned.

"What action does WMAS take to support its ambulance crews during icy / snowy weather?"

A close liaison is maintained with the Local Authority regarding road conditions, and with the police and motor organisations. Ambulance wheels fitted with 'snow socks' to help retain friction on road surface.

"Why are ambulances parked outside hospitals for long periods of time when they should be back at base on standby?"

WMAS recognises this concern and is working with hospitals to address it. The lag in time is due to the transfer of patient responsibility from ambulance crew to hospital staff. For a variety of reasons, hospital staff is not always readily available for this transfer and ambulance crews must remain with the patient.

LINK will continue to monitor the service supplied by WMAS which it currently views as a proactive organisation seeking to enhance itself through a variety of other allied activities which will be possible under Foundation Trust status.

Vincent Keogh

LINK Member

Dudley and Walsall Mental health Partnership Trust LINK Lead

Through the availability of Dudley LINK its given me as its Mental Health Lead the ideal component to bring to the community the general "whys and wherefores" of Mental Health.

The LINK is the ideal and useful platform to highlight the changes in Mental Health that are starting to be experienced by users and carers, the importance of the role that Primary Care will have, and how both it and Secondary care will be changing.

Information on Acute Inpatient services and other specialised programmes can be exchanged and criticism listened to, but most importantly the GP Commissioning Consortias and how they will influence Mental Health

Not only can good and positive points be highlighted but also the negative points, which in turn helps Dudley LINK to function in an excellent way and have an overarching view of Mental Health services and provision provided.

Angela Hill

Chair Support Association for Mental Health

LINK MEMBERS CONTRIBUTION CONTINUED

Social Care Leads for Dudley LINK

Ken and Tracy McClymont are the Social Care leads for Dudley LINK and are themselves disabled care service recipients having between them a range of issues including sensory loss, mental health problems and mobility issues. They currently receive care via a direct payment and are going through a new assessment for a personal budget.

They are founder members of the Dudley Centre for Inclusive Living (CIL) which is a user led organisation open to membership. They are also members of action for disabled people and carers network (ADC) and members of The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust. They take a keen interest in matters affecting disabled and elderly people as well as voluntary carers and those with long term health conditions throughout the Dudley borough.

One of the main projects for the social care leads this year for Dudley LINK has been to look at any issues and difficulties that are faced by people in Dudley due to the personalisation agenda.

It has been a very busy year in social care with cutbacks in budgets, changes in the way care is being delivered, transformation and proposed changes to the Local Authority.

The decision of the local councils to change the criteria eligibility from moderate to critical and substantial needs only has inevitably meant that some people will have lost their care package or part of their care package. This combined with the change to personal budgets has led to individuals informing Dudley LINK of their concerns.

The impact of the financial cuts is yet to be fully felt. The proposals to re-write the legislation on social care as recommended by the law commission and the report on the financing of care by the Dilnot commission could also potentially raise fears and concerns amongst all involved in social care.

In Dudley during the last year relatives of people with learning disabilities have raised concerns about the closure of day centres and the cutting back of services. Some people who are elderly or disabled have told us they are losing care and support. This has potential to have negative impacts on their lives. This is due to some individuals finding it difficult or impossible to go out on their own except for essential activities and even these in some cases are impossible.

PROVIDER CONTRIBUTIONS

Dudley LINK has been grateful for receiving comments from providers in Dudley who we have continued to build good working relationships with.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council – Directorate of Adult and Community and Housing Services (DACHS)



DACHS has been working closely with the Dudley LINK on a number of health and social care issues to enhance experiences of our users and ensure LINK sourced evidence contributes to the improvement agenda. DACHS has supported the LINK on a number of issues such as hygiene and nutrition for Dementia sufferers in Care Homes; support for carers through the development of the carers survey and the Personal Budgets survey.

Health Scrutiny and the LINK successfully integrated work plans to ensure their effective development and added value as different but complementary functions; outcomes resulting from this included the incorporation of valuable older people consultation into the Committee's Dignity in Care Review. On going dialogue through the co-opted Chair has also helped attain a deeper understanding of community priorities amongst elected members.

In 2011/12 we will continue to actively support the LINK through work plan development and seeking from it evidence, outcomes and benefits to local communities and people as well as improving our own services in the light of feedback received. We will be working with the LINK in shaping a local framework for HealthWatch and seeking its input in developing an adult social care Local Account.

The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



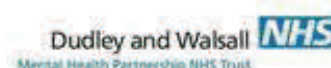
Once again during 2010/11 Dudley LINK have continued to forge strong links with the Trust. The Trust always welcome the contributions the LINK members make to our patient experience agenda providing valuable insights of people's experiences of the services we provide.

In particular this year members have been actively involved in our Patient and Public Experience Group and have attended many Council of Governors meetings as members of the public. Issues LINK have raised have been: The availability of hearing aid batteries for patients for which matrons have raised awareness with staff of the availability and there are new stocks available in the Accident and Emergency. LINK have asked us about delays in prescriptions being dispensed and the knock on effect of delaying discharge from hospital, the Trust have since installed an upgrade to our pharmacy technology to help ease this situation.

We look forward to continued input from the LINK during 2011/12.

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Dudley & Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust has a positive and mutually beneficial working relationship with Dudley LINK.



We have maintained firm relationships throughout the year by inviting members to events and groups organised by DWMHPT, allowing Dudley LINK to provide input and ideas on how our services are delivered. This has included Dudley LINK members regularly attending the open sessions of our Board Meetings and a regular Service User & Carer Reference Group held by the Trust. Dudley LINK members also provided useful insight and feedback from a service user and carer perspective when they attended the Trust's West Midlands Quality Review visit in May.

In turn, the Trust has attended Dudley LINK open days to raise awareness about its services and general mental health issues. We are also regularly represented at the group's board meetings in order to provide a local health economy perspective on issues under discussion.

As we move forward, we will continue to maintain the solid partnership that has been actively developed between DWMHPT and Dudley LINK. This will help ensure continually improving mental health care for the local population.

PROVIDER CONTRIBUTIONS CONTINUED

West Midlands Ambulance Service



West Midlands Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Trust

West Midlands Ambulance Service serves a population of 5.4 million. The Region has the second largest urban area in the country but also has some of the most remote countryside. It is the second most diverse community in England. Our main role is to respond to emergency 999 calls. We provide a Patient Transport Service which takes patients to and from hospital appointments on a pre-arranged basis and also a Single Point of Access to support the provision of unscheduled care over the phone.

Dudley is one of the urban areas and throughout the last year Dudley LINK Members have worked alongside West Midlands Ambulance Service on behalf of the population who live in the Borough, whilst remaining independent in a number of ways:

- As the Trust moves towards its application to become a Foundation Trust, members have been involved with the working group and provided constructive comments during our consultation period.
- Emergency Service Patient Survey – The LINK has been supportive in helping us to promote this as the Trust endeavours to get feedback from patients who use this service, which has been very much appreciated.
- They receive our performance figures monthly and actively comment on service provision from the patient and public's point of view which is welcomed, allowing us to respond to the needs of the patients in Dudley.
- Questions are put to the Trust relating to queries raised by members of the public which are answered directly to the LINK as soon as the issue has been addressed.
- The Trust encourages LINK members from across the West Midlands to engage with our Quality Account to help us set our priorities each year.

We enjoy a good working relationship with Dudley LINK and would like to thank the volunteers for the time and effort they put in to providing our Trust with their views in an effort to improve service provision for others. Their dedication is very much appreciated and we look forward to working with them for the next 12 months.

NHS Dudley



NHS Dudley and Dudley LINK have been working together with the Halesowen Asian Elders to look at language interpretation services across the borough. Several members of the Halesowen Asian Elders had raised concerns when visiting the local GP practices. They advised that they had trouble understanding the staff and GPs at several practices and they were not aware that interpretation services were available. We asked the group to help out in a mystery shopping exercise. Every time they visited their practice, we asked them to fill in a questionnaire specifically asking whether they had seen a poster or leaflet telling them about interpretation services or whether the staff had routinely asked them if they thought they were struggling. We quickly identified which practices needed further help and we addressed this through speaking with practice managers. This was all possible with the help of the LINK.

"The PCT is working with the LINK on capturing patient stories from a variety of on-line sources such as NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/choices and Patient Opinion, www.patientopinion.org.uk and the LINK's own patient feedback facility <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZMK2TNV>. Patients and other service users who have internet access can go on to 'feedback' pages and write their story. This might be about a good or a bad experience from a visit to the hospital, or to a GP or dentist. The PCT and the LINK then bring all of the stories together into a report. This goes to the PCT's Quality and Safety Committee every 3 months. Where patient stories suggest that things have gone wrong, the PCT can then follow these up with the people concerned. In this way, sharing your experiences of healthcare can lead to improvements being made. Stories can be added anonymously, although if you do give your contact details it means we can keep you informed about what is happening and the changes made as a result of your concerns."



COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Dudley LINK has been grateful to receive compliments from groups and residents in Dudley borough, here are a few examples:

Hope Centre, Halesowen

I would like to take the opportunity on behalf of everyone from the hope centre to thank LINK for all the effort they have put in to supporting the centre and the community here at Hope many thanks Link well done

Halesowen Asian Elders Association

As far as you regular visit to Green lane, and vicarage hall is concern, The group found it very constructive, and you gave them the opportunity to have a dialogue with you on one to one basis about the lack of some services in the system for the BME communities and I want you to continue with your visits in the future.

Dudley Resident

I am most impressed with the problems you tackle, the results you achieve and your attempts to ensure the ordinary man gets a fair deal.

Dudley Resident

This is just what the doctor ordered!!!
Well done LINK.

Halesowen Asian Elders

'The Halesowen Asian Elders Association is grateful that Dudley LINK has visited them on a regular basis to hear residents comments on health and social care, this has helped the association to have the views of their members heard. We are also very happy that LINK, working with the PCT, have taken our views seriously and have been working to make real improvements to the language interpretation service in our local GP surgeries, hospitals and antenatal clinics.

We look forward to have LINK continue to visit us in the future so that we can continue our relationship with LINK and make sure that the comments of our members, and other BME groups in Dudley, borough are heard'

in addition to above we used to have about 4 visits from the pals officer Vanessa Biddulph, who I understand is moved on to a another position, the AEA, would like to have these visits continued to do the liaison work with the local community.

Mr Mohammed Dar
Chairperson HAEA

Dudley Asra Day care Centre

I am so impress to see all the work been done by Dudley LINK. This is what our community needs now. A good help. And I am trying to do the same with the Asian community, i.e. identifying who needs help with there day to day life and lots more. (Keep up the good work)

"Dudley community
has continued to
support us as these
comments show, we
are very grateful for
their support"

Local Councillor

The value of LINK and it's work has been experienced by Organisations, Committees, Meetings and residents in the Dudley Borough through information, advice, sign-posting and giving members of the Public the opportunity to use their voices and air their views.

Lesley Faulkner
Halesowen North Ward

Cabinet Member for Adults
And Community Services

ENGAGEMENT

Dudley LINK organises, attends and makes contributions at many local events across the borough, both large and small, to continue its community engagement and to gain residents comments, views and experiences. To ensure your LINK hears the views of people in the community it has a dedicated engagement officer who works throughout the borough to hear what the community has to say about health and social care and to inform local people and organisations of the work of the LINK and how it may help local communities. LINK volunteers also regularly get involved in this activity.

The main activity takes places within the community of Dudley, often in community centres and similar venues. LINK is often invited to visit groups to talk to them and discuss their work and also to explain how local people can actively be involved in their LINK.

LINK places such importance on meeting residents in person as we are mindful that many do not have access to computers and email in order to share their experiences and issues.

Any comments received by LINK concerning health and care services in Dudley are all logged and help the LINK board to update and maintain its workplan. They also share these comments with service providers in Dudley to ensure that the views of local residents are heard and, where necessary, the LINK can invoke its legal right to a reply within 20 days if something needs urgent attention.

Dudley LINK has begun a new service called 'Dudley Local Service Watch' which is a web-based survey to monitor health and care services in Dudley please click the following link to access the survey <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZMK2TNV>. People are asked to tell us what service they used, when they used it, what they thought about the service, how they think it could be made better and if they would recommend this service to somebody else. This is also available in hard format and is taken to events around the borough to be completed. This is a good tool to enable the LINK to gain a long-term picture of all services in Dudley and to identify where residents see a need for an improvement in a service. Again these results are shared with service providers and commissioners in Dudley.



Carers
week

LINK attended
Carers week
events 2010,
pictured
are
representatives
of Dudley Carers
Forum and
Rethink

LINK at
Gornal
Fun Day



ENGAGEMENT

Please see below a list of activity taken this year and numbers who have attended and engaged with your LINK.

Dudley LINK Events Covered 1st April 2010 to March 2011

Date	Event	No Attending	No Engaged
April10	Jobs/Training/Volunteering Event, Zoar Church Hall, Gornal	150	40
April10	Brockmoor NESP Showcase Event	51	20
April10	Brierley Hill Health Inequalities Meeting	12	12
April10	Presentation to Hear Here group	12	12
April10	Visit to Churches Together, Halesowen	8	8
April10	Zion Christian Centre	1	1
May10	Refugee & Migrant Centre, Wolverhampton	4	4
May10	Visit to Halesowen Asian Elders	50	20
May10	Visit to Hope Centre	15	8
May10	Health Fair Russells Hall Hospital	200	50
May10	Event Keep Well, Keep Safe	90	50
May10	Volunteers Week, Stourbridge	75	30
June10	Volunteers Week, Halesowen	75	35
June 10	Volunteers Event, Dudley	150	75
June 10	Carers Meeting Amblecote	6	6
June 10	Tenterfields Children's Centre	10	10
June10	Wordsley Carnival	2000	45
June 10	Carers Forum Fun Day	60	20
June 10	Filming Halesowen Town centre	100	15
June 10	National Men's Week, Dell Stadium	50	10
June10	Dudley & beacon patients group	15	15
June 10	Direct Payment Forum	10	10
Jul 10	Oval & Tudor Tenants & Residents LINK Introduction	2	2
Jul 10	Deaf Awareness Week Corporate Morning	70	28
Jul 10	Physical Disability Elderly Group	12	12
Jul 10	Dudley Carers Forum	30	30
Jul 10	Health Market Place - Brook Primary School	47	40
Jul 10	Gornal Fun Day	200	55
Jul 10	Public Speaking Skills	30	10
Jul 10	Getting Involved & Taking Part	50	20
Jul 10	The Big Lunch, Lye Community Centre	30	30
Jul 10	Expert Patients Reunion	100	45
Jul 10	Wrens Nest Community Centre Drop In	25	15
Jul 10	Residents Involvement Roadshow Dell Stadium	18	11
Jul 10	Halesowen Asian Elders talk with NHS Dudley	50	50
Jul 10	Wallbrook Community Fun Day Coseley	100	37
Aug 10	Nutrition event, Russells Hall Hospital	10	10
Aug 10	Dudley LINK Open Day	200	200
Aug 10	Asian Elders Translation Survey	25	25
Sep 10	Beacon & Castle Patients Group	20	20
Sep 10	PCT Board	25	5
Sep 10	Quality in Care Homes	5	5
Sep 10	Health & Wellbeing Partnership meeting	15	15
Sep 10	Dudley BME Conference	300	100

ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

Please see below a list of activity taken this year and numbers who have attended and engaged with your LINK.

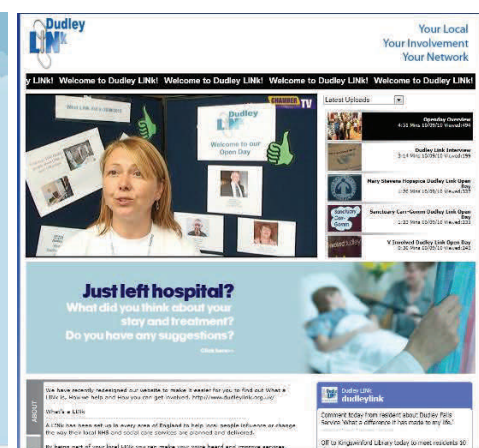
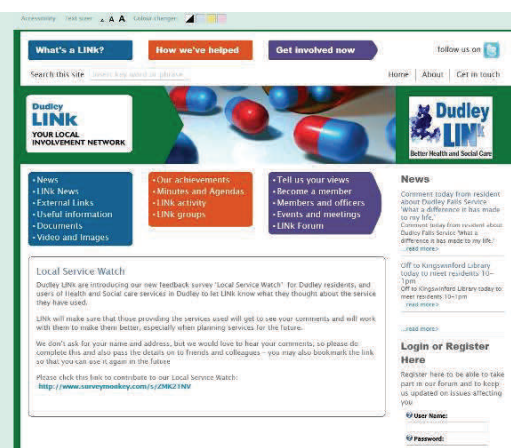
Date	Event	No Attending	No Engaged
Oct 10	Hope Centre	10	6
Oct 10	Castle and priory Local Assembly	150	36
Oct 10	Stourbridge Cancer Support Group	10	10
Nov 10	Dudley Mosque	2	2
Nov 10	Seetec Providers Event	80	37
Nov 10	Learning Disability Partnership Board	37	37
Nov 10	Brierley Hill Cancer Support	9	9
Nov 10	Carr Gomm Open Day	5	4
Nov 10	Asian Elders	75	75
Dec 10	Women's Awareness Association	3	3
Dec 10	Dudley Chinese Community Association	1	1
Dec 10	Community Zone	5	5
Jan 11	Alexandra House Appreciative Visit	30	9
Jan 11	Seetec 'New Year New You' Event	300	76
Jan 11	Ashwood Park Primary School Health market Place	150	60
Jan 11	Halesowen Cancer Support	9	9
Feb 11	Volunteers Week Planning	12	12
Feb 11	Community Engagement Event	40	26
Feb 11	Involving Children and Young people in LINKs	25	11
Feb 11	Halesowen Library Drop in	60	34
Feb 11	Health Fair Russells Hall Hospital	150	60
Mar 11	Doctors Orders Event	100	25
Mar 11	International Women's Week	80	50
Mar 11	Black Country Cardiovascular Network Event	100	20
Mar 11	Doctors Orders	200	40
Total for the year		6151	1918

Dudley LINK has also set up many ways of communication between the LINK and the community using emails, drop-in centres, websites, phone numbers, leaflets, online TV and a freepost address.

Dudley LINK on the web

Dudley LINK on Twitter

Dudley LINK online TV Page



THE REACH OF LINKS AND THE LEVEL OF PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

The reach of LINKs and the level of people's participation

By undertaking its engagement activity Dudley LINK has been able to reach the following:

Which is defined in three levels of participation, any of which could be "members" of the LINK.

Informed Participants: are groups or individuals who register their interest in the LINK and receive information, whether general updates and/or thematic interest. This includes those who interact with the website's social networking sites and also from those who express an interest in the LINK at community events and outreach sessions held in the community.

Occasional Participants: are informed participants (individuals or groups) who also respond to a particular LINK issue, or attend a workshop or meeting on a specific topic.

Active Participants: are groups or individuals who have a high level of participation (i.e. someone who takes part in activity at least once a month), for example by attending introduction to LINK workshops, accessing training to build up skills in

representation and/or visiting services, becoming involved in the core group/sub group activities, or representing the LINK externally.

Within each of these levels, people with a social care interest are those with experience of using social care services or a specific interest in social care. They may have an interest in health care too.

Group participants are people who are acting as a representative for one or more organisation(s) or interest group(s).

Individual participants are those who are not acting in this way.

Participants of Dudley LINK – 425 as at 31st March 2011

17 Board Members

10 LINK Representatives not on the board

323 Individual LINK Participants

75 Organisation Participants

Level of participation	Total	Of Which		
		People with a social care interest	Individual participants	Interest group participants
Informed participants	425	200	350	75
Occasional participants	124	35	110	14
Active participants	27	10	21	6
LINK Outreach through Community work	6551			

DUDLEY LINK SUCCESSES

Discharge from Russells Hall Hospital – Prescription delays

What you told us

That you were unhappy with how long you have to wait for your prescription following discharge from Russells Hall Hospital.

What we have done

We have asked The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to look at how these waiting times can be improved. They have agreed to try to keep all waiting times to a minimum and to develop a plan accordingly. Please tell us how long you have to wait so we can make sure the hospital is aware.

Outcome

LINK will continue to monitor this and work with The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to make sure that waiting times are reduced. Please tell us how long you have to wait so we can make sure the hospital is aware.

Bus routes from Kidderminster to Russells Hall Hospital

What you told us

Kidderminster residents going to Russells Hall Hospital had no public transport link direct to the hospital

What we did

We told The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust about this and action was taken by their Council of Governors

Outcome

Following our involvement, the 125 bus service from Bridgenorth has now been extended to call at Russells Hall Hospital

Dementia

What you told us

Friends and relatives of those suffering from dementia had concerns about the services available

What we did

LINK agreed, and decided to focus on issues relating to hygiene and nutrition for dementia patients in care. We developed a questionnaire to enable consistent discussions with residents, friends, family and staff. Care homes in the Borough with a high number of dementia patients were selected to “enter and view”.

Outcome

Questions have been asked and observations have been made. Currently 3 homes have been visited (as at 31st March); the final report will be sent to the Local Authority once all analysis has been completed.

Hearing Impairments – Raised Voices

What you told us

It was brought to the LINKs attention that spare batteries for hearing aids were not being kept on some wards as Russells Hall Hospital; also staff had to raise voices to communicate with patients with hearing impairments.

What we did

The LINK informed The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust asking for spare batteries to be kept at ward level or, if not possible, in the hospital shop.

Outcome

The response to this was a communication plan would be actioned to raise awareness to front line staff and looked into the feasibility of keeping spare batteries at ward levels. Spare batteries are also now kept in the Accident & Emergency department. Your LINK was also invited to sit on the Patient and Public Experience Steering group to monitor this in the future.

SUCCESSES CONTINUED

Personalisation Assessment and Personal Budgets

What you told us

Dudley LINK asked members of the community if they wanted to form a focus group to look at the reality of experiences of transforming Social Care and personalised budgets

What we did

A focus group was been set up to look at this topic in more detail and decide what actions the LINK may want to take on this topic.

Outcome

The focus group decided to survey the community before acting further by designing a questionnaire to gather evidence of any issues or concerns. Your LINK is keen to hear what you have to say about the process of personal budgets. The LINK board agreed to conduct a survey of both carers and those cared for to assess experiences of the new personalisation programme. You can access the survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZDMYXDR>

Quality Assurance Framework

Working with the PCT, Local Authority and care home providers your LINK has been activity involved in the development of a Metrics system for all care homes to use to assess quality.

Trust delivers another first-class service

The Trust is delivering another first-class service to patients and visitors after installing a post box in the main reception area at Russells Hall Hospital.

The post box was installed following a request by Dudley LINK, an organisation made up of individuals and community groups who work together to improve local health and social care services.

Collections will be made at 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 10am on Saturday.



LINK contributes to the Quality Accounts

Your LINK has contributed to the quality accounts of West Midlands Ambulance Service, The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

Post box at Russells Hall Hospital

SUCCESSES CONTINUED

Accessing Mental Health Services

What you told us

The choices of accessing services regarding Mental Health were not the same as with other services.

What we did

We have taken this issue up with Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust together with other issues that have been received, and in doing so have begun a close working relationship.

Outcome

Like LINK, the Mental Health Trust is committed to improve access to mental health services in Dudley. We're also working with other groups such as Rethink and Dudley Mind on this item. The outcomes will be reported during the year and in the 2011/12 Annual Report.

Carers Survey

What you told us

Many issues have come to Dudley LINK regarding concerns for carers.

What we did

In the LINKs July board meeting it was agreed to undertake a survey of carers to identify if there were any barriers that carers may face. Your LINK did a Carers Video Shoot during carers week advertised on www.dudleylinktv.org which highlights some of their concerns. You can access the carers survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZDRCZSB>

Outcome

The results of the survey will be presented to Dudley Council giving them your views of services for carers

Language Interpretation services in GP Surgeries

What you told us

Many residents are having difficult communicating with their GP's due to language barriers.

What we did

Your LINK wrote to all GP surgeries in Dudley to ask if they provide and promote the language interpretation service provided by NHS Dudley, but they only received 6 replies out of over 50 GP practices. Subsequently in partnership with NHS Dudley a 'mystery shopping exercise' in the form of a survey was carried out with BME groups, the result of which have given an indication of the weakness and strengths of the service across the borough. NHS Dudley and LINK has held meetings between Applied Language Solutions (the PCT interpreter provider) and the community representatives to resolve some of the issues that have arisen and further discussions will take place with practice managers to ensure that the best possible service is provided to patients.

Outcome

Following our involvement we expect the service to show considerable improvements in the future.

The LINK will continue to monitor this situation.

Ambuline

What you told us

Some patients attending Russells Hall Hospital via Ambuline services have been left waiting considerable lengths of time before being booked in.

What we did

We sent a formal letter to Ambuline raising this issue.

Outcome

Ambuline said they would remind all staff that they must book in patients where appropriate and to ensure that the more independent patients are given the appropriate information to allow them to book in themselves. Also a review of induction process would be carried out to ensure that the current training & guidance around this requirement is adequate. LINK has adopted a Watching Brief to monitor this item. Ambuline agreed to continue efforts to meet the 60 minute target in all cases.

Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre

What you told us

That there were concerns over this new centre regarding access for disabled users

What we did

We told NHS Dudley about your concerns regarding access issues at the centre, NHS Dudley confirmed they are liaising with other groups in Dudley involved in disabled access to new premises in Dudley.

Outcome

NHS Dudley has agreed to work with the LINK to examine the issues raised and has suggested the possibility of a workshop in the near future involving those affected to identify and remedy the concerns expressed. Dudley LINK will continue to monitor progress.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

Requests for Information in 2010-11

How Many requests for information were made by your LINK? (52 regarding same issue to all GPs)	73
Of these, how many of the requests for information were answered within 20 working days?	27
How many related to social care?	11

Enter and View in 2010-11

How many enter and view visits did your LINK make?	3
How many enter and view visits related to health care?	0
How many enter and view visits related to social care?	3
How many enter and view visits were announced?	3
How many enter and view visits were unannounced?	0

Reports and Recommendations in 2010-11

How many reports and/or recommendations were made by your LINK to commissioners of health and adult social care services?	6
How many of these reports and/or recommendations have been acknowledged in the required timescale?	6
Of the reports and/or recommendations acknowledged, how many have led, or are leading to, service review?	1
Of the reports and/or recommendations that led to service review, how many have led to service change?	3
How many reports/recommendations related to health services?	6
How many reports/recommendations related to social care?	0

Referrals to OSCs in 2010-11

How many referrals* were made by your LINK to an Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC)?	0
How many of these referrals did the OSC acknowledge?	0
How many of these referrals led to service change?	0

...

THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Dudley LINK will be focusing on their LINK workplan with a view to continuing to build new relationships and improve existing relationships within the community, with providers and the voluntary sector. It is a priority for Dudley LINK in the transitional year where LINK will evolve into HealthWatch to ensure that they remain focused on LINK activity and listening to the views of the community and their experiences of Health and Social Care in Dudley.

There will be three surveys active for 2011; one which will gather views and experiences in general of health and social care to allow the LINK to listen to the community and pass that information on to the providers to help improve services. Another will identify how people feel about personalisation and the third will be identifying any barriers that are faced by carers in the community. It is anticipated that new topics will come forward as the year progresses that will allow the LINK to respond to what the community needs the most in Dudley with regards to their health and social care services.

Dudley LINK appreciate that the next 12 months will be a very demanding time as the health sector carries out many potential changes and it is committed to working with all stakeholders as changes take place to listen to what is working well and where are the key areas for change/improvement.

ADVERTISING

It is necessary for Dudley LINK to inform people and organisations in Dudley Borough of their purpose and raise its profile. The LINK has a small budget to help them with this task and as such have undertaken activity to help them be better known in the community.

Please see list below of advertising undertaken this year

Talking Newspaper

www.Dudleylinktv.org.uk

Website

www.dudleylink.org.uk

Newspapers – Local

LINK Day

Local Buses

Carers Week

Volunteer's week

Express and Star – 3 adverts and community news

Neighbourhood News

Castle and Priory Community News Letters

Village Voice

Oval and Tudor Newsletter

Libraries

Newsletter – e-bulletin

Halesowen News



The quarterly newsletter has been well received. As well as being able to showcase LINK progress, other groups and organisations are encouraged to contribute and advertise what is happening in health and social care in Dudley. The newsletter gets distributed to over 2000 email addresses.

FINANCE

Amount allocated to the local authority by the Department of Health	172,000
Amount of funding received by the host from the local authority	168,500
Amount of funding received by the LINK from the host	22,500
Amount of LINK funding carried over from previous year	22,066
Other income (if known)	N/A
Total spend by host and LINK for 2010-2011	149,987
Total spend by host organisation	127,166
Total spend by LINK	22,821

HOW TO JOIN YOUR LINK

Anyone can join their local LINK

If you have an interest in Health and/or Social Care and would like to help improve services please contact your local LINK.

You can give as much time or as little as you like. You may like to be involved in a survey, let us know your experiences as a patient or even contribute at meeting and attend events on behalf of Dudley LINK.

For more information please email dudleylink@shaw-trust.org.uk or call 01384 886444 or write using the contact details on the next page.

You can also visit www.dudleylink.org.uk or www.dudleylinktv.org.uk for more information.

LINK CONTACT DETAILS

Postal Address:

**Dudley Local Involvement Network
FREEPOST RSCY-UYGH-UHJU
Woodside Children's Centre
Highgate Road
Dudley
West Midlands
DY2 0SN**



Host Staff



**Maxine Wain
07595 778034**

Tel: 01384 886444

**Ian McGarry
07545 500574**

“We are here
to listen to
your views and
help you
improve health
and social
care services
in Dudley”

Host contact details

Shaw Trust
Epsom Square
White Horse Business
Park
Trowbridge
Wilts
BA14 0XJ

Jilla Bond 07814 708957