



Annual Report 2009/10



The Annual Report of
North Tyneside Local Involvement Network

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Board Report

John Robson, Chair of North Tyneside LINK writes:



“The work of North Tyneside LINK’s Board this year has built upon the strong foundations created since its launch and we are proud to have achieved a great deal of work since then. This reporting period has seen some major changes take place, not least the transition from the Interim Board, who set up the LINK, to a Permanent Board. We have retained a couple of original members and are grateful to have their experience and knowledge among us.

We said goodbye to Gordon Dennett, Alan Geron, Glenis Stringer, Hugh Welch, Jeff Watts and Val White. Our thanks go to them all as without their input the LINK would certainly not have come so far. And we’ve had the pleasure of welcoming new board members Ellen Vick, John Tovell, Claire Easton, Joan Knox, Eileen Turner, Alison Chalmers, Fiona Leeming, Neil Tapster, Sandra Gray, June Davies and Bea Groves - you can find profiles of Board members on pages 5 and 6.

I am pleased to say that during the year the membership of LINK has increased a great deal. We have many committed members who work very hard on all of our behalf by attending meetings and sending reports back that are then shared with the LINK membership. In this way, LINK is having a **far-reaching influence** with representatives on a number of local and regional groups (see pages 8 and 9). We’d like to thank each and every member of LINK for making the network as strong and effective as it is.

Other achievements we are proud of as a network are the **strong working relationships** we have formed with partners; we regularly welcome observers from North Tyneside Council, North of Tyne PCT and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to our Board Meetings so that we can share information, details of our project work and strengthen our channels of communication.

Perhaps most importantly this year, we have really started to see the **impact** that LINK is having on a number of health and adult social care services in North Tyneside. We’ve directly influenced a carers’ information service (page 17), the programme of events offered by two local Children’s Centres (page 14) and of particular note is the positive impact LINK’s involvement has had on Hospital Discharge procedures in the borough (page 18). This work is ongoing and we’re looking forward to similar results in the coming year.

As I have said, as a Board we have achieved a great deal but we could not have done so without the support and considerable help from the Host Team who are so ably lead by LINK’s Manager Johanne Mears. So to Johanne, Hannah Claydon, Amy Rudd and Christine O’Brien - thank you one and all for all your hard work.”

Governance

Structure of North Tyneside LINK

North Tyneside LINK is a membership organisation made up of individuals, groups and organisations, and associated members (i.e. health and social care professionals or other stakeholders). The LINK is governed by a Board who were interviewed and selected from this membership. The Board is made up of:

- Six 'Individual' Members
- Six 'Organisational' Members
- Three Co-opted Members

The Board meets every six weeks to agree the priorities, workplan and budget of LINK, develop and agree project proposals, decide on the use of LINK inspection powers and carry out regular reviews of LINK's policies and procedures. It is also the role of LINK's Board to interview and select Authorised LINK Representatives and Enter and View Volunteers.

LINK's Board

See pages 6 and 7 for full Board Profiles.

Organisational Members	Individual Members	Co-opted Members
John Robson (Chair)	Joan Knox	Hazel Parrack
Ellen Vick (Vice Chair)	John Tovell	Fiona Leeming
Claire Easton	Eileen Turner	Vacancy
Alison Chalmers	Neil Tapster	
Norma Playle	Bea Groves	
Sandra Gray	June Davies	

LINK's Policies and Procedures

LINK is governed by 14 policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed by the Board. These are available to download from www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk:

- Decision Making
- Managing the Budget
- Enter and View Policy
- Reporting
- Register of Interests
- Terms of Reference
- Complaints and Resolution of Disputes
- Board Recruitment
- Equality and Respect
- Inclusion Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Expenses
- Volunteer Policy
- Data Protection Policy

LINK's Representatives

LINK has a number of 'active' members who sit on groups and partnerships in order to ensure LINK's involvement on a local and regional level. A full list of these and the groups they sit on can be found on page 20.

The work of the Board and its members is underpinned by the seven Nolan Principles, agreed by Government as the standards of behaviour those in paid or voluntary positions in public life should work within:

- Selflessness:** Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- Objectivity:** In carrying out public business including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interest relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Role of the Host Organisation and Team

The work of the host, in this case North Tyneside **VODA**, and its staff team is to make sure that the LINK is well organised and that it produces high quality work. To do this we:

- Advertise and promote North Tyneside LINK
- Work to make sure that individuals and groups can participate in the LINK by having information that is accessible to them
- Support and offer advice to the work of both the Board and the LINK itself
- Manage the data and information held by the LINK
- Help build effective partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders
- Maintain LINK's website and produce its newsletters and other publications
- Finally, we are responsible for producing this annual report on the activities and expenditure of the LINK

LINK Board Profiles

John Robson, Chair (North Tyneside Coalition for Disabled People)

John has been an active member of the voluntary and community sector since 1984 when he became a founding member of North Tyneside Coalition for Disabled People. “As Chair of LINK’s Board, I’m hoping to put my experience and local knowledge to use to help improve health and social care services based on what local people want.”

Ellen Vick, Vice Chair, Organisational Member (New Prospects)

Ellen is Chief Executive of New Prospects, an organisation that has been providing services for people with learning disabilities since 1990, offering them opportunity, choice and independence. “As Vice Chair, I believe LINK should be guided by the wishes of the people who use health and social care services and I’m keen to work with partners in the wider community to ensure this happens.”

Norma Playle, Organisational Member (North Tyneside CHCF)

CHCF provides opportunities for voluntary organisations and members of the community to have their say on health and social care. Norma says “I have worked in the voluntary sector for over 20 years and have been involved at all levels in advice, health and advocacy amongst others. I joined LINK hoping to give a voice to people who want to be heard and to help make a difference.”

Alison Chalmers, Organisational Member (Learning Disabilities Federation)

Alison has worked mainly in the voluntary sector in the North East since leaving her native Scotland in 1989. Following the birth of her first daughter, who has Down’s syndrome, Alison has been actively involved in campaigning and writing about the needs of carers and people with learning disabilities. “I joined the LINK as I passionately believe that we all need to be involved in understanding health and social care, both locally and nationally, and how it impacts on our lives.”

Claire Easton, Organisational Member (North Tyneside Carers’ Centre)

Having worked in the voluntary sector for 13 years, Claire is currently Manager of North Tyneside Carers’ Centre. Her skills and experience include researching and collating information, developing policies and procedures and writing plans and budgets. “I have a good understanding of health and social care issues and hope to use this, and my skills and experience, to the benefit of the LINK.”

Sandra Gray, Organisational member (Age Concern North Tyneside)

“Through my role at Age Concern I have developed a wide understanding of diverse health and social care priorities and issues through contact with individuals, statutory authorities and third and independent sector providers.”

Fiona Leeming, Co-opted Member (Barnardo’s)

“As an employee of Barnardo’s, my role on LINK’s board is to represent young people and children. I have been working with young people within education and community-based settings since 1997. In my view, it is essential that we include the thoughts, opinions and ideas of young people so that they feel as if they are being respected and listened to.”

Hazel Parrack, Co-opted Member

Hazel is Vice Chair of North Tyneside VODA, LINK's host organisation. She has maintained a long-standing interest in women's health and social issues and was a member of the National Childbirth Trust at a local and national executive level. She says "I was also a member of the Community Health Council and set up the North Tyneside Well Women Centre. I have valuable experience in health and social care, which is useful in my role as a Board Member of LINK."

Joan Knox, Individual Member

Joan has worked in North Tyneside as a social worker, community development worker and volunteer for many years. An active member of the Older People's Forum, she has also acted as a Trustee of Age Concern and is a member of CHCF. Of LINK's role she said "Consultation should be well planned to ensure appropriate people and communities are involved in the right way."

John Tovell, Individual Member

North Tyneside resident John Tovell has extensive public-sector experience and a background in business analysis and programme management. "LINK must not be thought to exist in abstract isolation: its work programme must be set in the context of North Tyneside's wider concerns and priorities. I would seek to ensure all project activity is directed towards specific and measurable deliveries."

Eileen Turner, Individual Member

A Trustee of Preston Grange Community Centre, Eileen's knowledge of health and social care has been gained through personal experience and through being a Trustee for the Whitley Bay Stroke Support group. "I would like to support the development of LINK to help people and organisations have a combined voice, so that their common issues in health and social care are heard and responded to."

Neil Tapster, Individual Member

After starting off his working life as a Marine Engineer, Neil has worked across a wide range of education, NHS, council, voluntary, church and NHS user groups, and was also heavily involved in the establishment and development of PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service). "I believe that we need to work toward a seamless transition between health and social care, and hope that my place on LINK's Board will help to achieve that."

Bea Groves, Individual Member

With 30 years experience as a coordinator of planning and development within the education sector, Bea has worked in a wide variety of management committee settings and is also heavily involved in transgender activism. "Having been a member of a number of committees, I believe it is essential that members and the people they represent should be truly involved in health and social care."

June Davies, Individual Member

"My professional life was spent mainly in health promotion, during which time I was a member of CHC (Community Health Council) and helped to run a well-women's group, addressing a number of issues. I feel I bring varied experience to LINK's Board and as a new member, am looking forward to working as a team to help to improve the health and social care needs of the wider community."

Involvement of Stakeholders

LINK members have been very active this year, involving themselves with several of our partnership organisations at local and regional level.

Locally two LINK members have joined the **Health and Well-being Partnership**, which reports directly to the Local Strategic Partnership on all matters concerned with health and adult social care.

The Host team have also formed a close working relationship with our local **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** and regularly exchange work plans, reports and support each other's investigations. During 2009/10 we worked very closely together on the Hospital Discharge project (see page 18) and supported an application for this work to the Good Scrutiny Awards 2010.

During the last year **North Tyneside Partnership** organisations responsible for commissioning health and adult social care services have been working towards developing a joint commissioning structure, which includes user involvement and participation of the community and voluntary sector. Representatives from LINK have been invited to play a part in this structure and we now have representation on areas covering mental health, learning disabilities, older people, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities and long term conditions. These groups discuss service provision, identify service gaps and advise commissioners on how to fill these gaps.

Regionally, LINK representatives have contributed towards sharing good practise in reablement, through the **North East Region Improvement and Efficiency Partnership** and they have contributed towards the development of **Quality Accounts** for Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust.

LINK representatives have also been involved in monitoring the service delivery of **North East Ambulance Service** and have been influential with local Health Trusts on the development of their first Quality Accounts. See the table opposite for full details of LINK's representation.

Training for Members and Board

LINK members have been able to access a number of training opportunities this year to enable them to feel fully confident in their roles.

As described above, earlier this year LINK members were invited by North Tyneside Council and NHS North of Tyne to be part of their joint commissioning structure. In order for members to fully participate in these meetings the host team arranged a training session on LINK activities and representation for those members who expressed an interest.

The joint commissioning groups are organised by the main strategic areas that the local commissioners were working on and members have taken up representative roles on each of these. LINK representatives report regularly to the membership through our website and newsletter and are able to receive members' feedback in return (see table below).

Members who have joined the LINK Board have been able to complete their induction training to inform them of their responsibilities and accountability and to better enable them to engage and involve the wider membership. The Board have also undertaken training to build their skills in leadership, reasoning, communication, delivering a membership-focussed service, flexibility and change. Feedback from Board members on their training has been extremely positive and the host team will be supporting further programmes next year.

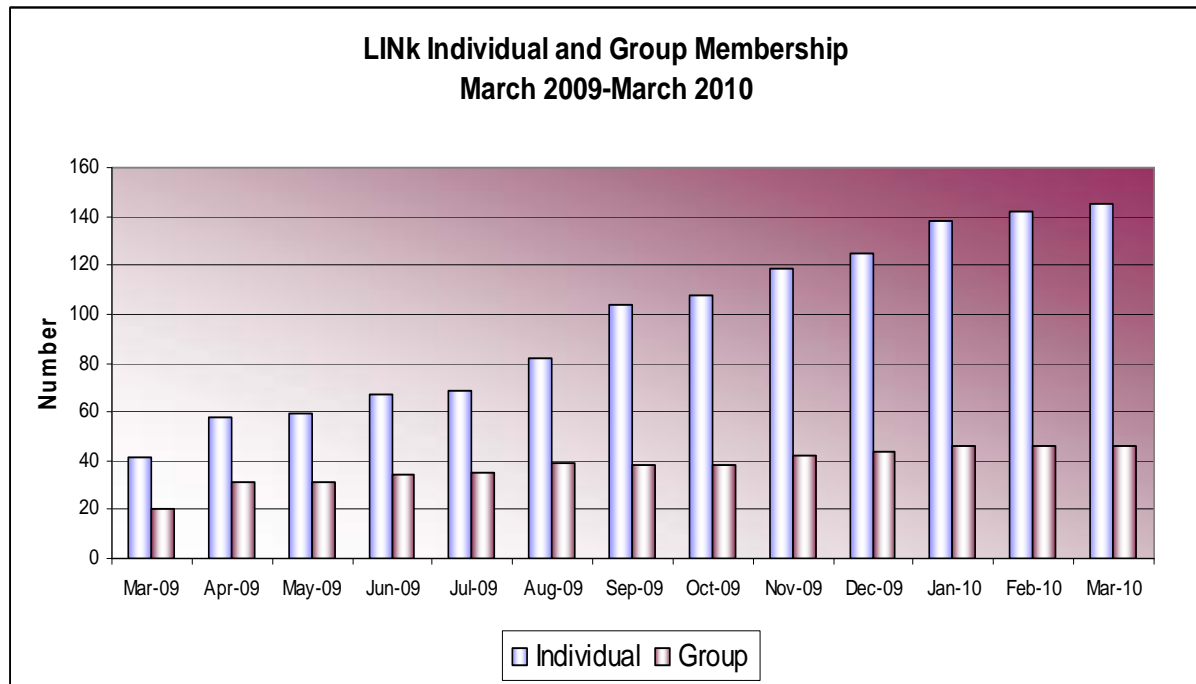
Members involved with specific projects and working groups have also received training in Personalisation, relating to equipment and services, and information sessions on quality accounts and increasing access to psychological therapies (IAPT). The host team are committed to ensuring members have as much information and understanding of the areas they feel are a priority for them to ensure that their involvement really can make a difference.

LINK Representatives

Member	Group(s)
David Melrose	Long Term Conditions Network (temporarily dormant)
Elizabeth Hicks (Until March 10)	Long Term Conditions Network (temporarily dormant) North Tyneside Council Mental Health Partnership
Lindsay Perks	NHS North of Tyne Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Group VONNE: Health and Social Care Group
Jane Noble	NHS North of Tyne Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Group North Tyneside Council Mental Health Partnership
John Robson	North Tyneside Council Health & Wellbeing Partnership Physical Disability Partnership Board
Hazel Parrack	North Tyneside Council Health & Wellbeing Partnership
Pat Bottrill	North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) LINK Group
Joan Knox	Older People's Partnership Board North East Improvement & Efficiency Partnership North Tyneside PCT Five Year Strategy
Hilda Bell	Physical Disability Partnership Board
Norma Playle	Older People's Partnership Board North East Improvement & Efficiency Partnership
Margaret Parsons	Learning Disability Partnership Board
Peter Douglas	Learning Disability Partnership Board

Membership of North Tyneside LINK

Since last reporting, the membership of North Tyneside LINK has risen steadily, from a total of 89 in March 2009 to **209** members in March 2010.



North Tyneside LINK in Numbers (at March 2010)

149 individual members	14 Board members
46 group/organisational members	20 active members and reps
67 number of members who attended our Annual Review event in January 2010 to hear about LINK's current work and progress	

How our Individual Membership is Made Up

We have been able to identify that our membership recruitment has been more successful in some parts of the borough than others. This has resulted in some targeted engagement work in the North West of the borough (see page 12):

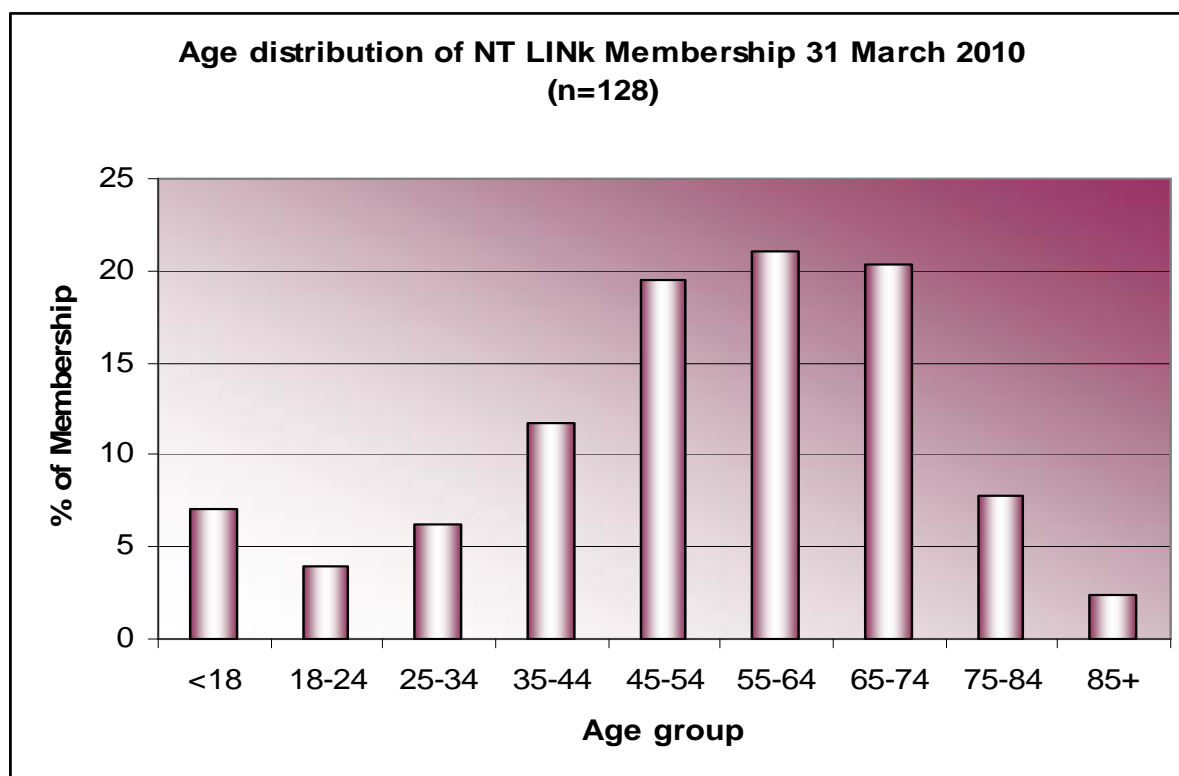
- **16** members live in the North West of the borough
- **32** members live in the South West of the borough
- **46** members live in the South East of the borough
- **55** members live in the North East of the borough

Membership of North Tyneside LINK

We also know that **31** of our members consider themselves to have a disability and that the number of women members (**96**) outweighs men (**43**). 52% of the population of North Tyneside are women.

Only **four** of our members have identified themselves as non-white or non-British, which is equivalent to 2.7% of our membership. Given that recent figures suggest 5.9% of the population in North Tyneside have identified themselves as non-white, this has helped us to identify this, along with men, as a development area for our engagement strategy next year.

The age of our members is shown in the graph below. An earlier audit of our membership identified gaps in young people and those over 85, and we have already carried out targeted engagement work as a result. See page 15 for details of our Young People's project and page 21 for details of a commissioned report into the health and social care priorities of the over 85s.



The next steps in our demographic development will see LINK continue our engagement with younger people, and with BME and migrant populations.

We will also be considering developing our database to record details of members' religious and sexual orientation. However, we have already noted from our current membership forms that 20% of individual members already decline to declare their personal details relating to age, sex and ethnicity.

Membership Development

During 2009/10 Membership Development has been a significant part of LINK's work plan. Based on an audit of our membership, an engagement strategy was developed and approved by LINK's Board during the summer of 2009. This saw LINK target several geographical areas and demographical groups, and carry out a general recruitment drive across the borough.

Geographical Membership Development

Membership recruitment days were organised in several places of interest and community venues in the areas of Whitley Bay, Tynemouth, North Shields and Killingworth. The LINK host team also attended summer fairs, community events and were invited to place information stands at venues across the borough.

To coincide with our recruitment days, we also held an awareness raising event in the North West of the borough to encourage people to become LINK members. This was an area where our membership was comparatively low (see page 10). As a result of the event, we were able to engage with both individuals and groups to identify the health and social care issues affecting the community in that particular area.

Group Membership Development

Having also identified younger people and parents in deprived areas as gaps in our membership, LINK has also carried out extensive engagement work with these groups (see pages 14 and 15).

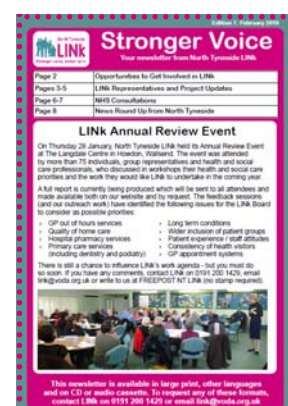
How We Make Things Known

Introduction

Telling local people, groups and communities about the work of LINK is one of our vital functions. It is our aim to reach as wide an audience as possible, therefore all of LINK's written materials are available in large print, on audio transcription and in other languages. North Tyneside LINK has developed a strong visual identity and this year, the host team has spent a lot of time out in the community. We also employ the following methods of communication:

Stronger Voice

We have issued **six editions** of our bi-monthly newsletter Stronger Voice. This is distributed to the entire LINK membership, at LINK's and other community events, and during our outreach work. Stronger Voice contains all of the news, events and project developments from LINK, plus reports and feedback from our Board Members and Representatives, and a round up of relevant news and events from the health and adult social care sector.



E-Newsletter: On alternative months to Stronger Voice we issue an E-Newsletter to members. The document is also uploaded to our website and hard copies made available for those who do not have access to email.

Website: LINK's website www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk is one of our main and most-used communications tools (see chart below). The interactive website contains a forum space, which allows members to discuss LINK's projects, a scrolling news section and a project space, which details the background, progress and impact of LINK's work. The website is also where Board papers, LINK's policies and procedures and representatives' feedback can be found.

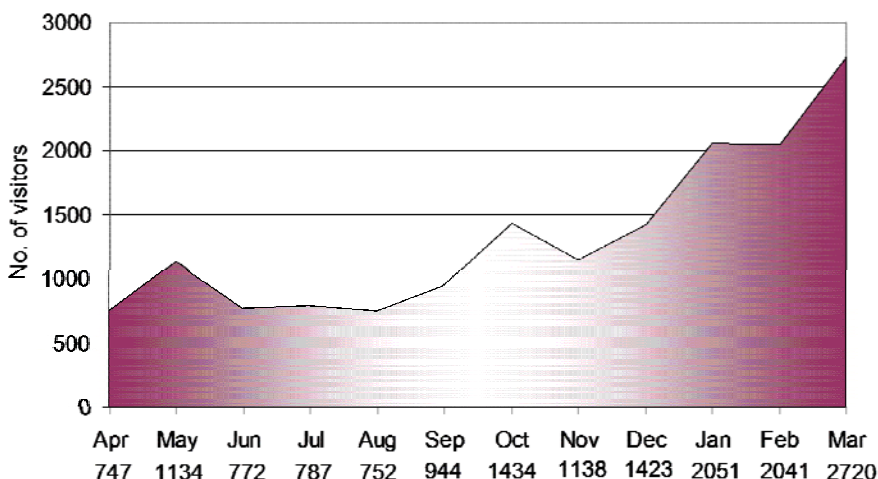
Advertising: We place carefully selected advertisements for LINK and our events at regular intervals. This can range from advertising in the local Community Care Guide to taking an advert out in a local theatre production's brochure.

Media: We issue regular press releases to our media contacts and maintain good relationships with local newspapers in particular. We also regularly contribute to local newsletters, including those of North Tyneside Carers' Centre, the Migration Support Project and that of our host, North Tyneside **VODA**.

Promotion: Our public information leaflet (pictured below right) has been distributed widely at venues around the borough and we have also undertaken a programme of Membership Development. This has involved the host team going out and about at public venues across the borough with LINK information and merchandise, and also attending a number of community events such as the Healthy Community Awards and a series of Adult Learners' events. North Tyneside LINK has also produced promotional postcards and banner boards promoting all 12 LINKs in the North East, to be used at regional events (pictured right).



LINK Website Visitors 2009-10



What You Told Us and What We Did

LINK's public engagement activities can be divided into two categories, **project and outreach work**. The aim of outreach work is to spread the word of LINK, to engage with targeted communities and to gather issues and concerns that may become projects. The aim of our project work is to gather information and evidence from members and the wider public that enables LINK to challenge existing services and to bring about positive change. Through events and meetings, LINK has had **631 direct contacts** since April 2009 (not including comments given to us by members of the public via local groups and visits to community venues). The following pages detail what our members and the public told us, what we did with that information and the impact that LINK has had.

Outreach Work

In 2009/10 LINK identified two areas that required development work: parents of young children from disadvantaged communities and young people.

Children's Centre Project

In order to target parents of young children, LINK worked with Children's Centres in the communities of Howdon and Wallsend. The host team carried out a brief questionnaire asking parents to identify concerns within local health and social care services, and also informed people about how to get involved with LINK.

What You Told Us

The main findings of this piece of consultation work were that parents would like to see the same midwife or health visitor throughout their care. They would also like to be able to book GP appointments in advance of two days and to have some basic, practical parenting skills courses available locally.

What We Did

Based on what we were told, LINK compiled and sent its Children's Centre Report to NHS North of Tyne Commissioners and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust with a request that they respond to the issues raised by local parents. Both responded within the statutory 20 days. In their responses both also recognised the problems that LINK highlighted and informed us of the steps they have taken to improve services. Northumbria Healthcare informed us that a short term problem in the midwife team due to staff sickness, has since been resolved.

Impact

LINK has fed the information back to Children's Centre users and will continue to communicate service developments to the Centres. We are also producing a leaflet to let parents know how to contact LINK and other patient support organisations if they have problems or would like to make a complaint. Local commissioners have told us more midwives have recently been employed and that this should result in better continuity. One local Children's Centre has also told us they will be running classes in how to bathe and safely handle new babies, along with other practical tips for new parents.

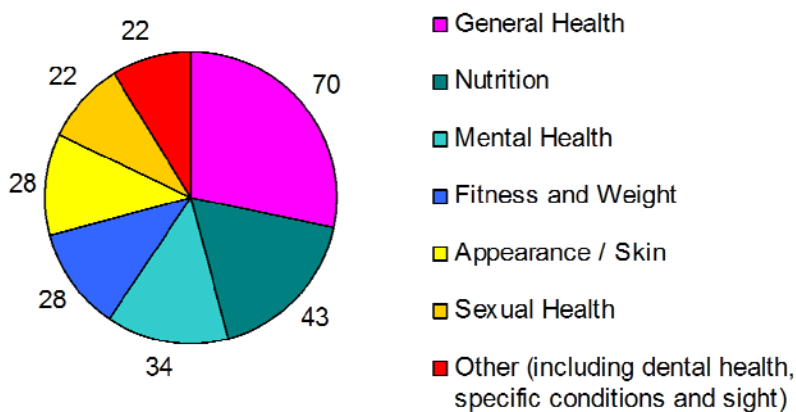
Young People's Project

What You Told Us

In order to gather the views of young people in North Tyneside, LINK developed a questionnaire entitled 'Your Health Care, Your Say' in partnership with young people from North Tyneside Volunteer Centre's Youth Action Team. This questionnaire was made available to all secondary school age young people, via North Tyneside Schools online tool The Learning Platform, and hard copies were taken to Tynemet College, George Stephenson High School, North Tyneside Disability Forum and The Base Project at Barnardo's.

A total of **161** young people completed the survey, which gave us a good idea of young people's health concerns and priorities:

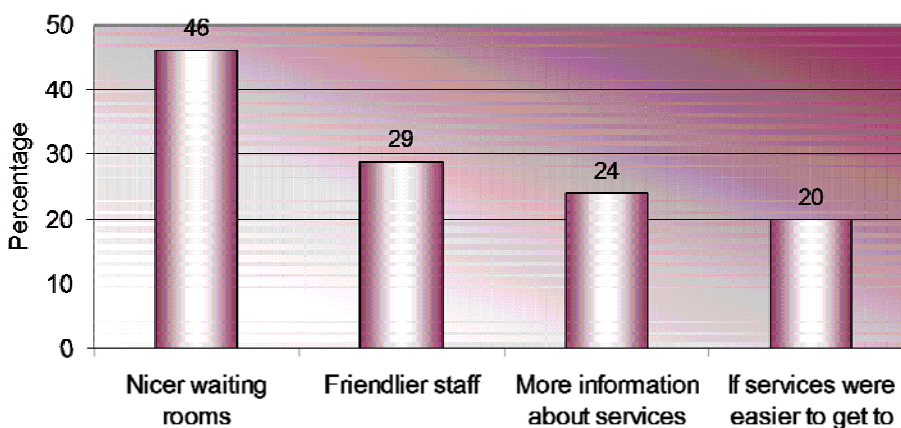
What are your top health priorities? (%)



"Many health professionals treat you as just another patient and not as an individual."

"I'd like to be respected more."

What would make services better for you?



"Clinics should be open more appropriate times."

"Doctors should talk to the young person who they are treating, not the adult accompanying them."

What We Did

This information was used to inform LINK's young people's event, which was held in February 2010. Fifteen young people took part in workshops based on the results of the survey (above), and in healthy activities such as dancing and fruit cocktail making. The topics of **mental health** and **staff attitudes towards young people** were identified as priorities for LINK (see over for Impact). We also produced a report on the event and shared this, and the survey results with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Impact

The information gathered at the young people's event has developed into a piece of project work in partnership with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust. Volunteers from their Child Health Action Team (CHAT), along with those from the Youth Action Team and members of North Tyneside Council's Young Cabinet have formed a working group who will explore the issues of mental health and staff attitudes towards young people. They will then present their concerns and recommendations for change to local service providers and commissioners.



"It's been an excellent event, lots of fun. I think it's really important for young people to be asked what they think about health care – it's such an important issue and it's only right that this age group are asked their opinion."

- Johnny Legg, 17, North Shields, who attended the event

LINK's Annual Review Event

In January 2010, LINK held an Annual Review event for members and partners to meet LINK's Board and representatives, discuss their health and social care priorities and contribute to the work plan of LINK for the coming year.

The event was attended by over 80 people, 67 of whom were LINK members. Discussions focused on how LINK's current projects are progressing and what health and adult social care issues members wished LINK to take forward in 2010. As a result of the event, LINK will be working on two new projects in 2010/11: Access to GP services and the quality of care at North Tyneside General Hospital. Quotes from Evaluation Forms included:

"Great opportunity to share experiences and knowledge."

"A very interesting and informative day. LINK appears to be developing the themes of partnership and persuasion."



Project Work

During 2009/10, North Tyneside LINK has completed one project around Information for Carers, and continued five projects that began in 2008/09:

- Urgent Care
- Dementia Strategy
- Hospital Discharge
- Personalisation
- Counselling

The following pages detail the background to the projects, what you told us, what we did with the information and what the impact of the work has been.

Information for Carers

The majority of this project took place in the reporting year 2008/09 when local carers identified information provision as a concern. In 2009, LINK produced a report which included members' recommendations for improvements to current provision and the elements they would like to see incorporated in an information and advice service. The report contributed to the development of the service specification for North Tyneside Council's tender document for carer support services. To this end, members have been able to directly influence how the future service will develop to meet carers' needs.

Urgent Care Project

What You Told Us

At two public events held in 2008/09, LINK members and members of the public shared their concerns, questions and recommendations about Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's proposals for a new emergency care hospital. A report was submitted to the Trust and a response to the questions received within 20 days, making assurances about issues such as transport, bed numbers and quality of care.

What We Did

In 2009/10, several LINK members were then involved in producing the final LINK Emergency Care Hospital Report, which was submitted as part of the formal consultation process. NHS North of Tyne (the commissioners of this project) have taken on board LINK members' concerns, requesting that Northumbria Healthcare do further work on some aspects of their plan to ensure that patients will be appropriately served by the new hospital.

Impact

LINK's work around the Urgent Care proposals has seen a large number of LINK members active in reporting their opinions and concerns about proposals that will affect North Tyneside residents. Some of the issues raised included transport, finance and the impact of the centre on the local general hospital. The points raised by LINK members have been included in NHS North of Tyne's report and resulted in a cautious welcome from them to the proposals by Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust. The areas raised by LINK's members are to be closely monitored by NHS North of Tyne in their commissioning role.

Hospital Discharge Project

What You Told Us

In 2008/09 LINK members expressed their concerns about hospital discharge procedures. Some of the issues gathered at events were: communication between medical and social work staff; the discharge of North Tyneside patients from Newcastle hospitals; and the lack of coordination of post-discharge care.

What We Did

LINK has held three public meetings around the topic of Hospital Discharge - two of which took place in 2009/10. These well attended events gave members, patients and carers an opportunity to discuss their experiences of coming out of hospital, to learn about discharge procedures from North Tyneside General Hospital and to put their questions and concerns directly to NHS and social work staff. A report was produced detailing local people's experiences and shared with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, the provider of the local hospital. Since then, LINK has worked closely with the Trust and North Tyneside Council's Hospital Discharge Team to address members' concerns.

Impact

This project ran alongside an investigation into Hospital Discharge by our local Overview and Scrutiny Committee sub group for Health and Well-being, and our events contributed to the public engagement element of their final report. By working collaboratively, LINK has strengthened its relationship with the Sub-Committee and increased the understanding of each other's organisations, which we hope will lead to more joint working in future.

By agreeing a joint approach with the Hospital Discharge Team and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and concentrating on areas where each organisation had particular strengths, we succeeded in maximizing scarce resources and avoided a duplication of work on this issue.

This work is on going, but to date has resulted in:

- Increased information about the Hospital Discharge Team being produced and placed on wards (this will hopefully be seen by North Tyneside General Hospital's in-patients, currently over **45,000** per year)
- Increased working between some voluntary sector organisations and wards (i.e. the increased presence of carer support workers on wards)
- Identifying cross boundary issues between Newcastle and North Tyneside
- The development of a directory of services that can support patients and their families/carers once they have been discharged from hospital. This resource will be available to the public and to professionals in 2010

“ Being involved in LINK's project has given me the opportunity to listen to people's concerns and ideas on how the Hospital Discharge Team can actively improve the process of planning for patients and their carers.”

- Georgia Douglas, Manager, North Tyneside Council's Hospital Discharge Team

Personalisation

What You Told Us

A number of voluntary and community sector organisations expressed their concerns to us about the implementation of the Personalisation Agenda, in terms of the information available and how it would affect their service users.

What We Did

LINK has formed a Personalisation Third Sector Reference Group, which currently involves six of LINK's 'group' members and a number of other local organisations and personnel who have an interest in the personalisation agenda. This group meets monthly to discuss and share feedback with North Tyneside Council on the development and implementation of personalisation.

Impact

To date this group has advised the Council on how appropriate information on personalisation should be distributed, and raised concerns regarding communication and safeguarding in a newly emerging market. The group has recently met with North Tyneside Council's Head of Adult Social Care to plan the progress of this ongoing project.

Counselling Services in North Tyneside

What You Told Us

At North Tyneside LINK's launch events in 2009, the availability of suitable counselling services was one of our members' main priorities.

What We Did

In order to find out what the scope of counselling provision is in North Tyneside, LINK commissioned North Tyneside Community and Health Care Forum to produce a research report. This was received and published in June 2009 and in October 2009, LINK held an event in order to report on the results. The event also gave members the chance to hear about the development of the new IAPT (Improving Access the Psychological Therapies) service and to put questions and raise concerns with the IAPT Service Manager (pictured below).

Impact

The Counselling Provision report was made publically available and distributed among all GPs in North Tyneside meaning they have an increased knowledge of voluntary and community providers of counselling services. Our event in October highlighted the need for further investigation into the accessibility of low level mental health services. This piece of research was commissioned early in 2010 (see page 21).



Dementia Strategy

What We Did

In 2009 LINK invited staff from local voluntary and community sector organisations to get together to discuss the newly produced National Dementia Strategy and the impact it could have locally. Since this initial meeting LINK has been invited to attend the NHS North of Tyne Dementia Project Review Board. To date the Board has been benchmarking local services using a regional tool as well as consulting with service users and carers to gather their experiences.

Impact

Now that these exercises have been completed, the Board has developed both a North of Tyne and localised Action Plan. These joint PCT and local authority documents will address each objective of the National Dementia Strategy. LINK has shared this information with interested local groups and will continue to keep the sector updated with developments and opportunities for involvement through the LINK website and Stronger Voice newsletter.

Requests for Information

Four requests have been made in 2009/10, three of which were responded to within 20 days.

Personalisation Project: request to North Tyneside Council for information regarding the implementation of personalisation in North Tyneside in light of staff changes. This resulted in the Head of Adult Social Care attending LINK's Third Sector Reference Group meeting to answer questions directly from voluntary sector organisations and an agreement that this group will continue to work alongside the council as a critical friend as the personalisation agenda develops.

Children's Centre Project: requests to NHS North of Tyne and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for a response regarding concerns and issues that were raised in the survey - GP appointments and continuity of care in midwifery and health visitor services.

Hospital Discharge Project: This project has not resulted in a statutory request, however LINK reports from this project have been shared with the Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as this group was also interested in the issue.

Respite Care Report: A response to the LINK report on the quality and availability of respite care, issues raised and recommendations made was received from North Tyneside Council, after writing to remind them of the 20-day response limit. The report was responded to positively and has resulted in a review of respite services for older people.

Commissioned Reports

At North Tyneside LINK's launch events in 2009, there were a number of issues raised that the LINK Board decided to commission further research in to. This work was advertised for tender to LINK members and local organisations and successful applicants were commissioned early in 2010:

- The quality and availability of respite care
- The quality of home care
- Experiences of transition between children's and adult's services
- LINK members' concerns about the availability of low level support and preventative services for those with mental health difficulties
- The health and social care needs of the very elderly
- The health and social care needs of transgender people
- The health and social care needs of gay and lesbian people

During this reporting year, we received and published one report - Respite Care - and we hope to report next year how our findings have contributed towards improvements in these areas. LINK members were given the chance to hear updates about all of these reports at our Annual Review event, held in January 2010 (see page 16). Pictured below are some of the authors of the reports.



Bea Groves Annette McGlade Sheila Lambert Keith Metcalf Maria Laben

LINK Reports in 2009/10

LINK has published the following reports in 2009/10. All of these are available by request or to download from our website www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk:

- Respite Care, March 2010
- Young People's Event Report, February 2010
- Annual Event Report, January 2010
- Children's Centre Survey Results, January 2010
- Hospital Discharge Report, December 2010
- Counselling Event Report, October 2009
- Regional LINK Conference Report, September 2009
- Final Response to Urgent Care Strategy Report, July 2009
- Information for Carers Report, July 2009

Finance

Budget Head	Budget		Actual Cost		Variance
Office	8,716		8,716		0
Administration	8,950		8,950		0
Host Costs		17,666		17,666	0
Salaries	70,669		70,690		-21
Staff Training	1,600		1,178		422
Staff Travel	2,000		1,426		574
Staff Costs		74,269		73,294	975
Governance Training	2,000		2,004		4
Meetings	1,000		2,100		-1,100
Marketing	7,500		7,395		105
Website	650		344		306
Database	500		0		500
Facilitator	3,000		3,000		0
Projects	5,350		4,688		662
Commissioned Reports	16,000		16,000		0
LINK Costs		36,000		35,531	469
Total		127,935		126,491	1,444

Commentary:

The Link budget is divided into three main areas: the host costs, the staffing costs of the LINK team and the LINK costs to support membership involvement, recruitment and awareness raising.

The host costs and staff costs were agreed in our contract with North Tyneside Council. LINK members, and the LINK Board on their behalf, have responsibility for approving the LINK costs.

The Board approved all variances in this year's spending and have agreed to adjust next year's budget to reflect a greater contribution to LINK meeting costs. As LINK's membership grows and the need to involve members in a wider variety of ways increases, we anticipate this is an area where greater investment will be needed.

Next Steps

In 2010/11 we will...

- Continue to audit our membership and target awareness raising and recruitment accordingly
- Continue to implement our 'Hard to Reach' strategy
- Continue with projects on hospital discharge, the implementation of the dementia strategy, and personalisation
- Continue to support LINK representatives on a variety of service development and commissioning groups with partnership organisations
- Hold an event to increase the community's involvement in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Respond to our local Health Trust's Quality Accounts
- Work collaboratively with our local Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Develop projects on access to GP services and care at our general hospital
- Recruit and train our 'enter and view' volunteers
- Follow up on the results from commissioned reports
- Host two bi-annual membership events to report progress to LINK members and seek guidance for the LINK Board on future projects

Thanks and Acknowledgements

North Tyneside LINK would like to thank the following people and organisations:

- The LINK Interim Board
- The current LINK Board
- Personalisation Working Group
- Hospital Discharge Working Group
- Young People's Working Group
- North Tyneside Community and Health Care Forum (CHCF)
- North Tyneside Disabilities Forum
- North Tyneside Youth Council
- Youth Action Team, VODA
- North Tyneside YMCA

Partnership organisations:

- North Tyneside Council
- NHS North of Tyne
- North Tyneside Primary Care Trust
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland Tyne & Wear Foundation Trust
- Democratic Support Officer (Health & Wellbeing, North Tyneside Council)
- Extended Schools Coordinators
- Sure Start Children's Centres

Groups LINK has worked with:

- Barnardo's

Consultants LINK has worked with:

- Continuum
- Keith Metcalf
- Maria Laben
- Sheila Lambert
- Diane & Alan Varty
- Bea Groves
- Annette McGlade

Companies LINK has worked with:

- Prontaprint
- Priors Catering
- The Bigger Scene
- News Guardian

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