



Gateshead LINK

Involving Local People in
Health and Social Care

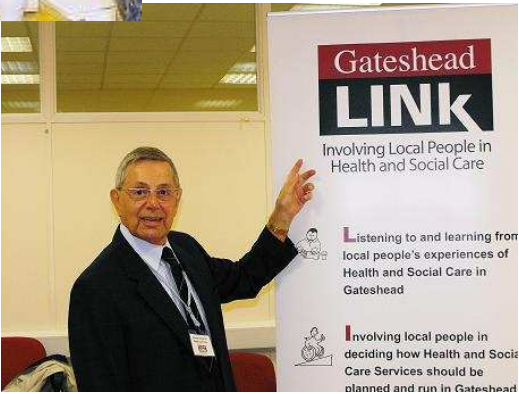


Gateshead LINK Annual Report April 2008-March 2009

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Introduction to Gateshead LINK from the members



As members of the Gateshead LINK Interim Steering Group we are pleased to present our first Annual Report.



The development of Gateshead LINK has been overseen by a core group of interested individuals and members of voluntary and community sector organisations. As a group we have a wide range of interests and experience that include: ambulance services; physical disabilities; carers; mental health; drug and alcohol issues; equality of access to services and holistic therapies.

We are continually looking to expand our membership so we can be truly representative of the communities of Gateshead. During the ‘set-up’ period we have been supported by our Host organisation and Gateshead Local Authority.

We are clear that our role is to assist the public, carers and services users to influence health and social care services for the better. We are committed to working constructively with health and social care partners, including commissioners of services, so that local people can receive both the type and style of services they require.

In preparing this Annual Report we asked “ What did the core LINK membership think that the LINK had achieved in it’s first year ? ”

The following responses were received from members:

“Widening the profile of the LINK and making more people aware of the potential for involvement”.

“Attendance at conferences and workshops has made the LINK stronger by being more knowledgeable about how health strategies work in Gateshead”.

“LINK is a great concept for the people of Gateshead and I’m glad to be part of an innovative new group”

“Sharing information about the LINK throughout the year has enabled me to be more professional”

“We have worked to properly set up the LINK which makes us effective”.

“I have enjoyed that ordinary people from all walks of life have come together with one aim – to make a difference, learn from each other and become friends”.

Gateshead LINK contact details

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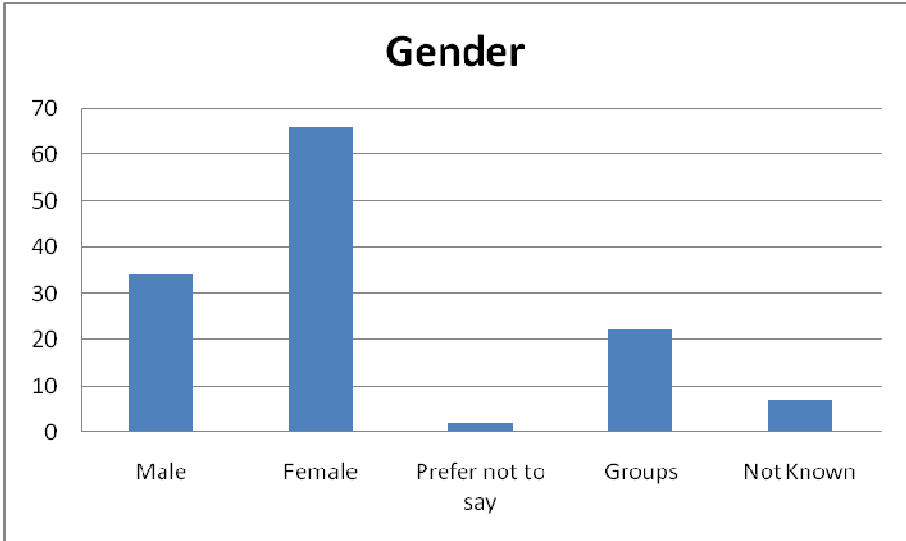
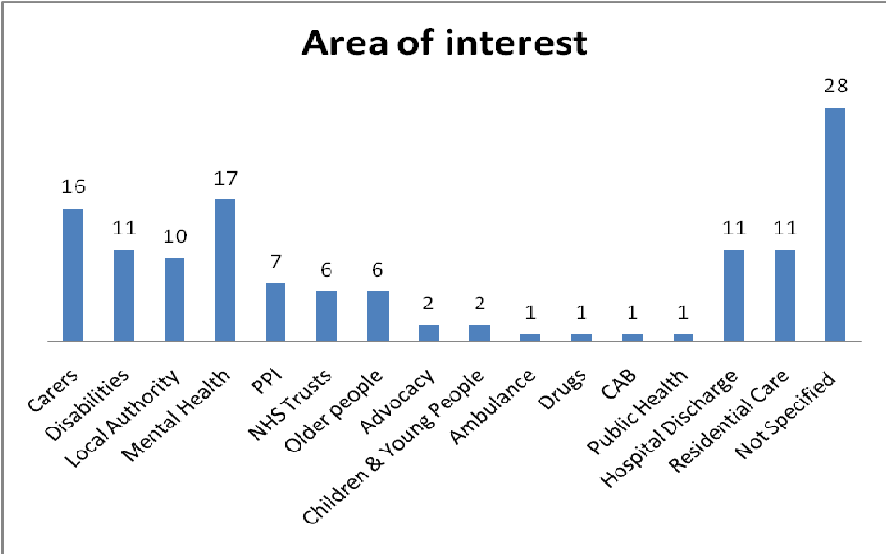
LINK Administrator
Kim Newton

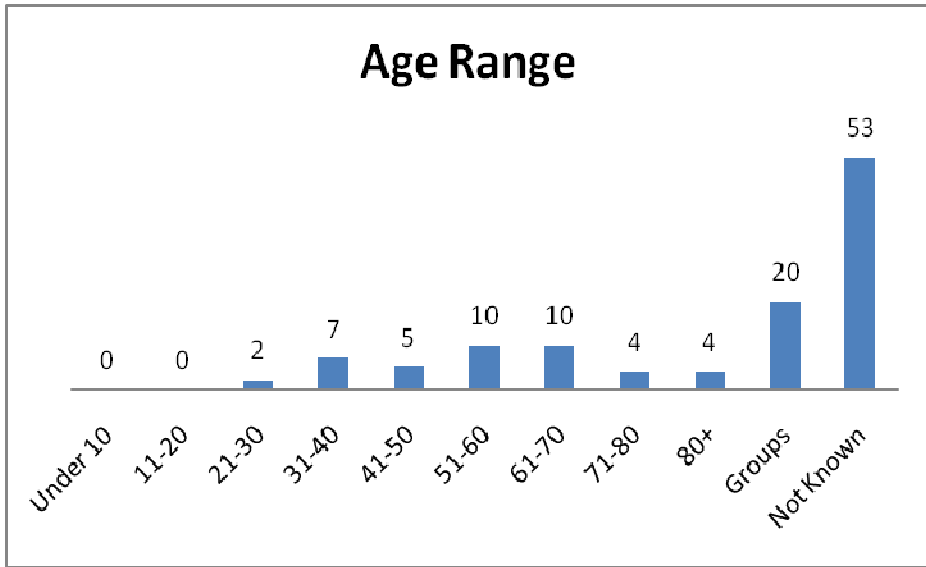
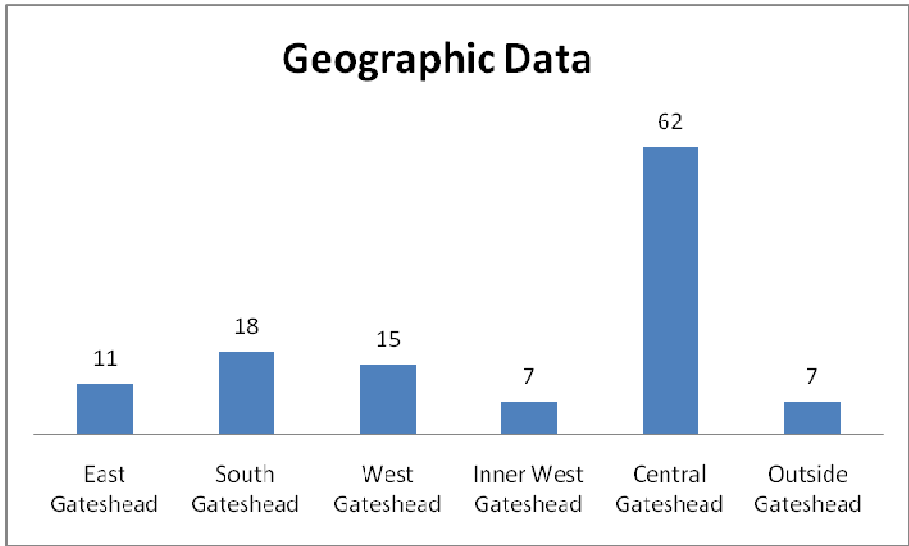
kimnewton@gvoc.org.uk

Gateshead LINK Membership

Gateshead LINK has 132 registered members consisting of 110 individual Gateshead residents and 22 organised groups from within the voluntary and community sector.

The following charts illustrate the area of interests of members, gender, geographic data and the age range.





Gateshead LINK Interim Steering Group Members

Alastair White
Alison McClellan
Anya Simpson
Bill Llewelyn
Caroline Airs
Christine Squires
David Wallace
Graeme Lyall
Gretel Keadell
Harold Stookes M.B.E.
Janet Butler
Janice Todd
Kay Parker
Malik Chaudhry
Mish Lorraine
Vicky Parsons

Andi Parker – Co-opted (Local Authority)
Gev Pringle – Director, GVOC (Host Organisation)

General background

The Department of Health White Paper “*A Stronger Local Voice*” published in July 2006 set out the Government’s policy on the future development of the patient, user and public involvement system, including proposals to establish Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). Subsequently LINKs were established by the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*.

LINKs were developed to enable communities to engage flexibly with health and social care organisations, in ways that best suit communities and the people in them. They promote public accountability in health and social care through open and transparent communication with commissioners and providers.

Each local authority with social services responsibilities has a statutory duty under the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* to make contractual arrangements with a Host Organisation.

In March 2008 Gateshead Council appointed Gateshead Voluntary Organisation Council (GVOC) as the host organisation for Gateshead LINK. The LINK commenced with the Host organisation on 1st April 2008

GVOC is therefore responsible for setting up the LINK and providing it with the practical support it needs. It is also responsible for the establishment, maintenance and support of the LINK.

How Gateshead LINK was formed

Throughout 2007 Gateshead Council held a number of workshops and local events to actively encourage the involvement of local people in the development of the Gateshead LINK. In particular the council targeted those already involved in influencing health and social care in Gateshead i.e. Patient Forums, Social Care and Carer User-Groups, Community Organisations and Voluntary Sector Organisations.

As a result a LINK Stakeholder Group was established in August 2007. This group considered the following issues:

- What Gateshead LINK should look like?
- How Gateshead LINK should be formed?
- What the LINK should expect from a Host Organisation?

The council also held a series of seminars for interested individuals and groups and began identifying issues and themes within Health and Social Care that were important to local people and users of services in Gateshead.

The Stakeholder Group worked closely with Gateshead Council to develop the Tender document for the LINK Host Organisation. They were fully involved in the selection and interview process.

In March 2008 Gateshead Voluntary Organisation Council (GVOC) were appointed as the Host organisation for Gateshead LINK

LINK Governance Structure

GVOC staff have worked with LINK members to develop a transparent and accountable decision making structure.

The LINK has a central Interim Steering Group that makes decisions on behalf of the LINK. The Steering Group meets monthly.

In the first year two task groups have supported the development of LINK policies and procedures and the promotion of the LINK to the broader public. These groups meet fortnightly.

The Interim Steering Group and the Operational and Promotional Task Groups agreed to operate until the LINK identified work priorities following wider public awareness and engagement.

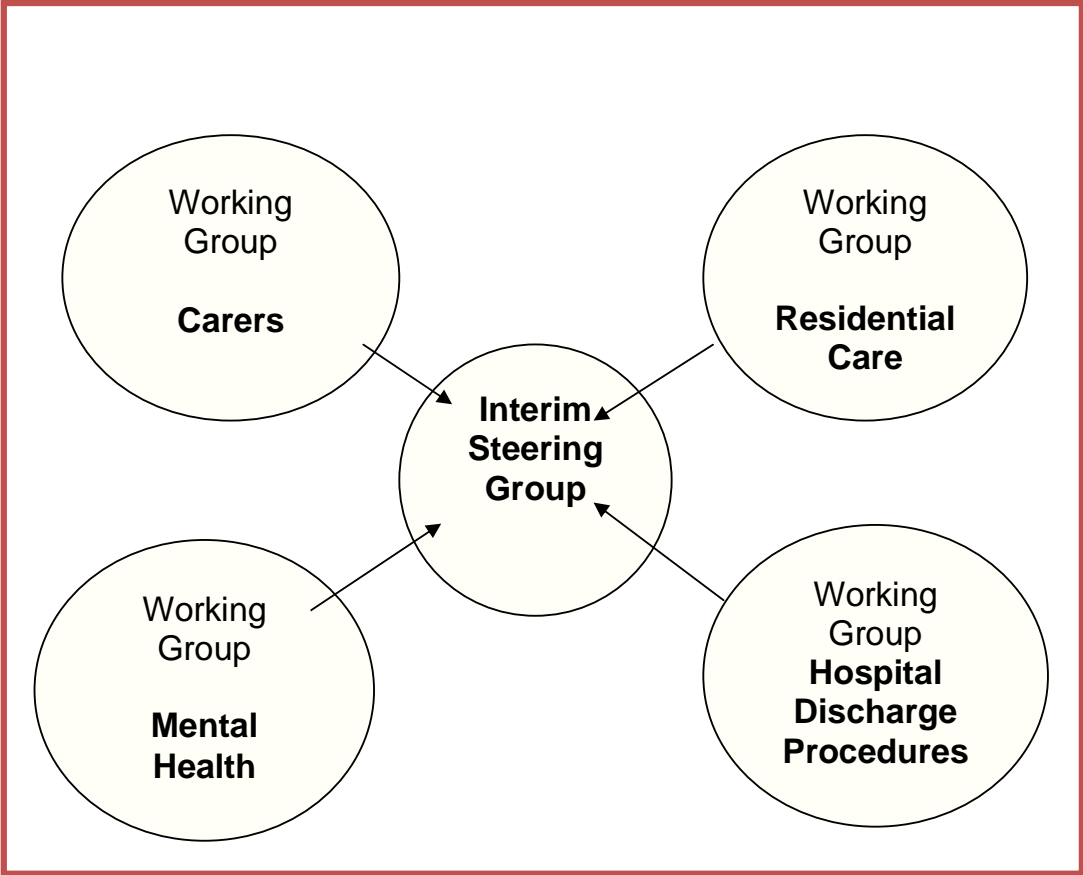
Four themed Working Groups have been established following wider consultation with communities in Gateshead:

Mental Health
Carers
Residential Care
Hospital Discharge Procedures

Each Working Group has its own Terms of Reference and meets every six weeks. Recommendations or planned future actions are taken to the Interim Steering Group for decision

Gateshead LINK Governance Structure

A LINK focused on Working Groups



LINK Support Structure

GVOC, as Host, has appointed 3 members of staff to support the development of the LINK:

- i) Co-ordinator (full-time)
- ii) Communications and Engagement Officer (full-time)
- iii) Administrator (full-time)

Setting the scene in Gateshead

As a LINK we have acquainted ourselves with the Gateshead position in relation to the national health and social care picture with such reports as the following:

Gateshead Council : Vision 2030 - Sustainable Community Strategy

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/People/Strategies/Vision%202030%20Summary.pdf>

Directors of Public Health Report (2007/2008)

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/Care/JSNA/001a.pdf>

Primary care Trust and Local Authority, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2009)

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/Care/JSNA/key-points.pdf>

Gateshead Health Profile 2008

<http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=gateshead>

The above documents demonstrate from a health point of view that:

Health and deprivation in Gateshead are generally worse than England as a whole. Deaths from smoking and rates of early deaths from cancer and from heart disease and stroke all appear worse than the averages for England.

Men and women from the least deprived areas of Gateshead can expect to live longer than men and women from the most deprived areas; about seven years longer for men and about four years longer for women.

Over the last ten years death rates from all causes have decreased for men and women in Gateshead, but these still remain above the England averages. Rates of early deaths from heart disease and stroke and from cancer have decreased over the last ten years, but still remain above the averages for England.

Breast feeding initiation and smoking in pregnancy rates are worse than the averages for England. The rate of road injuries and deaths compares favourably with England.

Long term illness and mental health problems are also higher in Gateshead than the averages for England.

Gateshead LINK acknowledges that the commitment of Gateshead Strategic Partnership (GSP) to community involvement, engagement and development through the GSP Community Development Strategy will support the LINK in achieving their community engagement and involvement objectives.

The process of familiarisation with health and social care issues is an ongoing one for the LINK. The Interim Steering Group continues to receive and discuss key documents relating to emerging health and social care issues and strategies. This information informs the priority choices made by Gateshead LINK.

It is, however, important to remember that the LINK members are interested in the LINK, not because of documents, but because of our contacts in the community and because we know that those receiving services are often the best judge of what works and what can be improved.

Interest is often sparked by a personal or family experience or a broader experience across the Gateshead communities. Gateshead LINK has strived to extend connections across communities and has successfully engaged many individuals and groups.

Gateshead LINK is clear it must work amongst the community to evidence what local people say, to help inform LINK priorities.

What local people have said

We held our first public event in October 2008. The objectives of the event were threefold:

- i) To receive comment upon the proposed LINK governance and structure.
- ii) To raise the profile of LINK.
- iii) To further the work of the Stakeholder Group, supported by Gateshead Council, in gathering public opinion on health and social care priorities for Gateshead.

Congratulations must be given to the LINK Interim Steering Group who were responsible for the planning and execution of this highly successful first LINK public event.

The following topics were offered as discussion groups, having previously been identified as important to the people of Gateshead:

Residential Care Homes
Hospital Services
Ambulance Services
Infection Control
GP Services
Social Care
Mental Health
Older People
Carers

Invitation to the event asked people to identify other topics they would like to discuss.

The event was publicised in the following ways:

- i) Approximately 3000 flyers were distributed from partner data-bases and circulated to community venues.
- ii) Information was sent to various voluntary and community sector groups.

iii) Invitations were extended to other stakeholder groups e.g. health and social care colleagues, GPs, health centres, schools and libraries

The event was attended by 70 people who represented a variety of stakeholders across the Gateshead communities.

The feedback from the event enabled the LINK Interim Steering Group to identify four clear priority areas to begin to formulate their work plan.

Mental Health
Carers Issues
Hospital Discharge Procedures
Residential Care

What Gateshead LINK has achieved

LINK staff have supported LINK members to develop the following LINK policies and procedures to enhance operational efficiency:

Aims and Objectives
Terms of Reference
Code of Conduct
Representatives' Handbook
Expenses Policy
Declaration of Interest Policy
Complaints Procedure
Protocol between LINK and Host
Membership Policy
Training Policy
Registration Forms
Membership Policy
Ground rules for meetings
Representatives Report Back Forms

LINK members have also been actively involved in a wide range of other activities:

- i) Attending conferences and discussion forums.
- ii) Helping to develop a LINK Regional Forum.
- iii) Attending community events in Gateshead to raise awareness of Gateshead LINK.
- iv) Developing a LINK website.
- v) Working on the Enter & View Policy.
- vi) Producing a new members information pack.
- vii) Developing accessible communications.
- viii) Attending monitoring meetings with the Local Authority.
- ix) Developing a working protocol and attending meetings with Gateshead Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- x) Selection and purchase of marketing materials to promote the LINK.
- xi) Responding to various Consultation documents and holding special meetings to discuss important topics.
- xii) Sending delegates to local consultations.
- xiii) Developing four working groups to respond to the priorities identified at the LINK October event.

Relationships established

- The LINK has developed a range of relationships, some more key than others, at this point in the LINK development. It is anticipated there is much potential to develop these relationships, as LINK work progresses. Initial contact has been made and discussions held with:

Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)
Gateshead Council: Networks and Forums
Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust
Gateshead Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Gateshead Primary Care Trust
Healthcare Commission
North East Ambulance Service
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust
South of Tyne and Wear Primary Care Trust
Voluntary and community sector groups

LINK income and Expenditure

	A	B	C	D	E
1	LINKs Spend	April - March 09	Year 1		
2					
3	Income	Actual	Budget	Variance	
4					
5	Grant	130000	130000	0	
6	brought forward				
7					
8	Total Income	130000	130000		
9					
10	Expenditure				
11					
12	Project Co-ordinator SO2	16445	16445	0	1
13	Development Officer SO1	728	728	0	2
14	Admin scale 3 point	10365	10366	1	3
15	Recruitment	1991	1991	0	
16	Additional staff time to set up LINK	8616	9000	384	
17	Insurance (cost for extra gvoc insurance)	575	575	0	
18	Capital equipment	3466	3466	0	
19	Management,finance and infrastructure support	15000	15000	0	
20	Audit	500	500	0	
21	Post,stat,phone,ICT,publicity,marketing,subs	10375	10500	125	
22	Rent/Service charges	5000	5000	0	
23	Room hire,catering,events	1915	2000	85	
24	Staff training & travel	646	640	-6	
25	Members travel/training/CRB/translation/ins.	3019	3854	835	
26	Annual Report, design,print & distribution	0	0	0	4
27				0	
28	Total Expenditure	78641	80065	1424	
29					
30	surplus to carry over to next year	51359	49935		
31					
32	note 1 : Start Oct 08				
33	note 2 : not starting until 23rd.March 09				
34	note 3 : Part time from June then full time from Oct				
35	note 4: invoice for reports will be rec'd in following year ie year 1 will be paid in 2nd year				
36					cc

Next steps

LINK Working Groups will continue to explore and evidence key issues with Gateshead communities.

Mental Health: the group have identified crisis intervention as an issue and will assess service user and carer experience of this service before considering future recommendation.

Carers Issues: the group are looking at the implementation of the Carers Assessment, use of GP Carer Registers and advocacy support for carers.

Residential Care: the group are currently exploring monitoring and assessment procedures used by the Local Authority and Care Quality Commission and may progress to use 'Enter and View' to assess user and carer experience.

Hospital Discharge Procedure: public opinion identifies gaps in this provision. The group are examining current policy and procedure with a view to comparing against user experience and making future recommendations.

LINK Annual Event (October 2009):

This event will report back to the wider public on LINK achievements to date and ask the public to re-assess LINK priorities for the coming year.

Marketing and Communication Strategy

The LINK's Communication and Engagement Officer's post commenced in late March 2008. It is anticipated this post will enhance the LINK capacity to develop the Marketing and Communications Strategy. It is intended to particularly focus on involvement of 'unheard from' individuals and groups.

Thanks to

- LINK members would like to add a very special thank you to two members of the Interim Steering Group who were instrumental in bringing the LINK to this stage in its development.
- Sadly, Dorothy Henley and Ian Mason died in the spring of this year. Their knowledge of health and social care issues and absolute commitment to developing the LINK to meet the needs of local people has been sorely missed by Gateshead LINK members.
- We would also like to thank officers of Gateshead Council for conducting such a comprehensive job, through the original Stakeholder Group, in determining what was required of the LINK, before the contract was offered for tender. In this sense we were given an excellent footing to begin our work.