



**Bracknell Forest
Local Involvement Network
(LINK)**

Annual Report

2010 - 2011

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Hello and Welcome!

Welcome to the Bracknell Forest LINK annual report for 2010 – 2011.

This year has seen the LINK build on the work that it began last year, by addressing several key Health and Social Care issues in the borough whilst also looking to continue to build relationships with our statutory partners and raise the profile of the LINK in Bracknell Forest. This Annual Report will cover the activities of the LINK over the past year, as well as outlining some of our priorities for the future.

During the first six months that this report covers The Steering Group continued to be supported by Help and Care as our Hosts Organisation. On October 1st 2010 the Bracknell Forest LINK was taken in house by Bracknell Forest Council, where we were provided with a Project Manager who supported all our administration and development needs.

Below is the statement that was sent to the media at that time.

Glyn Jones, Director of Social Care and Health, thanked Help and Care for their co-operation in ensuring that we build on the work which has been done so far to develop LINK and prepare for its likely new organisation HealthWatch. "The views of Bracknell Forest residents are crucial in order to help improve and deliver responsive Health and Social Care services. We are committed to continuing to support people who receive health and care services to speak out to influence and improve those services."

Mark Sharman, Chief Executive of Help and Care, said that they "aspired to build a broad and representative LINK in Bracknell Forest, unpinned by classic principles of community development; working alongside people to develop and articulate their aspirations, views needs and concerns, working in partnership with them to develop local solutions to local needs and to bring positive change to their lives. We hope the Steering Group members are able to respond to the challenges of the current times"

Our project on Deaf and Hard of Hearing is coming to a close this year with Bracknell Area Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing Support Group (BADHOGS) continuing the work in raising the awareness around Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents accessing services.

The Homelessness project is near to completion. The sub group are currently organising the distribution of information cards that they've designed. This will involve them visiting schools, the local college and liaising with Bracknell Forest Council Housing Option Team.

The Steering Group Members are currently looking at concerns on Direct Payments and Hospital Discharge. These two could be key issues in 2011- 2012.

We continue to have the following sub groups:

1. **Marketing and Publicity**
2. **Public Meetings**
3. **Health:** Here we keep up to date with health provision in Bracknell Forest.
4. **Issues:**
5. **Hard of Hearing**
6. **Homelessness**
7. **Direct Payments**

Bracknell Forest LINK continues to have good successful partnership working. We have representation on many of the Strategic Partnership Boards and Forums. I believe the outcomes from the two projects near completion will show benefits for the residents of Bracknell Forest.

The LINK Steering Group wish to thank local residents for volunteering their time and supporting the work of the LINK. We welcome any members of our community wishing to become part of the wider LINK and being involved in our sub groups.

We are pleased to represent their views on Health and Social Care and move them forward for a successful outcome and conclusion.

Barbara Briggs
Bracknell Forest LINK Chair
31 March11

How can you contact us?

Contact details for the LINK

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Our vision

The Local Involvement Network (LINK) exists in order to ensure the residents of Bracknell Forest have a chance to have their say about local Health and Social Care services and feedback ideas on how they could be improved.

The LINK works with individuals, the local community, service users, voluntary groups and organisations to identify local needs in relation to Health and Social Care services in the area. The LINK tells the local Council, Hospital Trusts, GPs and other Health and Social Care providers what it has discovered in order to improve services.

About our community



Bracknell Forest is situated in central Berkshire and is located approximately thirty miles from London. The area of Bracknell Forest includes the town of Bracknell and the surrounding areas of Sandhurst, Crowthorne, Binfield and North Ascot. The population is over 118,000; with most living in the urban areas.

According to demographic statistics the largest group of people in Bracknell Forest are between 30 and 59 years old, with lower numbers of older people. The residents of Bracknell Forest are healthier than in many other parts of England and health is improving.

Over the last ten years, death rates from heart disease and stroke have decreased.

People living in Bracknell Forest tend to be healthy but inequalities do exist; with 22% of Bracknell Forest respondents identifying health services as the main area for development in a recent 'One Place' survey (<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk>).

Key facts about the LINK

The Bracknell Forest LINK is comprised of a Steering Group of volunteers who meet once a month in order to feedback on engagement, make decisions on future LINK work, report on the LINK finances and discuss local health issues.

The Steering Group is comprised of local individuals and members who represent local organisations or services. This allows the LINK to be embedded in local activities and events as well as the local community. The Steering Group abide by the Nolan Principles - these are Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadship - endeavour to be representative of the local community and conduct LINK business in full transparency.

Steering Group Members

The Bracknell Forest LINK Steering Groups members are;

Barbara Briggs (Chair)

Barbara is the chair of the Bracknell branch of Carers UK. Her organisation keeps carers issues high on the agenda for those providing services for carers and those cared for. Although she has a working knowledge of health issues, her expertise comes from social care; Barbara is involved in most areas appertaining to carers in Bracknell Forest.

Terry Pearce (Vice-Chair)

Terry has lived in Bracknell for nearly 40 years and for most of this time he has been involved in community activity. He had served as Councillor for his ward for a number of years. Terry was Chairman of Bracknell Forest University of the Third Age but still has a substantial involvement with the organisation.

Currently, Terry is a non-Executive Director of the Look-In Community Cafe and the Chair of the Over 50's Forum in Bracknell.

Margaret Camp (Finance Officer)

As a member of the Bracknell Federation of Community Groups Margaret feels that she should be able to bring to the Steering Group a wide range of issues about Health and Social Care raised by our members in the Bracknell Forest Area. The Federation consists of at least fourteen member groups from different organisations within Bracknell Forest and it is their concerns, views and opinions that she would bring to the Steering Group as well as the concerns of the people in the area where she lives.

Isabel Fernandez-Grandon

Isabel was co-opted as a Steering Group member in her professional capacity as a community development worker for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Mental Health working for the NHS in Bracknell Forest. A member of the wider LINKs since September 2008, Isabel joined the Steering Group in February 2010.

Adrienne Jones

Born in Bracknell, Adrienne is a fifth generation resident. Adrienne attended a LINK Information event and felt that she could contribute in the future development of health care in the borough and help bring more services to the increasingly elderly residents who are a vulnerable sector of the community. Adrienne has been active in the voluntary sector for many years especially with Age Concern (since 1971)

David Maxwell

Since 1995, David has been active in HAG (was Heatherwood Action Group, now Health Advisory Group). He has been elected as a Governor of Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals Trust.

Linda Webdell

Linda is a 'first generation new-towner' having moved from London to Bracknell in 1958 as a child and currently four generations of her immediate family are resident in Bracknell Forest. She has therefore, a deep personal interest in Health and Social Care. For many years Linda has worked professionally in the community supporting and developing local

groups and residents. She has a special professional interest in Mental Health and Learning Disability locally.

Enter and View Team

The Enter and View programme is an important part of the way the LINK works. LINK members can visit and report on premises where health and social care services are being used by Bracknell Forest residents. Generally these premises will be run either by NHS Berkshire East or Bracknell Forest Council or on their behalf by contractors.

The Bracknell Forest LINK Enter and View Team are;

- Barbara Briggs
- Margaret Camp

Demonstrating impact through action

Gathering views

The main remit of the LINK is to gather information about local Health and Social Care services – ideas, suggestions for improvement, what is working well and what isn't - and to give people an opportunity to monitor and check how services are planned and run. The LINK then feeds the information it gathers back to the local NHS and local authority so they can take this information into account when making decisions regarding service provision and support.

We want local people to have a voice and make a change. Here are some of the ways we have achieved this in 2010/11.

Projects and Outcomes

The LINK undertakes focussed project work based on our engagement and the resulting priorities. Over 2010/11 the LINK continued to publicise their work around deaf and hard of hearing patients accessing their GPs and Homelessness. This section will present the project work initiated in 2010/11 and its outcomes.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Project

Introduction



This project is a continuation of that which was started towards the end of the last financial year with the aim of increasing the awareness of the problems experienced by deaf and hard of hearing patients, in communicating with doctors and reception staff at GP surgeries in Bracknell Forest.

Strategies

- Questionnaire forms
- Analysis of responses
- Visits to surgeries/practice managers
- Seminars at 2 surgeries
- Liaison with the Bracknell Area Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing Support Group (BADHOGS)
- Collecting of literature put out by various organisations serving deaf people

Scope

Within Bracknell Forest we have around 16 surgeries, based at 13 locations but comprising only 12 practices. We did not include the Chan and Phillips surgery at 18 New Wokingham Road although it serves many Bracknell Forest residents from Crowthorne; nor have we yet contacted the three Ascot surgeries (Green Meadows, King Corner, and Magnolia House/Sunningdale) which have now joined the Bracknell Forest GP Consortium.

Questionnaire and Analysis

Questionnaire had been offered to users of GPs services early in 2010/2011. Thirty five responses were received. A new questionnaire was designed and distributed to practice managers at 15 sites (12 practices) 9 responses were received.

Both the user questionnaire and the practice questionnaire were analyses by O'Driscoll Research Services of Guildford. Mr O'Driscoll provided an executive summary of his analysis and a full survey of deaf and hard of hearing users of GP services and survey practice managers; dated October 2010. The survey analysis was a most professional document and pointed to the need to visit practices and engage in discussion.

Visits

All 12 practices have been visited at least once. Some of these visits were by a single member of the LINK-BADHOGS team; other visits were by 2, 3 or 4 team members.

At all practices except one, serious interest was shown by the practice manager in improving communications between staff and deaf patients. Two practices were in denial of there being a problem that had not already been addresses. These two felt that changes to their surgeries it the procedures were not necessary.

Seminars

We were invited back to two surgeries to meet with the practice manager and some of his/her staff. It is not easy to get staff together as many work part time or cannot be spared from front-line duty.

The ideal event would be when staff meet for an afternoon when the surgery is closed – provided that the afternoon is nor earmarked for, say, annual first aid or resuscitation training. We were pleased to be able to meet with staff at Easthampstead Practice on 1st July 2010 and the Gainsborough Practice on 6th December 2010.

Liaison with BADHOGS

In accordance with LINK policy we were very pleased to be able to co-opt at first, 2 and later a third member of the BADHOGS team.

Our liaison with BADHOGS has been particularly useful; the 2 LINK members on the sub-group would not have been able to contact all the patients and practices that we have without the enthusiastic help of the 3 BADHOGS members. We would also like to record the tremendous help we have received from host personally namely Emma Austin, Alison Tasker and Samantha Coomber.

Outcomes

From these recommendations the project group have created a leaflet explaining the project but also explaining how best to communicate with people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. These leaflets are aimed at staff in surgeries with the hope that it will continue to raise awareness once the project has ceased.

We have also developed a business card sized communication card that will be distributed to people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to encourage them to come forward as having hearing difficulties to their GP practice and other relevant persons.



Future Activity

We are aware that all GP practices will require monitoring and reminders that “1 in 7” of their older patients do require special consideration. The 3 new members of the Bracknell GP Consortium should be visited.

The awareness campaign being mounted by Action of Hearing Loss (aka RNID) which will extend the scope way beyond GP surgeries, to include dentists, chemists, banks, shops etc, this should be supported via BADHOGS with as much effort as we are able to muster.

Update from David Maxwell

Homelessness Project



In 2010 an issue was raised with the Bracknell Forest LINK that people may be ‘sleeping rough’ in the woodlands surrounding Bracknell. In response to this the LINK formed a homelessness sub group to look at the issue, identify current services available to the homeless and to recognise gaps in services. The LINK has been working in partnership with Bracknell Forest Council on this project.

The aim of the project was to record the number of people that are currently homeless in Bracknell Forest under the definition of homelessness 'a person with no fixed, regular or adequate abode' to include sofa surfers and the hidden homeless living in the woods.

During the project the LINK made contact with the local Foodbank – a national network who give out nutritionally balanced emergency food to people in crisis who have nowhere else to turn - based at the Kerith centre, the LINK made contact with them to find out statistics, which show the amount of homeless people who are receiving food parcels from them.

The number of homeless people who have approached their service is available from them via their website. A figure is not quoted here as it is changing all the time. During the last year they have to date dealt with over 30 homeless people. Work continues with them to make contact with the homeless to involve them in this project. The LINK has also helped to partner the Foodbank with the borough.

Outcomes

- A representative from the LINK has been invited to sit on the Homeless Strategy Group.
- The LINK has designed and produced an information flash card with all the relevant information and contact details in it. The next phase of the work is to distribute this to the homeless. The LINK made contact with a previously homeless resident of the borough who took part in the production of the flash card.
- The LINK have also produced a comparison report which compared the homeless strategy produced by Decorum Council whose demographics are almost identical to that of Bracknell Forest. This has been given to Bracknell Forest Council.
- Currently Bracknell Forest Council does not have a current strategy with regard to homelessness, but has now stated that they are writing a strategy which will go out for consultation after the current Council Elections. The LINK will be part of this consultation.
- The work on this project will be ongoing throughout the coming year. The LINK will be holding a count of homeless people in Spring 2011.

Update from Linda Webdell

The Issues Sub Group

The issues sub group meets to discuss concerns that have been brought to the attention of The LINK, these concerns are then weighed and put through our matrix system before presenting them to the Steering Group for consideration in how the LINK could become involved and to what extent and whether the same piece of work is being carried out elsewhere.

If it decided to take up a concern a sub group will then be set up.

Health Sub Group

The meetings since October 2010 have primarily been update meetings and have included guest speakers to provide updates on health-based projects such as Bracknell Forest HealthSpace and Brant's Bridge Cancer Unit.

The project officer has been networking within the Health Sector in order to keep the LINK informed of what's going on, but also to inform organisations of the LINK work.

Youth Sub Group

The LINK have just recruited a new volunteer who is keen to work with young people and find out what their views are on Health and Social Care services locally, with the aim of getting schools, youth centres, community centres and local colleges on board.

The youth sub group are currently looking at possible projects that they can undertake in 2011.

Involvement in Local Consultations

Mental Health Inpatient consultation



In August 2010, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) launched a public consultation on mental health inpatient facilities serving the east of Berkshire. The consultation document explained that the Trust, seeking to deliver a high quality service in a more cost effective way, was considering three options.

- (1) To move all mental health inpatient beds in Berkshire to Prospect Park Hospital.
- (2) To use Prospect Park Hospital as above but continue to provide services for elderly patients in St Marks (redecorated but not refurbished)
- (3) To build new, high quality premises at Upton Park Hospital to serve the east of Berkshire

The LINK Steering Group members gauged local reaction through engagement with individuals and local groups, and by attending public meetings held within the community. On the basis of all the feedback gathered the LINK submitted its response to the consultation setting out the following main points:-

Principles:

1. That the most important priority should be to ensure mental health inpatients are offered the best treatment and facilities
2. The importance of patients retaining links with their families whilst in hospital

Concerns:

- The distance and travelling times to and from Prospect Park Hospital
- Whether the budget for transport provision promised to address this would be (a) sufficient (b) ringfenced

Preferences:

Bracknell Forest LINK responded to the consultation opting for Option 1. However the LINK did state that this option would only work with good transport links and an increased interest in patient's families and carers.

In February 2011, Berkshire Healthcare Trust published the results of the public consultation. The document states that detailed plans for Option 1 (Prospect Park) are to be developed for decision by the Trust and PCT by 1 June, even though it acknowledges that Option 3 (Upton) was the majority preference among responses received.

Response to the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Consultation

During September and November 2010 NHS Berkshire East PCT conducted their Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PDA) consultation.

After looking through the consultation the LINK Steering Group sent the following response to Berkshire East PCT.

"We think the document was very informative and provided a wealth of interesting data about our area. The various maps and graphs explained in clear form the different services provided by the NHS thus enabling us to make educated comparisons with other areas. The data on deprivation, life expectancy and carers, etc is very useful to the LINK as our role is to work with our local community and represent their hopes and aspirations.

Generally speaking our area comes out quite high in terms of health outcomes compared to other local areas as well as nationally. There are of course pockets of deprivation and this document is useful in pin pointing where they are. We seem to be fairly well covered in terms of pharmacies and chemists, although I am sure there are problems for some elderly or disabled people in getting to them.

We would like to thank you for producing a well written and informative document which will assist us in our work in the community."

Update from Terry Pearce

Our Relationships

Relationships with 'key stakeholders' continue to be developed. Stakeholders such as NHS Berkshire East, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, the Care Quality Commission, as well as some care home providers, continue to be supportive of the LINK. They have helped us by providing information, advice, support and presentations when requested, as well as offering opportunities for LINK representatives to get involved.

The "Look In" Cafe



On the 1st April this year the Look In Community Cafe celebrated its first anniversary since the running of the Cafe passed from Bracknell Forest Council to a volunteer board of directors. The Cafe is now staffed by a full time manager and assistant with a part time member of staff, assisted by volunteers. Many LINK members are involved with the Cafe and Margaret Camp and Terry Pearce, Steering Group members, are directors of the Cafe.

The Look In provides an important social function for the over 50's in Bracknell Forest especially for the socially excluded who for a variety of reasons are lonely and isolated. A number of locally based voluntary groups meet at the Look In and it provides a wider community facility beyond just the over 50's

Bracknell Forest Older Peoples Partnership

A representative of the Bracknell Forest LINK attends the quarterly meetings of The Older Peoples Partnership.

Since the partnership was established in April 2010 they now have Terms of Reference for the group.

Listed below are some of the issues discussed by the partnership to date?

1. The group looked at the strategy for older people "Adding Life to Years".
2. The group received and discussed the PCT Strategic Plan - Preventing Crisis – Supporting People
3. The group has been informed of a new initiative "First Contact" which has been developed by BFVA, Thames Valley Police and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue. When a resident is visited they would be given a checklist of services provided by each of the above.
4. The group has had presentation from, Adult Social Care, The Chief Housing Officer, The Head of Communications and Marketing and Dr Naheed Rana from NHS Berkshire East.

Some of the future issues to be looked at are:

1. Monitor the changes in health.
2. Review the Action Plan within the Older Peoples Strategy
3. Ward closures and the impact for older people in the community.

Update from Margaret Camp

Work of the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Joint East Berkshire Committee continued to meet at three monthly intervals to consider issues affecting the Berkshire East area.

In October 2010, the committee was invited by the Chief Executive to tour Wexham Park Hospital and see the working environment of the Accident and Emergency Department. Other items included progress on the Hospital Trust turnaround plan; NHS Berkshire East Budget Plans; the Consultation on Mental Health Inpatient Facilities and the transfer of Community Health Services. The Review of NHS Car Parking charges which had been undertaken was published. This was reported to the LINKs Health subgroup in December.

At the February 2011 meeting, the committee heard from the Chief Executive of south Central Strategic Health Authority about the implementation of the Government's proposals for NHS reorganisation and the national and regional health priorities affecting East Berkshire. There was consideration of the Consultation on Children's heart surgery services in England and an update from South Central Ambulance Service on its performance and progress towards Foundation Trust Status.

With the constraints of the economic situation, the reduction in resources and the changes to NHS structures, it was decided that a joint committee which repeated many items of the individual Borough Scrutiny Panels was no longer sustainable.

*Update from Madeline Diver,
LINKs Co-opted Representative,
April 2011*

South East Local Networking (SELLnet)

SELLnet is made up of LINKs Chairs and Vice Chairs from across the south east of England. SELLnet has approximately twenty six members in total.

At each meeting there is a round up of local activities each group is involved in and the outcomes of projects and meetings they have attended.

Some of the speakers SELLnet have had recently is a representative from the Department of Health, Safety & Environment (DHSE) who came and spoke on the Transition Period between LINKs and Healthwatch and The Government Response to the White Paper Consultation on Healthwatch

We have had recently speakers from:

- The Care Quality Commission
- A talk on GP Commissioning by Charles Waddicor

Some of the topics for further discussion are:

1. Accountability for Healthwatch
2. Patient involvement in GP consortia.
3. Patient and Public Involvement.

If you would like to find out more about SELLnet, please contact the Bracknell Forest LINK: debra.ogles@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Bracknell Forest LINK makes its radio debut!



On 10th April 2010 the LINK ran a one hour slot on a temporary community radio station called Hug FM.

Hug FM was a 10 week project funded by Bracknell Forest Council, with the aim to work with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to create a community radio station which broadcasted for 4 days. The LINK one hour slot was a success with a good mix of lively chat, music

and discussions on Health and Social Care issues that have been raised with the Bracknell Forest LINK.

The LINK Development Officer, and Linda Webdell, Steering Group Member spoke about the current projects around the joint working with Shelter in evidencing homelessness in Bracknell Forest. They also gave a background on the deaf or hard of hearing project.

The LINK had at that stage completed its first questionnaire to identify the barriers that the deaf or hard of hearing face when trying to access GP appointments.

Hug FM provided a great opportunity to engage with the young community of Bracknell Forest and to get them involved in having their say on health and social issues.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Update from Terry Pearce

I attended two meetings of the Bracknell Forest Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel last year as representative of the Bracknell Forest LINK. Issues discussed included GP Consortiums, Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS, Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies, Bracknell Healthspace, etc.

I asked questions on a number of issues, including Health and Wellbeing Boards, GP Consortiums, Healthwatch, etc. I was especially concerned to learn more about the role of GP Consortiums and how the local community could monitor its progress and how transparent they would be. I was interested in how the proposed Health and Wellbeing Boards would operate and how patients would be represented on them. I asked how progress was going in transforming LINK into Healthwatch and what would be the role of volunteers on Healthwatch. I am concerned about how the local community generally will hold to account the new bodies being created as a result of the proposed health service reforms.

I find the meetings interesting and informative, it is a good forum in my opinion to discuss these questions and the issues are relevant to the work of the LINK.

Working with other LINKs

The LINK have been looking at ways in which LINK can share information, coordinate and work together with neighbouring LINKs on issues of common interest.

Promoting and encouraging involvement

Nepalese Community Focus Group

There are approximately 150 Nepalese people within the Borough, 75 of these people are living in Sandhurst, excluding those currently serving in the Army. The majority of people are registered with GP practices in Sandhurst. There are currently approx 20 Nepalese children, all of whom attend schools in Sandhurst.

On 5th March 2011, the LINK organised a workshop with the Nepalese Community to discuss Health and Social Care factors that affect their community. With the help of a translator the following questions were asked:

1. What do you think of the local health and care services e.g. GP services, hospitals, homecare?
2. What do you like about the local services?
3. What do you dislike about the local services?
4. What do you think could be done to improve the services?
5. Have you got any specific issues of concern that relate to Health and Social Care?
6. Would anyone be interested in getting involved in the LINK? This doesn't have to include volunteering but just being kept informed of what is happening locally about Health and Social Care services.

As a result of the workshop, the LINK have discovered that the Nepalese Community find Health and Social Care services in the Borough generally good. However, one lady did state that there is a problem with communication; she said that it would be better to have translators to communicate the views of the women when they are using the Health and Social Care services, especially as their husbands (who speak better English) are often at work. Currently there are no translators that work in the Health and Social Care services which make it hard for the women.

Attracting new volunteers

The number of members of Bracknell Forest LINK has decreased significantly following the change in hosting arrangements on the 1st of October 2010. This is due to the previous host being unable to pass on contact details from the database of members that they held.



The outgoing host did communicate to members regarding the change and requesting that they contacted the new host to provide their details again however the majority of members did not

contact the new host and thus we were not able to access their details.

This has left Bracknell Forest LINK with a substantially diminished number of members, although work has been done to rectify this including creating and widely distributing new membership forms and recruiting at public events.

In late 2010 Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action passed on details for two potential active volunteers who raised their interest in LINK work on the 'Do It' website. Both volunteers are interested in undertaking work to further engage the community and raise the awareness of LINK in the community. The LINK Steering Group looks forward in working with them on upcoming projects in 2011.

Community Roadshow – “Mind, Body and Spirit”

On Wednesday 13th October LINK held its first Community Roadshow at Easthampstead Baptist Church.

The theme was Mind, Body and Spirit, the exhibits reflected this theme as did the programme of presentations by a variety of local groups and public services. The Roadshow ran from 4pm to 7pm allowing people to pop in on their way home from work, healthy refreshments were provided.

There was a competition to vote for a new Logo for LINKs as well as an opportunity to find out about the work of LINKs in our community. We would like to thank all those groups that supported the event as well as Bracknell Forest Council for their assistance with the organisation.

Many members of the public filled in the questionnaire for which we are grateful for.

Next Steps – looking ahead to the next 12 months

New host organisation

At the end of September 2010 we said goodbye to our host, Help & Care, who had provided support to the LINK for the past two years. We look forward to establishing a positive working relationship with our new host organisation (Bracknell Forest Council), building on past successes and taking forward our vital work together.

HealthWatch – planning and transition



In their White Paper, *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS* (July 2010), the government, attempting to ensure that patients are at the heart of everything the NHS does and in order to “strengthen the collective voice of patients and the public” will bring forward provisions in the forthcoming Health Bill to create a local HealthWatch in every local authority Area.

HealthWatch is to emerge as a new independent consumer champion across Health and Social Care taking on existing LINK functions and assuming new responsibilities and accountabilities.

Funded by the Local Authority, Local HealthWatch will be accountable to the public through extended reporting arrangements to the Local Authority and a new national HealthWatch England organisation. It is also proposed that they be represented at a strategic level locally through new Health and Wellbeing Boards so that they may identify and improve outcomes for health and social care across a broader range of functions.

Bracknell Forest Local HealthWatch:

Just as the Bracknell Forest LINK has been doing for the past 3, Bracknell Forest Local HealthWatch will obtain the views and feedback from patients and carers, make such views known, publish reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved, to persons responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services.

Its new functions will be

- Will provide advice and information about access to local care services. It will also provide advocacy and support people in making choices.
- Will provide a source of intelligence for HealthWatch England about the quality of providers.
- Will also be responsible for the provision of NHS Complaints Advocacy from April 2013

The LINK will spend the coming year working closely with Bracknell Forest Council, the Care Quality Commission and other key organisations to plan for the transition to local HealthWatch in preparation for July 2012 when it takes on its statutory responsibilities.

Community Event

A sub-group has been created to work on future community events and promotion, using the feedback from the previous event. As a result of feedback from previous events it was decided that the next event should focus on involving groups and communities that had not attended previous events.

In order to cover more of Bracknell Forest and access a variety of people it was decided that a series of smaller events would be more effective than a large event. Work has started on these events including ordering some promotional materials. The planning has



been subject to a slight delay due to a change in admin arrangements however it is hoped that these events will be an opportunity to involve new LINK members and spread the word further about work that has been, and is being, carried out by the LINK.

Direct Payments Projects



This sub group is in the early stages of collecting evidence. A concern was raised by a member of the public about the amount of information given to a client with a direct payment.

We have set up a meeting with Social Services for the first week in April.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The world of health and social care is changing rapidly with the planning and eventual ushering-in of the Health and Social Care Bill. It is an important time for us to make sure that patients and the public have an opportunity to make themselves heard in the new organisations that are emerging.

The Local Authority is in the early stages of setting up the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Board will seek to address the causes of ill health, enable lifestyle change, early detection and treatment of disease and will draw together commissioners across the NHS, public health, social care and children's services. Members of the board will draw on their clinical expertise, local knowledge or understanding of the needs of patients, users of health and social care services and the public to shape commissioning strategy.

Under the proposals, a seat is reserved for a representative from the new Local HealthWatch organisation and LINK will be involved in transition planning to ensure patient and public involvement is represented in the new structure.

Our year in figures

We need a LINK to ensure local people and community groups are able to influence the decisions that are made about the services that affect their lives – ***“Working with you in the community for better local services”***.

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

Number of LINK participants/members on 31/03/2011

| Level of participation | Total | Of which: | | |
|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | People with a social care interest | Individual participants | Interest group participants |
| Informed participants | 138 | 75 | 70 | 68 |
| Occasional participants | 75 | 35 | 60 | 15 |
| Active participants | 43 | 15 | 23 | 20 |

Our Finances

Income in 2010-11

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Help & Care | 44,697.50 |
| Salaries | 11,925.17 |
| Meetings & refreshments | 1,576.98 |
| Printing & Promotional costs | 1,154.00 |
| Adhoc | 57.70 |
| Previous year carry forward | -6,000.00 |
| | |
| | 53,411.35 |

Tell Us What You Think

We need to hear your experiences of local Health and Social Care services. The LINK can't work without you. We are committed to listen to your feedback. Please fill in the box below and send it to

Debra Ogles
Bracknell Forest LINK
Bracknell Forest Council
Time Square
4th Floor North, Adult Social Care and Health
Bracknell
RG12 1JD

Comments/ideas/issues/suggestions

Name:

Contact details: