



Bracknell Forest

Local Involvement Network

Annual Report
2012/13

Growing Stronger Communities

By joining together, many whispers become one voice

“Our Vision for the Bracknell Forest LINK is...making health and social care work for you by developing services that truly reflect the needs of people living and working in Bracknell Forest.

We have already established, and continue to develop, a diverse network of local people, communities, groups and organisations.

With your help we will create a stronger, more independent voice, to work together to help shape future services, strengthen and widen the influence of patients and service users in the planning, delivery and improvement of health and social care services for Bracknell Forest.”



Contents

Hello and Welcome	4
How can you contact us?	5
What does the LINK do?	6
Membership and Structure	7
The Steering Group	7
What have we done this year?	9
Bracknell Forest LINK Legacy	3
Involvement, Engagement & Networking	5
Relationship & Representation	7
Healthwatch Bracknell Forest	10
How was it paid for?	10
Summary of Activity	11

Hello and Welcome



As you will have seen from our last Annual Report (to 31 March 2012), the changes introduced by the Government's Health and Social Care Bill have resulted in the 152 Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) around the country ceasing to exist from 31 March 2013.

In spite of the knowledge that 'we', the LINK, will not exist beyond March 2013, we have taken the view that it must be 'Bracknell Forest LINK business as usual' up until the latest date possible.

Locally, through its External Representatives, the LINK has continued to maintain an effective and constructive working relationship with statutory organisations – such as the Primary Care Trusts, soon to be Bracknell and Ascot CCG, NHS Hospital Trusts, the voluntary sector and the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. These are important for any 'consumer champion' as without them, the public / lay person's influence would be minimal or non-existent.

Nationally, the LINK has maintained its presence on groups such as the South East LINK Leaders Network (SELLNet) and the National Association of LINK Members (NALM). The LINK has also met its statutory obligation to comment on Quality Accounts reports produced by NHS Trusts operating in Bracknell Forest.

The Bracknell Forest LINK has continued its work on the projects started last year. In particular, we are making very good progress with two major projects looking at patient experience of hospital discharge and public attitude around Self-Care.

We hope that the new organisation will continue the good work undertaken so far by the LINK, whilst building on the excellent relationships that have already been formed. In this way, the people of Bracknell Forest will continue to have a voice in respect of the health and social care provision they receive.

Barbara Briggs
Chair, Bracknell Forest LINK

How can you contact us?

The offices for the Bracknell Forest LINK are based in Bracknell Town Centre

Address: Bracknell Forest LINK
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Bracknell
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What does the LINK do?

Bracknell Forest LINK is focused on addressing local needs and priorities, by finding out what people want from their health and social carer services, monitoring the care that services provide and reporting our findings.

We offer everyone who lives or uses services in Bracknell Forest an opportunity to say what they think about health and social care services. The LINK aims to engage with as wide a cross-section of the public as possible to hear their views. Where possible individual issues received are signposted to further help and support. LINK actively look for trends which will then inform the LINK Work Plan.

The LINK makes recommendations to the people who plan and run services, and expects a response within a set period of time. It also asks for information about services, and again can expect a response within a specified timeframe. The LINK has the ability (via trained Authorised Representatives) to carry out Enter and View visits to see if services are working well. If it feels like action is required, issues can be referred to Bracknell Forest Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Who do we work with?

The LINK is an independent organisation but works in partnership with both local and national organisations. Most importantly we work with members of the public and the community to effectively represent their views to those organisations who purchase and commission services locally such as NHS Berkshire, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Adult Social Care, independent regulators and of course all those who provide health and social care in the community.



Membership and Structure

You don't have to be a member of the Bracknell Forest LINK to get involved. Anybody can participate in the LINK and tell us about their experiences of health or social care services, even if they are not a member of LINK. For those people who would like to be more involved, membership of the LINK can range from being on the mailing list and receiving the newsletter, through to volunteering to serve on sub-groups or running for election to the Steering Group for those with more time to spare.

The number of LINK participants has continued to fluctuate this year as people opt out as they move jobs or out of the area. During the transition from LINK to Local Healthwatch, the LINK will be contacting all participants to ask permission to pass on their contact details to Healthwatch Bracknell Forest.

The LINK has a total of 266 people registered to hear about its work and the opportunity to get involved.

The LINK has had 8 active members on its Steering Group who have been involved in decision making and supported the progress of project work.

Bracknell Forest LINK registered participants:	
Total number of registered interested parties as of 31 March 2012	266
Total number of registered interested parties as of 31 March 2011	273
Number of persons requesting information only	60
Number of active participants involved in groups, work groups, representing the LINK externally etc.	10
Number of active participants that have participated in training events	0



The Steering Group

Bracknell Forest LINK is volunteer-led, with local volunteer residents supported by a paid Support Officer. The Bracknell Forest LINK has one main volunteer group that drive the work forward: the Steering Group. This group consists of selected members who come from many different backgrounds and experience, but all have an interest in local health and social care issues. We also have an Enter & View Team.

Steering Group: The Steering Groups is responsible for the overall governance of the LINK. It is responsible for making sure that things are done properly and that processes are in place to make the LINK fair and accessible to all. The current members of the Steering group 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.

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.

John Cattermole

John was a Nurse for thirty three years, spending the last seventeen years working as a Modern Matron at Broadmoor Hospital in Crowthorne. He took medical retirement in 2006, due to the ongoing disability of Multiple Sclerosis. After which he joined the Patient and Public Involvement in Healthcare (PPI) , which he remained for 2-3 years. This involved looking at mental health care in Berkshire, and completing announced visits to health care providers, which included Prospect Park in Reading and Thornford Park near Newbury. John has an ongoing interest in mental health, physical disability, learning disabilities and older peoples care, especially those requiring a residential care setting.

Anne Ruthven

Anne was co-opted on to the Steering in January 2012

Brenda Winch

Anne was co-opted on to the Steering in March 2012

What have we done this year?

The LINK's issues Sub-Group assesses issues brought to it against set criteria to determine the course of action for them to take. If it is deemed necessary for a project to be initiated, it is referred to the Steering Group who then allocate resources to the project. These are the projects that the LINK has taken forward since its last report to the Secretary of State.

Bracknell Forest Community Chest

Project Lead: Barbara Briggs

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Status:

The LINK made a fund of £5,000 available to local community groups and charities in order to undertake projects and research that promotes and reports the public's views about health and social care. A set of criteria for application of funds was created and a maximum limit of £1,000 per application was set. A group of LINKs volunteers scrutinised the applications and decided which applicants should be awarded funding.

The successful applications were: Bracknell Forest Voluntary Sector Forum for a survey around people awareness of the new arrangements around health locally; Sandhurst and Owlsmoor PPG for a survey around Out of Hours; BADHOGs to buy new software for speech-to-text to ensure that all members can take part in their meeting; The Ark for a survey around GP access for people with learning disabilities and the Over 50s Forum on a survey on access to information about services, support and activities available from all agencies.

Bracknell Forest LINK Community Chest Projects: a snapshot

Over 50s Forum: The Over 50s Forum is an independent voluntary organisation set up in March 1998 to represent the views of the 50+ in the borough on matters arising locally which impact on their lives. This is achieved by liaison and discussion with public and voluntary bodies whose activities affect older people.

The aim of their report was to identify older people's attitude about accessing information and their views about: Given the opportunity would they like to access IT opportunities and have support to go online, the barriers to access/learning and of those not wanting to go online and the reasons why.

Sandhurst and Owlsmoor Patient Focus Group: provides a vehicle for patients in order to communicate concerns and find out their opinions about the services they are receive from the medical practices and then relate them back to the GPs who attend our meetings. We also carry out surveys and questionnaires. It helps the patients and the practice to improve its services.

The funded from the community chest allowed the PPG to carry out a survey on "out of hours services" along with questions relative to the Sandhurst and Owlsmoor practice.

The survey was sent out to over 300 people that are currently registered to the PPG but they also undertake face-to-face surveys at the surgeries.

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Sector Forum designed and conducted a survey to gather views on what local peoples knowledge is about the new arrangements under public health and commissioning.

In addition Bracknell Forest Voluntary Sector Forum would like to raise awareness and inform there new bodies of the vital services and support provided by VCFs groups in the health and wellbeing/social care field especially within the new commissioning arrangements.

The Ark Trust: The Ark Trusts aims to include, inform and inspire people with disabilities and young people not in education, employment or training across the South East of England. The organisation used the community chest fund to look at the experience of people with learning disabilities accessing their GP's.

Bracknell Area Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support Group (BADHOGs): BADHOGs used the community chest grant to develop a computer-based capability specifically for the very hard-of-hearing who, even when wearing hearing-aids, could not acquire sufficient content when someone else was speaking.

Although the prototype has now been installed it is still at a primitive level of operation. Work will continue on the speech analysis processor and it be more thoroughly trained to provide a higher level of accuracy and performance. At that point the whole capability will be ported across to a more powerful laptop which has been negotiated with DSL.

Access to GP appointments for the deaf and hard of hearing community - Revisits

Project Lead: David Maxwell and BADHOGs

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Complete

In September 2011, the Deaf and hard of hearing subgroup decided to revisit the 12 surgeries that took part in the original survey to see if there had been any improvements since the initial report was published. Revisits showed that very few improvements were made since our initial visits in 2009/2010. In a few surgeries the only way to make an appointment is by telephone or in person: The former is no use to a person with hearing difficulties and it is difficult for communication to be established between a hearing and hearing impaired person in the latter. Fortunately, electronic communication (i.e. email, text) is now available at several surgeries. These are not yet widely used for making appointments. We were pleased to note that several surgeries now send information to patients by email.

The project highlighted that there is still some work to be undertaken around raising awareness of the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing people accessing health services, including pharmacists, hospitals and dentists.

Satisfaction of the Direct Payment Process

Project Lead: Debra Ogles

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Complete

At the beginning of 2012, the Bracknell Forest LINK carried out an independent evaluation of Direct Payment recipient's satisfaction of the support given by the Self Directed Support team within Bracknell Forest Council. This piece of research came about from issues raised to the LINK from the public about vulnerable individuals becoming employers.

The project was commissioned by the LINK with the support from the Self Directed Support team at the local authority, after LINK steering group members received issues from members of the public about vulnerable individuals becoming employers. The LINK wanted to find out whether this concern was replicated with people's who currently receive a direct payment.

The survey was sent out to 158 people who were in receipt of a Direct Payment from the Council. This number excluded people who receive a Direct Payment for Shopping or House Work.

The LINK received back 56 responses to the survey which was a statistically viable 35% response rate.

The project highlighted that the majority of respondents were happy with the support and information provided by the self directed support team at Bracknell Forest Council.

Patient Experience of Hospital Discharge

Project Lead: Barbara Briggs

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Complete

During 2011/12, the LINK carried out an independent evaluation of Patient Experience of Hospital Discharge from the three acute hospital trusts that cover Bracknell Forest.

Patient Experience surveys were distributed to local residents at events, carers, and the main acute hospitals, Frimley Park Hospital, Royal Berkshire Hospital and Heatherwood and Wexham Park.

The findings of this project highlighted different ways that different people experience hospital discharge at different hospitals, with some trusts being more patient centred than others. It is clear that good practice exists, and this report may be useful evidence for more research and further partnership working/relationship development.

Homeless Project

Project Lead: Linda Webdell

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Complete

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.

Public Attitude to Self Care

Project Lead: Debra Ogles

Project Support: Dave Rossiter

Complete

During Self-Care Week which ran from 12th November – 16th November 2012 the LINK teamed up with key partners including Bracknell Forest Council and Stroke Association to promote and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Throughout the week the LINK, with partners, had a display in Princess Square, a shopping centre in Bracknell town centre, which enabled people to find out how they can help themselves in staying fit and healthy for life, in some cases taking the first steps in Self-Care. Fruit (provided by Waitrose), pedometers and information were all given away throughout the week by staff from LINK, Bracknell Leisure Centre, Stroke Association and Bracknell Forest Council.

To capture local people's attitude around Self-Care, the LINK encouraged local people to complete a survey which entered them in a prize draw. Over 100 people completed the LINK survey and it is estimated that a further 300 people visited the stall over the week, taking away valuable information about looking after themselves and the people they care for.

The report presents 8 recommendations to local health and social care organisations.

Review of Information for NHS Dental Patients

Project Lead: Debra Ogles

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Complete

NHS Berkshire, Dental Communications Group asked Reading and Slough LINKs to carry out a review of information for patients held by NHS Dental Practices. The project was then extended to include Wokingham, Bracknell and West Berkshire LINKs.

The project looked at the range of services offered by practices, the charges relating to those services and entitlement to receive certain services on the NHS. This involved members of the LINK enter and view team carrying out visits to 9 NHS dental practices in Bracknell Forest to speak to staff and look for patient information and following this reviewing patient leaflets and practice websites.

NHS Berkshire believes that improved information to patients via leaflets, websites, and within the practices would help address these issues, and improve the service patients are receiving from their NHS dental practice.

An interim report with recommendations and completed questionnaire's with LINK findings was sent to each of the practices visited and a final joint report with 'key themes' from each of the Berkshire LINKs that took part in the project was sent to NHS Berkshire. The report is to be used to share best practice and improve the information provided for NHS dental patients

Bracknell Forest LINK Legacy

Project Lead: Debra Ogles

Project Support: Debra Ogles

Complete

The Bracknell Forest LINK is keen to ensure that all of its work, processes, systems, volunteer efforts and resources are not lost during the transition to the new Local Healthwatch body. The Host worker is committed to ensuring that this is achieved and that the new Local Healthwatch organisation is in the best possible place to continue, in a seamless way, the functions of the LINK. The legacy document, which will be handed over to LHW, aims to ensure the voices of local people continue to be heard and opportunities for influencing decisions within health and social care continue to be available to the public.

The LINK legacy is the story and impact of Local Involvement Networks. When it ceases to exist as a statutory network in April 2013, it will be the LINK's benefits, lessons and achievements that will be passed on.

This legacy will continue the journey of promoting the voice of local people across Bracknell Forest in the future of health and social care. Many of these benefits will have particular relevance for community engagement initiatives going forward but there will also be wider significance to commissioners, service providers and local accountability mechanisms.

Representatives from the LINK's Steering Group were invited to discuss the legacy that the Bracknell Forest LINK will leave behind. The legacy included, for example, recommendations to Local Healthwatch following the results of LINK project work, NHS and social care issues that LINK

participants consider Healthwatch should address in the future, and LINK Authorised Visitor training packages.

Enter and View

The LINK has the right to Enter and View certain premises where health and social care services are provided (excluding Children's Social Services). Enter and View visits will take place following evidence-based research, and may be announced or unannounced. However, the LINK endeavours to address any issues at a 'grass-roots' level before the need for Enter and View arises.

The Enter & View Team comprises trained representatives who are responsible for our Enter & View visits of health or social care premises. The current Enter & View Team are:

- Barbara Briggs
- Terry Pearce
- Margaret Camp
- Adrienne Jones
- David Maxwell
- Isabel Fernandez – Grandon

During 2012/13, The LINK carried out 10 Enter and View visits as part of their dental review project.



Quality Accounts

All NHS service providers are required to publish Quality Accounts each year, to provide the public with information on the quality of care they provide. Bracknell Forest LINK is given a copy of these Quality Accounts for each provider in our area, and invited to comment upon it. Any statement that the LINK chooses to make must be included verbatim in the final Quality Account.

This year, the LINK was invited to comment on 3 Quality Accounts:

- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
- Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital

LINK members provided informed statements for the Quality Accounts for Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Involvement, Engagement & Networking

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 abolishes LINKs with effect from 31 March 2013 and a new organisation, Local Healthwatch, will replace LINKs.

Despite this, the LINK has continued to engage with local people through its networks, projects, Bulletins, quarterly newsletters, website, and through attendance at local events. However, the LINK has reduced its programme of major Community Engagement Events so that it can concentrate its resources (key LINK participants and the support team) on completing all of its projects before the LINK ends, alongside producing a Legacy to hand over to the new Local Healthwatch organisation.

LINK Roadshow

People across Bracknell Forest were encouraged to give their local health and social care services, as Bracknell Forest LINK went out and about during its summer roadshow.

The roadshow visited various locations and provided local people with an easy method to have their say on services in the community.

Newsletter and E-bulletin

The LINK Newsletter continued to share key information and updates with participants, health and social care organisations and providers.

The e-bulletin continued to share LINK updates, ensuring information and outcomes of LINK activity, surveys and involvement opportunities were shared in a timely fashion between newsletter publications.

LINK at Local events

The LINK has supported local events whilst also promoting its role. We have also had a presence at local partnerships including; Bracknell Forest Adult Safeguarding Board, Bracknell Forest Older People's Partnership, Integrated Care Partnership Board and Heatherwood Stakeholder meeting.

Shaping the Future of Healthcare in East Berkshire

The 'Shaping the Future' programme is a joint commitment by all elements of the local NHS to find long-term solutions for hospital and community health services to meet local health needs.

Working together on the Shaping the Future programme are:

- NHS Berkshire (Berkshire East PCT)
- Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) led by GPs covering Bracknell & Ascot, Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead and South Bucks.

The programme was designed to:

- Establish a financial and clinically sustainable model of care for east Berkshire
- Improve care pathways
- Ensure improved outcomes for patients
- Make the most efficient use of estates
- Ensure that every available pound is spent on patient care.

A clinically and financially sustainable model of care was required that meets the needs of local people. That will mean changes in both the location of services and the way they are provided.

A regular series of 'Shaping the Future' meetings have been held through this year at six to eight weekly intervals with LINK representatives from this LINK and those of Slough, Buckinghamshire and Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead.

The LINK representatives have pressed four main issues:

- The need for a clearly articulated vision of future services
- The need for integrated care
- Access to patients, including transport issues
- Patient involvement in shaping services.

This resulted in a fundamental review of the proposals by Heatherwood & Wexham Hospital Trust for development of services currently based at Heatherwood Hospital.

The development of the new strategy is being managed with LINK representation on the Stakeholder Reference Group of the Programme Board. Whilst there is general agreement that treating patients at home backed up by hospital services is a good idea, we remain concerned that community services need to be fully involved and then properly resourced to support such changes where this is possible and clinically appropriate.

Public meeting: new responsibility for the CCG

The Bracknell and Ascot CCG together with the LINK hosted a public meeting in June 2012

Dr Martin Kittel, executive member of the CCG discussed with attendees the development of CCG and the subsequent new responsibilities. Discussion also took place relating to the CCG commissioning strategy and local Patient Participation Groups

The meeting was well attended and feedback indicated a high satisfaction rate.

Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) will play a very important part in the future by leading on improving the strategic coordination of commissioning across NHS, social care and related children's and public health services.

In the future and when established, the new Local Healthwatch will have a statutory seat on the HWBB to represent the community's interest.

In the interim, the Bracknell Forest LINK is in the fortunate position of sitting on the Shadow HWBB. The LINK's representative is Barbara Briggs, Chairman of the LINK Steering Group.

South East LINK Leaders Network (SELLNet) and the National Association of LINK Members (NALM)

This year, the Bracknell Forest LINK Steering Group has continued to regularly attend the quarterly meetings of SELLNet, which brings together representatives of LINKs across the South East region.

As the Bracknell Forest LINK moves towards the transition to Local Healthwatch, the Steering Group have been working very closely with the relevant organisations to ensure that the LINK's Legacy and expertise are not overlooked during this critical stage. This has included attending the NALM Annual

General Meeting in October 2012, where Healthwatch England was launched, and various meetings of SELLNet in Newbury and Guildford.

Relationship & Representation

Relationship with Bracknell Forest Council

The LINK has continued to build upon its relationship with the council. The LINK has supported the joint commissioning team in carrying out Quality Assurance Assessment and has been used as an independent facilitator for people unable to complete the annual adult social care survey.

Relationship with organisations

The notion of what a LINK is has been difficult for organisations to grasp. As Bracknell Forest LINK is not seen as an organisation it has, therefore, been hard for the LINK staff to engage with the public by explaining the concept of a network in the context of LINK.

When the host contract ended, a support worker was put in place and has widely been regarded as being critical to the LINKs current and ongoing success, not least by the LINK Steering Group. Through active engagement, across a range of communities of interest, the support worker has developed a level of trust with people and demonstrated that changes can be made to services, regardless of size.

Relationships with children and young people

The LINK Steering Group understands that more work should have been done to engage with younger people to understand their views on health and social care. Whilst the LINK Steering Group invited members of the youth parliament at the beginning of 2009, they stopped attending and it was recognised that the set up of the meeting was inappropriate for youth involvement.

LINK relationship with the PPG/PRGs

Whilst the LINK has developed individual relationships with some of the Patient Participation Groups (PPG) and Patient Reference Groups (PRGs) in the borough, a relationship has never been formed with the Bracknell and Ascot Joint Patient Forum (BAJPF), the overarching group attended by the Borough PRGs and which would have been the most effective way to communicate and engage with the all the local PPGs together.

Feedback from the PRGs themselves has led the LINK to identify local PPGs playing a key role in Local Healthwatch representing the patient voice at neighbourhood level. However, before this a working relationship needs to be developed and protocols need to be put in place; the current setup does not allow for the widest representation of views to be gathered and heard which means that genuine outcomes for health improvement and reducing health inequalities could be missed for the wider community.

LINK relationship with Bracknell and Ascot CCG

The LINK relationship with the Bracknell and Ascot CCG has developed rapidly over the last six months, as the CCG has emerged and developed. The LINK support worker has worked hard to raise the profile of the LINK and secure involvement in CCG planning and development, successfully providing input into the CCG workplan. As the landscape of the NHS changes, LHW will need to be focussed and tenacious in developing relationships with the new NHS.

Though a relationship has been formed, more work needs to be carried out to ensure that all CCG members have a clear understanding of the role of LINK/Local Healthwatch and the expertise is has to offer to support its commitment to patient involvement which could be helpful at the early steps of CCG development, and how our statutory powers can support them with their project planning, service delivery and quality assurance. In the short-term, this could involve developing a quarterly meeting with the CCG chair for operational matters alongside the strategic relationship that LINK and LHW will soon play on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

LINK relationship with NHS Berkshire

The LINK relationship with NHS Berkshire is developing into a positive one. NHS Berkshire has involved the LINK in the development of the “Shaping the Future” consultation by meeting regularly to discuss proposals and asking for LINK input. The LINK is kept informed about changes in services and is able to raise concerns to the designated contact.

As PCTs will be abolished on 1 April 2013, a new relationship will need to be brokered with the NHS Commissioning Board, both nationally and with local area teams, Commissioning Support Units, local public health teams and other organisations and groups emerging from the modernisation of the NHS. This relationship was limited because:

LINK relationship with other LINKs

The LINK host workers in Berkshire have developed a very good and strong working relationship. This relationship has proved invaluable and would strongly encourage LHW Bracknell Forest to engage and connect with peers, Berkshire-wide and within the new NHS Commissioning Board local area team configuration, as soon as possible after establishment for the added-value such a relationship can bring for strategic and operational issues.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Group attend quarterly SELLnet (South East LINK network) meetings, where they meet other LINKs chairs across the south East. Whilst LINKs had many different national and regional networks to choose from, LHW will be supported by Healthwatch England. Whilst the value of this organisation cannot yet be determined, the national and regional perspective is a useful one to secure.

LINK relationships with health and social care agencies

The LINK has provided lay representation on a wide range of committees and boards which has been positive in raising its profile and ability to influence but not necessarily providers. However, representatives have been drawn from a relatively small pool of volunteers and the extent to which they have been able to represent the wider views of service users and the public has been limited.



Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Since becoming responsible for providing community based health services in April 2011 in addition to mental health services for Berkshire the Trust have undergone some changes in staff but the LINK have maintained a strong relationship

Patient and Public Involvement

Liz Daly joined the trust as Head of Service Engagement & Experience and subsequent patient experience reports improved to make sure the learning from customer complaints is captured. Jo Gilbert has continued to support the LINK in keeping us informed on the Shaping the Future consultation and changes in services and responding to our requests.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBHFT): Patient and Public Involvement work

A member of the LINK attended the Trust's Patient Partnership Standing Conference in November where excellent presentations were given by staff on patient care and included projects planned to improve care.

LINK relationship with the CQC

CQC and the LINK had begun to develop regular meetings, to share information and identify current issues and mutual concerns. Changes in staffing have created some challenges however it is anticipated that these links will continue and be strengthened with the development of Healthwatch England.

Referrals to Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

No referrals to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel were made in 2011/12, but the relationship has been maintained. The LINK Vice Chair, Terry Pearce, continues as the representative for LINK on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

Developing Local Stakeholder Relationships

Host staff and LINK Participants shared LINK work and provided key health and social care updates throughout the year, gathering views on services and experiences where appropriate.

Some of the Groups Bracknell Forest LINK have engaged with

Rethink	Bracknell CAB
Bracknell and Wokingham Mencap	Voluntary Sector Forum
Over 50s Forum	Just Advocacy
Berkshire Youth	Arthritis Care
BADHOGs	Princess Royal Carers Trust
Deaf Positives	Stroke Association
The Ark	Alzheimers Society
Bracknell and Ascot Branch Blind Social Club	U3A
The Challenge Club	Sandhurst Stroke Club
Age Concern	Red Cross
Dementia Support Group	Berkshire County Blind Society
Health Advisory Group	Age UK

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest

The setting up of Healthwatch Bracknell Forest is the responsibility of Bracknell Forest Council. However, to enable the seamless transition from LINK to Healthwatch as stated in the Health and Social Care Act, LINK has worked with Bracknell Forest Council wherever possible.

The LINK steering group has helped Bracknell Forest Council in highlighting key issues that needs to be observed in the development of the Local Healthwatch specification. Our organisational knowledge and the importance of securing a local provider have been key to this.

The LINK has also supported and took part in the “vision for Local Healthwatch” exercise. Publishing the final report on our website and with our participants.



How was it paid for?

Refreshments	389
Printing/photocopying	1982.99
Postage	102
Interpreting	687
Volunteer expenses	105
Room hire	891
Travel costs	141
Community Chest Funding	3,250
Self Care Project	351
Events	15

Summary of Activity

Requests for Information in 2011-12	
How many requests for information were made by your LINK?	20
Of these, how many of the requests for information were answered within 20 working days?	9
How many related to social care?	0
Enter and View in 2011-12	
How many enter and view visits did your LINK make?	10
How many enter and view visits related to health care?	10
How many enter and view visits related to social care?	0
How many enter and view visits were announced?	10
How many enter and view visits were unannounced?	0
Reports and Recommendations in 2011-12	
How many reports and/or recommendations were made by your LINK to commissioners of health and adult social care services?	0
How many of these reports and/or recommendations have been acknowledged in the required timescale of 20 working days?	0
Of the reports and/or recommendations acknowledged, how many have led, or are leading to, service review?	0
Of the reports and/or recommendations that led to service review, how many have led to service change?	0
How many reports/recommendations related to health services?	0
How many reports/recommendations related to social care?	0
Referrals to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2010-11	
How many referrals* were made by your LINK to an Overview & Scrutiny Committee?	0
How many of these referrals did the OSC acknowledge?	0
How many of these referrals led to service change?	0

“Together let’s shape local health and social care”



Get involved...

It's free to join Bracknell Forest LINK and get your views on local health and social care provision heard, so why not join today?

You don't need to be an expert to get involved, just enthusiasm!

We can offer you free training to help you get involved and build your skills.

You can register as an individual or as a group

Contact us on 01344 352579 or visit us online at www.bracknellforestlink.org