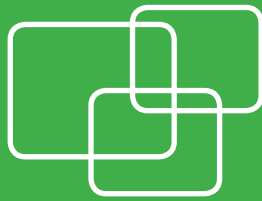


Richmond upon Thames

LINK



improving local care & health

It's not our LINK, it's YOUR LINK!

Newsletter 1 / Spring 2009

In this Issue

Membership Report	2
LINK at Work	2
LINK public meeting	2
How you can take part.....	3
Being Heard.....	3
Chairs Question.....	4
How to Join	4

WELCOME to the first newsletter from Richmond upon Thames Local Involvement Network. Read on to find out what your Local Involvement Network (LINK) is all about and how you can get involved.

Richmond upon Thames LINK seeks YOUR views

What are your experiences of using local health or social care services?

Would you like to influence how those services are designed, planned and delivered?

Well now you can by joining Richmond upon Thames LINK

LINK public meeting - page 2



What is the LINK?

Richmond upon Thames LINK was launched on 30 October 2008. It is a network of local individuals and organisations that come together to ensure the best care and support possible is available in and around the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. This includes healthcare provided for local people at nearby hospitals and clinics such as West Middlesex and Kingston Hospitals.

The LINK gathers views and ideas for improvements and then uses these to directly influence and inform decisions about the planning, design and provision of local health and social care services.

The LINK supports the community to hold providers and commissioners of services to account.

Anyone can take part in the LINK in a way that suits them. Read on to find out how.

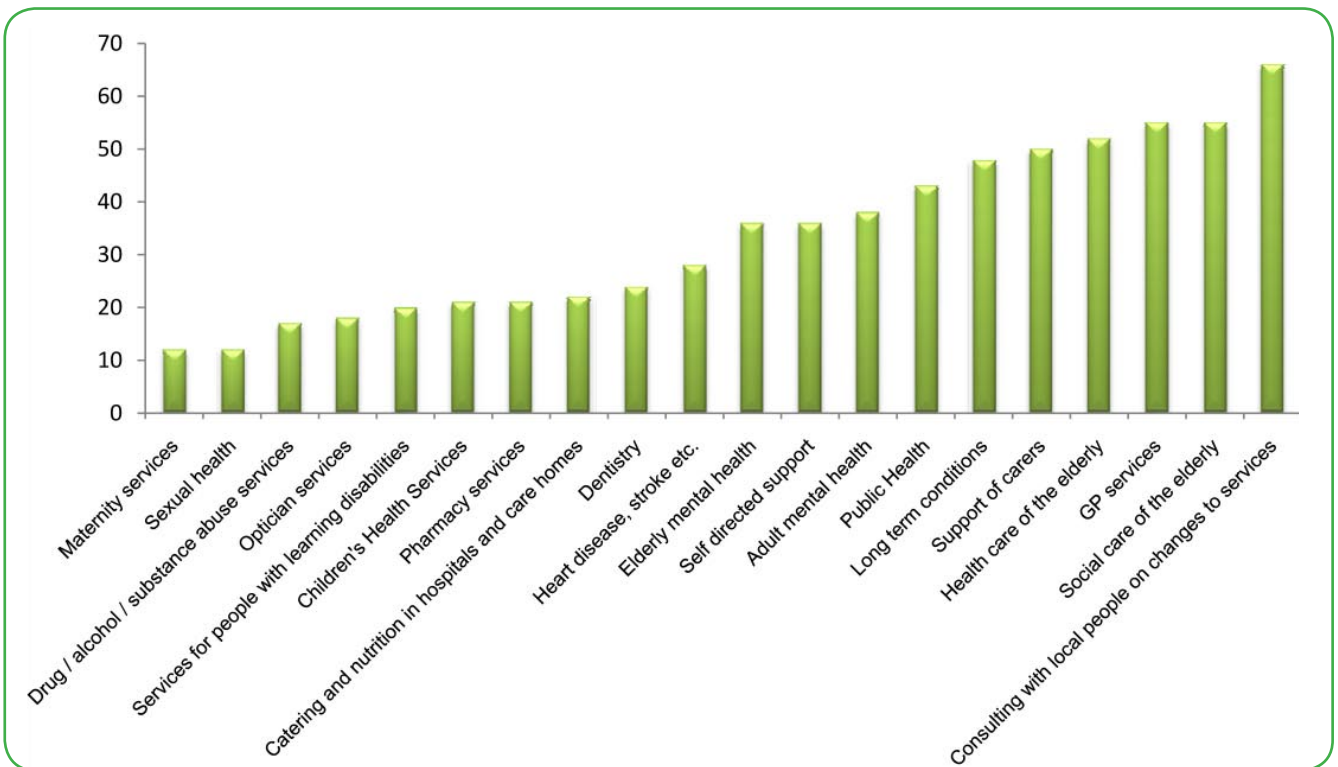
LINK Membership

Richmond upon Thames LINK now boasts over 150 members. We want to involve more people to ensure that the LINK properly reflects the views and concerns of all local residents. Please help us to spread the word throughout the borough by telling friends, colleagues and family about Richmond's LINK.

LINK at Work

A big thank you to all those members who indicated their priority areas on the membership form. We are starting to see some common themes emerging in terms of where your interests lie; the following chart below shows what you have said is important.

The Steering Committee is using what you have told us to choose which areas of health and social care will be the first to benefit from LINK input.



It comes as no surprise that the most ticked box on our membership form was 'consulting with local people on changes to services' and we responded with our first bulletin in February telling members about some major consultations taking place both across London and locally.

Public Meeting on Self Directed Support

When: Tuesday 30th June 2009 from 6pm

Where: Clarendon Hall at York House, Richmond Road, TW1 3AA

Why: Self Directed Support was introduced in Richmond in 2007 to give users of social care services more control over what support they get and to allow them to buy and manage this support themselves - with help, if required. Come and find out more about how Self Directed Support is working in Richmond and feed your views and experiences into the review Richmond upon Thames LINK is carrying out.

Who: Everyone is welcome - LINK members will receive more information about the meeting, including registration details, in May. We will also advertise the event widely throughout the borough.

How can I contribute to the work of the LINK?

Membership is open to everyone and is flexible so you can contribute in a way that suits your interests.

You might want to be told what's going on, and fill in a short survey about what's important to you.

Or you might want to take an active part in shaping local health and care, for instance, you could:

- share your concerns about health or social care by attending a meeting
- join a group of other volunteers looking at the quality and reliability of a service such as a GP surgery or the quality of food in care homes.
- Carry out research or write a report
- or apply to join a team who visit services and report on what they find.

We will send bulletins to all our members featuring opportunities for members to take part.

How can I tell the LINK what I think is important?

You can write, email or phone and if you need help, please contact the LINK office - see back cover for contact details.

We want to hear from **you** - your feedback informs what the LINK does. The Steering Committee meets on a regular basis to consider the issues they have been told about.

When telling us about your views and experiences of health or social care it is important that you describe the issue and, where you can, also tell us:

How many people it affects?

What is the impact on those affected?

Does it disadvantage any sections of the community?

Are other organisations already involved?

Is there a deadline we need to know about?

The LINK's role relates to local health and care services generally and we can take action where we can see trends or where whole services need the LINK's attention.

If you have an individual problem or complaint you should still raise this with the appropriate complaints organisation. LINK can't resolve complaints but please call us if you're not sure who you should speak to.

It's not our LINK, it's YOUR LINK!

Chair's Questions

Margaret Dangoor, Chair of Richmond upon Thames LINK's steering committee, has been involved with the voluntary and charitable sector at both national and local level for over 20 years and is a keen advocate of user involvement in influencing health and social care services.

If you have a question you would like to ask the Chair please send it to:

Chair's Questions, 1 Princes Street, Richmond, TW9 1ED. Or **email info@richmondlink.org.uk**

Q. What does your role as Chair involve?

"The chair's role is about ensuring that the 16 members of the steering committee focus their attention and energy on establishing the network as early as possible. The LINK can then concentrate on its key role - giving communities a stronger voice in how their health and social services are delivered through involvement.


Over the past few months we have been setting in place governance arrangements to make sure our LINK is effective and accountable; we have been mapping existing activities and developing a work plan; identifying existing relationships with members of the local voluntary and community sector and deciding how we are going to develop these; and finally reaching out to the community to grow our membership."

How to Join

Visit our website **www.richmondlink.org.uk**, download our membership form or complete the online survey. Contact Mike or Hilary who are happy to help.

Michael Derry


LINK Service Manager

 020 8255 8516

 manager@richmondlink.org.uk

Hilary Davidson

Communications & Administration Coordinator

 020 8255 8509

 coordinator@richmondlink.org.uk

For more information on the contents of this newsletter, or any aspect of the LINK visit **www.richmondlink.org.uk/news** or call the LINK office.

 Richmond upon Thames LINK, Freepost TW1559, 1 Princes Street, Richmond TW9 1ED

 www.richmondlink.org.uk

 info@richmondlink.org.uk

