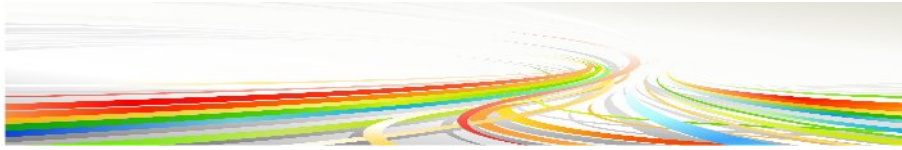


## EAST SUSSEX LINK

The County's Local Involvement Network in Health and Social Care



## Your LINK One Year On

“Our Core Purpose is to work with partners to improve Health and Social Care services for the people of East Sussex”

# YEAR 1 ANNUAL REPORT: 1 APRIL 2008 – 31 MARCH 2009



East Sussex LINK

1 Faraday Close

Eastbourne

BN22 9BH



Telephone: 01323 514510



Text: 079682 119806



Email: [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)



Web: [www.thecountylink.net](http://www.thecountylink.net)

### **Host organisation:**

East Sussex Disability Association

1 Faraday Close

Eastbourne

BN22 9BH

Telephone: 01323 514500



*Developing Health and Social Care services around you*

The LINK Host is East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) Registered Charity Number 1042071 Company Limited by Guarantee No. 2979027 Registered in England and Wales

## **FORWARD:**

“When one door closes, another one opens”,

With the abolition of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (Forums) on 31 March 2008, the door opened for the new Local Involvement Networks (LINK).

Due to a number of individuals' dedication to maintaining the importance of patient and public involvement, East Sussex got going swiftly, and the Host contract was implemented on 1 April 2008.

Like with any new initiative, East Sussex LINK was not dependent on one set of individuals to drive it forward. Here in East Sussex we had the support of a proactive Local Authority, who opened the doors for relationships to begin with a totally new aspect of involvement and scrutiny for users and providers of health and social care services. The Host Organisation, the local user led charity East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA), also had its finger on the pulse with the changing agenda in health and social care services.

ESDA were uniquely suited to submit a tender to host the new Local Involvement Network due to their long established record of supporting disabled people in East Sussex. Experience in this specific service area meant that ESDA could bring the much needed social care balance to the project.

### "Recipe for Developing the LINK"

#### Key ingredients:

Willing partners  
Champions for change  
Shared aims and objectives  
One set of common values

Mix together.....

A group to drive forward East Sussex LINK

In the initial stages a group of self-nominated individuals came forward and began to look at what needed to be done. The Interim Core Group, equipped with a set of recommendations from the Patient and Public Involvement Forums, a list of pro-active partners, a supportive Host Organisation, and a legacy of projects important to local people, set about planning the mammoth tasks ahead.

# CONTENTS

Page No.

4.	<b>Better Together – Introduction from Chair</b>
7.	(i) Core Group
9.	(ii) What is the Host's Role
10.	<b>Why our work is needed</b>
13.	<b>What you told us</b>
19.	<b>What we did</b>
22.	<b>What we achieved</b>
24.	<b>Income and expenditure</b>
25.	<b>Next steps, the next 12 months</b>
27.	<b>Thank You</b>

## APPENDICES

1. Easy to read Work Programme
2. Dignity and Privacy Report – September 2008

The **Promotional DVD** is about one participant's journey into LINK, from taking a leaflet last summer at Rye Farmers Market (when the team was out in the community telling people about LINK), to becoming an Authorised Representative to undertake 'Enter and View'. The DVD also includes snap shots from members of the community saying why they feel it is important to be involved and examples of the many diverse events we have facilitated and attended.

# BETTER TOGETHER

Introduction from the Chair of the Core Group:-



**Janet Colvert, Chair  
East Sussex LINK Core Group**

The East Sussex LINK is pleased to present its first Annual Report.

## Setting the scene:

Before the LINK began on 1 April 2008, a working party was in place, made up from volunteers who were interested in Health and Social Care issues in East Sussex and its boundaries; the volunteer's names can be found at the end of this report. These volunteers worked with the County Council, who had been asked to appoint a support organisation to be called a Host. We were pleased to be able to announce the name of the Host before 1 April 2008 – the East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA).

## The beginning:

On 1 April 2008 we had a working group of volunteers, who became the Interim Core Group, a Host organisation with office space, phones and computers and ready to appoint a new team of staff, and a great deal to do.

We knew that the LINK would be a network of people and organisations who could represent the views and ideas of the community on Health and Social Care Services.

We wanted to give people a chance to say what they thought about local Health and Social Care Services, what works well for them and what needs improving. This would mean we could work together to improve services for everyone.

For the first six months the Interim Core Group met fortnightly. We had to put in place policies and procedures to make sure we were working in a legal and open way, and organise our own ways of working together.

What we are most pleased about was that during this time we were able to get in touch with many people - we held Meetings in Public, sent out a monthly newsletter by email and by post, and attended as many events as possible. We also had meetings with our many partners in Health and Social Care.

After six months we were keen to hold our first elections so that LINK participants could democratically elect a Core Group to drive forward to the work of East Sussex LINK.

### Where we are now:

This year has been a busy and exciting time for those involved in setting up the LINK, and we would like to share with you what we have done, how we have done it and how we have used the funding we have received. We hope you will want to be part of the coming year's activities so that we can extend our role in contributing to the improvement of Health and Social Care Services for the people of East Sussex.

During the year we have established an elected Core Group, who meets monthly to review and update the work programme and respond to other issues on behalf of the LINK. The Core Group is made up of 10 individual representatives and 6 representatives from voluntary and community organisations (VCOs), who have a wide range of experiences and skills from different parts of the County, and with different interests in various aspects of health and social care – Core Group Representatives are listed at the end of this report.

Of equal importance, our Host organisation ESDA has appointed a staff team of four, dedicated to supporting the work of the Core Group, developing our relationships with the community and ensuring that we are all kept in touch with all that's happening; both locally and nationally. Most importantly the team act as a point of contact for all those who contact the LINK – The Host Team are also listed in this report.

East Sussex LINK have built on the existing relationships that the Patient and Public Involvement Forums had with our partners in the health service, and meet regularly at a strategic level with our two Primary Care Trusts, the East Sussex Hospitals Trust, Sussex Partnership Trust and South East Coast Ambulance Service. We also are grateful to our participants who are working hard in local communities within and around East Sussex, and let us know of local diverse needs and concerns, as well as improvements that are taking place.

We have also formed a new relationship with our colleagues in Social Care and Children's Services, and are now meeting with senior Managers on a regular basis and developing ways of working together. This part of our work is now growing quicker than we thought possible.

It is particularly exciting for us to be able to look at how effective it is when services work together to meet the needs of individuals and communities. We are looking forward to celebrating good practice in joint working, as well as times when a more joined up approach would have benefited individuals and communities.

More details of who we meet and when can be seen in our Annual Calendar on the website or available from the LINK office by request.

We have been able to follow up the leads the community have given us, especially when views were expressed on cross boundary working - many cross from county to county for treatment and this can be great news or a real worry for you.

We have already held an event to talk to our neighbouring LINKs and health and care professionals, which was very successful and are following up issues that were raised from experiences.

We have also worked well with the local authority. We have a Liaison Group which meets quarterly to feed back views from its members, and is an opportunity to exchange ideas and gain from each other's experiences. We also have membership of the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, and are able to contribute to their meetings and give the views of local people to aid their discussion. We can benefit from each other's knowledge and perspectives and know that we are listened to.

Cllr Sylvia Tidy, Chairman, East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee said:

*"HOSC welcomes the opportunities presented by LINK's broad remit across health and social care. LINK is able to refer matters to HOSC and we have a simple protocol on how we handle these issues. We will also work in partnership on some topics. We have the shared objective of wanting to make health and social care services better."*

However, our main success has been gathering the views and concerns that the community bring to us by email, phone and letter, through our website, by meeting with us at community events and our meetings in public. We log all of these and then look to see how we can help find a solution, either by signposting you to another organisation, by seeking further information or working with our partners to improve services.

This system has taken a considerable time to set up, as we have to be sure to behave fairly and keep proper evidence files of our work - but we are now up and running and issues are raised at a monthly meeting.

Everyone who raises an issue will hear what we have done in relation to that issue, and how we will follow up issues in the best way possible. Although this work is handled by a small group confidentially, the areas of concern are shared on the website and form the basis of our rolling work programme.

You can see our work programme on the website – and hard copies are available. The work plan will be updated quarterly on the website.

As for moving forward, addressing the work programme and the issues raised is our major work and:

- We shall continue to recruit and train more participants, and hope our number will grow so that we can undertake more visits to check on the information we have. We are interested to hear from those that would like to be an accredited representative
- We hope to meet more and more people of East Sussex to gather their views, using as many ways as we can think of to contact such a large and diverse population
- We will continue to work with our professional colleagues as they continue to improve the services they are responsible for, and will support and challenge them to achieve the highest possible standards for all the people they serve.

We shall continue to monitor our own work to ensure it meets needs in times of change, and welcome views at all times.

**Janet Colvert, Chair**

## Core Group

The Core Group were elected in November 2008 and consists of sixteen members of the community. These individuals represent the 5 Boroughs and Districts of East Sussex, 5 generic county wide places and 6 places for the voluntary and community groups. They meet monthly to review the work programme, consider issues raised by the community and assign activity groups. To support the Core Group we have 3 sub groups who consider Policies and Procedures, Training needs and Finance.

### 5 Members from the Districts and Boroughs:

Janet Colvert, Chair and Rother District  
David Lawrance, Lewes District  
Margaret Stanton, Eastbourne District  
Geoff Thomas, Vice Chair and Hastings District  
Sue Weiner, Wealden District

### 5 Individual places from across the county:

Raymond Barrett  
Ivy Elsey  
June Jarrett  
Maureen Lawrence, Vice Chair  
Tony Moore

### 6 places allocated to Voluntary and Community Groups:

Alan Keyes representing Sussex Heart Network  
Ambrose O'Boyle representing Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance  
Baldev Soni representing Sussex Indian Punjabi Society  
Geoff Brown representing Citizens Advice Bureau in East Sussex  
Interest declared from Friends, Family and Travellers Community  
Perry Aldred, representing Crossroads Care

Prior to the election, a group of self-nominated individuals formed an Interim Core Group with 8 members and 6 Co-opted members included:

Janet Colvert	<i>Co-opted members:</i>
Geoff Thomas	Sue Weiner
Fred Cullen	Maureen Lawrence
Walter James	June Jarrett
Tony Moore	Maurice Langham
Margaret E Stanton	Brian Rockell
Ray Barrett	David Bold
Dave Rogers	

## Authorised Representatives

These individuals have attended the appropriate training and have current CRB clearance level to undertake visits. East Sussex LINK representatives authorised to enter and view services are below:

Janet Colvert - Core Group Chair  
June Jarrett - Core Group  
Maureen Lawrence - Core Group Vice Chair

Pam Lee - East Sussex LINK participant  
Margaret Stanton - Core Group  
Sue Weiner - Core Group Member and lead Champion for Children and Young People

\*\*\*\*\*

To help and support the LINK develop in East Sussex the full Host team have been in post since June 2008.

### **About the Host Organisation**

East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) was delighted to be appointed as the Host Organisation for the LINK in April 2008. It is a County wide organisation of disabled people that was established in 1938 and its user led membership work through a network of 19 local groups/district committees. This structure enables ESDA to promote local involvement through local people

East Sussex Disability Association has worked in partnership with East Sussex County Council and other partners including Primary Care Trusts and Hospital Trusts for a number of years. The Association is, and has been, a member of several multi-agency strategic groups including the Older People's Partnership Board, County Disability Strategy Group, Joint Approach to Adaptations, Integrated Community Equipment Services Management Board, East Sussex Hospitals Trust Disability Steering Group and others. ESDA plays a prominent part in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in East Sussex, as well as working with partner organisations in West Sussex and Brighton and Hove; ESDA is signed up to the Compact for East Sussex.

ESDA has considerable experience of methods of consultation, participation and community development in its work with disabled people, which is also used to advise the East Sussex LINK on these matters.

Our strengths are user inclusion, community involvement, consultation and working in partnership. ESDA is an organisation dedicated to ensuring that its services are available to all and do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, disability, race, culture, religion, sexuality or age, in terms of either participation or of obtaining and presenting people's views and experiences.

### **NickTapp, Deputy Chief Executive ESDA**



*ESDA members and supporters*

## What is the Host's role?

The role of the organisation employed to support the LINK will include:

- telling the community about a LINK and encouraging people to get involved
- advising the LINK in its' work and activities
- providing office support and helping the LINK to develop clear systems
- managing the LINK budget and recording its activities
- letting the community know about what the LINK is doing and asking for their views
- reporting the progress of the LINK to Government (Department of Health guidance)

Key Achievements for the Host Team during the first year include:

- a functioning team supporting the work of the Interim Core Group within three months of contract
- the organisation of three meetings in public and two major countywide events
- members of the team attending over 100 meetings and events across the county, organised by our partners
- promoting and building relationships with all our partners

### Current Host staff:

LINK Manager: Elizabeth Mackie  
email: [manager@thecountylink.net](mailto:manager@thecountylink.net)

LINK Administrator: Jane Hay  
email: [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)

LINK Development Worker, Lewes and Wealden: Val Young  
email: [val.young@thecountylink.net](mailto:val.young@thecountylink.net)

LINK Development Worker, Hastings and Rother: Jan Cutting  
email: [jan.cutting@thecountylink.net](mailto:jan.cutting@thecountylink.net)

East Sussex LINK also has a web site [www.thecountylink.net](http://www.thecountylink.net) where you can access up to date information and details of any reports.

The LINK office is open from Monday – Friday; 9 – 5pm and paper reports are available at the LINK office:

**1 Faraday Close  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN22 9BH**

**Tel: 01323 514510  
Text: 07968 119806**

## WHY OUR WORK IS NEEDED:

“Our Core Purpose is to work with partners to improve Health and Social Care services for the people of East Sussex”

The LINK is needed because local people have a desire to be involved in decisions about their health and social care provision. We have used the expertise and knowledge of LINK participants to evidence this. Here are some key findings to date:

- **Keeping it local, whilst ensuring East Sussex is not left out of the National picture**

Alan Keys, Core Group Member, Sussex Heart Foundation said:

*'Most of us are familiar with NHS targets measuring such items as waiting or ambulance response times. What has been missing is any assessment of the quality of care, which is such a vital issue for the patient. The Department of Health is now working with a range of stakeholders to develop Quality Accounts, which will start to address this particular aspect.*

*The intention is to agree a range of care outcomes that include a significant proportion that the local population want to see, not just a menu from Whitehall. It is a complex matter because selecting and then measuring the levels of care may prove very difficult sometimes and all would agree that this must not add another layer of high costs. Therefore, it is being piloted in East Anglia, while plans progress to proceed elsewhere as soon as possible.*

*There is little doubt that this could be an excellent development towards achieving consistently high quality care. It will be essential to monitor aspects of care that are seen by the local community to have priority and to review the data carefully to ensure the process is beneficial. We see a role for LINKs in the initial consultation process to agree the local 'menu' and in the review of results. Therefore, we have fed this view into the planning for Quality Accounts and shall do our best to play a role for our community.*

*If members of the public hold views on quality care issues that they see as a priority we shall be very pleased to hear their opinions.'*

- **Supporting the community with Health and Social Care issues and concerns**

East Sussex LINK participants and staff team joined local professionals in March to endorse the “Time to Change” campaign. Time to Change is about ending mental health discrimination. People have told us a broad spectrum of issues and concerns affect individuals who use mental health services within East Sussex and its adjacent counties.

Dave Rogers, LINK Participant, has explained why this is a key issue facing our communities. In the coming year you will also find it is the topic of our meetings in public, giving you the opportunity to have more input.

Dave Rogers, LINK Participant said:

*"I am involved with the Mental Health Project Board working alongside Working Aged Adults, which is looking at the changes to the way people are cared for within the mental health services, as people have been put into residential care and in some cases forgotten, for one reason or another. I found this to be incredulous that people could be put into an institution and just forgotten because the social worker changed their job, and no one picked up their case file.*

*The new two tier system this project board has pulled together will address the gaps in the residential care system and will eventually help them to rejoin society. This does of course need a lot of work from other agencies, such as Social Landlords, to provide housing and of course the departments will have to change the way they work with people with mental health issues.*

*As East Sussex County Council are also introducing people to use their own budgets, which I must say I have my own doubts about, I have asked the question what happens if some one uses their budget for the year up in ten months. One of many questions I am sure will be asked as Putting People First unfolds.*

*I keep the LINK informed of what happens next; at the present time they are tendering companies for the contract to administer the residential care across East Sussex and about key issues important to people who use mental health services.*

**'Putting People First'** mentioned in Dave Roger's account will also be a parallel topic for our meetings in public as Individualised Budgets are introduced. Having thematic meetings will provide one of many mechanisms for people to feed in their comments, views and concerns from all parts of the county.

- **Maternity Services Development Group**

Maureen Lawrence, Vice Chair Core Group, Champion lead Maternity Services reported:

*"Prior to the inception of the East Sussex Local Involvement Network, people in the County had made their voices and views on the shape of maternity services heard and much passionate debate ensued. In addition the East Sussex Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee made their views known to the Health Trusts, resulting in recommendations from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel which had been set up by the Secretary of State. These recommendations were in addition to services planned and strongly approved of by the Reconfiguration Panel.*

*Subsequently, the local Health Trusts set up a Maternity Services Development Panel and a Clinicians' Forum to consider the Recommendations and devise a strategy to meet these requirements. East Sussex Link was very glad to be invited to join the Panel in order to represent the needs and opinions of local people on the shape of their maternity care. The Trusts involved (East Sussex Hospitals, Sussex Downs and Weald and Hastings and Rother Primary Care) are committed to public involvement and wish to ensure engagement with local people during the discussions and LINK are part of this work, helping to design the Public Engagement Plan and disseminating the progress of this work among the people of East Sussex."*

**Regular updates on Maternity Services in East Sussex can be found on our website [www.thecountylink.net](http://www.thecountylink.net) and in the monthly Newsletter.**

- **Care Quality Commission Annual Checks**

Elizabeth Mackie, LINK Manager (Host) has been facilitating how the LINK will contribute to the new Care Quality Commission Annual Checks:

“As the Health Care Commission, Commission Social Care Inspection and Mental Health Commission Act will merge on 1 April 2009, LINKs need to be aware of the future roles they have and how they will provide evidence in the future”

- **Commissioning**

Geoff Thomas Vice Chair Core Group leading on commissioning provides regular updates on the developing Commissioning agenda in East Sussex:

“As the PCT embraces World Class commissioning it should be noted that definitions may include the following comment: Commissioning is the means to secure the best value for local citizens. East Sussex LINK has begun to develop and determine how, as representative of citizens it can interact with the commissioning process. A LINK representative has, for example, been fully involved in a recent round of tendering for dental services. Patient and public involvement is increasingly being sought as services such as Mental Health, Walk-In Centres and Physiotherapy are re-defined and providers secured.

As commissioning encompasses more than just the process of identifying providers and includes both strategic planning and service redesign East Sussex LINK will need to develop further its expertise. Representatives have been attending meetings of the Practice Based Commissioning boards and a meeting is being scheduled with Director of Primary Care and Commissioning following which East Sussex LINK will need determine its role in ensuring there is appropriate public and patient engagement in areas such service redesign, the Efficiency and Quality programme through to procurement.”

**All of the above are examples of key activities the LINK has been engaged in and will inform the work programme in year 2.**

## WHAT YOU TOLD US:

The LINK has gathered a total of 49 issues, which include:

- the future of dispensing pharmacies in communities
- waiting times for Children requiring Physiotherapy in Peacehaven
- health inequalities for people with learning difficulties
- social Isolation for people with learning difficulties when in house or short term projects come to an end ~ funding implications
- inconsistent use of Health Action Plans for people with learning difficulties
- whether people with Mental Health issues should be in prison
- funding issues for amputees at Conquest Hospital to access Physiotherapy
- inconsistent booking appointments procedure in Hastings
- lack of information available from Eastbourne District General Hospital prior to planned procedure
- sterile Treatment Rooms at the Conquest Hospital unavailable
- mixed sex wards at Eastbourne District General Hospital
- lack of specific Disabled Access at local GP Surgery
- lack of alternate medicines available ~ post code lottery
- concerns about services on our boundaries and in other counties
- not all neighbouring counties offer online facilities to book appointments through choose and book
- out of hours concerns
- difficult to get admission for detox from alcohol/drugs and follow on treatment across the county

### Getting People Involved:

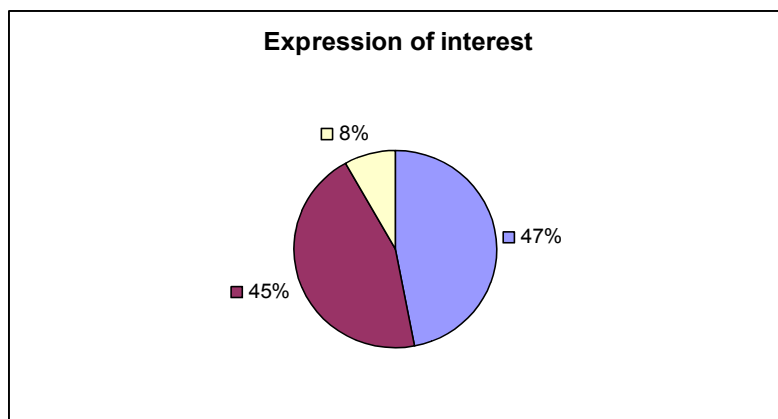
The Core Group and the Host team work together to compile and review a range of promotional material to tell the community about LINK and why they should become involved. These include:

- Leaflet "About LINK"
- Leaflet for Children and Young People "Spk Up about Ur Health"
- Information Packs
- Registration of Interest forms
- Skills Audit forms
- Postcards for people to send in their comments, views or issues
- Flow charts ~ how the LINK can work for you
- Dedicated website with browse aloud facilities
- Promotional DVD ~ LINK participant's journey into LINK (included)
- Questionnaires and Surveys
- Meetings in Public
- Stakeholder Events
- Text Number
- Facebook - social networking forum

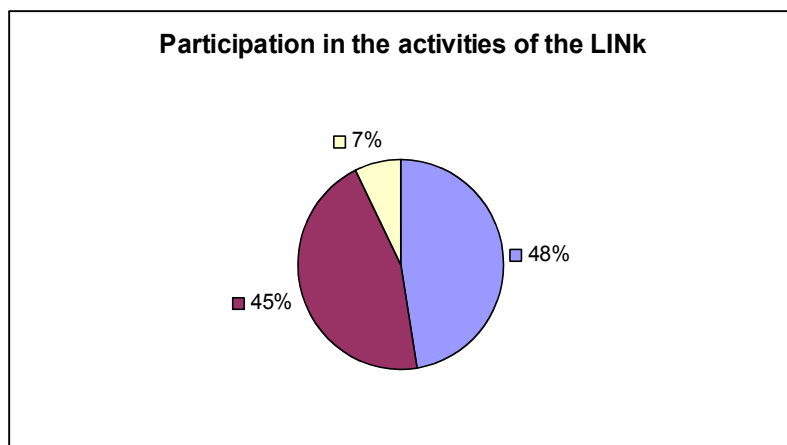
A key objective was to recruit individuals and community groups to the LINK; either at the level of 'expressing an interest' or 'participating in activities'.

A benchmark defining 'participation in activities' was set for the purpose of performance monitoring; receiving newsletter/e-bulletin updates, attending meetings, taking part in surveys/completing questionnaires and raising an issue were all included as 'participation'.

Here are our first year statistics:



- Individuals from under-representative groups expressing an interest in the LINK
- Individuals expressing an interest in the LINK
- Groups / Organisations expressing an interest in the LINK



- Individuals from under-representative groups participating in the activities of the LINK
- Individuals participating in the activities of the LINK
- Groups / Organisations participating in the activities of the LINK

### **Building a Cohesive LINK with Capacity:**

Supporting interested participants to becoming active participants has also been a key priority for the Host team. From completed skills audit forms we can identify any training needs, but also best utilise individual key expertise. We have completed induction workshops for Core Group members and have planned further workshops for wider participants and representatives from Voluntary and Community Organisations.

The Training Sub Group devised its own programme for authorised representatives based on the Department of Health guidelines. We have another training day planned for 2009/10 to recruit further participants interested in becoming authorised representatives.

### **Completed Training:**

Authorised Representative Training, Module 1: Roles and Responsibilities and Safe Guarding Vulnerable Adults

- Induction for Core Group members and members from voluntary and community groups
- Induction Workshop for Wider Participants

The opportunity of support from National Centre for Involvement was widely embraced to ensure our LINK is developing a cohesive way of working together in an open and transparent way.

### **Promotion and engagement:**

Meetings in Public and Events held across the County as our Chair talked about have been one way we have engaged with the community.

Three Meetings in Public were held in Seaford, Crowborough and Pett.

Minutes from each meeting in public are available from the office or can be viewed on line: <http://www.eastsussexlink.org.uk/index.php?pageID=227>

A fourth meeting was planned for Uckfield in February 2009, but had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

We have also provided opportunities for the community to have their say on the structure of the LINK. On 30 September 2008 an event was held in public for individuals to decide the best structure for the LINK Core Group. Following this event we held elections and there was no shortage of candidates.

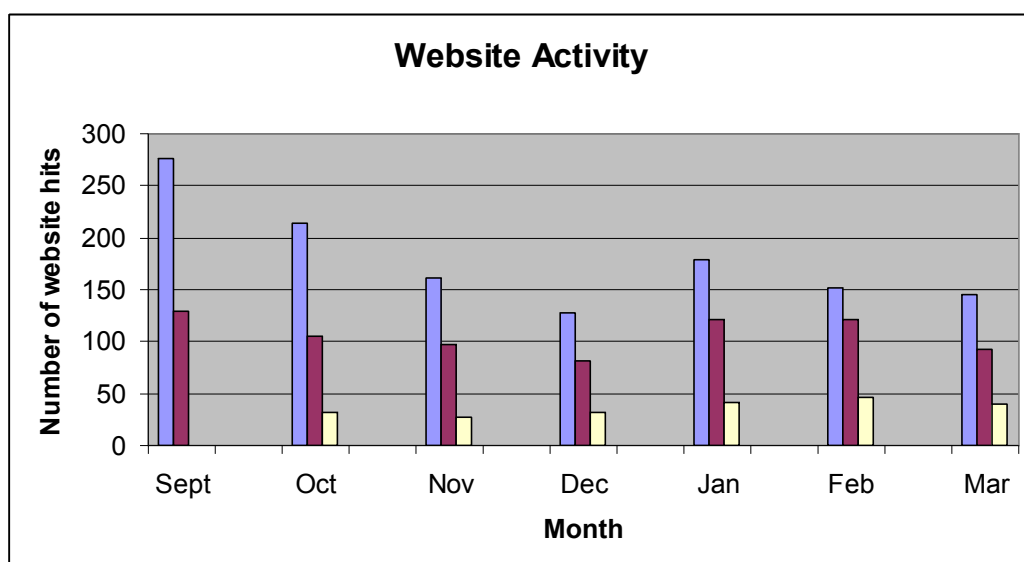
Following responses received from people about concerns when using services outside East Sussex, we organised a "Cross Border Event" in January 2009. This event was supported by our five neighbouring LINKs; representatives from South East Coast Ambulance Service and the Strategic Health Authority. East Sussex LINK conducted a survey and presented its findings to the floor about what people in East Sussex said was important to them.

This event was well attended and set the scene for LINKs and partners to work together in the future. An outcome of the event was that LINKs should work together in arranging a second event in Year 2. To take this work forward, a Working Group has been formed and wider participants have been invited to join the group.

One key question asked in the evaluation of the event, was how confident attendees were that the work started would be continued. Sixty-seven percent responded stating they were confident the work would be continued.

### Other ways to get involved:

In a recent survey of LINK participants, fifty-three per cent told us they use our website. Having a dedicated website so early on in our first year has enabled lots of people to learn about the LINK and read about its development; as well as access local and national updates from Department of Health and the Local Authority.



- Visits to the website
- Unique visits to the website
- Bounce rate

### Engaging with seldom heard groups:

We were also keen to engage with and recruit community groups and individuals from seldom heard groups to the activities of the LINK.

This remains a high priority for the LINK and we attend events across the county, especially in the rural areas, talking to many diverse communities.

The East Sussex LINK was represented at a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) event on 31 March at Manor Barn, Upper Sea Road in Bexhill. The event was organised by the SpeakUp Forum in East Sussex (a forum to facilitate representation for the VCS in East Sussex), Sompriti and UNI (South East Networks for BME groups) It was attended by a diverse representation and included presentations and training sessions on how BME groups are, and can be involved in the community. Sompriti was supporting the TAO (Together As One) Network.

East Sussex BME Network developed a Preliminary Strategic Plan in March 2008 and the agenda included a review of this. There was also an introduction to the representation arenas, such as East Sussex LINK, Sussex Police and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Reaching BME communities in the county is an important part of LINKs work, and this event was extremely useful for raising awareness about us and finding some important and helpful contacts.



*Photographs supplied by the SpeakUP Forum  
Copyright: SpeakUp  
Photographer: Volunteer - Jol Czes.*

Other groups in the community the LINK are keen to engage with:

- “the working population” often difficult to reach
- “young parents”
- “people behind closed doors” ~ a challenge
- “people with learning difficulties”

Having representation from LGBT (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual Transgender) communities, Sussex Indian Punjabi Society and an interest declared by Friends, Families and Travelling communities with our Core Group, it enables the LINK to look at the many diverse needs their decisions must include.

### **Are we doing a good job?**

The Link asked participants at the end of the first year about their involvement, and how they would like to continue to be involved.

Here are some of the responses and comments to the questions asked:

Of the 135 forms sent out to groups and individuals:

- 31% responded to the questionnaire
- 95% said they would like to continue being involved
- 14% said they would like to become more involved
- 88% said they are aware of the LINK activities
- 11.9% have raised an issue with the LINK
- 4/5 of the people who had raised an issue were satisfied with the outcome (1 no answer)

- 76% received Newsletters
- 54% attend meetings
- 66% use e-communications
- 40% via postal services

**And your comments:**

*“...It has become increasingly obvious that the amount of small, rural groups and forums, also church gatherings, has increased over the last year. By whatever method the LINKs is spreading, your message is where you want it – Grass Roots. Keep doing what you’re doing.”*

**John Jones**  
**Wealden Seniors Citizens Partnership**

*“...Thank you for this opportunity to feel/be involved and therefore personally valued/empowered”*

**Rosetta Lenton**

*“... Very satisfied with info and E-News circulars. Very important way to keep up to date with developments and up to date changes which occur in the public service provider arena. Excellent conduit for info transfer to our committee and membership.”*

**John Burns**  
**Seaford Seniors Forum**

*“I am more than delighted at the way East Sussex has moved so positively to its present level of activity with a relatively short timescale. By judicious use of both full time staff and the Core group, a fun and progressive organisation has informed the public of the need for a functional organisation which we can now rejoice in. Congratulations to all who by their efforts have brought us to this stage.”*

**Fred Cullen**

*“...I would like to continue to receive newsletters/dates of local meetings etc. ESSA has representatives and report back to us. Are we (Senior Forums) sufficiently involved?”*

**Kate Davies**  
**Meridian Mature Citizens Forum**

A full report of our survey is available from the office or electronically [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)

Our thanks to everyone who contributed; the comments enable the LINK to plan how it communicates with people, look at the quality of information we circulate, and we do acknowledge there is still a lot more work to do!

## WHAT WE DID:

### Activities undertaken by East Sussex LiNk 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009

As an Interim Core Group a work plan was agreed to cover the transition period, and following the elections and a new mandate for the core group, and a Rolling Work Plan has been agreed and shared with partners and the community via the website, monthly newsletter and paper copy.

View full version:

<http://www.thecountylink.net/upload/Workprogramme%20version7-updated24.4.09.pdf>

### Easy read Work Programme: (*Appendix 1*)

The working party made a commitment to maintain an overview of concerns to the community whilst the LiNk was being set up. The LiNk staff team have been recording issues from 1 April 2008. Once systems were in place which enabled the LiNk to address the issues logged, the following actions and outcomes have been achieved:

The Champion for Involving Young People in the activities of the LiNk took part in a joint piece of work with East Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust, talking to the Youth Cabinet about how they would like to be involved and the key issues they would like to communicate. A copy of this report is available from the LiNk office alternatively click on the following link:

<http://www.thecountylink.net/upload/MeetingProforma-Youthcabinet7Sept08.pdf>

### Outcome of Youth Cabinet Presentation:

A Project group has been formed which includes wider LiNk participants interested in working with young people. All participants to the group have been supported by the host team to access Child Protection Training, and two individuals have completed LiNk training to become Authorised Representatives. Further recruitment initiatives and promoting of the LiNk has recently brought a member to the working party from Voluntary and Community Sector working with all young people in East Sussex.



### **LINK Visits:**

In September 2008 a co opted member of the Interim Core Group took part in a coordinated visit to two services, one in East Sussex and one across the county border in Kent looking at Dignity and Privacy Standards. Within East Sussex this remains a concern as another issue was received from a community group around mixed sex bays. The LINK is continuing to work with the Hospital Trust in addressing these concerns and has further observational visits are planned to see improvements. The following report was submitted (*Appendix 2*)

[http://www.thecountylink.net/upload/DignityandPrivacySeptember2008%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.thecountylink.net/upload/DignityandPrivacySeptember2008%20(2).pdf)

To enable the LINK participants involved conduct carry out these visits, the following support was provided:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Training
- LINK Identity Badge
- Letter confirming their suitability to take part in visiting procedures

### **Referrals to Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Health and Adult Social Care:**

A LINK representative sits on both the HOSC and ASC OSC, and a referral process has been agreed with both committees.

The LINK has made no referrals to the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee in its first year.

The LINK has made no referrals to the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the first year.

### **Reports to Commissioners and Providers:**

One Report has been forwarded to East Sussex NHS Trust and to the Eastbourne Herald, the local newspaper.

This report was in response to car parking charges at local hospitals and the recommendations in this report concurred with that of the Hospitals own findings. The outcome of this report was that the LINK will continue to monitor the proposed changes to hospital car parking charges in East Sussex, and be mindful of any national changes to processes in place throughout England.

### **Requests for information made to commissioners and providers regarding the following – which will inform future work:**

- GP Surgeries and Patient Participation Groups
- Fair access to all screening programmes whether you have a permanent postcode or not.
- Mixed Bay wards East Sussex Hospital NHS Trust sites
- Transport issues from District and Community Hospitals for patients with early appointments and admissions together with lack of information around transport.

- End of Life Care
- Care home standards in the independent sector. Residential clients/service users have their views needs assessed.
- Working in partnership with HOSC on Hospital Discharge concerns

**Working in partnership with Eastbourne District General Hospital, Polegate Ward review:**

LINK participants will talk to patient staff and carers about their experiences. The desired outcome for this project is to identify what is working well and identifying areas which can be improved.

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED:

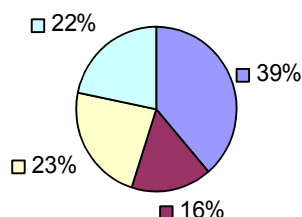
The LINK and the Host have established good working relationships with statutory partners, and their comments evidence the ground work covered. To support our working relationships the LINK have drafted and circulated joint protocols around communication and duties to respond. This document has been welcomed by our partners and work is in progress to adopt the protocols.

Keith Hinckley, Director Adult Social Care East Sussex County Council, commented on the LINKs achievements:

*"I believe that during 2008/09 a very positive working relationship has been established between Adult Social Care staff and both the Core Group and the Host staff of the East Sussex LINK. The LINK will be an important voice for service users, carers and residents about health and social care issues that matter to them. I welcome this, particularly as social care is undergoing significant change in the way services are delivered in response to the 'Putting People First' agenda. Now the LINK has been effectively established, and is leading the way in many areas of work nationally, the network will become a key partner in our work on engagement with residents, service planning and priority setting. Working effectively with the LINK will also improve the information and advice we provide. By working across health and social care the LINK has already played an important part in enhancing our partnership with health colleagues so we work together to address issues raised. I look forward to working closely with the LINK in the future, being kept informed of LINK activities and meeting personally with the Chair of the Core Group on a regular basis. In addition my Department will support LINK activities, listen to what our residents say about health and social care, improve our services in response to issues raised, respond to requests for information and promote with the LINK and its activities to service users, carers and staff at all levels."*

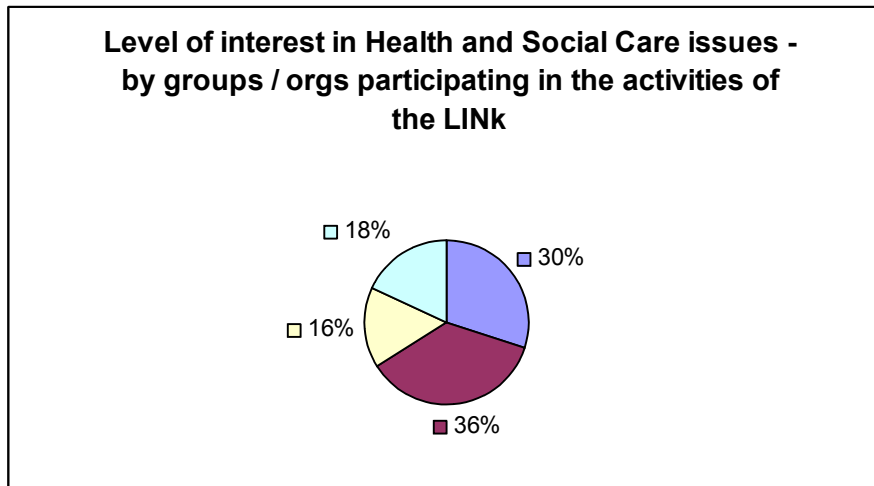
It is through these relationships the LINK will communicate the views, experiences and suggestions for improvements to services gathered from the community. The LINK has confirmed representatives on various boards and partnerships. These are where key decisions are made.

**Level of interest in Health and Social Care issues -  
by individuals participating in the activities of the  
LINK**



- % of individuals interested in both Health and Social Care issues
- % of individuals interested in Health issues

- % of individuals interested in Social Care issues
- % of individuals that did not declare a particular interest



- % of groups / orgs interested in both Health and Social Care issues
- % of groups / orgs interested in Health issues
- % of groups / orgs interested in Social Care issues
- % of groups / orgs that did not declare a particular interest

**Notable and Key Achievements:**

- East Sussex LINK has forged strong relationships with Adult Social Care at all levels
- Our work to involve Young People has been recognised
- Good practice examples in training for enter & view have been shared with other LINKs
- The Governance arrangements are now in place
- Dedicated Website up and running
- Work Programme has been published
- A Core Group has been elected
- Confirmed representation on strategic boards and partnerships

**These achievements provide a strong foundation for our work in years 2 & 3.**

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

The host report all financial activity quarterly to the Local Authority.

### Financial Report 2008/2009

#### Income

	£
Income from DoH via ESCC	200,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>200,000</b>

#### Expenditure

Start Up Costs	9,236
Staff	97,169
Support Costs	14,929
Running Costs	20,098
Governance	24,749
Projects	4,810
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>170,991</b>

Balance carried forward **29,009**

This years LINK accounts show that income was in excess of expenditure by £34,913. There is an over spend on start up costs of £3,591, the reason for this overspend was the extra costs in replacing the computer system for the LINK staff.

There is an under spend on staffing costs of £13,792; the reason was staff were not recruited till June 2008; however we did employ temporary staff to cover the delay of recruiting the staff team.

There is an over spend on support costs of £1,770. This was the extra ESDA staff time spent on the project in the first few months.

Running costs are within budget.

There was an under spend in Governance of £6,758 because there was a delay in recruiting to the core group.

There is an under spend of £19,724 on project costs. This is because timescales established to set up the core group and agreeing the work plan were extended. However there are projects that have started and it is anticipated that the carry over funds will be spent within the coming year.

**Reg McLaughlin ESDA Chief Executive**

## **NEXT STEPS, THE NEXT 12 MONTHS:**

How the LINK will decide its priorities over the next twelve months and how it plans to involve local people and groups in those activities:

The LINK has a rolling Work Programme which is updated quarterly and responds to the needs of the community. The work programme provides opportunities for local people and groups to get involved and take issues forward in a planned and coordinated way.

Local people are encouraged to comment on the work programme. Here are some questions we have invited people to answer on the website:

### **1. The Work Programme**

The LINK has just published their Work Programme. We would like to hear your comments and views.

---

### **2. Influence Health and Social Care services:**

Your Local Involvement Network (LINK) gives you the opportunity to influence your local health and social care services.

*Have we got it right?*

*Can you identify in the work programme where LINK Participants can influence health and social care services?*

### **3. Getting involved:**

Anyone can get involved, and it has been set up to make sure that people in your area get the health and social services they need, does the work programme reflect this?

*Can you identify in the work programme:*

- *How to get involved?*
- *Why you should get involved?*
- *What are the Key issues for people in East Sussex?*

### **4. Experiences of Health and Social Care:**

We want to hear about your experiences of health and social care services and your ideas for improvements or changes.

*Does the work programme reflect clearly the views and experiences we have gathered?*

### **5. Work of the LINK:**

Your LINK has the power to implement small changes and influence big changes.

*How will you know if your LINK is doing a good job?*

## **Prioritising Community Issues in the future**

Issues communicated to the LINK will be prioritised via the Decision Making Policy:

Each issue is logged and allocated a unique reference number. The Identifying Priorities and Assigning working projects sub group meet monthly prior to the main core group meeting. The group are currently looking at a scoring system to support their decision making process. The level of action assigned is presented to whole core group for wider input and ratification. (The LINK Manager attends the Identifying Priorities and Assigning working projects sub group in a support and advisory capacity).

Plans to include local people and groups will be published in a Framework for LINK Promotion, this will include LINK OUTREACH programme starting in April 2009.

To accompany this Framework, the LINK will also publish a Communication and Engagement Strategy telling the local community about the many different ways to get involved and who we communicate with on their behalf.

A vital part of this strategy will include, for our statutory partners, a document outlining how we will work together. (Agreement of Joint Working Protocols)

The website will continue to play a key role in giving information to citizens and communities as well provide a mechanism to communicate their views and experiences to the LINK.

Monthly Newsletters, OUTREACH and local media cover will provide other means to keep local people up to date with activities of the LINK.

## THANK YOU:

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in developing the LINK in its first year, we look forward to building on the foundations laid in order to achieve an effective and credible LINK; working to improve social care and health services for the people who live and work in East Sussex.

Including:

All our Statutory Partners in Health and Social Care and a special thanks also to Keith Hinkley and Cllr Sylvia Tidy for their very positive comments.

And lastly

**You**

For getting involved and wanting to.....

**“MAKE IT HAPPEN!”**

