

D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 1



# Volunteer newsletter

Issue 20

## More information

Get in touch with your Local Involvement Network (LINK)

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🌐: [www.thesurreylink.org](http://www.thesurreylink.org)

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## In this issue

### New hosts

Introducing our new hosts –  
Surrey Independent Living  
Council

### HealthWatch

Update on national  
developments



## A message from our Chair

Welcome to our last newsletter of the year.

The Surrey LINK had an eventful year last year but I am very much looking forward to a positive new year.

As most of you know the hosting arrangements for The Surrey LINK that were provided by Surrey County Council came to an end in September and I would like to thank the members of the LINK Executive and Business Group for all the great work they did in covering the host arrangements. Special thanks to Colin Slatter, Stuart Craig and Margaret Jago who stepped in to keep things going and in particular to Karen Murray who almost single-handed kept the office going during that time.

I'm glad to say we now have new hosting arrangements in place details of which you can find in this newsletter.

We have a very busy few months ahead of us with local groups following up their work plans and with the start of the move into the new Healthwatch arrangements.

One of the first things we will be doing is revamping the newsletter so if you have any ideas of what you would like to see in it call the LINK office on **01483 447 131** or email: [admin@surrey-link.org](mailto:admin@surrey-link.org)

I hope you find the information in this issue interesting and wish you all a very happy new year.

**Cliff Bush OBE**

## New host announced

**We are pleased to announce that from 1 December, Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) has taken over responsibility for hosting the Surrey LINK.** These host arrangements are managed by **Richard Davy**, the Operations Manager of SILC.

### The host team consists of:

**Richard Davy**, the Operations Manager of SILC

**James Campbell**, Project Officer, who will be based in the office full-time and will be looking after The Surrey LINK website, social media initiatives as well as providing general admin support. James has already started.

**Roy Weeden**, Development Officer, who will be getting out to all the groups to see what help they need with their workplans. Roy will also be linking with some of the voluntary organisations. Roy will be full-time and is starting in January.

**Jean Wickens** (who many of you will remember from her Surrey County Council days) will be working one day a week as a lead on 'intelligence' and consultations. This will include doing some further research on HealthWatch and its functions.

**Carol Deans**, Freelance Communications Consultant, will be providing PR to support our transition from LINK to HealthWatch by raising our profile in the local community and with the local media to enable more people to get involved and have their say in their local health service.

### Getting started

Richard has brought together a small team of people who will be able to support us with our projects and plans and prepare for the move to HealthWatch (see panel on left for details).

Richard has already started to get out and about and he and the team are looking forward to meeting as many of the council members and volunteers as possible over the coming weeks. Richard said:

*"I have been involved in social care for many years and I am looking forward to working with, and supporting, the good work the volunteers and groups are involved in. I hope you will see an improvement in the Surrey LINK's overall effectiveness and a more positive profile around what LINKs is doing in Health and Social Care for the people of Surrey."*

### Location and meeting support

The Surrey LINK office will still be based at Astolat and NB Consultants will continue to support meetings and deal with the reimbursement of expenses.

### Profile-raising PR

The two 'Developing HealthWatch' events held in Surrey earlier in the year identified a range of public relations actions (including website, social media, communications, engagement, marketing and advertising). Carol Deans will therefore be sharing a draft public relations / communications plan with the Business Group at its next meeting on 16 January.

Carol will be providing the support, training and tools to enable Surrey LINKs and SILC to undertake as much of the public relations activity as possible for ourselves.

## Website development and social media

**James Campbell, Project Officer and Carol Deans, Freelance Communications Consultant have already started looking at how we can develop our website ([www.thesurreylink.org](http://www.thesurreylink.org)) and make it easier for people to find us through google and other search engines.**

You should already see that The Surrey Link is 'tweeting' again and these messages, along with 'tweets' from other local health and media organisations are on the website. James is also removing out-of-date content, making sure all links work and adding new content.

Behind the scenes, James and Carol have developed an easier menu structure for finding information and using the site. If you would like to give your views on the new site as it is being developed, please contact James in The Surrey LINK office (tel: 01483 447131, email: [james.campbell@surrey-link.org](mailto:james.campbell@surrey-link.org)).

## News in brief

### CQC to target home care services

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be carrying out a themed inspection programme of home care services from April 2012.

### NHS Operating Framework published

The Operating Framework sets out the business and planning arrangements for the NHS in England.

### Clinical Commissioning Groups

The configuration of the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Surrey is still being finalised. We will update you when they are agreed.

## Groups and projects

**We have a number of groups that are involved in making sure the voice of patients and the public is considered when health and social care is planned and provided.** These groups are either linked to:

- the main NHS hospitals in Surrey
- particular services (eg: mental health services and learning disability and autism services)
- areas of Surrey (East, West and Mid Surrey).

We have groups that support the running and co-ordination of The Surrey LINK (including the full council and the business group) and can also set up projects to look at a particular issue (such as patient choice, podiatry and transport).

Each of the groups has a workplan that covers:

- Monitoring and reviewing services
- Finding out what care and services people would like provided
- Producing reports and recommendations on how services may be improved
- Asking people about their experiences of health and social care services.

Roy will be helping the groups to provide updates about their workplans, progress and achievements in future editions.

## Increase in mileage rates

Mileage rates for volunteers have increased to 45p per mile from 1 December 2011.

## HealthWatch

**The Government's health and social care reforms are centred around the fundamental principle that patients and the public must be at the heart of everything our health and care services do.** This will only happen if there are mechanisms in place to involve and engage people in every aspect of how services are planned, commissioned, delivered and monitored. In practice, this means ensuring that the consumer voice is integral to the way things are done, not an add-on, an optional extra, or isolated outside decision-making and planning – but a genuine shift to putting people's views and experiences at their heart.

The Health and Social Care Bill is currently going through Parliament and includes the strengthening of the patient and public voice through the implementation of HealthWatch as a consumer champion at both local and national levels. It is anticipated that the local LINKs will become local HealthWatch organisations.

The creation of HealthWatch and the transition of LINKs into HealthWatch is still being developed nationally and through a number of 'pathfinders' (local authorities and LINKs who are developing into a local HealthWatch early to help with the preparations).

The local HealthWatch will not be a 'network' like the LINK is. It will be a 'body corporate' (an organisation in its own right like a charity or company).

We have a Surrey HealthWatch Steering Committee with representatives from Surrey County Council (who will be responsible for commissioning the local HealthWatch) and The Surrey LINK who are working towards setting up a shadow Surrey HealthWatch in April 2012 ahead of the deadline of October 2012 for all local HealthWatches to be in place.

Jean Wickens will be keeping us up-to-date with the developments through this newsletter, but here is **some of the basic information:**

### *Some similarities...*

Local HealthWatch will retain all involvement and scrutiny functions of the LINK, including:

- promoting involvement
- obtaining views
- monitoring health and care services
- making reports and recommendations
- carrying out Enter & View visits.

### *Some differences...*

- Local HealthWatch will provide **information to support patient choice** (responding to questions about information which the PCT PALS (patient advice and liaison service) teams currently do)
- There will be a Local HealthWatch **representative on Local Health & Wellbeing Boards**. These boards will be made up of local councillors, council officers and GP commissioners and will be responsible for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and also for developing a Health and Wellbeing Strategy based on the evidence in the JSNA.
- Local HealthWatch will point members of the public in the direction of **NHS complaints advocacy** (From 2013). Local HealthWatch can either bid to run the service, or if not, must signpost people in the direction of whoever is running the service.
- Local HealthWatch will have a role in ensuring the NHS meets its duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 through the **Equality Delivery System**. This means all local health providers will have to submit reports that demonstrate how they are trying to meet the needs of the parts of the community covered by the Equality Act.

## HealthWatch national support

- HealthWatch England will represent HealthWatch at a national level and will be a committee of the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- HealthWatch England will put together standards for Local HealthWatch to be measured against, and provide guidance for Local HealthWatches.
- Local HealthWatches will be able to pass concerns to HealthWatch England, who will work with the CQC to look into concerns raised from local information.

## Funding HealthWatch

The local HealthWatch will be funded from money from central government. As a rough guide, the budget is being calculated as the current LINK budget plus approximately 65% of the PCT's PALS budget.

However, the local HealthWatch money is not ring-fenced. That means that the Local Authority does not have to spend the money on local HealthWatch. The money will go into the Local Authority's whole budget. The amount that it spends on HealthWatch will vary from place to place.

## Diary dates

Date	Time	Meeting	Venue
Fri 6 Jan	5 – 7 pm	Executive Group	Maybury Centre
Mon 9 Jan	2 – 4 pm	Ashford and St Peters Hospital Group	Runnymede Centre
Tue 10 Jan	7.15 – 9.15 pm	Royal Surrey County Hospital Group	Royal Surrey County Hospital
Wed 11 Jan	10 am – 12 noon	Mid Surrey Group	St Georges Christian Centre
Thurs 12 Jan	2 – 4 pm	Frimley Park Hospital Group	High Cross Church
Mon 16 Jan	2 – 4 pm	LINK Business Group	Astolat
Tue 24 Jan	5 – 7 pm	HealthWatch Steering Group	Astolat
Wed 25 Jan	10 am – 1 pm	East Surrey Group	Tandridge District Council Offices (tbc)
Thurs 26 Jan	7 – 9 pm	West Surrey Group	Maybury Centre
Wed 1 Feb	2 – 4 pm	Mental Health Group	Astolat
Mon 27 Feb	7 – 9 pm	Surrey LINK Council	Park House

The next meeting of the Learning Disability Group is not until March.

If you would like to find out more about these meetings or arrange to attend them, please contact the Surrey LINK office (tel: 01483 447131, email: [admin@surrey-link.org](mailto:admin@surrey-link.org)).

## What is the Surrey LINK?

**The Surrey LINK** is your opportunity to influence health and social care decisions in your community.

Volunteering with **The Surrey LINK** can make all the difference to the services you, your family and community rely on.

Your involvement can help to close the gap between what's on offer and what you really want and need from hospitals, doctors, dentists, social services and more.

Anyone can join **The Surrey LINK** and everyone is welcome!

There are a range of ways to volunteer and get involved from short one-off fact-finding exercises to full engagement in projects which monitor and improve services, all with training and support to help you, get started.

Information about some of the groups and projects our volunteers are involved are on page 3.

**To find out more or get involved, call 01483 447 131 or email The Surrey LINK at [admin@surrey-link.org](mailto:admin@surrey-link.org)**



***Merry Christmas and a happy new year from all at The Surrey LINK and Surrey Independent Living Council***