



**North Somerset LINK**  
Your partnership for health and social care

# LINK NEWS

Issue10 - Jun11

## Latest News...

### LINK Host – New Contact details

From Thursday 12th May, the LINK Host office base changed. This is one of a number of changes that the Host has agreed with North Somerset Council as a joint response to a reduction in the funding that the council can make available to the LINK in 2011-12.

### Our New Contact Details:

**North Somerset LINK**  
**9 Orange Street**  
**Bristol**  
**BS2 9HG**

**Tel: 0117 9420796**

**Email: [contact@nsomersetlink.co.uk](mailto:contact@nsomersetlink.co.uk)**

**Web: [www.nsomersetlink.co.uk](http://www.nsomersetlink.co.uk)**

We have four part-time staff to cover the office and we can generally guarantee that there will be someone in the office during the core hours of 10.30am - 2.30pm, Monday -Thursday.

When the office is unstaffed, there will be an answering machine operating, which will always be checked when we are next in the office. Otherwise, please feel free to contact us by email and we will respond as quickly as possible.

**FREEPOST: NB. Please do not use our freepost address or envelopes with the freepost stickers on them if you have any, as the account has now been closed.**

## Keeping in touch with our Members and Participants

So that we can keep you up to date with progress on HealthWatch and keep sending you consultation details and other items of interest, **it is really important that we have your email address**, if you have one.

It is necessary for the Host to cut costs in all areas possible, so we will be considerably reducing the amount of information that we send out hard copy. Email will be our main form of communication, so if you have not given us your email address yet, please do so now, so that we can keep in touch with you.

If you are not able to provide us with an email address, please ensure that we have up to date contact details, so that we can get in touch, when we have important information to share with you.

Latest News	P1
Updates: Health & Social Care Bill and HealthWatch	P2
Feed back to your NS LINK Reps	P3
A few Items of Interest	P3
Events: Compass Disabilities' event – 'a resounding success' and details of Age UK Somerset's next 'Big Advice Day'	P4
Free Courses/Training opportunities & Initiatives	P5 &6
Meetings	P7
Latest Consultations	P8
LINK Meetings & Newsletter changes	

## Updates

### **Health & Social Care Bill and HealthWatch**

#### **Background**

The health and social care bill was introduced to Parliament in January 2011. The Department of Health White Paper, which contemplated significant changes to the NHS, proposed the creation of a national body called "HealthWatch England". HealthWatch England is proposed to be a "new independent consumer champion", and will be a part of the Care Quality Commission. Local Involvement Networks will "become the Local HealthWatch", and will ensure that views and feedback from patients and carers are a key influence in local decision-making about health and social care. They may also have the two new functions of supporting people who wish to make complaints about care services, and of helping people make choices about their health and social care services. Members of the LINK Committee met back in early October 2010 to discuss a collective response to the HealthWatch proposals and the NHS White paper consultation, which set out the Government's long-term vision for the future of the NHS, including the new framework for GP Commissioning. Our response is available to view on the LINK website [www.nsomersetlink.co.uk](http://www.nsomersetlink.co.uk).

#### **Current Situation**

You may be aware of the current political controversy over the progress of the Health and Social Care Bill. The Coalition Government agreed a two-month "Pause" and "Listening Period" and LINK representatives attended a local NHS consultation meeting on the Bill in May. The "Listening Period" has now ended and the outcome is due in June. Although the sections of the Bill relating to public involvement and to HealthWatch do not seem to be among the more disputed items, they will be affected by any delay in the Bill's progress through Parliament. It has already been announced that all statutory aspects of the Bill will be delayed until July 2012 "at the earliest", and this will include the commencement of HealthWatch. A further six months' delay in the legislation has recently been suggested although this has not been confirmed.

The one thing we can be certain of at the moment, is that the LINK will exist until the new legislation comes into force - whenever this may be. In the meanwhile, the LINK will continue to work with its statutory partners towards developing Local HealthWatch, and to carry out the LINK's existing duties.

## **Feedback to your LINK Representatives:**

The NS LINK representative for Patient Transport issues is Tony Hawkings. Tony regularly attends meetings on behalf of the LINK and is keen to ensure that he is representing the views of its Members and Participants when he attends.

Tony would like Members and Participants to get in touch if they have had experience of using the new GWAS Patient Transport Scheme (PTS) for hospital appointments. Any feedback that you would like Tony to pass on, including positive experiences of using the service, would be really appreciated, so that he can be confident that he is accurately reflecting patients' views.

Please send any comments to the new NS LINK address above, let us know via email ([contact@nsomersetlink.co.uk](mailto:contact@nsomersetlink.co.uk)) or telephone 0117 9420796. You can also comment via the NS LINK website: [www.nsomersetlink.co.uk](http://www.nsomersetlink.co.uk).

If you have any questions about the GWAS Patient Transport Scheme, particularly in respect of the eligibility criteria for the scheme, or any other queries, please get in touch.

## **Items of Interest**

### **New website with latest news on health and social care reform**

With the official launch of the health and social care reform bill, the Department of Health has launched a web channel with the latest news on health and social care reform. To view the new website follow paste this link into your web browser bar: <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/>

### **National Statistics about the experience of black / minority ethnic patients**

The Department of Health has conducted a consultation around how, in better and more accessible ways, to publish data on the self-reported experience of patients from black and minority ethnic groups. The response to the consultation has now been published. To view the response go to:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_126672.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_126672.pdf)

### **Government to seek legislation to protect society's most vulnerable people**

Plans to strengthen the protection of vulnerable adults by making it a legal requirement for all local authorities to have a Safeguarding Adults Board were published on 16<sup>th</sup> May by Care Services Minister Paul Burstow.

To view the statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding, go to:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_126770.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_126770.pdf)

## Events

In our March e-bulletin we publicised the following event and are pleased to include in this newsletter, the press release from Compass Disability about the success of the event, below:



### **DISABILITY SOMERSET EXHIBITION A RESOUNDING SUCCESS**

THE first Disability Somerset exhibition on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May proved to be a resounding success. Around 1,000 disabled people, their carers and professionals attended the event, which was organised by Somerset charity Compass Disability Services. Over 100 exhibitors showcased a superb range of equipment, information and services – from all terrain wheelchairs and police car-styled mobility scooters to daily living aids.

Disability Somerset, which took place at the Junction 24 Sedgemoor Auction Centre, was the county's first major disabilities exhibition, organised to promote independent living and enhance quality of life for disabled people. The event was officially opened by BBC Radio Somerset presenter Emma Britton, who cut the ribbon live on air. Emma then hosted the morning show from the BBC Bus and floor of the exhibition, including interviews with exhibitors and visitors.

Compass Disability Services' CEO Richard Pitman described the exhibition as a huge success and aims to make it an annual event. He said: "We are delighted with the way the first Disability Somerset exhibition went. The event was extremely well supported by exhibitors and visitors and I'd like to thank everyone who supported it, including our main sponsor Dame Hannah Rogers Trust.

As well as exhibitor stands, those who attended were also able to visit the 'Compass Disability Services zone', to view the number of projects and services run by the Taunton-based charity. Workshops and networking activities for individuals and professionals working in the disability or care sector were also well attended.

#### **Age UK Somerset would like to invite you to their ' Big Advice Day'**

**Venue:** Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall, Baytree Road, Milton, W-s-M  
BS22 8HQ

**Date:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**Time:** 10am-Noon

For Further information, contact: Justin Parsons

Email: [justin.parsons@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:justin.parsons@n-somerset.gov.uk)

## Free Courses/Training Opportunities & Initiatives

### CREATING CHANGES

Creating Changes is a project offering free community development training to a wide range of local support and development organisations, so that they can improve their practice in supporting small groups and networks.

**Date: Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 Time: 9.30am - 4.00pm**

**Venue: Friend Resource Centre, 39 Oxford Street,  
Weston super Mare, BS23 1TN**

To find out more, contact: the South West Foundation on 01275 333666 or email: [jcrawley@southwestfoundation.org.uk](mailto:jcrawley@southwestfoundation.org.uk)

### Bridge Project at The Carlton Centre, Weston Super Mare

The Bridge Project has been set up to support people who are at a point of change or vulnerability in their lives. It offers a range of 'taster' sessions in a relaxed environment. This provides opportunities for people to try out therapeutic recreational and creative activities that develop their interests and confidence.

The Bridge Project Programme - Free places still available - it's not too late to join – contact Linda Shaw by email: [thebridgeprojectns@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:thebridgeprojectns@hotmail.co.uk)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Poetry</b>
Tutor	Debby Grice
Date	Started Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> May
Time	1.00 – 3.00
Venue	Carlton Centre Art Room

#### **About the session**

A relaxed session that aims to put you in touch with your inner poet. Have a go at writing some poems with friendly creative writing tutor on hand to give you some ideas and inspiration. Serious or humorous, light or heavy, all kinds of poetry-writing is good for you! Come along and enjoy the fun of playing with words.

**Activity            African Drumming**

Tutor                Angela Jones  
Date                 Starts Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June  
Time                 10.00 – 5.00  
Venue                Carlton Centre Art Room

**About the session**

Drumming is about communication and celebration – it builds confidence and friendship. Come along and enjoy yourself. You have nothing to lose and lots to gain.

Stay the whole day or join in sessions which begin at: 10.15, 11.15, 12.15, 1.45, 2.45, 3.45. To book, contact: [thebridgeprojectns@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:thebridgeprojectns@hotmail.co.uk)

**Free Computer Training**

For people in North Somerset who want a better understanding of computers can now sign up to a free two-hour training session.

Non-profit-making organisation, North Somerset Training is hosting free computer and internet taster sessions at venues throughout North Somerset.

Details of venues will be finalised once the number of participants is confirmed. Call Evie or Sam on 01934 440 021 to register your interest.

**Get online!**

There is a new government initiative to help people get online. Affordable pcs and broadband are available to people receiving certain benefits and to charities. For more information or an application form, go to:

<http://www.getonlineathome.org/>

You must receive one of these benefits to qualify for the cheaper price of £95:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Jobseeker's allowance
- Pension credit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance / Constant Attendance Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit / Employment and Support Allowance
- Disability element of Working Tax Credit

## LINK Meetings 2011/12

### June

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

14<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2

### July

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

12<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2

### September

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

13<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2

#### **LINK Management Sub Group meeting with Care Quality Commission**

14<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2

### October

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

11<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2

#### **LINK Committee Meeting in Public**

20<sup>th</sup>, 10-12.00, Horsecastle Chapel, Yatton, *these details are to be confirmed, please check our website for any amendment*

### November

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

8<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2

### December

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

13<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2 –*maybe cancelled*

### January 2012

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

10<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2 – *only if no meeting in Dec*

### February 2012

#### **LINK Management Sub Group Meeting**

14<sup>th</sup>, 10 -12.00, Yatton Methodist Hall, RM 2 - *may be cancelled*

#### **LINK Committee Meeting in Public**

23<sup>rd</sup>, Horsecastle Chapel, Yatton, time tbc. – *these details may change*

## Latest Consultations

### **UK influenza pandemic preparedness strategy 2011: strategy for consultation - Closing date: 17 June 2011**

[UK influenza pandemic preparedness strategy 2011: strategy for consultation](#)

### **Focus on Outcomes to Improve Patient Care**

The framework focuses on tackling inequalities in outcomes in five areas: preventing people from dying prematurely; supporting people with long-term conditions; helping people to recover as quickly and fully as possible from ill health or injury; see

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_122944](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_122944)

### **Report on Stroke Services**

A major review by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on stroke care has found the extent to which patients are supported in coping with life after stroke varies significantly across England. See [CQC Stroke review national report. PDF](#)

### **LINK Meetings and Newsletter Changes**

LINK Committee Meetings: A further impact of budget constraints will be on the number of Committee Meetings in public that the LINK will be able to hold this year. The LINK's Management Sub Group (MSG) has agreed to have two Committee meetings, probably in October 2011 and February 2012 (dates/times/venues tbc), the main focus will be the transition to HealthWatch.

MSG Meetings: Although there will be meetings of the LINK's MSG most months, these have also been reduced. It has been agreed that there will be no more than eight meetings of the MSG in total, between April '11 – April '12.

Newsletter: We will also be cutting back on paper copy communication and instead of sending out monthly e-bulletins, we will only be sending out this Newsletter, a minimum of three times per year.

Please keep an eye on the LINK website ([www.nsomersetlink.co.uk](http://www.nsomersetlink.co.uk)) for any changes to meetings and other info. We will also endeavour to update Members and Participants about anticipated changes, as and when they crop up, via email.

