

*Your LINK for improving health and social care*

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a LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK

## Medway LINK Annual Report 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009

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#### **Central Office**

KMN, Unit 24 Folkestone Enterprise Centre,  
Shearway Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4RH  
Tel: 01303 297050  
E-mail: [info@kmn-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@kmn-ltd.co.uk)  
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm  
4.00pm

#### **Local Office**

The Medway LINK, Avenue Business Centre,  
17 New Road Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6BA  
Tel: 01634 821135  
E-mail: [info@kmn-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@kmn-ltd.co.uk)  
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 8.30am –

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*(Answerphone available out of office hours)*

# 1. Summary

## Introduction

- 1.1 **Welcome** to the first Annual Report of the Medway Local Involvement Network (LINK).
- 1.2 If you have never heard of a Local Involvement Network or a LINK before then do read on – you could get interested and get involved in what it does.
- 1.3 If you know about the LINK already and, in particular, have signed up to be a part of this new venture then do read on to find out more.

## Format of this report

- 1.4 This report contains a factual and chronological statement of the progress made in Medway to establish a Local Involvement Network (LINK).
- 1.5 This first section - **Summary** - outlines the different sections in the Report.
- 1.6 The second section - **Introduction** - contains a welcome from Shirley Griffiths, Facilitator of the LINK's Coordinating Team. Also, here you will find details of how to get in touch with the Medway LINK.
- 1.7 If you have never heard of a Local Involvement Network or a LINK before then Section 3 - **What is a Local Involvement Network (a LINK)?** - will help as it describes how the LINK has come about, what its purpose, roles and powers are.
- 1.8 LINKs were due to start in April 2008 when PPI Forums (Patient and Public Involvement Forums) were abolished. This is when the legal requirement for Local Authorities to establish and support a LINK in their area came into being. Back in late 2006 Medway had been fortunate in being identified as a pilot area to trial LINKs (called Early Adopters). Section 4 - **From PPI Forums to the LINK** - provides highlights of the Medway Early Adopter Project and up to July 2008, when Medway Council awarded the contract to a Host organisation to set up and support the LINK - Kent & Medway Networks (KMN). KMN, a not-for-profit organisation, had, until April 2008, supported PPI Forums in Kent, Medway and Surrey.
- 1.9 Much investigative work took place in the Early Adopter Project and the transitional period between the Forums closing and the LINK coming into existence. In addition, the PPI Forums left an excellent legacy of their work. Combining all of this with the development work undertaken by the LINK Coordinating Team and KMN, the formal launch of the Medway LINK took place on 7 January 2009 at an event in Rochester, a city in the heart of Medway. A summary of that event can be found in Section 5 - **Launch of the Medway LINK**. A fuller report is available on request to KMN.
- 1.10 Since the formal launch at the beginning of 2009, where the LINK's outline structure, policies and governance arrangements were agreed, work has continued to establish the LINK's various networks and groups - details of these are found in Section 6 - **Structure of the Medway LINK** - and Section 7 – **The**

**Medway LINK in operation.** Section 7 provides examples of the work that has been undertaken in the name of the LINK.

- 1.11 Section 8 - **Funding of the Medway LINK** - provides the accounts for the public funds made available to the Medway LINK.
- 1.12 With the use of public funds comes responsibility to provide value for money and a professional and responsive service, in support of the LINK. There is a performance management process and Section 9 - **Performance management** - highlights how Medway Council can be assured that KMN is fulfilling its contract to set up and support the LINK.
- 1.13 Section 10 - **Next steps for the Medway LINK** - provides details of the next years work for the LINK and an outline of what will be looked at in the following year, subject to agreement at the LINK's annual meeting in June 2009.
- 1.14 Last but not least, the LINK Coordinating Team, and KMN, are keen to learn from you:
  - What do you think about this report? For example, is it informative, is it too long, having read it do you have sufficient information to know what the LINK is about and how you can get involved?
  - What do you feel the LINK should be addressing in the future?
  - How do you wish to become involved in the LINK and its work?
- 1.15 A separate feedback form is included - please do take a few minutes of your time to complete and return this to us - contact details are on the form. If you are not already a LINK participant then please do sign up, either through the website or the feedback form.

## **Acknowledgments**

- 1.16 The LINK Coordinating Team and KMN wish to thank all those who have contributed to the development of the LINK in Medway, the officers and volunteers who worked during the transitional period - the Medway Early Adopter Project Group and LINK Transitional Steering Group. All worked hard to maintain the momentum and interest in this new way of encouraging more people to get involved, not just in their local health service but also, for the first time, in local social care services.
- 1.17 Also thanks must go to PPI Forum Members who have left a good quality legacy from which the LINK has been launched.
- 1.18 Finally, KMN would like to thank all of the LINK Coordinating Team (past and present) for their time, effort, support and help in the production of the LINK's various policies and governance framework.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 A few words from Shirley Griffiths – Facilitator of the LINK's Coordinating Team:

*Dear Reader*

*Welcome to this the very first Annual Report of the Medway LINK.*

*Much of the activity in this our first year has been on setting some firm foundations for the LINK. Whilst this is not very exciting stuff, it is vital that the community of Medway sees the LINK as an organisation which it can trust and one that can make a difference. We hope that people will recognise the innovative way the Medway LINK has been set up in order to secure its independence and to give a voice to all sections of the community and not just the few.*

*This report describes some of the activities the LINK has carried out since the launch. I should particularly like to draw attention to two activities:*

- A joint venture we embarked upon with the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum, using Awards for All Lottery Funding, to hold a number of events. These were aimed at reaching out into certain communities to let them know about the LINK and to provide information about a range of services. This involved promoting the LINK at Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre and holding three very successful events for Asian, African / Caribbean and Eastern European Women.*
- A survey of users of Medway's NHS as part of the national Annual Health Check on NHS standards. 130 people took part in this exercise and have raised many important issues concerning the quality of our local health care services, which we shall be taking forward – see our proposals for the LINK's programme in the coming year.*

*I should like to place on record my sincere thanks to all those that have contributed to the setting up of the Medway LINK - an organisation which everyone in Medway can now be proud of. This is in no small measure down to the hard work of the members of the Early Adopter Project Group, the Transitional Steering Group and past and existing members of the Coordinating Team of the LINK. I should also like to thank Medway Council for the assistance they have given the LINK in helping to get established, particularly around the appointment of the support organisation, Kent and Medway Networks. Thanks also to the Medway NHS Foundation Trust and to NHS Medway with whom we have started to develop a close and, I believe, potentially effective working relationship.*

*The Coordinating Team would also like to thank Kent and Medway Networks for their assistance in supporting us during the last year.*

*Finally, a big thank you to the ever-increasing family of LINK participants that are the Medway LINK.*

*Shirley Griffiths  
LINK Coordinating Team Facilitator*

2.2 To contact the Medway LINK:

By Post: **Medway LINK, Kent & Medway Networks Ltd,  
FREEPOST NAT17761, Folkestone, CT19 4BR**

By Telephone: **01634 821135**

By SMS Text: **07976 596913**

By Email: **info@kmn-ltd.co.uk**

**Contact details for your local LINK Development Worker are at the end of this report.**

### 3. What is a Local Involvement Network (a LINK)?

3.1 First some questions for you (answers overleaf):

	Question	Your answer
1	<i>What do you think a Local Involvement Network (LINK) is?</i>	
2	<i>What are the aims of a LINK?</i>	
3	<i>What is the LINK's role?</i>	
4	<i>Does the LINK have any powers to carry out its job?</i>	
5	<i>Who can get involved in the LINK?</i>	
6	<i>OK – I am interested, so how can I get involved in the LINK?</i>	
7	<i>Can I get involved on-line?</i>	

3.2 How did you do? Here are the answers and to find out more please read on:

	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1	<b><i>What is a Local Involvement Network (LINK)?</i></b>	It is an independent network of local people, voluntary organisations and community groups working together to influence and improve local health and social care services.
2	<b><i>What are the aims of a LINK?</i></b>	Its aim is to strengthen the system that enables communities to influence the services they receive.
3	<b><i>What is the LINK's role?</i></b>	<p>Its job is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• find out what people like and dislike about their local services</li> <li>• work with the people who plan and run them</li> <li>• help make changes and improve the services</li> <li>• monitor and review the local services</li> <li>• tell others about their findings, such as Medway Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - those who have the power to hold the managers to account.</li> </ul>
4	<b><i>Does the LINK have any powers to carry out its job?</i></b>	Yes - the Medway LINK has powers to help it do its job and to make sure that changes happen - see later in this section.
5	<b><i>Who can get involved in the LINK?</i></b>	The Medway LINK is open to anyone, any group, any organisation in Medway. You can get involved if you live or work in the area or use any health or social care service in Medway. There are no strings attached.
6	<b><i>OK – I am interested, so how can I get involved in the LINK?</i></b>	<p>You can get involved at any level you wish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simply receive information about the LINK and its work</li> <li>• Take part in a consultation about a service change for example</li> <li>• Get more involved in a project to review a particular local service.</li> </ul>

7	<b>Can I get involved on-line?</b>	<p>Most certainly and this may be the quickest way to get involved.</p> <p>The Medway LINK has a website <a href="http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk">www.themedwaylink.co.uk</a> where you can find out more about what the LINK is doing, what is happening in your area, such as events and training opportunities, news on your local health or social care services. Also on the website you can register to be a participant in the LINK.</p> <p>There are interactive elements on the website - discussion areas called 'Talkback'; an opinion poll and survey section where LINK participants' views are sought and lots more!</p> <p>Views and information on a variety of topics currently appear, such as whether the NHS should fund complementary medicine / therapy and whether Boards of NHS Foundation Trusts should meet in private.</p>
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### Some facts – the legal framework

- 3.3 Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) are defined in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and are established for the same geographical areas as local authorities with social care responsibilities. In Medway this is Medway Council.
- 3.4 There are deliberately few rules and regulations governing how LINKs are organised and are to carry out their activities. This has enabled the Medway LINK to organise itself in ways that most closely meet the needs of communities (see Section 6).
- 3.5 Under the Act LINKs are established through a duty placed on those local authorities to ensure that LINK activities can take place in their areas. The Act requires the authorities to make contractual arrangements with a 'Host organisation' to support LINKs. Here in Medway, the Medway Council has contracted with Kent & Medway Networks (KMN) to fulfil this role.
- 3.6 The Secretary of State has provided funding through the Area Based Grant (to the Local Authority) for three years up to March 2011 to support the carrying out of LINK activities:

- Set up a Local Involvement Network in their area
- To contract with a local independent organisation to act as a Host for the LINK (ie to support and provide advice and guidance to the LINK)
- To enable the LINK to undertake its role in the community

**Purpose of the Medway LINK**

- 3.7 The Medway LINK exists to provide a voice for the community of Medway - a flexible mechanism for providing a stronger voice for local people in the planning, design or redesign, commissioning and provision of health and social care services.

<p><b>The roles of the Medway LINK are to:</b></p>	<p><b>The powers of the LINK</b> mostly relate to the information it may need to undertake these roles and to enter and view specific places where health and / or social care services are provided. The LINK can:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promote and support the involvement of people in commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and social care services</li> <li>○ Obtain the views of people about their need for, and experiences of, local health and social care services</li> <li>○ Convey views to the providers and commissioners of those services and scrutinisers (such as the Medway Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee)</li> <li>○ Monitor and review the commissioning and provision of health and social care services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask for information from health / social care services providers and commissioners</li> <li>○ Receive such information in a specified time</li> <li>○ Make reports and receive a reply within a specified time</li> <li>○ Visit services to see and review what they do</li> <li>○ Tell elected politicians on an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) what they have found about services and get a response.</li> </ul>

## 4. From PPI Forums to the LINK

### Background

- 4.1 From 2003 to 2008 Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums carried out the role of representing the patient and public view in the National Health Service. PPI Forums replaced Community Health Councils that had been in existence since 1974. Both statutory bodies compromised volunteers who were able to address health issues only, specifically those services delivered within or by the NHS.

### Medway Early Adopter Project

- 4.2 Towards the end of 2006, with the planned abolition of PPI Forums and the creation of Local Involvement Networks, the Department of Health sponsored nine Early Adopter Projects and Medway was selected to be one of these. In addition there were two test sites led by the Healthcare Commission.
- 4.3 An overview of the key learning points, the achievements and challenges of the Medway Project can be found in 'The Medway Early Adopter Project for Local Involvement Networks - Final Report' available on the LINK's website [www.themedwaylink.co.uk](http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk) or by request to KMN.
- 4.4 Each Early Adopter Project was supported by the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) and had the aim of learning as much as possible, as quickly as possible about how to create effective LINKs. The project objectives were to:
- o consider how new and different patient and public involvement systems might work in each area
  - o define the relationship between the LINKs, Overview and Scrutiny, audit and inspection bodies, local communities and other stakeholders
  - o explore how the LINKs will work on equality and diversity
  - o contribute to national and local learning
  - o explore how to involve the community in the commissioning of the Host organisation
  - o identify governance issues that might need to be resolved
  - o look at the local, regional and national elements of patient and public involvement
  - o consider the resource requirements for LINKs.
- 4.5 Principles of the Early Adopter Project were to:
- o use a process of community development and empowerment
  - o add to the system – the LINK should build on good, existing local networks and not replace or take these over
  - o devise a system that fits with the needs of the communities and not the purchasers and providers of services.

- 4.6 In Medway a Project Group was formed in January 2007, with representatives of key stakeholders from the statutory and community / voluntary sector, to develop a model for a Local Involvement Network in Medway by:
- o evaluating the effectiveness of current user and public engagement in health and social care
  - o maximising the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the design of the LINK, in particular those traditionally hard to reach groups
  - o exploring the challenges and opportunities of a LINK through action research on a 'real' issue locally
  - o exploring the role and purpose of a LINK in relation to other existing engagement methods
  - o exploring possible structures, governance arrangements and support required
  - o communicating with local stakeholders on the progress of the project.
- 4.7 The Early Adopter Project Group started with an information-gathering phase with the results being used for a second phase of testing a LINK model. The aim of the third phase was to evaluate the process and to use the learning in the establishment of the Medway LINK.
- 4.8 A result of their work was a LINK model / structure for the Medway LINK that has a governance type core with external groups based on geography or topic. The core was later re-named the 'Steering Group' and comprised volunteers recruited from the local community. The aim was to have seven representatives of the voluntary sector and eight individual members of the public. Ultimately the final group consisted of 12 representatives and 11 individuals who together took forward the development of the model agreed by the Project Group. Some of the Project Group was retained to form an Advisory Group.
- 4.9 This work continued in parallel with Medway Council tendering in the UK and Europe to find an organisation to help set up and support the new LINK (the Host organisation).

#### **From the Early Adopter Project to the Medway LINK**

- 4.10 The Government's intention was that local authorities with social services responsibility would have a substantive Local Involvement Network (LINK) in place in April 2008, to coincide with the end of the PPI Forums.
- 4.11 Many local authorities were not in a position to have a LINK in place by the time PPI Forums closed but legislation was passed to help each authority to ensure that there was not too significant impact in their area.
- 4.12 Medway Council was in this position and so engaged in ensuring that transitional arrangements were in place to fill the gap until a Host organisation was contracted to set up and then support the LINK.

## Appointment of a Host Organisation

- 4.13 Advertisement for the post of a LINKs Host was placed in the Official Journal of the European Union which was published on 2 January 2008.
- 4.14 The closing date for formal submissions was 22 January 2008 and organisations who expressed an interest were sent the full tender documents and invited to outline in some detail how they will meet this specification. The deadline for responses to the tender documents was 28 March 2008. After interview, the contract was awarded to Kent & Medway Networks Ltd (KMN) on 16 June 2008.
- 4.15 In July 2008, the Host organisation commenced their work of enabling a Medway LINK to be established. Following an Introductory Workshop event attended by members of the Steering Group, it was decided their first task was to make the necessary arrangements for the appointment of a Coordinating Team to cover nine specific areas: Finance, Project Management, Community Engagement and Partnerships, Legislation Policy and Governance, Equality and Diversity, Communications and PR, Strategic, Facilitator and Performance Management. The appointment of nine individuals, who were each responsible for one of these areas, was finalised in September at which point they took over from the 'Steering Group'.

## **5. Launch of the Medway LINK**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 The formal launch of the Medway LINK took place in Rochester on 7 January 2009. The Mayor of Medway, Cllr David Carr, and the Mayoress, Mrs Kirstine Carr, were the guests of honour and helped formally launch the LINK.

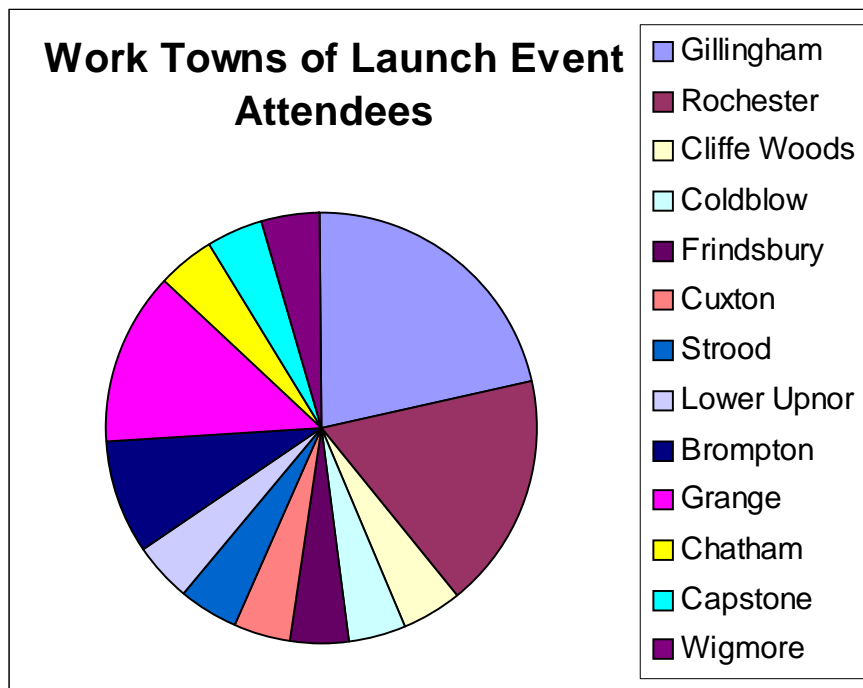
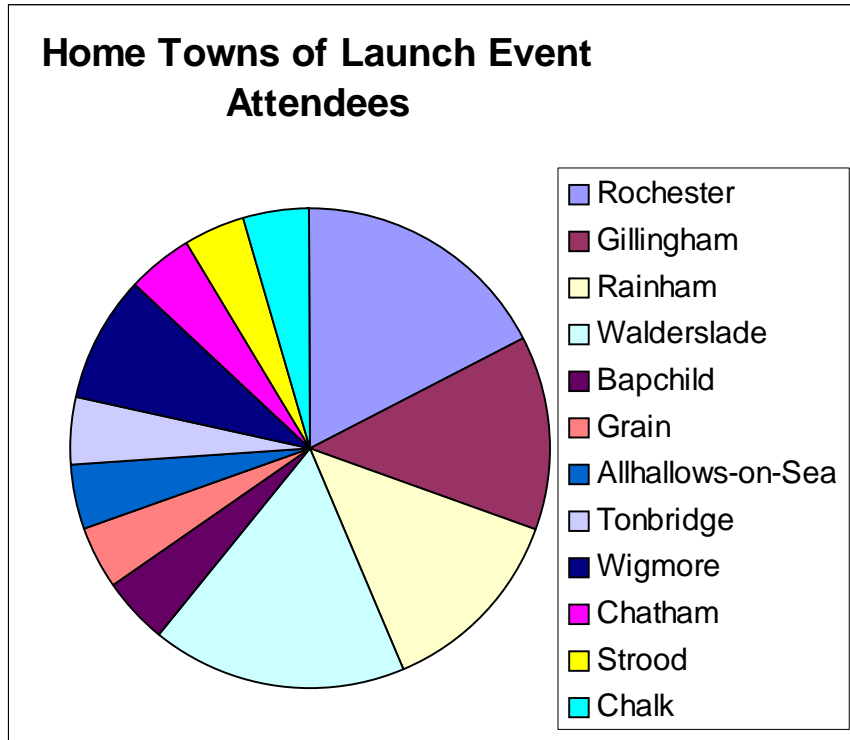
### **Purpose of the event**

- 5.2 This was published in the information pack that was distributed to all attendees in advance of the event:
- o To formally launch the Medway LINK as a legal entity
  - o To formally launch the Medway LINK website
  - o To publicise and promote the Medway LINK
  - o To promote how to become involved in the LINK through the Medway LINK website
  - o To recruit participants to the Medway LINK
  - o To explore the roles of and recruit to the Medway LINK's
    - ❖ Authorised Panel of Visitors
    - ❖ Pool of External Representatives
    - ❖ Moderating Panel.

### **Some statistics**

- 5.3 Around 400 invitations to the formal launch were despatched.
- 5.4 Over 70 people attended either as an individual with an interest in health and / or social care or as a representative of a voluntary / community / statutory organisation. In addition, the LINK Coordinating Team and representatives from Kent & Medway Networks attended.
- 5.5 All attending were asked to indicate where they lived and / or worked so that the diversity in relation to geography could be analysed - see the charts on the next page.

**Diversity of attendees at the Medway LINK's launch on 7 January 2009**



- 5.6 Numbers of people registered to be a LINK participant:
- o Before the formal launch - 23
  - o At the launch event - 45
  - o Total as at 31 March 2009: 112 (which includes 56 organisations).
- 5.7 **Programme for the launch event** - A copy is at Appendix A.
- 5.8 **Workshops** - All present at the event were asked to contribute to the development of the LINK's various groups and each table formed a workshop to address one of the following subjects:
- o Medway LINK Authorised Panel of Visitors
  - o Medway LINK Pool of External Representatives
  - o Medway LINK Moderating Panel
- 5.9 **Outcome of the 3 workshops** - consolidated feedback from all discussions is available on request to KMN. This work has contributed to the development of the LINK's various groups - see Sections 6 and 7 in this Annual Report.
- 5.10 **Voting numbers** - All LINK strategies / policies presented to the event were agreed with the participants in attendance voting as follows:
- o Community engagement strategy                      29 votes for and none against
  - o Governance Framework                                      28 votes for and 1 against
  - o Equality and diversity policy                              26 votes for and none against
  - o Communications and public relations strategy                      27 votes for and none against
- 5.11 **LINK Work programme** - various opportunities were provided for LINK participants to contribute to the LINK's future work programme. The topics / issues that were raised have formed part of that programme.
- 5.12 **Budget and expenditure** for the event:
- o Total Budget                      =              £2000
  - o Total Expenditure                      =              £1700
- 5.13 **Medway LINK website** - The LINK website was launched at the same time as the LINK.
- 5.14 **Feedback** - All attendees were provided with a feedback form to give their views on the event and an analysis of the responses and comments is available on request to KMN.

## Conclusion

- 5.15 The Medway LINK was formally launched alongside the Medway LINK website: [www.themedwaylink.co.uk](http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk)

## **6. Structure of the Medway LINK**

### **Introduction**

- 6.1 At the launch of the LINK in January 2009 LINK participants agreed a range of LINK policies and particularly its governance arrangements - the rules by which it will work. This includes the outline structure for the LINK that is intentionally flexible, allowing for change when the need arises. It is anticipated that the first review of the structure will take place at the first annual meeting of the LINK (in June 2009). A diagram reflecting this structure can be found at Appendix B.
- 6.2 Under this approach the LINK can set up groups or panels of LINK participants to help it do its work, to make decisions, set priorities and to work in specific areas. This is a development of the structure, with geographical and / or topic groups, that culminated from the Early Adopter Project and was agreed by the LINK Steering Group during the transitional period.

### **Getting involved**

- 6.3 There will be many activities providing opportunities for everyone to get involved, ranging from people receiving information, taking part in on-line discussions to being part of an interest or discussion group or project group. In addition, some LINK participants will be able to enter and view services to see how they work at first hand or represent the LINK on a health or social care planning or commissioning group and keep the LINK and the community of Medway informed.
- 6.4 The LINK is not a committee or group of people representing others - participants can dip in and out of its activities and there will be more opportunities for those people or groups that previously have struggled to get their voices heard.
- 6.5 There is a requirement for the LINK to produce an Annual Report before the end of June each year. The Medway LINK is holding its first annual meeting on 3 June 2009 where participants can attend and review the LINK's activities over the past year and plan for the future.
- 6.6 Recognising that some people need different ways to get involved, a number of methods are being implemented, as detailed below.

### **Quarterly community engagement event**

- 6.7 There will be many different types of community engagement activities, such as Quarterly Events held in different parts of the community and throughout the area. This will provide LINK participants with an opportunity to hold the LINK's Coordinating Team, and the Moderating Panel, to account for the way they have discharged their responsibilities on behalf of the LINK. It also offers more chances for hearing about other health and / or social care issues / topics and to influence how the future work of the LINK is to proceed. The first of these events is scheduled to take place on 3 June 2009, to coincide with the LINK's first annual meeting.

## **Physical Access to the LINK**

- 6.8 The LINK has a local office in New Road Avenue, Chatham and intends developing a number of local access / information points where local people can get information about the LINK and take part in LINK activities near to where they live. Already the LINK has established a presence in the Sunlight Centre in Gillingham and is starting to hold surgeries at that location where the LINK Development Workers can meet with individuals and groups to provide opportunities for them to get involved in the commissioning of health and social care services.
- 6.9 It is hoped that these access / information points will have meeting facilities to enable LINK participants, if they wish to meet to discuss issues within their area of interest.
- 6.10 Other different and remote ways for participants to vote on policies / LINK actions, where appropriate, are provided, such as through the LINK website, [www.themedwaylink.co.uk](http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk) and by proxy or postal voting.

## **LINK Groups**

- 6.11 The LINK's structure, as agreed at the launch in January 2009, allows for the establishment of a range of LINK groups and the following details the current organisation of:
  - o Coordinating Team
  - o Moderating Panel
  - o Panel of Authorised Visitors
  - o LINK representatives on outside bodies
  - o Topic / geographic groups.
- 6.12 The terms of reference, roles and process for appointment to the various LINK groups can be found on the LINK's website [www.themedwaylink.co.uk](http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk) or by contacting KMN for a printed version.
- 6.13 Selection panels have been convened to consider a number of applicants for the Moderating Panel, Panel of Authorised Visitors and LINK representatives on outside bodies. A verbal report of the outcome of that process will be given at the LINK's first annual meeting to be held on 3 June 2009.

## **Medway LINK Coordinating Team**

- 6.14 The first LINK group - the Coordinating Team - was formed in September 2008 and has been working closely with the Host organisation, KMN, to develop the LINK's governance arrangements.
- 6.15 Collectively the members of the Coordinating Team took responsibility for the LINK's governance arrangements and other aspects of the LINK's overall policy-making process, such as its community engagement strategy, equality and diversity policy and communications and PR strategy – all presented to and agreed at the launch in January 2009.
- 6.16 In essence this Team forms the LINK's Management Committee that oversees the wellbeing of the LINK, ensuring that the LINK's work contributes to its mission and purpose, its resources are used wisely and effectively and that it

works in an open and transparent way. This means ensuring that all work undertaken by LINK participants in the name of the LINK not only complies with its own governance arrangements but also the law.

- 6.17 Whilst the Coordinating Team have this oversight and support role, the Team does not decide what issues the LINK should deal with in relation to health and social care. These are matters for the LINK participants and the LINK Moderating Panel in particular - see below.

### **Medway LINK Moderating Panel**

- 6.18 Every year, at its annual meeting the Medway LINK will agree its programme of work for the following year. But, from time to time throughout the year, there will be other subjects that will be raised with the LINK.
- 6.19 The LINK has agreed a system for making decisions and setting priorities as new subjects arise. With relevant information and set criteria a small group of selected LINK participants (the Moderating Panel) will make such decisions in accordance with the LINK's overall aims and in accordance with agreed criteria, protocol and process.
- 6.20 It is anticipated that this Panel will work virtually, only meeting initially for induction and then once a quarter to review decisions made and implementation of the decision-making process.

### **Medway LINK Panel of Authorised Visitors**

- 6.21 One of the powers of a LINK is to 'enter and view' places where health and social care services are delivered (with the exception of children's social services). The Panel of Authorised Visitors will comprise approved LINK participants who have been through a selection process, had satisfactory references, a CRB check and undertaken the appropriate training. Such LINK participants also need to be authorised and the nominated authorising participant for the Medway LINK is the Facilitator of the LINK's Coordinating Team.
- 6.22 The Authorised Visitors will undertake visits on behalf of the LINK in accordance with specified tasks and using agreed protocols.
- 6.23 It is anticipated that the Panel of Visitors will be required to meet as a group for induction and training sessions. They will then work in pairs, at least, undertaking visits as and when required by the LINK's work programme. Visitors may wish to meet as a group during the year to review their work and the processes they follow.

### **LINK representatives on outside bodies**

- 6.24 From time to time, to help its work, the LINK may decide that it needs to be represented on an external group or body. Participants will be selected to represent the LINK on external bodies such as NHS Trusts, Medway Council commissioning groups.
- 6.25 Representation will be in accordance with agreed protocol and based on the needs of the LINK's work.

- 6.26 It is anticipated that the LINK representatives will be required to meet as a group for induction and training sessions and then work individually as and when required by the LINK's work programme. Representatives may wish to meet as a group during the year to review their work and the processes they follow.

#### **Medway LINK Topic / Geographic Groups**

- 6.27 When LINK participants join the Medway LINK they indicate what their interests are in health and social care. As a result of this, the Medway LINK, which at 31 March 2009 had 112 participants and as at 26 May 2009 has 305 participants, is forming itself into numerous topic / geographic groups.
- 6.28 These groups will generate the LINK programme of activities, facilitate networking across the topic areas and according to local geographical groupings.
- 6.29 It is envisaged that these groupings will develop into the engine room of the LINK and allow all voices to be heard.

#### **Support for the LINK and LINK Participants - Host Organisation**

- 6.30 The legislation that introduced LINKs gave local authorities the role of contracting with a Host organisation that will set up and then support the LINK in their area. The Host's role is to help the LINK determine its priorities, facilitate and support the activities of the LINK and enable the volunteers to fully participate.
- 6.31 In Medway this role is discharged by Kent & Medway Networks Ltd (KMN) - a not-for-profit organisation. KMN employs the LINK's Development Workers to help the LINK access under-represented / hard to reach groups to enable their voices to be heard.

## **7. The Medway LINK in operation: Getting Medway involved!**

### **Introduction**

- 7.1 This part of the Annual Report provides the highlights of the LINK's year - or 8 months to be more precise - with the Host coming on board in July 2008. The following items are covered:

- ❖ Recruiting to the Medway LINK and reaching out to the community
- ❖ Promoting the Medway LINK
- ❖ How representative is the Medway LINK already?
- ❖ Providing different ways of getting involved
- ❖ What has the LINK been doing?
- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Experiences of the LINK Development Workers
- ❖ Examples of LINK participants' discussions on 'Talkback'

### **The Medway LINK's aims**

- 7.2 First of all, it is relevant to recall the Medway LINK's aims which are to:

- o Get more people involved in helping to shape Medway's health and social care services - including those who have previously had difficulty getting their voices heard
- o Using people's experience of services to improve their quality
- o Establishing confidence in Medway's health and social care services by enabling people to monitor the quality of health and social care services
- o Setting up a structure that has the confidence of the community - demonstrating independence and fairness

## **Recruiting to the Medway LINK and reaching out to the community**

- 7.3 The first step along this road has been to let people know about the LINK and how they might get involved. Every available opportunity to promote the LINK has been used, for example, at events of partner organisations and taking the LINK to Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, Gillingham for the week, 23 to 28 March 2009. Plans to hold an event at the Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham were thwarted but it is hoped to hold a promotional event there during the coming months.
- 7.4 In conjunction with Medway Ethnic Minority Forum and using funding from Awards for All Lottery Funding, three events were held during February and March 2008 promoting the LINK and providing information on women and children's services in Medway. The events, which are summarised in paragraph 7.29 later in this report, were targeted at specific groups:
- o Asian Women
  - o African / Caribbean Women
  - o Women from Eastern Europe

## **Promoting the Medway LINK**

- 7.5 A range of products has been developed and produced with the aim of raising the profile of the LINK and attracting more people to become involved, such as:
- o a leaflet and various sizes of poster have been printed and currently being distributed through health and social care outlets and other public places
  - o a promotional video was commissioned and used extensively at various public events, including in the Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre in Gillingham
  - o a stock of various marketing / promotional material is held by KMN and will continue to be a resource to help promote the LINK at a range of events
  - o a 13 week advertising campaign with the newspaper Medway Messenger was undertaken with the Medway LINK logo and contact details printed on the front page, next to the 'Medway Messenger' title
  - o opportunities have been taken to promote the LINK through a range of publications of partner organisations where this is free and this will continue and further forms of such media explored.
- 7.6 The LINK Development Workers have made contact with a wide range of community and voluntary groups throughout Medway.
- 7.7 We are grateful to:
- o Council for Voluntary Service Medway who have continually promoted the Medway LINK to all members via their newsletter and database
  - o Medway NHS Foundation Trust who distributed LINK leaflets via their newsletter which increased the number of LINK participants considerably

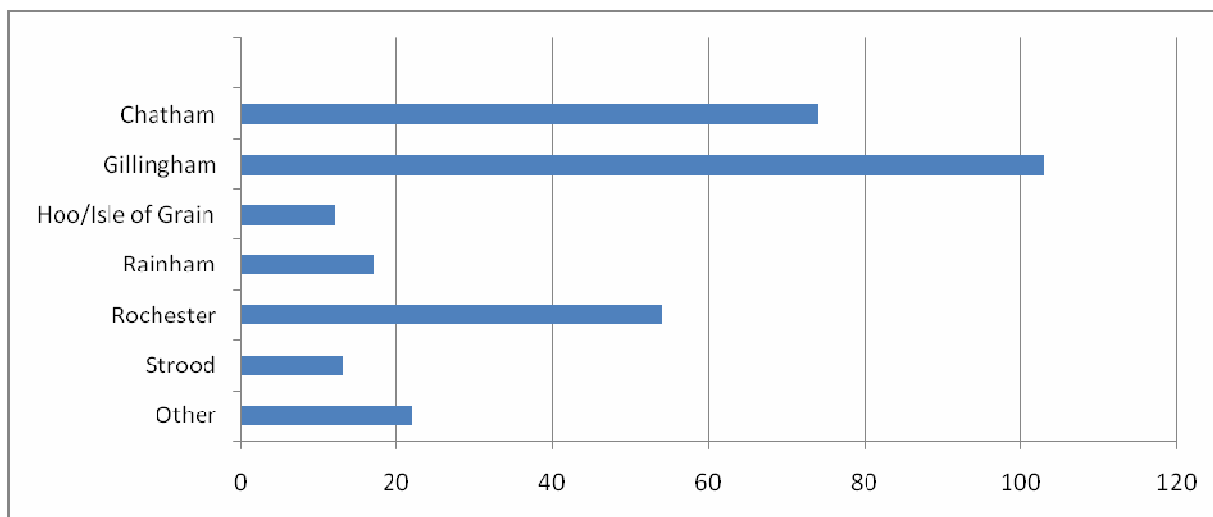
- o Kent Sensory Services for their advice on how to make our promotional material and website usable by individuals with varying degrees of sensory loss - sight and hearing
- o DGSM yourChoice (formerly Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mencap Ltd) for their help in providing easy to read material for use in the LINK's Annual Health Check survey. This was developed by service users from their Steppingstone Training and Employment Project.

**How representative is the Medway LINK already?**

7.8 Some facts - as at 31 March 2009 there were:

- o 112 registered LINK participants
- o 56 of that number were participant organisations
- o 51% of LINK participants are women
- o 49% are men (excluding 'Don't knows')
- o 95% are individuals who have had no previous involvement with the former patient and public involvement forums

7.9 The geographical distribution of LINK participants is represented in the following chart:



7.10 The data in the chart above is based on LINK participants registered as at 20 May 2009 (which stood at 295). Diversity information is being collected from participants and will be published shortly. The 'Other' line is where there is inadequate / incomplete address information given on registration – this is being followed up with the relevant participants.

- 7.11 The LINK will use this and other information to target communities in Medway which may be under-represented. This would include attempts to address all aspects of diversity and to ensure minority groups are appropriately represented or given an opportunity to get involved.

## **Providing different ways of getting involved**

### ***Providing information***

- 7.12 Simply supplying information to LINK participants is not involvement but is one step along that road. For this purpose the LINK produces:

- o A fortnightly LINK Bulletin
- o A news, events, consultation and information section on the LINK's website [www.themedwaylink.co.uk](http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk)
- o Opportunities for discussion and debate through the LINK's 'Talkback' section on the LINK's website. To date these have included:

- ❖ NHS policy towards Community Hospitals
- ❖ Should complementary therapies be funded through taxation?
- ❖ Transforming the social care agenda
- ❖ Topping up NHS care with private payments

- o Surveys on current topics of the day. To date these have included:

- ❖ The annual check on health care standards
- ❖ Should complementary therapies be funded through taxation?
- ❖ The information needs of LINK participants – see later

- o Opportunities to take part in consultations. To date these have included:

- ❖ Fairer Charging Guidance in relation to personal budgets
- ❖ The use of 084 telephone numbers in the NHS
- ❖ The Health Professions Council (Constitution) Order 2009 - a paper for consultation
- ❖ Consultation to make children's cancer measures clear and comprehensive
- ❖ Consultation on regulations to implement the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Act 2008
- ❖ The Care Quality Commission - Reviews in 2009 / 2010
- ❖ End of life care strategy - Quality markers consultation
- ❖ Access to NHS Dentistry
- ❖ "Calling all dads ...." and anybody who is in a fathering role
- ❖ Mental health research and the contribution that service users can make
- ❖ Consultation on improving access to taxis by disabled people
- ❖ Fairer Charging Guidance - a consultation carried out by the Department of Health on the extension and revision of the statutory guidance for charging for non-residential social services, the 'Fairer Charging Guidance'.

- o Quarterly Events which move around the Medway area to provide opportunities for LINK participants and the local community to:
  - ❖ Get information about local services
  - ❖ Discuss significant topics of interest to the community of Medway and also in that locality.

7.13 At the Quarterly Events there will be an opportunity for the LINK Coordinating Team to report on what they have been doing. Future events will also include reports from the LINK's Moderating Panel.

7.14 Everyone's information needs vary - so getting the balance right is difficult. To ensure the best possible information service is provided a survey of LINK participants has been conducted on whether:

- o the frequency of information dropping through their letter box or in the email 'inbox' was right
- o the content was right
- o there was just too much information

- 7.15 The response to this survey would suggest that frequency, content and amount of information is about right. There have been comments from a small number of LINK participants who have suggested that the frequency might be too much. It is difficult to get right. Providing information less frequently could prevent the majority of LINK participants with the opportunity to take part in a consultation or an event - the deadline may have passed. This is being reviewed.
- 7.16 It has been good to receive feedback from participants that information provided by the LINK has made them aware of things that otherwise they would not have known about and have attended an event or commented on an issue that is important to them.

### **What has the LINK been doing?**

- 7.17 Following its formal launch on 7 January 2009 the LINK has been attempting to involve LINK participants - even though all the LINK's structures, rules and regulations and resources have not been fully in place (for example the LINK's Moderating Panel, its teams of 'Authorised Visitors' or nominated representatives on external bodies). Examples of that work follows:

#### ***Working with the community***

- 7.18 Working with the community and voluntary sector is an important activity for the LINK, not to duplicate their work but to complement their activity and enable networking and use of the LINK's powers to further their aims, as illustrated by the following Case Notes:

#### **Case Notes - Health services for isolated communities**

Grain Disabled and Carers Group has made representations to the LINK to intervene over the difficulties being faced by patients on the Isle of Grain, without their own transport, in getting blood taken for tests. There was a time when the local GP or nurse provided this service. Now patients have to make a 20 mile round trip costing £5.30 on public transport. This impacts on some of the most vulnerable patients. The LINK made representations to the NHS in Medway who responded that they had:

- o Invested just over £62,000 in additional community phlebotomy services in December 2008 for new sessions at Rainham, Lordswood, Parkwood and Twydall.
- o Recently recruited a nurse at St Werburgh GP practice with the appropriate experience, who has started off phlebotomy in Grain on Monday mornings and Stoke on Monday afternoons. At present, the other practice with a satellite branch, The Elms Medical Centre, is not offering phlebotomy as a Locally Enhanced Service but has agreed to review this decision.

As the Trust were concerned to learn that people with diabetes were afraid to have their blood tests taken, they are also informing GP practices in Grain to enable them to identify and review these patients.

### **Case Notes – Shortage of speech therapy services**

The Kent Wide Down Syndrome Group called on the LINK to take up their concern at the shortage of speech therapy services in some parts of the area that affect Medway. They felt that this was discrimination against a sector of the public who have generally nobody to speak up for them. Some of their parents had been so desperate that they had set up their own self help group to tackle the situation but their waiting list was huge. This is a basic service which goes against the principles set out in the 'Every Child Matters' initiative. Their concerns continue to be pursued by the LINK.

### ***Working with individual LINK participants***

7.19 The following case note is an example of the 'individual' LINK participant raising an important issue and using the LINK to get their voice heard.

### **Case Notes - Sharing medical record information between departments of the NHS**

A LINK participant raised concerns that according to the NHS website, Medway had not been listed as an 'early adopter' site for such a scheme and that the proposed new Parliamentary Bill has not yet been agreed on this type of access. The concern was that a patient's health record will end up in the wrong hands and compromise privacy. NHS Medway provided a full response which was circulated to all LINK participants.

### ***Working with the regulators and other LINKs***

7.20 One major activity since the LINK's launch has been participant involvement in the Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check. The Healthcare Commission, (the Care Quality Commission from 1 April 2009), uses the Annual Health Check to:

- o measure the performance and standards of all NHS Trusts throughout England and
- o provide an annual rating of the Trust's performance

7.21 The process requires NHS Trusts to self-declare against seven core standards. Only a proportion of NHS Trusts are visited as part of this process. To provide some external validation, third party commentaries are invited from key community groups, such as the LINKs. Previously the PPI Forums took part in this activity.

7.22 The Medway LINK joined forces for this project with the Kent LINK as many Medway patients use services across health authority boundaries and similarly Kent patients use Medway's services.

7.23 130 individuals and organisations contributed to the LINK's submission to each NHS organisation in Kent and Medway. In the main, the LINK's response demonstrated what a good service the NHS provides and how much it is appreciated by its users. The main issues that concerned people fell into a number of broad categories – see below:

- o **Hygiene and cleanliness** – people remain anxious but there were observations that patients have noticed improvements.
- o **Differing policies** in Kent and Medway over the use of hand gels and hand washing caused confusion. Some hospitals have a high front of house / entrance presence with publicity but others have minimal information at their entrances. The latter appear to concentrate their resources close to where care is provided and where 24 hour supervision of visitors / staff can be undertaken.
- o Some **poor consultation** with users in at least one Trust.
- o **Gaps in services**, such as:
  - ❖ a rural community having difficulty in accessing services that previously had been provided by their local GP, such as the taking of blood for blood tests and having to travel to a centralised service at some distance
  - ❖ lack of active patient recall to check on hearing loss and hearing aid suitability
- o **Discrimination** - the need for Trusts to challenge discrimination was highlighted by some participants.
- o Poor **public transport links** to hospitals in the county.
- o Inadequacy of **pain relief service** in some parts of the county.

7.24 The Annual Health Check is just one of the ways that LINK participants, as individuals or as organisations, can influence the quality of services. The LINK aims to refine and develop this important opportunity for next year and will be seeking the views of participants on how they wish to be involved. LINK projects around the core standards will also inform this process.

### ***Working with those scrutinising the NHS in Medway***

7.25 Medway Council's Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) has an important relationship with the NHS in Medway with its powers of scrutiny. The LINK also has a legal relationship with the OSC in that it has powers of referral of issues to which the Committee has to respond. Shirley Griffiths, the Coordinating Team's Facilitator, has been a regular attendee at OSC meetings and has been included in joint pieces of work around the Annual Health Check.

## Networking

- 7.26 One of the most exciting and challenging things about the LINK concept is the potential for LINK participants to network with one another in a whole variety of ways. Examples follow - and there are more than these!

### **Discussion through the 'Talkback' section of the Medway LINK website**

- o In the various case notes later in this section are examples of some of the discussions on the 'talkback' section of the LINK's website. These discussions are forwarded to the relevant health or social care commissioner or provider. In the future some of these discussions may result in proposals being referred to the LINK's Moderating Panel to be taken forward for some action by the LINK through, for example, a LINK project or recommendation for improving services to the Medway Council's Director of Adult Social Care or even a referral to the scrutiny committee of the Council or a referral with recommendations for improving services to an NHS Trust or Primary Care Trust

### **Discussion within LINK interest groups or geographical groups**

- o When registering, LINK participants list their areas of interest in NHS and social care. Sometimes they give the LINK permission to share their contact details with those within the LINK with similar interests, whether it be around transport, social care support in people's homes or a specific condition, such as cancer or a stroke
- o Other networking opportunities can be on a geographical basis. The Isle of Grain case note, highlighted earlier in this section, is one such example
- o Some of these groups within the LINK may need additional support - for example stroke users, people with learning disabilities, those whose first language may not be English, etc.

### **More formal settings**

- o There will still be a role for the more formal type of events around local issues. For example, there may need to be a consultation on an important local issue. In another case a local LINK group, which has been communicating virtually, may require to meet up to share ideas and put proposals forward to the LINK's Moderating Panel
- o The LINK's Quarterly Events will also provide an outlet for LINK participants to raise issues with some fellow LINK participants.

### **Facilitation of events by the LINK's Development Workers**

- o The LINK's Development Workers' remit is to facilitate involvement opportunities for service users, communities and the general public, especially hard to reach groups. Their work with the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum in working with minority groups is one such example of how the LINK hopes to make the LINK accessible to all parts of the Medway community.

7.27 All the above options are now open to LINK participants to use.

### **Experiences of the LINK Development Workers**

7.28 The Host organisation that supports the Medway LINK, Kent & Medway Networks (KMN), employs two part-time LINK Development Workers whose role it is to work around the area providing opportunities for individuals and organisations to get involved in the LINK, giving information about the LINK and networking to encourage more people and organisations to get involved.

7.29 The following events organised in conjunction with the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum are such examples:

#### **'Black is Beautiful': an event to celebrate women of colour**

This was an event to celebrate women of colour. It took place on Saturday, 28 February 2009 at the Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road, Gillingham. There were panel discussions on fashion and health and it was aimed at raising awareness of issues that affect women from African and Caribbean backgrounds.

#### **Eastern European Women's Day**

This event was held to celebrate Eastern European Women's Day. It took place on Saturday, 7 March 2009 at Christchurch, Luton Road, Chatham. There was a panel discussion on health and information on services available in Medway for women and children, including Sure Start and Medway Council's Children's Services. The event was also aimed at bringing together Eastern European families living in Medway.

#### **'Be Yourself' - South East Asian Women's Day**

This was an event where women from South East Asian backgrounds could meet and discuss various matters with health professionals. It took place on Saturday, 21 March 2009 at New Brompton College, Marlborough Road, Gillingham. This was a women only event.

## Examples of LINK participants' discussions on 'Talkback'

### Case Notes: Should complementary therapies be funded through taxation?

- o *"One hopes that you haven't had to use the services of a therapist during chemotherapy or indeed when dying of a terminal illness! I'm sorry but until we make these therapies a part of the holistic approach we will continue to get what we have always had.....trust me the introduction of therapy will bring drugs budgets down and will improve the health of the nation! We may not be able to tell exactly what's what but the proof is in the pudding so let's get cooking!"*
- o "I agree with ..... as a massage therapist and infant massage instructor, that these therapies should be available to all, via the NHS or Health Centres and GP practices, and not the selective few who can pay, I fully agree that many alternative therapies are especially beneficial in end of life care. Are we a caring society, as proclaimed or caring only to those who can afford it?"
- o *"I agree with ..... in respect of complementary therapies for end of life care but also those battling with debilitating illnesses such as cancer, mental illness, etc. Surely we should be looking at the whole person and therefore a holistic approach is what is needed with a mix of orthodox and complementary treatments tailored to individual needs."*
- o "If a complementary therapy is going to help the patient then why not provide it? The NHS needs to keep abreast with all initiatives / discoveries if they are proven to be effective. The NHS should not just rely on medical / surgical / traditional methods of treatment and advancements in these - medicines / surgical procedures for example."
- o *"Is the NHS about keeping people healthy or is it about treating illness? Or is it about improving people's quality of life. Here I am thinking of end of life care where some complementary / alternative therapies may help the patient to deal with / cope with / their illness and definitely help make them more comfortable in their latter days."*
- o In addition to the above, nine other participants entered the discussion, eight in favour of the alternative / complementary medicine being funded through taxation and one against. The most favoured alternative therapies were:
  - ❖ Osteopathy and Acupuncture - supported by seven people
  - ❖ Homeopathy - supported by four people
  - ❖ Massage - supported by four people
  - ❖ Meditation - supported by four people
  - ❖ Reflexology
  - ❖ Tai chi
  - ❖ Chiropractics
  - ❖ Western Herbal Medicine – Physiotherapy
  - ❖ Aromatherapy

**Case Notes: Transforming Social Care - some participants' views:**

- o *"I think it is a good idea that the 'customer' can purchase from a range of recognised providers of care and devise a package of care that suits them."*
- o *"I think it would be good for people to be in charge of their own care - whether it is needed from the NHS or it is a social need. However, how do they know where to go and how much it might cost?  
My view is that there needs to be national quality standards with flexibility in the systems that are available locally. All systems and services should meet the national standard - National Health Service. Who will help the user / patient to establish what their care package should be? Will it be the GP or another professional?"*
- o *"My concern is for the increased burden this places on carers who will need help to manage the paperwork and managing the finances associated with contracting care packages"*

## 8. Funding for the Medway LINK

8.1 The following represents the income and expenditure of the Medway LINK for the period to 31 March 2009:

### Medway LINK Expenditure Report 1 July 2008 – 31 March 2009

	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
	£	£	£
<b><u>Fixed Costs</u></b>			
Staff Costs	40,967.04	45,357.73	
Office Costs	9,000.00	1,349.17	
Professional Fees	9,999.90	5,563.84	
Premises	<u>9,900.00</u>	<u>7,604.10</u>	
Fixed Costs Total	69,866.94	59,874.84	9,992.10
<b><u>LINK Costs</u></b>			
Expenses	5,000.04	261.57	
Communications	14,333.04	9,273.62	
Development Work	17,099.97	7,060.44	
Other	<u>3,000.06</u>	<u>1,191.25</u>	
LINK Costs Total	39,433.11	17,786.88	21,646.23
Contract Total	109,300.05	77,661.72	
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>109,300.05</b>		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b><u>- 77,661.72</u></b>		
	<b>£31,638.33</b>		

#### Notes

1. Total under spend of £31,638.33 of which £21,646.23 relates to the LINK budget
2. Staff Costs include salaries, staff training and travel
3. Office Daily costs include IT, stationery, postage and copying
4. Professional Fees include insurance, contract management fee and accountancy
5. Premises Costs include office and communication costs
6. Communications includes LINK website, recruitment, publicity and promotional costs
7. Other includes CRB checking and member training

- Subject to audit.

## **9. Performance management**

- 9.1 The Medway Council has a duty to ensure that the Host organisation delivers the requirements of its contract.
- 9.2 Performance indicators on what KMN should be delivering have been agreed between Medway Council and KMN and quarterly performance reviews have been planned.
- 9.3 Two such reviews have been held in this reporting year - in November 2008 and March 2009 with the Council representative.
- 9.4 At each review the Council's officers are provided with an update of progress being made by KMN to help set up the LINK, its structure, policies and governance arrangements.
- 9.5 In addition the LINK Coordinating Team receives regular updates from the Host, including budget reports.
- 9.6 During the coming year LINK participants will be invited to contribute to this process by being given the opportunity to feedback on the support service they receive from KMN. This is likely to take the form of a survey - through the LINK's website and, for those who do not have access to the internet, through the post. In addition a representative of the LINK Coordinating Team is invited to attend the performance review meetings.

## **10. Next steps for the Medway LINK**

### **Introduction**

- 10.1 As well as continuing to recruit new participants, networking and engaging with more people and organisations, especially those who are traditionally hard to reach, there will be issues / topics that the LINK will pursue in helping to make improvements to health and social care services in Medway. All of this will be documented in the LINK's Annual Work Programme for 2009 - 2010.

### **LINK's Annual Work Programme for 2009 - 2010 - Proposals**

- 10.2 The Medway LINK's Work Programme will be derived from Medway LINK participants' issues and proposals for inclusion in the LINK Work Programme. It is likely that these will be proposals for a varied range of activities. The LINK will not be able to pursue in detail every issue / topic brought to its attention. However, all will be considered by the LINK's Moderating Panel and, once approved, will form part of the LINK's Work Programme.
- 10.3 The Moderating Panel will be in place by the end of May 2009 - a panel of members will have been appointed. They will then undergo a period of induction and start to work on developing the criteria against which all issues and proposals for the LINK to act will be decided upon.
- 10.4 Until such time as the Moderating Panel becomes fully operational, authority is needed by the LINK to continue / commence work on a number of matters which have been brought to the attention of the LINK already.

### **Review of the area's health and social care commissioning plans**

- 10.5 A start needs to be made on how the LINK can be brought into the process for reviewing and developing the commissioning (purchasing and planning) arrangements for health and social care services across Medway.

- 10.6 It is recommended that the Host be instructed to commence discussions with NHS and social care commissioners in the area with a view to proposals being drawn up for future LINK involvement in these arrangements.**

## Annual Health Check

- 10.7 There is a need to review a number of service issues that have arisen as a result of the LINK's recent commentary on the Annual Health Check (see earlier in this Annual Report). Participants are asked to consider two recommendations:

- 10.8 **It is recommended that the LINK Development Workers liaise with LINK participants to review relevant aspects of the commentary and where appropriate to recommend action by the LINK's Moderating Panel.**
- 10.9 **It is recommended that the Host be instructed to commence work with the community and voluntary sector on arrangements for the next Care Quality Commission's Health Check to enable the LINK to make a commentary for the Annual Health Check.**

## Access (transport) to health services

- 10.10 This is a general subject that continues to remain an issue for patients and users of health services across Kent and Medway.

- 10.11 **It is recommended that the LINK Development Workers make contact with LINK participants who are concerned with transport issues in relation to accessing the area's health facilities, with a view to identifying the main points of concern, liaising with the appropriate authorities over these concerns and submitting proposals for any possible action that may be taken by the LINK.**

## Fair Access to Care Services

- 10.12 Medway Council has now completed its review of clients in need of care services and has set up an advisory support services 'Living Well' to provide advice for those people who may not come within the criteria to receive certain services. The 'Living Well' service works with Medway Council to help people to remain independent in their own homes. People can refer themselves, or be referred by others such as voluntary organisations or family members. Priority can be given to those who are discharged from a hospital / care setting and where immediate help is required. They will speak to a skilled adviser and, after a short assessment, they will agree an appropriate course of action. In addition to telephone enquiries, people can also have a face to face interview at various locations in Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Rochester, Strood and outlying villages.

- 10.13 **It is recommended that the LINK carry out a 'Mystery Shopping' exercise to review the functioning of these and other similar advisory type services commissioned by Medway Council.**

### **Events Programme 2009 / 2010**

10.14 As part of its involvement in local communities the LINK has developed a programme of Quarterly Events. The purpose of such events is to:

- o raise awareness of the LINK in different localities around Medway
- o encourage more participation in the work of the LINK
- o hear about issues relating to that area or generally in Medway
- o hold the LINK's Coordinating Team and Moderating Panel to account for the way they have discharged their responsibilities on behalf of the LINK
- o influence the future work of the LINK.

10.15 Proposals for a programme and recommendations are overleaf.

10.16 It is recommended that the following programme of events be agreed:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Type</b>	<b>Location</b>
30 May 2009	Community Engagement	Dickens Festival Rochester
03 June 2009	Annual General Meeting / Community Engagement	Queens Hall, Corn Exchange, Rochester
01 June 2009	Community Engagement	Lordswood Healthy Living Centre
08 June 2009	Community Engagement	Rochester Healthy Living Centre
15 June 2009	Community Engagement	Rainham Healthy Living Centre
22 June 2009	Community Engagement	Sunlight Centre, Gillingham
01 July 2009	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
17,18,19 July 2009	Community Engagement	Kent County Show, Maidstone
04 August 2009	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
02 September 2009	LINK Quarterly Event	Rainham
07 October 2009	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
04 October 2009	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
04 November 2009	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
02 December 2009	LINK Quarterly Event	Gillingham
06 January 2010	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
03 February 2010	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
03 March 2010	LINK Quarterly Event	Chatham
07 April 2010	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
05 May 2010	LINK Coordinating Team Meeting	Chatham
2 June 2010	Annual General Meeting / LINK Quarterly Event	Queens Hall, Corn Exchange, Rochester

## Medway LINK contact details

### Medway LINK Local Office:

(This office is open on selected days)

**Postal address:** The Medway LINK  
Kent & Medway Networks Ltd  
Avenue Business Centre  
17 New Road Avenue  
Chatham  
Kent, ME4 6BA

**Telephone:** 01634 821135

**Email:** info@kmn-ltd.co.uk

**SMS Text:** 07976 596913

**Website:** www.themedwaylink.co.uk

**LINK Development** Jane Williamson

**Workers:** Email: jane@medwaylink.org

Telephone: 07968 056285

Graham Hills

Email: graham@medwaylink.org

Telephone: 07817 536877

### Medway LINK central administrative office:

(This office is open from 8.30am to 4.00pm, Monday - Friday)

**Postal address:** The Medway LINK  
Kent & Medway Networks Ltd  
FREEPOST NAT 17761  
Folkestone  
Kent, CT19 4BR

**Telephone:** 01634 821135

**Email:** info@kmn-ltd.co.uk

**SMS Text:** 07976 596913

**Website:** www.themedwaylink.co.uk

## Launch of the Medway LINK

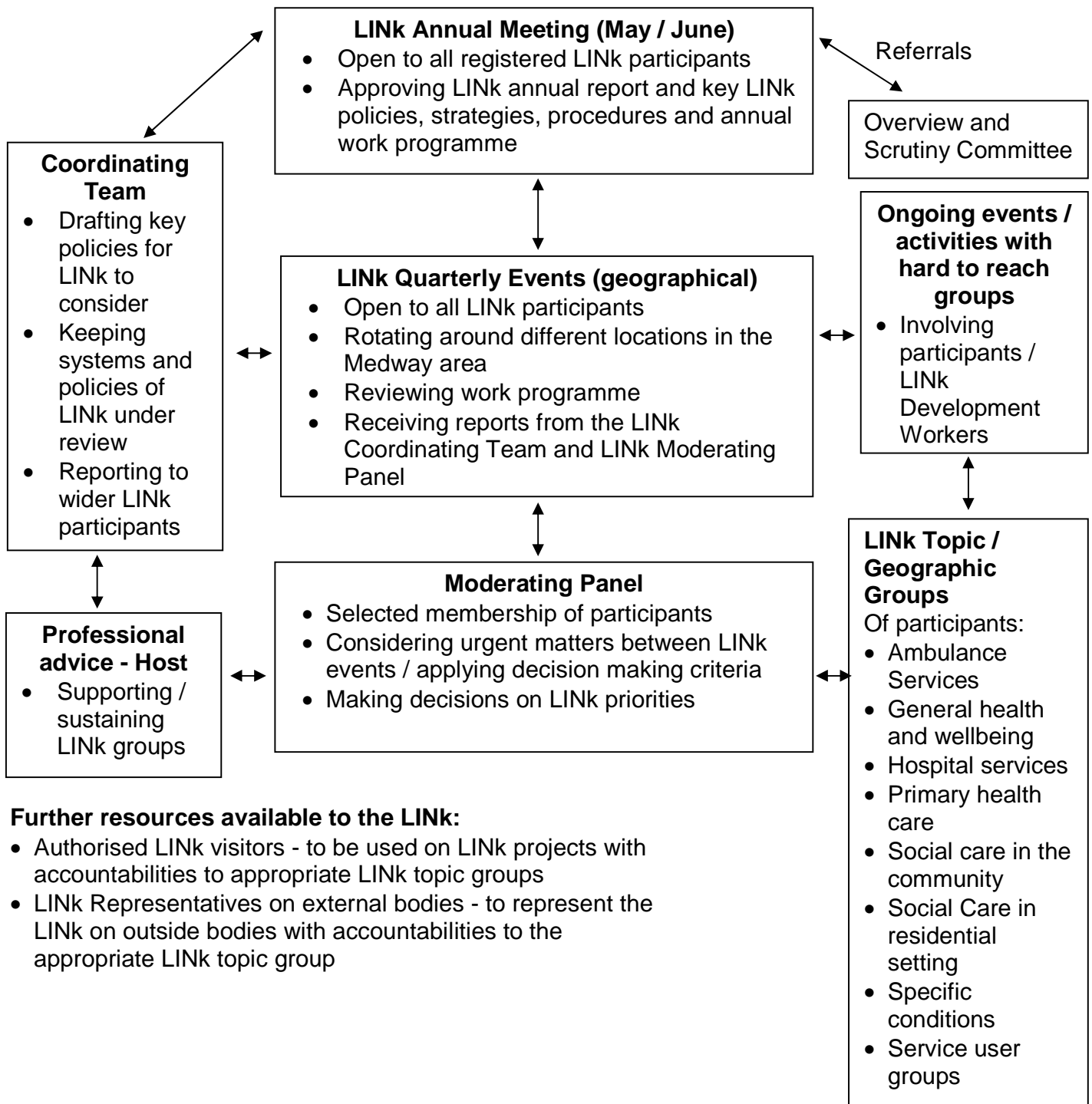
**Wednesday, 7 January 2009, 1.00pm – 4.00pm**  
**Queens Hall, Corn Exchange, Rochester, ME1 1LS**  
Facilitator – Brenda O'Neill, Kent & Medway Networks

### Programme

Lunch will be available from 1.00pm. The launch of the Medway LINK will start at 1.30pm.

<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	The Worshipful Mayor of Medway, Councillor David Carr
<b>Purpose of the event</b>	Brenda O'Neill
<b>Introduction to a Local Involvement Network (LINK)</b>	Brenda O'Neill
<b>Introduction to the Medway LINK Coordinating Team</b>	Team Members
<b>Medway LINK policies and procedures</b>	David Haymes
Each item will be introduced followed by LINK participants voting	
• <b>Community engagement strategy</b>	Joy Birdsey
• <b>Governance framework</b>	Claire Murray
• <b>Diversity and equality</b>	Tina Murphy / Pauline Yau
• <b>Communications and public relations</b>	Edward O'Neill / Jenny Gibson
<b>Formal launch of Medway LINK as a legal entity</b>	The Worshipful Mayor of Medway, Councillor David Carr
<b>Introduction to Workshops</b>	Team Member
<b>Next steps</b>	Brenda O'Neill
<b>Close of event</b>	David Haymes

## The Medway LINK Structure



**Further resources available to the LINK:**

- Authorised LINK visitors - to be used on LINK projects with accountabilities to appropriate LINK topic groups
- LINK Representatives on external bodies - to represent the LINK on outside bodies with accountabilities to the appropriate LINK topic group

**Formal review 6 months – June AGM**

## Annual Health Check: Medway LINK commentary

### Introduction

1. The Medway Local Involvement Network (LINK) was established under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 with a view to:
  - a. “promoting, and supporting, the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services;
  - b. enabling people to monitor.....the commissioning and provision of local care services;
  - c. obtaining the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local care services; and
  - d. making views such as are mentioned in paragraph (c) known, and reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved, to persons responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services.”
2. The LINK is an independent legal entity and is accountable to its local population and, through its Annual Report, to the Secretary of State for Health. The LINK's remit covers not only health issues but also social care services (particularly Adult Services).
3. The Medway Council contracts with an ‘arms length body’ (the Host), currently Kent & Medway Networks Ltd, to provide funding and support for the LINK. The contractual arrangements made by the Council are a way of providing independence for the LINK.
4. The LINK's relationship with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is a legal one in as much as the LINK can refer matters relating to health and social care services to the Committee who are required to acknowledge receipt and to keep the LINK informed of the Committee's actions. Possibly, another important role for the HOSC is to make sure its Council's Executive / Cabinet are taking LINKs seriously by assisting in its work to engage with local people and groups in relation to health and wellbeing and social care issues.

### The LINK's approach to the Annual Health Check

5. In October last year, the Healthcare Commission approached the embryonic Medway LINK with a view to it submitting a third party commentary on Kent and Medway NHS Trusts' declarations as part of their Annual Health Check for the period April 2008 to March 2009. It was recognised that as the LINK had not been operational for the period under review, it may not be in a position to fully contribute to this year's health check process. In view of this, the LINK agreed to build on the legacy it had inherited from the former Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPIFs) and, in addition, to seek the views of the community and voluntary sector in Medway to produce a third party commentary.