

Terms of Reference

County Durham Local Involvement Network

The purpose of the County Durham LINK is:

To promote, influence and improve the physical and mental well-being of people of all ages residing permanently or temporarily in County Durham.

1. To establish a local, community based network of organisations and individuals, patients, users and carers and give them a louder voice and more influence in the provision and commissioning of both health and social care services.
2. To improve the quality of Health and Social Care services and to be responsive to the views and experiences of patients, service users, their carers and families and the wider public.
3. To monitor the outcomes of commissioning and service provision from the perspective of service users, carers and the public.
4. To recognise and tackle health and social care inequalities and strive to ensure health and social care is accessible to all.
5. To strive to ensure LINK members (individuals and groups) represent as wide a range as possible of interests across the health and social care agenda.
6. To ensure, through partnership with others, that methods of communication are developed which are effective, constructive, clear and concise.
7. To work constructively with other LINKs where issues cut across health and social care administrative boundaries.
8. To capitalise on the skills, knowledge and experience built up by patient, user and carer forums.
9. Use its powers as appropriate to seek additional funding for projects agreed by the LINK from sources which do not compromise the funding of constituent members.
10. To use its powers as appropriate to source relevant training and skills development for its members and the LINK Management Group/Board.

County Durham LINK Core Values

The LINK will strive to:

- be open and transparent.
- respect and value diversity.
- ensure that it acts only in the best interests of its membership, in line with the core values.
- ensure accountability to its membership.
- give equal consideration to all health and social care issues whilst recognising the need to prioritise LINK activity.
- focus on achieving outcomes including:
 - services which are shaped to meet people's needs.
 - services which are improved as a result of people's experiences.
 - local people have increased confidence in the validity and transparency of the decision making processes used by health and social care services.

How the LINK will influence:

1. The LINK will be a community-based network of organisations and individuals committed to strengthening and widening the influence of patients, service users, their carers and the wider public on the design and development of health and social care services intended to meet their needs.
2. The LINK will be independently run by its members and supported by a Host organisation.
3. The LINK will influence through the exercise of its powers to enter and view certain services and to request information from health and social care commissioners and providers.
4. County Durham LINK will establish specific relationships with Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) and have specific powers to refer matters to them. It will aim to develop similar relationships of benefit to the LINK over time.
5. The LINK will have a broad range of members and its scope will be inclusive, diverse and take account of both geographical and community interests.
6. The LINK will work in ways which are open and transparent and will be proactive in seeking positive involvement with local groups and individuals.