



Blackpool  
**LINK**  
Local Involvement Network

Local people and organisations have the opportunity to influence local health and adult social care services

# *Annual Report*

1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009



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Blackpool LINK has been set up to help make sure the people in the area get the health and adult social care services they need, and anyone can get involved.

Blackpool LINK wants to hear about your experiences of health and adult social care services and ideas for improvements or changes – whether they are big or small.





## Introduction

Welcome to Blackpool LINK's first annual report. 2008/2009 has been a very busy year during which we have been progressing at a steady pace.

Between April 2008 and September 2008 Ann Rodham, a local consultant, was tasked with pulling together the Governance arrangements following which the Interim Advisory Group came together in September 2008 in order to lay the foundations for the new Advisory Group. Helen Kay, LINK Coordinator and Sue Russell, LINK Support Officer were both appointed in October 2008. The Interim Advisory Group have been working closely with both Helen and Sue to enhance and strengthen the Governance and establish robust policies and procedures in readiness for the new Advisory Group to take over in April 2009.

Now that the work of the Interim Advisory Group is complete, we would like to take this opportunity to wish Blackpool LINK and the new Advisory Group every success for the future. We feel sure that with solid foundations, Blackpool LINK will go from strength to strength.

*Thank you*

*Sharon Worthington  
Chair of Interim Advisory Group*

## Report

### **Report from Ann Rodham – Consultant (April 2008 – October 2008)**

It was decided by Government to abolish Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Fora with effect from 31 March 2008. Local Councils were given a directive to set up Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to replace and extend the work of the PPI's from 1 April 2008 or by 31 September 2008 at the latest. A Host organisation would be appointed to support and encourage local people to become involved in the monitoring and scrutiny of health and adult social care service provision.

Blackpool Council, as with many others, was not able to appoint a Host organisation at the outset but engaged a consultant to undertake the work for a period of 6 months to develop the governance which would outline the policies and procedures for how the LINK would work.

A series of four stakeholder events took place in June 2008 to identify possible Host organisations and also to encourage individuals to get involved in the establishment of Blackpool LINK who would be able to form an Interim Advisory Group until formal elections could take place.

In August a selection process was followed to appoint an organisation to Host the LINK and support its continued development. Groundwork was the successful organisation and took over in September.

Blackpool Council was recognised as being very forward thinking in their approach and the Blackpool LINK is well established and progressing very positively.

# Interim Advisory Group

**Ann Rodham together with the Steering Group established an Interim Advisory Group and the following people were invited to be on it.**

**Fiona Jones – Blackpool Youth Service**

**Gwynneth Mugonyi – Blackpool Senior Voice Forum**

**Norma Rodgers – Local resident (ex-PPI)**

**Lynn Saggerson – Volunteer Centre Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde**

**Mike Stewart – Local resident (ex-PPI)**

**Sharon Worthington – Blackpool Advocacy**

Two members of the Interim Advisory Group withdrew for personal reasons.

Since the Interim Advisory Group was established in September 2008, we have met 7 times. We had a very clear remit and that was to secure the governance arrangements and to respond to the Annual Health Check.

With 16 places on the Advisory Group, individuals and groups/organisations from the wider membership were invited to put themselves forward as a representative. Of the 16 places, 8 are for health and 8 for social care. Each set of 8 places are divided into 4 individuals and 4 group/organisation representatives. This was to encourage equal representation for both health and adult social care.

**The new Advisory Group consists of organisations from the wider membership**

## Organisations

Sharon Worthington – Blackpool Advocacy (Adult Social Care)

Ian Ellis – Mental Health Forum (Adult Social Care)

Simon Dooley – Action for Blind People (Adult Social Care)

Tom McCallum – Blackpool Senior Voice Forum (Health)

Gregory Thurlow – Blackpool Young People's Council (Health)

## Individuals

Michael Hodkinson (Adult Social Care)

Robert Hooton (Adult Social Care)

Geoff Newman (Adult Social Care)

Pam Parr (Health)

Michael Martin (Health)

Wendy Dowling (Health)

Steven Bate (Health)



# Why our work is needed

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) have been established to give local people and organisations a say in how their health and social care services are planned and provided. Recent evidence has shown that 'Local health and social care services tend to improve if peoples' views are listened to and acted upon'. (National Centre for Involvement 2008). Blackpool LINK will examine all publicly funded health and adult social care services in Blackpool, whether they are provided by the Council, National Health Service (NHS), private sector, community or voluntary sector.

LINKs are made up of individuals and community groups who work together to improve local health and social care services. They are independent networks and are continuing to work to create a stronger local voice for all, by finding out what people want, giving them a chance to suggest ideas to care professionals that may help improve services, investigating issues and use its statutory powers to hold services to account.

## What you told us

From various events, the Blackpool LINK website and talking to local voluntary and community organisations, we have collated the following information: -

**Health** - It has become very apparent that there are a number of issues around GP surgeries, dentists and hospitals such as training, hospital discharge, late appointments, lack of available treatments, care provision and staffing. It was also felt that healthcare needed to be improved for service users who are at risk of exclusion.

**Adult Social Care** - Some issues raised link with health, such as care at home following hospital discharge, more physiotherapy for individuals in care homes and proper liaison between hospital and community occupational therapists. It was felt that social services care assistants would benefit from better training and for them to be able to spend more time with clients when visiting. It was also felt that there needs to be stricter control of nursing and rest homes.

The newly formed Advisory Group will prioritise the issues.

## Community Engagement and Promotion

To help promote Blackpool LINK and encourage individuals and groups/organisations to be part of Blackpool LINK, the following Community Engagement and Promotion has taken place

### community & partner engagement

- Blackpool LINK launch
- Blackpool's 7 Area Forums
- Advice Link 'Advice Week'
- National Gulf Veterans & Families Association
- Launch of Blackpool involved Team
- Mental Health & Well-being Conference
- Third Sector Strategic Partnership Launch
- Blackpool Older People's Conference
- PALS Team meeting
- Blackpool Senior Voice Forum
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Blackpool SURF Annual General Meeting
- Mental Health Forum
- Blackpool Faith Forum Executive
- Blackpool Advocacy
- Reassurance Plus Tasking Meeting

### promotion

- Display in Out-Patients at Blackpool Victoria Hospital
- Advert in Hospital Bedside Folder
- Adverts in local community newsletters, Blackpool Gazette, 'Your Blackpool'
- Websites - Blackpool Council, NHS Blackpool
- Blackpool LINK newsletter
- Blackpool LINK Website
- Display at local Libraries, Sport Centres,
- Display at Blackpool Council's Customer First Centre

# Progress so far

Over the past 6 months, we have been working to raise the profile of Blackpool LINK. We have enhanced and strengthened the governance arrangements, and established robust policies and procedures to ensure transparency, fair and equal representation. We have developed a website where everyone can access information about Blackpool LINK, register themselves, register their issues and concerns, find out what is happening, and interact and influence the work of the LINK. The website was updated on a weekly basis ensuring all information was up to date, including minutes of meetings from the Interim Advisory Group.

Blackpool LINK was launched at an open event in January 2009 at Sacred Heart Church Hall in Blackpool. The event was well attended and included a cross section of organisations and individuals from Blackpool. They were given an opportunity to meet project staff, Interim Advisory Group members, and learn how to get involved in order to influence the work of Blackpool LINK.

## Annual Health Check

Blackpool LINK was invited by NHS Blackpool to comment on their services as part of their Annual Health Check. Following members' comments from the launch and the Interim Advisory Group, it was agreed that Blackpool LINK would focus on the Dignity and Respect element of the Annual Health Check. Representatives from Blackpool LINK attended a meeting in Manchester, hosted by the Healthcare Commission, to learn more. Blackpool LINK support team then contacted members for comments both positive and negative and feedback was submitted.

## National and Regional Events

Representatives from Blackpool LINK have attended a number of National and Regional Events. These include

- 'Getting Better Together' Conference - London (February 2009)
- 'Engaging with your Community' seminar
- 'Building relationships and keeping them' seminar
- 'Enter & View' seminar
- 'Making sense of LINKs and commissioning' seminar
- Regional LINK Event - Warrington (March 2009) for LINKs and Host Organisations

A workplan was developed that ensures Blackpool LINK continues to raise awareness and encourages participation from all sections of the community. We have also started to develop good working relationships with a variety of existing organisations across Blackpool to enable the growth and diversification of Blackpool LINK, therefore giving the people of Blackpool the opportunity for a stronger voice and a greater influence on health and adult social care services.

The relationship between Groundwork, our Host Organisation and the Interim Advisory Group has been very positive. We are continuing to develop a good working relationship with public sector service providers and commissioners.

Our membership continues to grow and we are confident that the governance arrangements of Blackpool LINK will encourage and support a strong, diverse and proactive Advisory Group in the future. As at 31st March 2009, membership is 85 individuals and 117 organisation.

## Next Steps

The Interim Advisory Group and the newly formed Advisory Group met with Cathy Hamer, a consultant provided by Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Expert Advisory Team at the end of March 09. Cathy went through the issues that have been raised and suggested that at the first Advisory Group meeting, they agree on three issues to take forward and work upon. The remaining issues will be looked at and put into the draft workplan.

## The Interim Advisory Group would like to thank the following:

- Blackpool LINK members
- Ann Rodham – Consultant
- Jacquie Mutch – Groundwork Lancashire West & Wigan
- Helen Kay – Blackpool LINK Co-ordinator
- Susan Russell – Blackpool LINK Support Officer
- Jean Hedley – Blackpool Council
- Steve Sienkeiwicz – Blackpool Council
- Richard Emmess – NHS Blackpool
- Keith Savage – NHS Blackpool
- Cathy Hamer – (Centre for Public Scrutiny)

*This report is available in different formats and languages.  
If you require this report in a different format or language, please contact  
Blackpool LINK Support Team who will be happy to help you.*



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Blackpool LINK is hosted by Groundwork  
Lancashire West & Wigan

