

South Gloucestershire LINK Interim Core Group and Subgroups Terms of Reference

1. The following draft terms of reference have been put together using Department of Health guidance and good practice taken from other Local Authority areas and the Early Adopter Projects.
2. South Gloucestershire LINK will be a wide network of local people, groups and organisations that will encourage the involvement of members of different communities in making decisions about the commissioning and operation of all local health and social care services. The LINK will provide information and evidence to commissioners, Scrutiny Committees and health and social care providers and report back to its members.

3. Powers of the LINK

The LINK will have the power to:

- a. Request information and receive a response in due time from health and social care decision-takers and providers;
- b. Provide reports and recommendations and receive a response from local providers of health and social care services;
- c. Make visits to places where health and social care are provided, including the independent and voluntary sector organisations where they are commissioned to provide services, and view delivery of services (subject to some safeguards);
- d. Refer issues to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees and expect to receive a response.

4. The Vision of the LINK

‘To contribute to the improvement and provision of health and social care in South Gloucestershire’

5. Aims of the Local Involvement Network Interim Core Group

- a. Promote equality of access to health and social care provision in South Gloucestershire
- b. Influence and enhance the quality of health and social care provision in South Gloucestershire

- c. Support the LINK in South Gloucestershire to promote people's health and wellbeing

6. Objectives of the Interim Core Group

The steering group or the interim core group will function until April 2009 and will act on behalf of the whole LINK to:

- a. Establish the South Gloucestershire LINK within the next nine months according to an agreed governance structure and within the terms of reference below
- b. Build on and develop existing mechanisms for patient and public involvement in health and social care so that the LINK becomes a 'network of networks'
- c. Incorporate the new powers and duties of the LINK; specifically to scrutinise adult health and social care and children and young people's health services (including services for people with learning difficulties), to enter and view settings and to report to and to receive responses from the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- d. Develop, agree, implement, monitor and review a South Gloucestershire LINK work programme which avoids duplicating the monitoring role of existing audit agencies and ensures that diverse voices are heard and acted upon within the commissioning of health and social care services
- e. Endeavour to ensure that health and social care inequalities and other significant issues of importance to the people of South Gloucestershire are researched, reported on and scrutinised
- f. Communicate and engage with LINK members (including children and young people), stakeholders and the local community and agree a strategy for doing this
- g. Publicise the LINK and market its work
- h. Map and engage with existing networks across client groups and the different localities in South Gloucestershire

- i. Identify seldom heard and seldom involved groups and individuals and enable them to participate in the LINK and agree a strategy for ensuring this broad engagement
- j. Formulate recruitment processes and criteria for different levels of LINK membership – prospective members, contacts, participants and volunteers - that enable people to contribute to the LINK when and how they choose
- k. Establish standing and task and finish sub-groups to carry out focussed work on particular issues identified in the work programme as agreed by the interim core group or steering group
- l. Develop and agree the code of conduct, policies and working protocols to structure the work of the LINK, establish its accountability and probity, and ensure the good conduct of its members
- m. Work within the agreed budget and where any variance occurs immediately to review this with the Host organisation's finance manager
- n. Oversee a training programme for LINK members and stakeholders
- o. Oversee the work of and receive reports from the subgroups
- p. Establish a self-assessment mechanism to monitor the performance of the LINK
- q. Appraise the performance of the Host organisation in relation to the Council monitoring requirements
- r. Produce and agree an annual report for submission to the Department of Health
- s. Ensure the sustainability of the LINK including developing business opportunities and maximising resources through cross border work with other LINKs and through cross-sector working with other organisations

7. Membership of the Interim Core Group

The interim core group will consist of no more than 16 members

- a. All interim core group members must be an active member of at least one subgroup
- b. The chair and 2 deputy chairs of the interim core group, who will be representatives of different subgroups, will be agreed by a consensus of core group members or if this is not achieved be elected by secret ballot and will serve for a period agreed at the time of their election but for no longer than two years, and for no more than one consecutive period of office
- c. The interim core group can agree at a previous meeting to invite key stakeholders to a specific meeting or for a particular item
- d. The Host organisation staff will attend the interim core group and will have an item on the agenda to report LINK activities but will not have voting rights or decision making powers
- e. The Host organisation will monitor attendance every six months. Where a member fails to attend or to send a substitute from the subgroup they represent to three consecutive meetings, the subgroup will be asked to review its representation
- f. The interim core group may agree to co-opt members from within the sub-groups or from the wider LINK membership.

8. Responsibilities of Interim Core Group Members

Members representing a subgroup should:

- a. Know what the subgroup members have agreed
- b. Put across their views
- c. Feedback from the interim core group to the subgroup members
- d. Attend meetings or send a substitute
- e. Uphold the good reputation of the LINK
- f. Abide by these terms of reference, the code of conduct and all others of the LINK's policies

9. Role of Chair and 2 Deputy Chairs(one for health and one for social care) of the Core and subgroups

- a. Attend and chair subgroup and core group meetings on a regular basis
- b. Ensure that the remit of the interim core group is properly adhered to and the work programme is progressed
- c. Ensure that equality and diversity are promoted throughout the work and conduct of the group
- d. Represent the LINK with other stakeholders and other LINKs
- e. Ensure that meetings are held to schedule and are minuted
- f. Ensure that policies are agreed for the effective and accountable running of the LINK
- g. Lead the LINK self assessment with the support of the Host organisation
- h. Have a broad understanding of the health and social care commissioning agenda and of the work of the LINK
- i. Be available to respond to the Host organisation in managing the LINK
- j. The core chair and deputy chair people will be an ex officio member of any LINK task or sub group

10. Remit and Membership of the Subgroups

- a. Subgroups will be set up by the interim steering group to progress specific tasks, aspects or issues in the agreed work programme, and thereafter by the interim core group on the basis of issues raised by the wider LINK membership.
- b. Members of subgroups will be self selected from the LINK membership
- c. A subgroup must aim to have at least 5 active members who attend at least 3 out of 5 meetings; these members should aim to reflect a cross section of the groups and communities with an interest in the subgroup's terms of reference
- d. Subgroups must agree by consensus, or where this is not achieved they must elect by secret ballot, a chair and a deputy chair of the subgroup
- e. For subgroups with up to 9 members the chair will represent the subgroup on the interim core group; for subgroups with 10 or more members both the chair and the deputy chair will represent the subgroup on the interim core group

- f. Subgroups will identify at their outset a clear purpose, prescribe specific terms of reference and agree a work plan with realistic targets; these should incorporate ways in which seldom heard groups can be heard and involved and they will need to be agreed by the interim core group before work commences
- g. Subgroups must work within a budget agreed by the interim core group and ratified by the finance officer for the Host organisation, and report immediately any variance that occurs both to the chair of the interim core group and to the Host finance officer
- h. For standing sub groups regular review dates should be agreed
- i. Subgroups will report back to the interim core group on a regular basis as agreed with the chair and deputy chair of the interim core group
- j. Subgroups are responsible for announcing meetings at least a week in advance, for keeping records of all decisions made and why they made them, for communicating with the communities which have an interest in the work of the group, and for reporting back to them on the outcomes of the work of the group
- k. Subgroups will provide monitoring evidence for the self assessment, local authority evaluation and annual report as requested by the interim core group and by the Host organisation
- l. The Host organisation will attend subgroup meetings by invitation or to provide quality assurance and accountability

11. Frequency of Meetings and Agenda Setting

- a. The interim core group will meet every month
- b. The subgroups will meet at least once every two months

- c. Any member of the interim core group can submit agenda items at least ten working days before the interim core group meeting
- d. The final agenda will be agreed by the chair and deputy chair
- e. Subgroup members should request the subgroup representative on the interim core group to submit agenda items on their behalf
- f. Urgent items may be included on the agenda at the meeting, subject to the approval of the chair at the start of the meeting

12. Support for the interim core group and subgroups

- a. Members of the interim core group will undertake the research, entering and viewing agreed in the work programme
- b. The Host organisation will provide the administrative support to the interim core group and will execute its governance decisions on behalf of the LINK
- c. Members of the subgroups will be self supporting unless the core group agrees to allocate administrative support from the Host.

13. Inclusion

The interim core group and all subgroups will consider as appropriate the particular access, mobility, health and social care needs and experiences of the following communities:

- a. Low income
- b. Unemployed
- c. Non-working parents and carers
- d. Non traditional households
- e. People with learning difficulties
- f. People with physical disabilities
- g. People with mental ill health
- h. Children and young people with special education needs, who are disconnected from education and where there is a health issue
- i. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people

- j. People with HIV/AIDS
- k. Black and minority ethnic
- l. People with dual or multiple heritage
- m. People speaking languages other than English
- n. Asylum seekers and refugees
- o. Travellers and gypsies
- p. Homeless people
- q. People involved in the criminal justice system and their families
- r. People who work in the sex industry and their families
- s. People who experience domestic abuse including children and young people
- t. People who experience drug and alcohol misuse

14. Accountability

Before members can participate in the work of the LINK they will be required to sign up to certain policies which will maintain the integrity of the members and the probity of the LINK. Certain activities will be undertaken by members only once they have been trained, or checked by the criminal records bureau.

15. Policies, Protocols and Strategies

The interim core group will be responsible for ensuring that policies and protocol are agreed and reviewed as follows:

- a. Code of Conduct, including disclosure of interests and conflict of interests, harassment, confidentiality and removal of members
- b. Managing conflicts of interest
- c. Inclusion, equality and diversity
- d. Health and Safety
- e. Safeguarding
- f. Complaints
- g. Expenses
- h. Elections and voting
- i. Overview and Scrutiny
- j. Risk management
- k. Entering and viewing
- l. Data protection
- m. Lone working

Strategies will be developed and agreed on:

- n. Communications
- o. Engagement

- p. Monitoring and evaluation
- q. Training and development
- r. Sustainability

16. The Host organisation (The Host)

The Host will provide the following support to the LINK through the interim core group:

- a. Draft governance documents for discussion
- b. Maintain information and communication systems
- c. Service meetings and events
- d. Develop strategies and business plan
- e. Manage finances
- f. Undertake community development work
- g. Train volunteers
- h. Facilitate reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- i. Liaise with key stakeholders and other LINKs
- j. Provide quality assurance and risk management
- k. Produce annual report