

## The Carers Survey showed that:

**Carers need greater recognition and respect**

**Most carers feel overwhelmed and isolated**

**Lack of information**

**Friends and family provide the most support**

**Services need to be better coordinated**

**Most carers are caring for 50+ hours a week**

**Full results of the survey will be published shortly.**



**Work Programme**

Anti-coagulants

**Work Programme**

Head & Neck  
Cancer Services

**Work Programme**

Teenage Pregnancy

## Chair's Report

It seems no time at all since we sent out the Christmas newsletter. It has been a very busy time for us and I hope that you agree that we have made good progress. Here are some of the highlights of the last three months.

**Out of hours:** our report to the PCT about the quality of the out of hours service was sent to them in December. In the New Year we heard that Take Care Now was withdrawing from running the service. Some LINK members attended a stakeholders' event run by the PCT where we had the opportunity to ask in-depth questions of Harmoni. It was later agreed that Harmoni will take over the out of hours service in April this year. We promise to undertake further Enter and View visits during the coming year to observe how the service is working.

**Head and neck cancer:** we continue to help with ensuring that the service remains in Worcestershire. In March three of us are going to see the Chair of the 3 Counties Cancer Network to ask some key questions about what is happening. We have already been to talk to the Director of Operations at the Acute Trust to check that all is on-target for the development of a new cancer service, with a radiotherapy unit, for Worcestershire cancer patients.

**Anti-coagulant prescribing:** we have begun work on this and are really pleased to report that the quality of the service is much improved since it was investigated by the PPI forums some three years ago. We have more work to do here, particularly in respect of community services.

**Carers' survey:** we have 130 responses to this, which is fantastic. Thank you to those of you who responded. We hope to have the results of the survey any day now.

**New staff:** many of you will have met our staff of Fliss (Community Development Officer), Anne and Georgie who run our administrative service. We soon realised that there was far more work than Fliss could manage. So, we have been able to recruit 1.5 more Community Development Officers.

They started in April, which is excellent news, and will enable Worcestershire LINK to reach out to far more community and voluntary groups than we have been able to do so far.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all the best.

Ann Montague-Smith  
Worcestershire LINK Chairperson



## An Introduction to Practice-based Commissioning

Commissioning for health services is the process of assessing local health needs, identifying the services required to meet those needs, then buying those services from a wide range of healthcare providers, which can include hospitals, dentists, opticians, pharmacies and voluntary organisations and finally monitoring the outcomes. Practice-based commissioning (PbC) is about supporting this commissioning process by engaging GP practices and other primary care professionals.

In Worcestershire, commissioning of services for the population is led by the Primary Care Trust (NHS Worcestershire). Services are bought from a number of different providers, such as:

- NHS Trusts, eg Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust, Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust, plus NHS providers from out of the county;
- The provider arm of NHS Worcestershire;
- Primary Care contractors (such as GPs);
- The private sector;
- The voluntary sector.

Already primary care clinicians, particularly GPs, direct a large amount of NHS resources through the referrals they make on a daily basis. This means they are well placed to shape how these resources are invested and to shape the health and healthcare of local populations. Through PbC, they are being provided with the indicative budgets and support to become more involved in the commissioning decisions. NHS Worcestershire retains the responsibility for managing the overall budget and has the overall accountability for healthcare commissioning.

### What happens in Worcestershire?

Participation in practice-based commissioning (PbC) is voluntary, and in Worcestershire 66 out of 68 GP practices have decided to participate. Practices were given the freedom to decide on management arrangements which best suited them. As a result, a variety of different structures are in place across the county, some practices have grouped together to form Clusters whereas others have decided to tackle on their own. Two practices have so far opted to remain outside of PBC.

A summary of the arrangements is as follows:-

Cluster	Practices	Population
<b>Redditch &amp; Bromsgrove</b>	23	170,000
<b>Wyre Forest</b>	12	110,000
<b>Evesham, Broadway and Bredon</b>	6	49,000
<b>Malvern Hills &amp; Pershore **</b>	9	71,000
<b>“Worcester City 4” **</b>	4	57,000

<b>“Worcester City 5-1” **</b>	5	43,000
<b>Droitwich **</b>	3	30,000
<b>St.John’s House, Worcester</b>	1	15,000
<b>Tenbury Wells</b>	1	9,000
<b>Great Witley</b>	1	6,000
<b>Inkberrow</b>	1	3,000

Those Clusters marked \*\* form the South Worcestershire Cluster Group and work collectively on some projects.

The Clusters meet regularly to discuss their plans and implement individual proposals. As well as ensuring that as many practices as is possible are involved in this work, Clusters are encouraged to engage their patients in the commissioning process.

### **Outcomes to Date**

The focus of PbC is increasingly on moving activity out of hospitals into more local settings wherever this can be done without compromising the quality and safety of services. This has the advantages of being more convenient for patients and also often much cheaper.

Practice-based Commissioners have submitted over 200 business cases, and the majority of these have been approved and implemented. Some of these are of relatively small value (eg investing in equipment to improve the ability of primary care to take work away from hospitals), but a relatively small number of business cases involve large-scale re-design of how services are provided and can have values in excess of £100k.

**Trevor Neatherway**  
**Head of Practice-based Commissioning Development**  
**February 2010**

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**Worcestershire LINK** has moved to a new office.

Our new contact details are as follows:

**FREEPOST RSHC-CUUS-ZXTJ**  
**Worcestershire LINK**  
**B D Business Centre**  
**Blackpole Road, Worcester**  
**WR3 8SQ**  
**Tel: 01905 755313**  
**E-mail: worcestershirelink@shaw-trust.org.uk**



Dementia is an umbrella term for a number of medical conditions that attack the fabric of the brain. This includes disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and Lewy Body disease as well as many others that occur less frequently. Typically symptoms of dementia include increasing difficulty with all types of thinking processes. It often takes a long while before people seek help. Although we don't have a cure for dementia yet there are a lot of things that can help and it's important to rule out any other illnesses that might mimic dementia symptoms. Also, understanding what is going on at an early stage helps people feel more in control of their life and important decisions. Dementia has been in the news a lot recently but it is not a new issue in society. Symptoms of dementia have been described since the times of the ancient Greeks. The reason for this increased attention is that people are generally living longer than they used to and we have seen some large increases of people living into very old age.

Worcestershire has a higher proportion of elderly people than many other counties in the West Midlands. The incidence of dementia is higher in older age groups, effecting approximately 1 in 20 of the over 65's and 1 in 5 of the over 80's. Using these statistics it is likely that there are approximately 7,000 citizens in Worcestershire currently living with dementia out of the 96,000 in the over 65 age range. It is expected that this number in Worcestershire will double by 2026.

It is important to remember that dementia is not simply part of the aging process. Most people who live into a very old age have absolutely nothing wrong with their memories or ability to think clearly. Using the statistics above means that we have 89,000 older citizens in Worcestershire who will NOT experience dementia.

Younger people can also get dementia. Although the actual numbers of people experiencing dementia in the 30-65 age range is relatively small (around 200 in Worcestershire) the impact on families with young children and for people getting appropriate care and treatment can be fraught with difficulties.

The National Dementia Strategy for England was published just over a year ago. It outlined 17 objectives designed to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia. In order to help us move forwards in Worcestershire there are a number of new developments. One of these is the founding of a new university based association whose focus is securely set on a body of work that will improve the lives of people living with dementia, their families and those who work to support them. The Association for Dementia Studies (ADS) at the University of Worcester is built on a strong foundation partnership between the University, Worcestershire NHS Primary Care Trust, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and the national charity 'for Dementia'.

These parties decided to invest in ADS in recognition that having a university department dedicated to dementia will give Worcestershire a head start in achieving its objectives under the National Dementia Strategy. Indeed, in its first month of operation ADS worked with its partners to ensure that Worcestershire secured one of the twenty-two national demonstrator sites for the Dementia Advisor Service.

All parties, however, recognize that the vision for the work of ADS is wider than Worcestershire. The vision is that ADS will become a national and international centre of excellence in training, education and research in dementia studies. The provision of key products to assist in the delivery of the National Dementia Strategy will be a priority. These will include;

- Training and education for those involved in direct care.
- Professional and leadership development programmes for those directing care.
- Evidence based consultancy to improve practice directly for providers of health, social care and housing.
- Research and evaluation of new service models and commissioning.
- Research and Development in the delivery of person-centred dementia care and the National Dementia Strategy
- Scholarly activity in dementia studies

Now our core team is in place we will begin to shape the work programme for the next five years. We are actively seeking working partnerships. If you want to be kept informed of our developments or discuss your ideas for the future then please keep in touch.

Our website is a good place to start

<http://ihsc.worc.ac.uk/dementia>

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WR2 6AJ

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## Official Opening of Emergency Operations Centre

Eve Meredith Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Worcestershire LINK was invited to attend the Official Opening Ceremony of the Emergency Operations Centre at Tollgate Staffordshire along with her husband Tony Meredith by Anthony C Marsh Chief Executive of the West Midlands Ambulance Service Trust.



Mike O'Brien QC, MBE Minister of State (Health) conducted the opening of the Centre and took the opportunity of speaking to all of the guests, which included The Mayor of Stafford, representatives from a local team of Community First Responders and a number of LINKs Members from various counties. The WMAST of course covers 7 Counties and fosters good relationships with them all.



Mike O'Brien was very approachable and Eve Meredith took the time to advise him of some of the work the Worcestershire LINK was currently carrying out, such as the Carers Survey in conjunction with University of Worcester and the Out of Hours service, obviously as he had to do his civic duty to everyone not all of our work could be discussed. However, he did take a keen interest in what we and all the other LINK representatives were doing and thanked us for giving up our personal time

The Emergency Centre was impressive and has the capacity to cover the Brierley Hill Emergency Operations Centre should a catastrophe occur be it a terrorist attack or a natural phenomena. The new CAD system will also allow complete interaction between Control Rooms and Ambulances.





## Community First Responders

What do a mother, a retired postwoman, a teaching assistant and a student have in common? On the face of it, not much perhaps, but one of these very different people may just save your life – they are all Community First Responders (CFRs).



Rich Bebbington, West Midlands Ambulance Service's Community Response Manager for Worcestershire said: "CFRs come from all walks of life. They go about their daily lives, but if an emergency call is received by the ambulance service within a two or three mile radius of them, they are sent. There are 74 CFRs and 14 CFR schemes in Worcestershire; a registered charity in need of fresh volunteers (an appeal was recently made for volunteers in Malvern and Upton) and sponsorship to pay for their equipment).

### The Facts:

- To volunteer, you must be aged 18 or over and have a full driving licence and lots of enthusiasm.
- West Midlands Ambulance Service will provide the training - an Institute of Healthcare Development (IHCD) course covering:
  - Basic Life Support and Defibrillation,
  - Medical Emergencies,
  - Traumatic Emergencies
  - Preparing for Active Duty.
- Volunteers will go 'live' following observational shifts with ambulance crews.

Contact Rich Bebbington, Community Response Manager for Worcestershire on 07791 959131 or [richard.bebbington@wmas.nhs.uk](mailto:richard.bebbington@wmas.nhs.uk)





## **Worcestershire patients and families to benefit from new essential standards of care**

From April 2010 new essential standards of quality and safety are being introduced gradually across all health and adult social care services in England. The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the new independent regulator of health and adult social care, will license services if they meet essential standards and constantly monitor them to make sure they are compliant with new legislation about to be passed in parliament.

NHS trusts are the first to come into the new system starting 1 April this year; they will be followed in October by all providers of social care for people over 18 years of age and by providers of independent healthcare. Over the coming two years the system will include all primary care and dentists too.

The new system means that you can expect your care and treatment to meet essential standards of quality and safety that respect your dignity and rights. The biggest change from any earlier system of regulation is that each of the standards is based on an actual outcome for people rather than a policy or a target. Providers must demonstrate that people in their care have a quality experience across all aspects of their treatment, care or support.

For more information go to [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

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## **Cancer Strategy Proposals**



Cancer Strategy proposals will mean more local services

NHS Worcestershire has unveiled a radical new draft Cancer Strategy that could mean lots more cancer services are delivered locally within the county. This Strategy will now be subjected to public consultation in May and the LINK will play an important role in this exercise to make sure patient's views are considered before a final Strategy can be agreed and implemented in 2011.

The draft Strategy includes proposals to develop an extended cancer unit in Worcestershire in partnership with Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. Services that could be delivered safely locally would then be provided from that centre, with more complex procedures being provided by an out of county partner. Worcestershire patients requiring treatment for cancer currently travel to Wolverhampton, Coventry or Cheltenham depending on where they live in the county. The proposals in the new draft Strategy would see much of this treatment centralised and fewer people having to travel long distances.

One service that could be affected by these proposals is the head and neck cancer service that has been the subject of much local debate. The previous procurement exercise for head and neck cancer services, that could have seen the service provided in Gloucestershire, has now been put on hold whilst NHS Worcestershire develop the Cancer Strategy for the county.

Simon Trickett  
NHS Worcestershire



## **Anthony Goldsmith - Chairman of the Wyre Forest Multi Agency Group**

I became Chairman of the Wyre Forest Multi Agency Group in January 2008 having been a member since 2003. At that time I was Divisional Secretary of Wyre Forest SSAFA Forces Help from 2001-2008 although I was a Caseworker for a total of eighteen years. During the time as Divisional Secretary based in Kidderminster, I did 700 cases and granted aided some £450000 to those in need. This covered anything from Level Access Showers, rent arrears, white goods, housing the homeless amongst just a few.

As a volunteer member of WF MAG, I found the experience and support from the many members of WF MAG representing a wide range of interests very useful and it soon became part of my learning curve. I was dealing with many different issues involving the ages of all groups of people from Second World War to the present each with their own problem. It soon became apparent that there are many dedicated people working in the welfare sector, both from public, private and voluntary organizations which support those in need. All the people involved have considerable experience at the sharp end which is important to gain that on-ground experience and expertise. We now have some thirty members in WF MAG representing most of the welfare organizations in Wyre Forest. I am very pleased to see that Worcestershire LINK is a member of WF MAG.

WF MAG was started by JobCentrePlus some ten years ago but due to restructuring the aims are the same but is now administered by volunteers. We meet every quarter with the sole aim of interacting and improving the line of communication between us so we can express views and concerns by which working together, we hopefully improve local services to help those in need and the more vulnerable in society. We normally invite someone to give a Presentation on a local and topical subject which will be of interest to all but where everyone has the chance to express their views. We all volunteer to come and there is no pressure that it is a must. People choose which ones are more relevant to them. It is all about learning.

For the last couple of years under the auspices of WF MAG we have held two very successful Workshops. These Workshops concentrated on Mental Health issues on how we could make people more aware of the problems faced by many, how they can be tackled and how we can work to improve the services in Wyre Forest. The Workshops were all chaired by Dr Richard Taylor, MP who has been a staunch ally. The Workshop in 2009 was co-ordinated with Community First. A Practical Steering Group is now in the making so progress is very encouraging.

Mental Health covers so many issues and boundaries so it important everyone is aware of the situation in Wyre Forest. There is no doubt there is much duplication in the welfare sector many chasing the same money which is wasteful. Hence the importance of knowing what the other side is doing! Everyone expects the State to solve all problems but it is an impossibility as only people can solve problems and this means working together as experienced by organizations such as WF MAG.

My interest grew in mental health issues when meeting many veterans who, for some reason or another, had lost their way in life. It was very obvious that the support and help these people needed was not available from the normal medical channels as they were basically a number and misunderstood. There was no personal support as one had to go with the tide as stated by Government. It should also be recognized that the State cannot be all things to all people!

I attended recently a conference in Worcester entitled "Mental Health in the Workplace". There were excellent speakers but one Speaker in particular explaining "Happiness" mentioned three words which, to me, summed up the problem of Mental Health. These were, "Learning, Philanthropy and Spirituality". In other words, the willingness of all of us to help those one in four people who suffer from a variety of mental health disorders is essential. No one person can solve the problem. Family, friend, work-mate, a stranger, a business acquaintance and many others can all help. Perhaps what has focused my mind more than anything is how our Service personnel are treated upon their return from a war theatre suffering from depression, PTSD and other disorders. Physical disabilities can be seen and understood but mental health is a silent illness and once these people are "out in the cold", their world is lost leading to alcoholism and homelessness and even prison. It is said, nearly 17% of the prison population is ex-Service.

Everyone has a skill. There should be more emphasis on soft skills training (Place and Train before Train and Place) and attracting volunteers to help those in need. Pressures of modern day living such as debt and social changes make matters worse. There are many people who are discarded to one side classed as dysfunctional and therefore left off the wagon train. Many have Learning Difficulties due to the low educational standards in some places. Making someone sit and watch TV all day with a six-pack is not the answer! It was due to this that last summer I undertook a fairly detailed private study on Mental Health in Wyre Forest incorporating a Business Plan and a Proposal as a result of discussing these issues with some twenty people and organizations, all of whom represented a wealth of practical experience. Did you know in Wyre Forest, there are some seventy organizations that purport to have a role in Mental Health and one Ward is identified as having 50% mental health issues? This seemed to suggest there was considerable duplication in the various aims either to justify a target or worse, little understanding of the on-ground problems experienced by those in need of help. The downside is that this chews up the few funding resources which could be better utilized. The other key point that came to light was that most people with these problems are only too willing to be helped to get over their plight but help, mentoring and other personal support mechanisms need to be available, probably from the voluntary sector which plays a vital role. Employers need more encouragement in understanding and a willingness to help.

WF MAG sits as a member of the LSP Health & Wellbeing Group and the Homelessness Forum in Kidderminster.

January 2010



## Wise up to Carewise

Carewise is a new website, set to 'go live' in mid-March, which will be a central source of care and well-being information for Worcestershire. It will contain details on a broad range of services, from those targeted at people with specific needs to others with a more universal appeal.

Over 500 services are already in the new database and the company supporting the software is currently 'harvesting' details from other reputable sources to ensure there is a sufficient store of information at 'go live'. This 'harvester' will assist with keeping records up to date, as it will automatically update any 'harvested' records at regular intervals. Manually inputted records will be maintained by the organisations, which have been involved with the project set up, as well as staff from within Worcestershire County Council.

The name of Carewise has been chosen to reflect the type of information available on the site, and the working group is currently developing the design and look of the website. The new Carewise logo is based on the colours and font used by the Choice and Control programme and is supported with imagery used on the literature. The layout and style of the new website is based on the Council's own website with a banner at the top of the page. Carewise will be accessible from a number of sources and the page banner can be adapted to reflect the providing organisation's own styles and colours.

Members of the public will be able to access the information via the internet, either directly, or by approaching any of the advice and information services in Worcestershire, all of whom will have free access to the system. Using an advanced search option, people can search for specific outcomes or services and filter results down by location and a number of other options.

Carewise is intended to be the *golden source* of care and well-being information for Worcestershire and the services covered range from small local voluntary groups to larger commercial services and those offered by Social Care, Health and other public bodies. The system provides details of events as well as local and national services, which support a broad range of desired outcomes, whether these services are free or provided at a cost to the user.

To find out more visit the Choice and Control website at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/choiceandcontrol](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/choiceandcontrol)

**choice and control**  
choosing your support, your way

# Worcestershire LINK AGM

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2010

7.00pm – 9.00pm with buffet

The Cricket Suite

Worcestershire County Cricket Club

New Road

Worcester

WR2 4QQ



Places are limited; please contact the administration office to book a place.

**Contact details:**

FREEPOST RSHC-CUUS-ZXTJ

Worcestershire LINK

B D Business Centre

Blackpole Road, Worcester

WR3 8SQ

Tel: 01905 755313

E-mail: worcestershirelink@shaw-trust.org.uk



## Headway North Worcestershire

Headway is the leading UK charity dedicated to the care and support of people with acquired brain injury.

Headway is a national charity and has a network of 110 local groups throughout the country. Through these groups people with head injury and their carers can meet other people in similar situations and offer each other understanding and support as well as social outlets. 51 of these groups organise and run Headway House Day Care Centres or Drop-in Centres; these provide respite care, activities and therapeutic facilities for people with head injuries.

Headway North Worcestershire originated in 1988 when concerned relatives of people with brain injuries began to hold meetings at Kidderminster Hospital. Within several years it had expanded dramatically, becoming recognised as a much needed resource in the community. Today it operates from its base at Headway House in Stourport-on-Severn (with an outreach centre in Bromsgrove), covering the whole of North Worcestershire through a staff team of 17 people plus 10 volunteers.

It offers service users and carers a counselling service, a maintenance service, a 'Community Support Scheme' and 'Family Support & Carer Support' plus a number of stimulating group activities in the day (such as art, cookery, gardening etc).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Headway office (tel. 01299 878738), who will be happy to help. Alternatively please visit our website at [www.headwaynw.org.uk](http://www.headwaynw.org.uk)

Congratulations to Barbara who won £25 vouchers by recommending a friend.



**Congratulations!**

## Winter Pressures

Worcestershire LINK visited Community Hospitals and GP Surgeries to find out how the bad weather affects services, staff and patients over the winter period. We also asked you about how the bad weather affected your lives over this period.

This is what we found:

- Staff found it difficult to get to and from work
- There are not enough community beds available, this means patients have to stay longer in Acute hospitals
- There was an increase in the number of patients who did not attend their appointments
- Better planning and coordination between services is needed
- People found it difficult to heat their homes because of the cost of fuel
- People who relied on carers were not visited
- People found it difficult to get to the shops to buy food and felt isolated
- People reported that their health was worse during the particularly bad weather

The results of this piece of work and the recommendations LINK made were presented by Pat Fisher (LINK Management Committee Member) at the HOSC meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Worcestershire LINK would like to thank all of those who took part in the survey and the staff and patients at the various Community Hospitals and GP Surgeries throughout the County.



**Win a Box of Chocolates: recommend a friend. Fill in the details below and send it to our Freepost address or e-mail us! (Our full contact details are on the previous page)**



### Your details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Your friend's details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_