

LINK Legacy

How do we make sure the organisational memory of LINKs is carried forward?



LINK Legacy is the term used to describe the processes, policies, activities, operational areas, along with the specific knowledge and skills used to deliver the LINK functions. The following provides a checklist of areas that could be transferred to the new local Healthwatch organisation.

The passing of the LINK Legacy to the new Local Healthwatch (LHW) will assist the new organisation to build on the positive work that has been achieved and increase the opportunities for a seamless transition between the two structures (LINK and LHW).

Background

The following checklist has been developed in conversation with delegates attending the national Healthwatch event held on Thursday 4 October 2012 at Local Government House. The results of the discussion have been used to create the following checklist.

The section on data/information is based on work by a group of London commissioners, and authored by Ed Knowles (Lewisham). To assist delegates in understanding the concept of a LINK Legacy, it was described and discussed as four groupings:

Data/information

LINks have a legacy of information and data about:

- services
- issues and complaints
- previous contacts and enquiries
- members
- staff roles and activity (as do the host).

People

- volunteers
- contact with local people and other organisations
- LINks committee members.

Previous work, research, reports

- organisational memory
- influencing commissioners
- positive impact
- outputs and products.

Processes and systems

- engagement with service users, carers, and the VCS
- recruitment and support of participants (volunteers)
- prioritising issues and concerns
- Enter and View
- an understanding of working with the local authority and the NHS.



Using the checklist

The checklist is intended to assist the LINK, LINK host and local authority (as commissioner of the local Healthwatch) in capturing the processes, policies, activities, and operational areas associated with the delivery of LINK functions that are intended to form part of the LHW functions as stated in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

It is essential that the LINK Legacy is developed jointly and owned by the LINK host, the active LINK participants (volunteers), and the local authority. Partners should consider agreeing a timeline for the collecting and physically transferring the information, together with the resources that need to be allocated to this activity.

The LINK Legacy if produced correctly will be of great value to LHW, providing a solid foundation from which it can then develop the new additional functions required of LHW.

This document does not cover the following areas (transfer of assets, staff, and finance) as they should be covered separately within existing contract arrangements and the process the local authority uses to establish LHW. There is likely to be a cross over between the four groupings used to describe the LINK Legacy.

Data/information

- Establish how your LINK has recorded comments and information since its inception. In many cases this will take the form of a database - does it include personal information or information which might allow an individual to be identified?
 - In addition to comments and complaints, establish how your LINK has communicated with its volunteers and whether it holds people's contact details, and any confidentiality clauses assigned to this data/information.
 - Establish the format in which data/information will be transferred ie electronic or paper.
 - If data or management systems are part of the Legacy ensure that a list of passwords used, subscriptions, software licences held etc is included.
 - As defined by the Data Protection Act the data controller is legally responsible for the information, its storage, use and transfer. Establish who the data controller is or which organisation owns the data. Where this is not clearly specified, but the contract establishes an expectation that the host should collect and hold certain information, then the local authority is most likely to be the data controller. If the situation is still unclear establish as soon as possible an agreement with the host and/or LINK executive as to who should be the data controller and what decision they will need to take come April 2013.
- It is for the data controller to decide whether/how to contact individuals regarding the change to LHW and the transfer of their comments/data. In a typical contract held by the local authority (where the local authority is the data controller) there is no expectation that all users/customers be informed of a change in provider.
 - Given the community-facing nature of LINKs/LHW, it would be regarded as best practice to write to its members/contributors informing them of the creation of LHW, explaining that the information they provided will be passed over to the new organisation and providing them with the opportunity to opt-out of the mailing list.



People

- Gather all information relating to the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks carried out on existing volunteers. Check guidance on the transfer of CRB checks in relation to the local context of LHW development.
- Identify existing roles for volunteers involved in the delivery of functions (ie Enter and View) and compile a description of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for each role. Include information on time commitment, re-imbusement of expenses and any other requirements associated with this function. This information can be used to promote volunteering opportunities and create a volunteer agreement.
- Identify what systems are in place (if any) for appraising volunteers and recognition/ reward systems include any actions that have become custom and practice for people who are active in LINK functions and activities.
- Identify and compile information on the partnerships, networks, forums, and boards that had LINK volunteer representation, including key contacts and dates and times of meetings.
- Gather and record information from the partnerships, networks, forums, and boards on why they had LINK representation, and what their expectation was of LINK representation, and additionally what are their expectations of a LHW representative given the additional functions of LHW.
- Compile a contact list covering residents, carers, patients, service users, and voluntary and community organisations that the LINK has engaged or communicated with.
- Gather information on methods of communication used by LINK with residents, carers, patients, service users, and voluntary and community organisations.
- As stated above(data/information) it would be regarded as best practice to write to the contact list, to determine their interest in continuing to receive information regarding the development of LHW, and explaining the wider role and functions of LHW as distinct from LINKs .



Previous work, research, reports

- Compile a record of the issues and concerns that have been raised with the LINK, and information on the prioritisation of these, establishing any areas where common themes on issues have arisen.
- Gather all requests for information made to the LINK; include reports produced by the LINK and responses to reports by commissioners.
- All information could be compiled into a library of records. This will assist LHW in having a full account of the issues raised, the reports produced and how they responded or influenced commissioners.
- Gather information on the role played by volunteers in the gathering of issues, the substantiation of the evidence/ information and any resulting reports. Include involvement in influencing commissioners, or responding to requests from commissioners.

Processes and systems

- Develop a listing of existing media and communication channels used by the LINK. Include how they use social media, types of meetings and events that LINKs have organised eg public consultation events.
- Capture and consolidate the process and protocol for promoting engagement and involvement across the geography of the LINK.
- Establish how LINKs have worked together across geographical boundaries on engagement and involvement including public consultation.
- Compile a record of existing LINK representation and involvement on regional bodies and the systems that exist to capture public intelligence and evidence regionally.
- Capture the process for prioritising issues and concerns raised by residents, carers, patients, service users, and voluntary and community organisations.
- Gather all information on the process and protocol for the 'Enter and View' function of LINK.
- Gather all information on the processes and protocols for recruiting, supporting, co-ordinating, and managing LINK volunteers.
- Gather information on any process and protocols for engaging with public sector organisations (including overview and scrutiny), and officers, include private sector organisations that are commissioned for public sector service delivery.
- Compile a detailed listing of all active or planned LINK activity to pass to LHW.





Local Government Association

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
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