

**Report to Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
regarding the future of Oxfordshire Local Involvement Network – the  
interim year 2011-2012**

The contract for the agency that currently provides support to the Oxfordshire LINK finishes at the end of March 2011. Healthwatch will formally begin in 2012, leaving us with an interim year to plan support for. Over the past month we have carried out an informal consultation exercise with a number of LINK stakeholders, and will continue to do so up until mid Nov. Once this consultation is complete an options paper for 2011-2012 will be produced and submitted for agreement. The process and timescale for agreeing funding nationally and locally still needs to be confirmed.

Who have we/ will we talk to?

LINK Stewardship group members  
Wider LINK members  
Primary Care Trust communications director and involvement lead  
Involvement leads officers from Health Trusts  
Voluntary sector organisations e.g. Age UK, Carers forum, OVCA  
Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee members  
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee members

What have they said?

We have received a lot of interesting responses and ideas about how to take forward the support for the Oxfordshire LINK. Most people felt that LINK have gained significant momentum over the last few months, and that the interim year should build on this. Some stakeholders felt that continuing the contract with Help and Care would not be a positive, and that bringing the support in house would be the best way forward, some felt that contracting with a local voluntary agency would be best. Several models for governance were suggested, and without exception all people interviewed so far felt that lessons must be learnt from the last three years. Whatever option for the interim year is taken forward, LINK needs to be in the best position to ensure high quality Health and Social Care services are delivered for the people of Oxfordshire.

Options suggested so far for supporting the LINK

- Bring support for LINK in house (within Social and Community Services)
- Extend contract with Help and Care
- Contract with a local Voluntary Organisation

All of the suggested options have significant issues that would need to be resolved in order to take them forward.

Options suggested for governance

- Form new stewardship/steering group by creating job descriptions and asking people to apply.
- Continue with current structure and membership.
- Continue with current membership but split group into two one focusing on the future looking a creating a shadow Health Watch, one focusing on the current work plan and delivering future projects

Your ideas?

LG 10/10