

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mission Statement of the Gloucestershire LINK is 'to help influence, improve and change the way local health and social care services are planned and delivered' and this Annual Report charts the development and progress achieved during our first year.

LINKs were set up in England in April 2008 to give communities a stronger voice in how their health and social care services are delivered and because local health and social care services tend to improve if peoples' views are listened to and acted upon.

Working as independent networks of local people and groups, LINKs find out what people want, investigate issues and use their powers to hold services to account. They are open to anyone to join and make it easier for communities to talk to the people who plan and run health and social care services.

Gloucestershire LINK began life in April 2008 with the appointment of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) as Host organisation. A Transition Group was formed in June 2008 to look at governance and communications and to make sure the LINK was operational by October 2008. Their hard work over the next six months led to the successful launch of the Gloucestershire LINK on October 21st 2008 and the election of the LINK Interim Stewardship Board.

Between January and March 2009, eight district Community Engagement events were held across the county giving local people an opportunity to meet

members of the Gloucestershire LINK and raise issues of concern and priority for their area. The views gathered at these events have been collated and will be put forward for possible inclusion in the 2009/10 LINK workplan as well as communicated to the relevant commissioners and providers of services for the county.

A registration process has been developed to ensure that the LINK is communicating with and accessible to all sections of the community. Current membership is spread evenly across Gloucestershire and the registration process has enabled us to identify the following top five areas of interest:

- Community Health
- Older people / services for older people
- Hospital services
- Carers and carer support
- Care pathway on discharge from hospital

In March 2009, the new LINK Stewardship Board was elected and has identified membership, community engagement and the development of a dynamic and responsive workplan as some of its main priorities for the year.

Much has been achieved in this formative year and the foundations are firmly in place for the consolidation and growth of Gloucestershire LINK in 2009/10 and beyond.

