

Information about Coventry LINK

What is a Local Involvement Network (LINK)?

A LINK is a network of individuals and groups with an interest in health and social care within a specific area. There is a LINK for every Local Authority within England.

Each and every LINK is independent of local health and social care providers and sets its own work programme.

Each LINK is facilitated by a Host organisation. The role of the Host organisation is to provide a skilled support team for the LINK, promote the LINK, record the work of the LINK, conduct community outreach work, and hold the LINK's budget. The host organisation for Coventry LINK is Voluntary Action Coventry.

What is the purpose of a LINK?

The purpose of a LINK is to improve the health and social care provision for all those living within its area by:

- **Listening** to what people have to say about health and social care;
- **Investigating** the issues raised by local people;
- **Reporting** its findings to the appropriate organisations and to the local community;
- **Acting** to ensure reports and recommendations are taken into consideration by local health and social care providers.

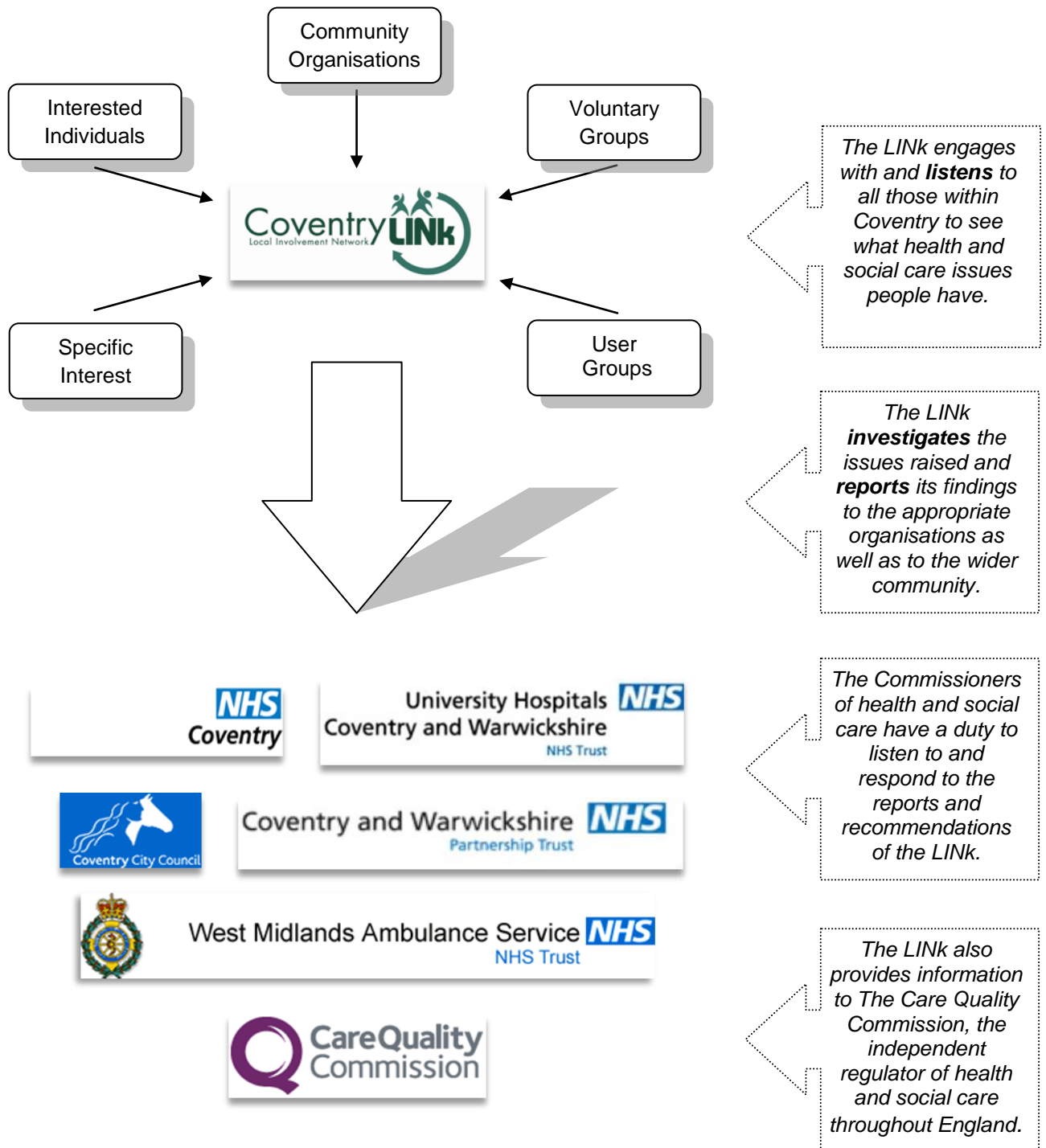
What can a LINK do?

Every LINK throughout England has powers that allow it to complete its work. These powers include:

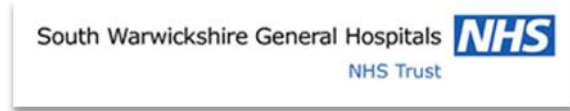
- The right to request information from health and social care commissioners and expect to receive it within a specific amount of time;
- The right to carry out visits to NHS and some social care services in an appropriate and safe manner to see if services are meeting the needs of local people;
- The right to make recommendations for change and expect a response to these;
- The right to refer issues to local council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees if it seems service providers are not taking action.
- The opportunity to provide feedback to the Care Quality Commission, the independent regulator of NHS and social care services throughout England.

Where does Coventry LINK fit in?

The Coventry LINK is a network of organisations, groups, forums and individuals that are within Coventry. It is a structure that allows everyone to have a say on health and social care services within the city. The LINK itself does not **represent** any one group nor does it have its own point of view. Instead the LINK gathers all the views of those within Coventry and **presents** those to the commissioners of health and social care:



Coventry LINK also works in partnership with other LINKs in the West Midlands to improve the services provided by these organisations:



How can people be involved with the LINK?

There are three main ways a person or group can be involved with the LINK:

Participant – A participant is a person or group that helps the LINK by giving views on health and social care within Coventry. This could be by taking part in surveys, recounting experiences, or simply commenting on a project the LINK is working on. Participants will get involved in LINK activities, which suit and interest them.

Member – A member is a person or group that has agreed to join the LINK by completing a simple form. Members have a say in what issues the LINK should look at. Members can either dip in and out in ways the suite them or they can volunteer some of their time regularly. Members do not have to attend meetings or join a committee, and are regularly kept up-to-date on the work of the LINK. Members are expected to uphold the values of the LINK and follow its policies and procedures.

Member – Volunteers:

There are different roles that members can do regularly as member- volunteers:

Theme or working group volunteers: LINK members who give some of their time regularly to undertake pieces of LINK work. They are involved in planning and undertaking the LINK work programme.

Visiting Volunteers: are LINK volunteers who will be trained and CRB checked to be authorised "Visiting Volunteers" who can visit some NHS and social care premises as per the work programme to see how services are delivered and get feedback from service users.

Steering Group Volunteers: people elected by the LINK's members. The steering group is a strategic governing group responsible for ensuring the LINK is open, accountable, and is doing what it is supposed to be doing.

How can people find out more?

Coventry LINK is an independent network supported by Voluntary Action Coventry. To find out more visit www.coventrylink.org.uk
Or email coventrylink@vac Coventry.org.uk. Or phone 024 7622 0381.

The postal address for the LINK is **Coventry LINK, Voluntary Action Coventry, 6th Floor, Coventry Point, Market Way, Coventry, CV1 1EA.**