

**iNvolvement Network Scenarios for Centre for Public Scrutiny**  
**'Getting ready for LINKs' event workshops for local authorities**  
**on 'Building Relationships between council executives, hosts,**  
**LINKs and scrutiny'**



***iN Scenario 1***

As executive member in charge of resources, you are talking with the officer in charge of procuring host services about a different subject. As he is about to go, he admits to you that he is feeling out of his depth around the procurement of a host because he does not really know what it is that a local involvement network is meant to do. In particular, he is not clear how their role is different from that of the local authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee or indeed, how it might be different from the sort of thing they and the Primary Care Trust already fund the local voluntary organisation health and social care network to do. How would you explain to him what it is that the LINK is there to do? How would you describe the difference between the role of LINKs and the role of the OSC? If you felt you or he needed further help on this, where would you seek to find it – including finding any learning and development support for yourself as a council member? Why might you not be the right person to talk to him about this subject in depth?

Notes on follow-up and resources:

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If you would like to know more about the work of the iNvolvement Network and its members, email us on [info@involvementnetwork.org](mailto:info@involvementnetwork.org) or speak to one of our facilitators on the day.

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***iN Scenario 2*** As a member of the executive, you are considering a proposal for a *substantial* shift of services from a local hospital to an intermediate care team run jointly by your local authority and the primary care trust. The social services manager in charge, who is new to your borough, looks blank when you suggest that the matter should be referred both to the local involvement network and to overview and scrutiny.

How would you explain to the manager why it may be a) necessary and b) helpful to find out, and take into account, the views of service users and the wider public on major plans and proposals? How would you seek to ensure that in future, the LINK and scrutiny are notified of such proposed changes? How would you propose to deal with any potential conflict of interest of the Host itself (who might hold a social services contract and could be tempted to seek to unduly influence the LINK) or any LINKs participants who might also be holding contracts from Social Services (and who might be tempted to use their position to unduly influence the award of the contract)?

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***iN Scenario 3.*** The Local Involvement Network in your area has been running for almost a year now, and things are not going well. Accusations and counter-accusations are flying around in the local press. The local authority manager who monitors the performance of the host has threatened to take away the contract because in his view the local involvement network, though up and running, has not done enough. The chief executive of the host, however, reckons they have done all that can be expected, given the length of time it takes to set up a new system. In her view, the host is being unfairly targeted because the LINK has criticised a day centre run by local authority social services.

At a meeting of an overview and scrutiny panel on primary care, which you are attending, the LINK chair is also present, and seems keen to find a way forward. Have you any ideas on how to ensure that the matter is handled fairly, and public confidence in the system for involvement restored as far as possible? Could the risk of such a situation have been reduced, and if so how?

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***iN Scenario 4***      There is a small local far-right group who have had some success in infiltrating community groups and residents' associations. It is extremely racist and homophobic. You and several other councillors and officers are concerned that its members have become active in the local LINK, and are busy promoting their policies, including cuts to NHS care for those they consider unworthy. Others in the LINK, and some host staff members, have told you that they are being harassed, but the host manager is not sure what she can do.

Can you suggest how the system could have been designed to reduce the chance of such problems arising? What might be done to make things better now?

Notes on follow-up and resources

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