



## NEWS RELEASE

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# **COMMUNITY REGENERATION AGENCY WINS PATIENT INVOLVEMENT CONTRACT**

BCHG (Black Country Housing Group) has won a £175,000 contract to supply Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council with a local health network.

The community regeneration agency beat off stiff competition to win the contract to launch the Your Local Involvement Network (LINK) service. The service will provide a voice for people of Sandwell, in the West Midlands, in the planning, commissioning and provision of health and social care services.

On 1 April legislation the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act came into force establishing LINKs. LINKs replace Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPIs) together with the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH).

LINKs is one of a number of government initiatives that aim to help improve the care and support people receive. Individuals and representatives from the local community and the voluntary sector can have their say about what they want and see improvement across a range of health and social care services.

This will include, GPs, hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, opticians and public and private social care services. Membership of the LINK will be open to both individual people and organisations.

Elemay Parkes, *Director of Community Regeneration* at BCHG, said: "We are delighted to support this new era of patient and public involvement in Sandwell and are committed to providing a first class service to the people of the borough.

"Our experience of community involvement means we will ensure we deliver the best service possible."

BCHG will now embark on a series of consultations to find out what people want from the LINK and how they would like to get involved.

Sandwell Council's *Director of Adult Services and Health* Andrea Pope-Smith said: "We aim to provide our customers with the best possible services we can. LINKs will help us meet our aims by encouraging a greater number of local people to be involved in the planning and delivery of the services they receive."

BCHG previously ran the patient forums in the area as part of a Patient and Public Involvement in Health project.

Some of the work carried out included working with partners to ensure patients could claim back car parking fees, helping shape hospital facilities in the next decade, and lobbying for a buggy to transport residents from an X-ray department to the outpatients,

Sandwell PCT Forum and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust PPI Forum were heavily involved in the "Towards 2010" consultation over the proposed future shape of health and hospital facilities across Sandwell and the heart of Birmingham PCT areas.

## **ENDS**

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Note to Editors:

**Black Country Housing Group Ltd is a community regeneration agency with housing at our heart, working in Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.**

**The Group specialises in urban renewal, economic and social regeneration, through building new affordable homes, providing care and health services to communities and supporting social enterprise and financial inclusion.**

**It is landlord to tenants in more than 1500 homes and has over 30 years experience in providing quality homes and support services for families, couples, single people, older people and those with special needs.**

**The Group has established an innovative environmental consultancy service, e<sup>2</sup>S, which advises on sustainability issues for landlords, house builders and public sector organisations.**

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