



County Durham LINK Procedure for Scoring Work Plan Issues

Introduction

County Durham LINK has decided that they will employ a scoring system to prioritise the issues that are to be considered by the LINK. This system is to ensure that all members of the LINK have an equal say and that there is a recorded process that can evidence that work plan issues have been prioritised fairly.

This procedure is to support the process, although it has been agreed that County Durham LINK will have the option to disregard this process when a specific issue arises that proves to be really important/vital for the LINK to become involved with.

Decision Making Process

This scoring system is designed to give a framework through which work plan issues can be considered.

The table below outlines the criteria that have been agreed by County Durham LINK Management Committee and gives a comprehensive scoring system, along with definitions of the scoring criteria:

Criteria	Definition	Score
1. Number of individuals affected	Individuals living or working in County Durham.	10% + of the County's population = 5 points Between 10% and 5% of the County's population = 3 points Between 1% and 5% of the County's population = 1 point Below 1% of the County's population = 0 points

Criteria	Definition	Score
2. Equality and Diversity	Has a greater impact on people who are from an identifiable race/ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability or sexual orientation, than on the population as a whole	The issue has had a specific detrimental impact for individuals from one of the special interest groups = 10 points The issue has been identified as having a detrimental impact but no evidence of an actual incident has been raised = 5 points The issue might have a detrimental impact but this has not been specified = 3 point No detrimental impact can be foreseen = 0 points
3. Mortality	The issue has caused an increase in the rate of mortality for the particular service	Over 50% increase in mortality = 5 points Under 50% and over 25% increase in mortality = 3 points Under 25% but over 10% increase in mortality = 1 point Less than 10% increase in mortality = 0 points
4. Quality of life	The issue has an impact on a significant number of individuals that changes how they live/their lives	Has a permanent and significant impact on how individuals live/their lives = 5 points The issue has a significant and long-term impact = 3 points The issue has a permanent but not significant impact = 1 point The issue has no impact on quality of life = 0 points
5. Impact on wider community	The issue has an identifiable impact beyond the individual service user and their immediate social group	The issue has a direct and significant impact on others in the community = 5 points The issue has an indirect but significant impact on a large number of people in the community = 3 points The issue has an indirect but significant impact on a small group in the community = 1 point The issue has an insignificant or no impact on the wider community = 0 points

Criteria	Definition	Score
6. Cost effectiveness	The work has a clearly defined outcome/impact and the amount of time and resources needed to reach the outcome are proportionate to the outcome	<p>The work is likely to have a significant impact and requires little time or resources = 10 points</p> <p>The work is likely to have a significant impact and will take a reasonable amount of time and resources = 5 points</p> <p>The work is likely to have a significant impact and will take more than a reasonable amount of time and resources = 3 points</p> <p>The work is unlikely to produce results but if it does then the impact would be significant, and the time and resources necessary are reasonable = 3 points</p> <p>The work is unlikely to produce results, but if it does then the impact would be significant, and it would take an unreasonable amount of time and resources = 1 point</p> <p>The work has no clearly defined outcome/impact = 0 points</p>
7. National Agenda	The issue is part of a wider national, regional or local issue that is currently being explored	<p>The issue aligns with a current national, regional or local strategy = 5 points</p> <p>The issue is an on-going national or local issue = 3 points</p> <p>The issue has a current high profile with local or national media = 2 points</p> <p>The issue has no context other than the immediate group it impacts on = 1 points</p>
8. County Durham LINK members	The issue is considered to be important to LINK members	<p>20% + of the LINK's membership = 10 points</p> <p>Between 10% and 20% of the LINK's membership = 5 points</p> <p>Between 5% and 10% of the LINK's membership = 3 points</p> <p>Below 5% of the LINK's membership = 1 points</p>

Scoring process

The process for scoring the issues would be for a report to be drawn up providing factual information about the issue in relation to each criteria. If factual information is not available then it would be necessary for the Management Committee to use an amount of discretion to give the criteria a score. The lack of any certainty should reduce the score, but an issue should not be dismissed for the lack of information around a single criteria. If there is not factual information available linked to the issue then it would not be appropriate for the Management Committee to consider the issue.

Setting Priorities

The nature of the different criteria is such that few issues will score towards the higher end of the total possible score. The list of issues in Criteria 1 – 5 are to some extent mutually exclusive, for example if an issue impacts on one of the equality groups then it is not going to score highly on the total population. This is not true of all of the sections in Criteria 1 – 5 but it seems unlikely that many issues will score highly in all of these areas. The way the scoring has been laid out means that there isn't a great deal of discretion that could be exercised under Criteria 1 - 5, which might suggest that the assessment of this could be a paper exercise.

As far as Criteria 6 and 7 are concerned, this is where there is likely to be more opportunity for debate. The different levels within the scoring framework are more arbitrary and so it will be more open to interpretation. It could therefore be argued that these criteria should be given a higher weighting, but this will have to be considered once this system has been tested.

It is suggested that any issue scoring less than 5 is not taken any further as it does not have sufficient impact to warrant further work. Beyond this it would be a matter of taking the average scores for all of the issues and using this to generate a priority list with the issue with the highest score being given the highest priority.

As the system develops it may be necessary to alter the weighting of particular issues in order to ensure fairness in the decision making process.

The only difficulty in applying this system is that it is based on the assumption that all of the issues will be presented at the same time, and this is unlikely to be the case. It is suggested that this scoring system be used to set and review 6/12 month work plans, and that these plans allow for additional issues to be raised in that period. This would have to be done with sufficient time to progress issues that needed more urgent attention, but this will be refined as the processes for identifying issues are clarified and the overall system is bedded in.