

Engagement and Communications Strategy

2019 – 2022

Our vision: Improving people's lives in St Helens, together, by tackling the challenge of cost and demand

In St Helens we are committed to carrying out meaningful engagement and communicating effectively with our staff, stakeholders and the local community ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to get involved and have their say.

This engagement and communications strategy outlines how we will ensure that staff, local communities and key stakeholders are able to help shape local health and social care services.

Within St Helens Integrated People's services we have a robust communications and engagement plan to ensure that all staff receive clear and consistent messages and are engaged with effectively around the work we do and the difference we have made.



To show our commitment to the local community we have a lay member for patient and public involvement who sits on a number of committees to ensure the patient's voice is heard.

S O'Brien

Sarah O'Brien

CCG Accountable Officer/ Strategic Director for People's Services

As the Patient and Public Involvement Lay Member, my role is to ensure that, in all aspects of the CCG's business the public voice of the local population is heard, fully represented and that opportunities are created and protected for patient and public empowerment in the work of the CCG. In particular, this will ensure that:

- The views of our patients and public are heard and their expectations are understood and met as appropriate;
- the CCG builds and maintains an effective relationship with Healthwatch, acting as a key link to the voluntary sector and community groups/forums within St Helens and draws on existing patient and public engagement and involvement expertise; and
- The CCG has appropriate arrangements in place to secure public and patient involvement and engagement in an effective, timely and representative way to feedback recommendations from patients, carers and the public



Through the delivery of this strategy our community, patients, stakeholders, member practices and employees will be both kept informed in the work of the CCG and given the opportunity to influence it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Weights'.

Mark Weights

Patient and Public Lay Member

1.0 Who we are

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 St Helens Integrated Peoples Service (SHIPS)
- 1.3 Our Vision
- 1.4 Our Values
- 1.5 Our Duty
- 1.6 Equality and Diversity
- 1.7 Our Audiences and Stakeholders

2.0 What is Engagement and Communications and why is it important

- 2.1 Communications
- 2.2 Engagement and Involvement
- 2.3 How we enable patient/public engagement and Involvement
- 2.4 Messaging
- 2.5 Campaigns

3.0 Membership Communications and Engagement

- 3.1 Our Membership
- 3.2 Membership Communications and Engagement channels
- 3.3 Membership Engagement Principles
- 3.4 Membership Communications Principles

4.0 Patient / Public Engagement and Involvement

- 4.1 Improvement and Assessment Framework
- 4.2 Patient and Community Engagement Indicator
- 4.3 Listening and learning

5.0 Digital Communications and Engagement

- 5.1 The Benefits of digital Communication
- 5.2 Plan for digital communications
- 5.3 Website
- 5.4 Social Media
- 5.5 Social Marketing

6.0 Reputation Management

- 6.1 Public Relations

- 6.2 Local Media
- 6.3 NHS Brand
- 6.4 Crisis Management

7.0 Health and Social Care is Changing

- 7.1 St Helens Cares
- 7.2 St Helens Cares Engagement Group
- 7.3 St Helens cares Brand

8.0 Established patient/ public groups

- 8.1 Patient Experience and Involvement Group
- 8.2 Patient Participation Group
- 8.3 Stakeholder Forum
- 8.4 Children's and Young people Network

9.0 Political Communications and Engagement

- 9.1 Public Affairs
- 9.2 Parliamentary Briefings

10.0 Statutory Duties

- 10.1 Governing Bodies
- 10.2 Primary Care Committee
- 10.3 Annual Report
- 10.4 Annual General Meeting
- 10.5 Freedom of Information

11.0 Internal Communications and Engagement

- 11.1 Importance of Internal Communications and Engagement
- 11.2 Internal Channels
- 11.3 Internal Engagement Principles
- 11.4 Internal Communications Principles

12.0 Evaluation and Feedback

- 12.1 Evaluation
- 12.2 Feedback from our Stakeholders

13.0 Governance and Accountability

- 13.1 Working arrangements and reporting

Executive Summary

Purpose of this Strategy

This communication and engagement strategy is designed to support the CCG to realise its objectives and achieve its vision. It sets out our approach to communications and engagement, both within the CCG and externally with our many stakeholders. It also sets out how we will:

- Communicate effectively with our members
- Help build public confidence in and manage the reputation of the St Helens CCG and St Helens Cares
- Develop close working relationships with our stakeholders, which will allow them meaningful opportunities to influence decision making.

Strategy Aims

Raise Awareness and understanding: Raise awareness of the existence of NHS St Helens CCG and what we do

Build Reputation: Raise the profile of NHS St Helens CCG, ensuring we are a 'recognisable face' with NHS St Helens.

Develop Stakeholder Buy-in: Ensure all stakeholders feel a sense of ownership and pride towards NHS St Helens CCG.

Listen to Stakeholders: Ensure the public/patient voice really is at the centre of all business decisions and that there are appropriate structures in place for all stakeholders to feedback comments, questions, criticisms or concerns

Manage Expectations: Confirm that some things won't change quickly – although over time the CCG will bring about continuous improvements that benefit communities. Remind stakeholders of the limitations to resources with respect to communications and engagement

Provide Co-ordination and Consistency: Ensure that organisational key messages are interlinked into all messages and all partnership communications and engagement activities are integrated into our work wherever possible

Integrate Communications and Engagement: Communications and engagement should be at the heart of all business decisions and the ethos of commitment to good communications and engagement should therefore be the responsibility of all CCG stakeholders, not just that of the communications and engagement team.

1.0 Who we are

1.1 Introduction

NHS St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for commissioning (or 'buying') health and care services for the local community, using our budget of around £226.3 million to ensure high quality, sustainable healthcare that meets the needs of our population of 197,000.

The CCG is committed to working with our colleagues at the local authority and our local acute, community and mental health trusts to make a difference and improve the health of local people.

We are a membership organisation comprised of 34 GP practices. We cover the geographical area of St Helens which includes the areas of Sutton, Town Centre, Earlestown, Rainhill, Eccleston, Clock Face, Haydock, Billinge, Rainford and Newton-le-Willows.

1.2 St Helens Integrated Peoples Services (SHIPS)

The CCG is fully integrated with the People's Service directorate within the local authority. As part of this integration a joint role has been developed - the CCG's Accountable Officer is also the Strategic Director of People's Services to lead the integrated team to ensure health and social care are fully aligned and deliver the best services for our community.

SHIPS have set a number of priorities as a way of measuring our success by 2021:

- We will support a higher proportion of our people to stay well in their own community
- We will increase the number of children and families receiving early help and reduce the numbers requiring statutory intervention
- By school heads and the council working in partnership, every child will attend a 'good' school and the gap between vulnerable students and their peers will be decreased
- We will improve healthy life expectancy and decrease the gap between the best and worst wards for healthy weight, physical activity, wellbeing and community support
- We will improve the lives of people experiencing poor mental health
- We will have a financially sustainable medium term integrated budget strategy without putting the population of the borough at risk

1.3 Our Vision

In St Helens, our People's Board was established to bring together the necessary membership, responsibilities and policy intention of the St Helens Health and Wellbeing Board and 'Safer St Helens', the local Community Safety Partnership. The membership of both groups was similar and both had a cross-over focus on some issues such as alcohol. The St Helens People's Board creates a borough based partnership to collectively achieve our vision:

Improving the lives of people in St Helens, together, by tackling the challenge of cost and demand.

This contributes to four key objectives for the borough as listed below and has a particular focus on the development of a sustainable health and social care (people's services) system;

- Raising ambition and achieving aspirations
- Developing a sustainable health and social care system
- Growing the economy
- Being Connected.

1.4 Our Values

It is important to define the values that guide the way we work, working with our community, staff and member practices; the CCG values are outlined below.

- Integrity
- Compassion and respect
- Working together
- Making a difference every day.

These core values support our vision, shape our organisational culture and reflect how we want our people to behave. They are the essence of our identity and guide us in all decisions that are made.

Communications has an important role to play in making sure our community, staff and GP members recognise and understand our values and appreciate what behaviours they need to adopt to realise these values. All messages cascaded by the CCG should (wherever possible) refer back to our values. Our stakeholders should also be able to recognise these values in the way we interact and work with them.

1.5 Our Duty

NHS commissioning organisations have a legal duty under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended) to ‘make arrangements’ to involve the public in the commissioning of services for NHS patients (‘the public involvement duty’).

For CCGs this duty is outlined in Section 14Z2 of the Act and for NHS England the duty is outlined in Section 13Q. To fulfil the public involvement duty, the arrangements must provide for the public to be involved in:

- a) The planning of services
- b) The development and consideration of proposals for changes which, if implemented, would have an impact on services
- c) Decisions which, when implemented, would have an impact on services.

1.6 Equality and Diversity

The NHS has clear values and principles about equality and fairness, as set out in the NHS Constitution. In St Helens we ensure that whenever people need

healthcare, they not only have the right to access it but also to be treated fairly and not to be discriminated against.

As well as working with services to ensure that people with protected characteristics (defined by Equality Act 2010) are not discriminated against, we actively carry out targeted engagement to ensure that their voices are heard and their experiences are captured and acted upon. We also ensure that we communicate and engage with them in the most appropriate way using a variety of engagement methods and language and formats suitable for them.

1.7 Our Audiences and Stakeholders

We have many stakeholders who we must communicate with, listen to, engage and work with. Our key audiences and stakeholders include:

- Our GP membership – the member practices and practice staff
- Local community
- Patient representatives and groups
- Voluntary and community sector organisations/representatives
- Healthwatch St Helens
- St Helens Cares Partner organisations
- Our staff
- Local elected members
- Press and media

Building supportive and trusting relationships with our key stakeholders is critical to our success. It is crucial to understand who our key stakeholders are and their importance to the delivery of our vision and priorities.

We also work closely with organisations which have similar objectives to help address gaps, reduce duplication, successfully implement integration and build sustainable, high-quality services. By working in partnership, we will bring together support for pressing health issues more effectively promote the reputation of the NHS.

2.0 What is Communications and Engagement and why is it important?

Communication and engagement is more than an exchange of information. It achieves organisational credibility, promotes reputation and reassures people in times of crisis. It involves two-way written, verbal and non-verbal communication but also involves managing relationships. It is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about delivering messages. Good and bad communication or the decision to communicate (or not) can have a serious impact on public confidence, staff morale and the reputation of the organisation and brand.

Our vision is to commission high quality services to enable people to live longer and healthier lives. The only way we can do this is by putting the people of St Helens at the heart of all of our communications and engagement activities. This involves working with, talking to, listening and learning from our public, patients, families and

carers to fully understand what matters to them and improve things in response to their views and needs.

Similarly, greater emphasis needs to be placed upon equipping officers, GP members and other services who have regular contact with the people of St Helens to create a well-informed network who are capable of passing on our messages effectively. Effective communication and engagement has the power to manage, motivate, influence, explain and create conditions for change.

2.1 Communications

Communications is a tool used to share information and deliver key messages to the local community and stakeholders. Communications can be delivered in a number of formats to suit the audience such as email, newsletter etc. Communication is also used as a way of gaining feedback from our community on the services we commission.

When developing messages, the Communications team follow the principles of the 7 Cs:

- Clear (what is the purpose and goal of the message? Is there a call to action?)
- Concise (is the message straight to the point and brief?)
- Concrete (is the message solid? Will all promises definitely be delivered upon?)
- Correct (is the message error free? Are we using the best channels for the audience?)
- Coherent (is the message easy to understand by all?)
- Complete (is there anything missing from the message? Can we pre-empt what questions or issues may arise from the message?)
- Courteous (is the message friendly, open and honest? Does it empathise with the audience's needs?).

2.2 Engagement and Involvement

Engagement and involvement refers to giving people the opportunity to shape and influence the commissioning and delivery of local health and social care. It is vital to ensure that local people's voices are heard and their thoughts and experiences are taken into consideration i.e. 'no decision about me without me'.

Listening to our local community is key. Capturing and sharing patient experiences and stories provide us with insight and influence decision making. This gives us the opportunity to achieve a greater understanding of the needs of our community and to buy the services that our communities really need.

When undertaking engagement and involvement activity, the team work towards the following engagement principles. They ensure that all processes:

- Make a difference (not tokenistic)
- Are transparent and are delivered with integrity

- Involve the right number of participants, are fit for purpose and are tailored to their needs
- Are an integral part of the mainstream commissioning and planning process
- Are owned by all CCG colleagues and stakeholders
- Make clear from the start what is 'on offer' (i.e. what can and cannot be influenced, how the results will be used and what feedback will be given)
- Involve people at the earliest stages in the planning, not just consulting them once decisions are made
- Appreciate that people, communities may wish to engage at different levels and some may not wish to become fully involved
- Ensure participants are kept informed of what changes occurred as a result of their input
- Ensure evaluation, monitoring and feedback are built into plans at the outset.

2.3 How we enable patient/public engagement and Involvement

Effective communication, engagement and involvement of patients and the public in the work of the CCG is the day-to-day responsibility of all our staff and members. However, to support the effective communication, engagement and involvement of patients and the public (and wider stakeholders) across the organisation and its programmes of work, we have a small dedicated communications and engagement team

The communications and engagement team are responsible for monitoring, delivering, evaluating and reporting on communications and engagement activity and how successful it has been in delivering the organisation's objectives.

They have a key role in supporting others within the organisation to maximise the effectiveness of their communications and engagement with stakeholders.

This organisation-wide communications and engagement strategy is underpinned by programme and project-level communications and engagement planning for each of CCG's priority programmes as well as the wider work of St Helens Cares.

Patients and the public are encouraged and supported to get involved with the work of the CCG and its areas of work. This involvement can either be in an patient advisory capacity - through invitation to specific meetings, workshops or events led by programme and clinical leads, or through regular input to specific 'task and finish' work at project level.

2.4 Messaging

Consistent messaging gives a clear voice to the organisation. Our overarching key messages are:

- We are clinically-led, by local GPs, and work together to improve the health of the people of St Helens
- We plan and buy high-quality healthcare services for the people of St Helens

- We work with our patients to help prevent them becoming ill and support them to live longer, better quality lives
- We are committed to working with our colleagues across the NHS, social care and third sector to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of St Helens
- We continually work hard to safeguard the quality of healthcare services
- We always encourage feedback from local people and will act on it wherever possible
- We make our best efforts to use the funding and resources we have wisely to ensure we achieve value for money.

2.5 Campaigns

The CCG will continue to develop and support national and local campaigns to deliver consistent messages across our community such as flu campaigns, be clear on cancer campaigns. We also work with neighbouring CCGs and our providers to develop a local campaign across the Mid Mersey footprint – the campaign ‘Let’s Do It Together’ was developed to highlight to our local communities the need for the appropriate use of NHS services across Cheshire and Merseyside as well as what other services are available.

3.0 Membership Communications and Engagement

3.1 Our Membership

As a membership organisation, how we communicate with our 34 GP member practices is a key part of everything we do. An effective CCG must work with its membership and be committed to the same vision and to delivering shared objectives.

To achieve this, two way communications is critical to ensure GP member practices feel confident that they are able to work with us to develop plans and take ownership of commissioning.

3.2 Membership Communications and Engagement channels

Commissioning Bulletin – Our fortnightly Commissioning bulletin is published and distributed to all GP Practice staff via email. This bulletin is also uploaded onto the CCG. The bulletin provides important updates in terms of commissioning decisions as well as key information and updates from partner organisations e.g. change to service number, pathways etc.

Intranet – The intranet is specifically for CCG staff and GP members. It contains a range of information including podcasts, vlogs, and details of events, policy updates and resources to support GP practices.

Podcast – The GP podcast was introduced to keep members up to date on key areas of work of the CCG and how they can get involved. The podcast is introduced by the CCG’s Accountable Officer and included has updates from other CCG staff and GP leads and Governing Body members. The podcast is then uploaded the Intranet

Weekly Update Vlog – The CCG’s Accountable Officer produces a weekly update video which specifically looks back at her week and provides updates relevant to staff and GP member practices

GP Members Council – These meetings bring together senior Clinical Commissioning /staff with GP representation from all practices across St Helens

3.3 Membership Engagement Principles

There are a variety of ways in which our members are engaged with CCG business. These include our regular GP Forum and GP Members Council; ad-hoc topic specific events; 360 degree GP partner survey; and one to one practice visits with CCG senior leaders. It is vital that our members fully appreciate that the CCG is theirs, that the success of the organisation is in their gift and then subsequently take full ownership of it.

As with all membership organisations, there needs to be ongoing monitoring of the feelings and attitudes of members during engagement activities to assess whether attitudes are neutral, friendly, hostile or apathetic. We then adopt our approach accordingly. We know that our GPs are more likely to get and stay involved if they can clearly see how the CCG’s work will benefit them and consequently what will improve.

3.4 Membership Communications Principles

In order for each of our GP members to fully appreciate what potential value the CCG could bring to them (both at practice level and as an individual clinician), they must at first fully understand what the organisation actually is, its objectives and their own personal role within the system. By working collectively as members of one commissioning organisation, the GPs have considerably greater power than should they commission / provide independently.

Strong membership communications is essential for building robust and meaningful relationships between our GP community and the officers working on their behalf. The GPs must recognise that the CCG belongs to them and is therefore their organisation if they are to take a sense of ownership towards it. Successful membership communications will ensure that we create one unified primary care health economy, sharing local and clinical knowledge and skills and all working for the greater good, i.e. to ensure the people of NHS St Helens live longer, healthier lives.

In order to fit alongside their busy daily schedules, the CCG recognises that member communications must be succinct, relevant and not disseminated in a ‘scatter-gun’ approach. A commitment has been made to members that non-urgent, ad-hoc messages will be published collectively by a fortnightly commissioning bulletin. Alongside this digital tactic, the communications team also provide GP practices with printed communications when relevant.

4.0 Patient/ Public engagement and involvement

4.1 Improvement and Assessment Framework

NHS England has developed a new approach to the assessment of patient and public participation as part of the statutory annual assessment of performance.

The 'Patient and Community Engagement Indicator' is a standalone indicator within the Improvement and Assessment Framework (IAF). The assessment will therefore, form part of the overall IAF assessment for CCGs.

The domains and criteria within the 'Patient and Community Engagement Indicators' include:

- A. Governance
- B. Annual Reporting
- C. Day to Day Practice
- D. Feedback and Evaluation
- E. Equalities and Health Inequalities.

4.2 Public Consultation

Where any of the CCG's plans or proposals represents a substantial development or variation of service, we notify the local authority via the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and formally consult with local people and wider stakeholders.

We undertake equality analysis in line with the Equality Act 2010 (and section 149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty) and pay due regard to the Gunning Principles in our approach to consultation by;

- Consulting when proposals are at a formative stage
- Clearly outlining proposals and the reasons for them so local people can understand the changes
- Allowing adequate time for consideration and response
- Taking responses into account and ensuring they inform decision making.

Communication and engagement is vital to carrying out effective public consultation activity and therefore, each consultation carried out by the CCG will be supported by a detailed communication and engagement plan.

4.3 Listening and learning

We want to understand the needs of our communities and the priorities for reducing health inequalities in our population. We need to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society have a voice and that we listen to their experiences to ensure that they are able to access appropriate care, services and support to help bring about improvements in their health and wellbeing.

We want patients and the public to know that we listen to them and design local healthcare with them, not just for them. In order to achieve this, we need to appropriately and effectively involve patients and the public and record all feedback to help inform our commissioning.

The CCG triangulates and analyses feedback, insight and intelligence provided by patients and the public via communication and engagement activity.

This review of evidence from patient and public feedback is used as commissioning intelligence to help develop programme and project plans that address the needs identified and also to target future communication and engagement activity. Patient experience information is gathered from a range of sources, including:

Local NHS Providers - Patient feedback from providers who have direct contact with patients is crucial to the commissioning process. We collect results from both local and national patient satisfaction surveys.

Local GP Practices - Results from the annual national GP patient satisfaction surveys provide us with information about how satisfied local people are with their local GP Practice.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints - Complaints and PALS information provides us with a valuable insight into how patients experience local services. We look closely at the themes from complaints, concerns, enquiries and compliments. Complaints, in particular, can provide powerful lessons for improving local services.

Consultations - When carrying out our public consultations, we take the opportunity to listen to peoples' experiences of care, and ensure we record and use them to improve Health and Social Care services.

Talkfest - Feedback from those who attend our Talkfest public engagement events provides us with valuable data on patient experience.

Patient Stories - Regular feedback from patients is vital to service redesign and development. We take the time to meet with patients and carers, listen to their stories, take careful notes and learn from these.

Focus Groups / Drop in sessions - We invite local people to attend focus groups / drop in sessions where they can share their patient experiences and meet others in similar positions to themselves.

Healthwatch St Helens - We work closely with our local Healthwatch, who share feedback they have collated about local patient experiences. This gives us a rich source of patient feedback which is then presented to our patient experience and Involvement Group, reviewed, analysed and added to our patient experience reporting module.

Friends and Family Test - The aim of this test is to provide all NHS patients and carers with an opportunity to give us feedback using a simple question, that is,

would you recommend this service to your friends and family? We use this to help make service improvements.

Patient Websites - People are increasingly turning to websites to report on their patient experiences, and we regularly monitor these and add them to our patient data repository. Of particular note is the feedback posted on the NHS Choices website and Patient Opinion websites. Feedback posted on social media sites such as Twitter and Face book are also regularly checked for patient feedback on local services.

5.0 Digital communications and engagement

5.1 The benefits of digital communications

We recognise the need to continually develop and build new ways of communicating and engaging with our stakeholders to help develop strong, mutually beneficial relationships. It is important that we communicate with people in the way that is most convenient and accessible for them, in the way which makes it easiest for them to engage and respond.

Using a multimedia approach will enable us to:

- Reach a wider audience
- Help to improve health and local healthcare through targeted
- Encourage people to share our news to enhance our reach
- Engage with our stakeholders and ensure that we are approachable. The informal nature of social media encourages more people to have a conversation with us, challenge us or make their own views known.

5.2 Our plan for digital communications

We will effectively manage our digital media communication methods by linking them to our strategic objectives. Our main objectives will be to:

- Build a strong community of stakeholders online
- Engage stakeholders in a two-way conversation about our work
- Encourage stakeholders to support our work
- Share health and social care messages
- Encourage staff and members to support promote and take part in our online activities.

5.3 Website

Increasingly, people use the internet to seek information about an organisation, where to obtain help and advice and how to access services. Equally websites are being used more as a means of providing feedback. As an organisation we acknowledge the importance of having a fit for purpose website.

The CCG has a quality, easy to navigate website and is accessible to the whole the

community. We will also ensure the website is maintained regularly and all information is up to date with latest policies, procedures as well as engagement and involvement opportunities. The CCG also links to other relevant websites to ensure information regarding local services are easy accessible and to keep the community up to date on developments within health and social care for example St Helens Cares.

5.4 Social Media

We recognise the increasing importance of social media as a way to engage and communicate with our community and stakeholders. We use popular social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, blogs and vlogs. These platforms allow us to communicate our key messages, engage with the community on our work, and obtain feedback from patients and the public as well as promoting engagement opportunities.

The nature of social media makes it responsive and constantly adapting to its environment which can provide a good opportunity for excellent two-way engagement and communications.

We will trial the use of other social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram to assess their effectiveness too – with the aim of further expanding our social media platforms and reach.

5.5 Social Marketing

Although we do not actively develop our own social marketing campaigns, we access regionally and nationally developed campaigns, such as ‘Be Clear on Cancer’. We also work with our local public health team and neighbouring CCGs and trusts to develop joint campaigns across our local areas to ensure consistent messages.

6.0 Reputation management

6.1 Public relations

Every organisation, no matter how large or small, relies on its reputation for success. If we establish and maintain a good reputation as an NHS organisation, then our patients will feel confident that we are doing the best job on their behalf and will be more likely to work with us.

One role of the communications and engagement team is to help protect and enhance the reputation of the NHS in St Helens by promoting the work the CCG does.

This can be achieved through effective public relations and media approach to:

- Raise the profile of the CCG
- Strengthen relationships with GP member practices and partner organisations by showcasing how the clinical commissioning group is

- making a difference
- Tell the story of health and social care in St Helens – sharing our successes

6.2 Local media

How the local media perceive and portray us can be highly influential in forming public and other stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation's credibility and standards. Careful handling of all media enquiries and identifying proactive media opportunities to talk about the improvements we have made to patient care will help us to build a mutually supportive relationship.

6.3 NHS Brand

Effective management of our identity and corporate house style is an important element in protecting the organisation's reputation and in ensuring that our vision and values are clearly visible within all our communications.

We work with staff to ensure that the brand and the corporate house style are applied appropriately at all times. To support staff with this, the communications team have developed a series of corporate templates and guidelines about how the NHS and corporate identity should be applied.

6.4 Crisis management

The provision of healthcare is, by its very nature, risky. Incidents can occur which can quickly become a focus for the media with the potential of impacting on the reputation of the CCG. Often these can spring up without warning and require prompt, careful and effective communication management to provide the public with accurate information and reassurance – as well as limiting reputational damage. For all crisis management situations, an appropriate spokesperson will be identified and fully supported by the communications and engagement team.

7.0 Health and Social Care is Changing

7.1 St Helens Cares

We are changing the way that healthcare and social care services are organised in St Helens. Moving forward, clinicians, managers and planners will work together and will engage with patients, the public and staff to develop plans for a better healthcare and social care system for St Helens residents.

We aim to ensure that this local system of care will be organised in the most effective way to provide safe, effective, person centered and sustainable care to meet the current and future needs of our population. This will also support the vision of the CCG and the People's Board which is *improving people's lives together, by tackling the challenge of cost and demand*.

The local care system, St Helens Cares, is being developed through locality working. This will see a core team of multidisciplinary health care and social care

clinical and managerial staff from across St Helens working collaboratively. They will work in partnership with our local hospital providers, the ambulance service, local police and fire services, community and voluntary services, the local housing trust and education providers. They will engage with the full range of people in an open, transparent and accessible way and use their feedback to support the implementation of the transformational St Helens Cares Clinical & Support Strategy.

7.2 St Helens Cares Communications and Engagement Group

To support the work of the wider St Helens Cares work, a communications and engagement group has been established to bring together all organisations to support the delivery of this work across their local communities and staff.

7.3 St Helens Cares Brand

The St Helens Cares branding guidelines have been produced to support all organisations on the effective use across the local care system. As this work evolves, work will continue across the St Helens Cares communications and engagement group to further develop the branding.



8.0 Established patient / public groups

8.1 Patient Experience and Involvement Group

The Patient Experience and Involvement Group is a sub group which reports directly to the CCG's Quality Committee, in line with the quality strategy. The group supports and advises on borough-wide engagement, consultation and communication activity and initiatives relevant to the delivery of the CCG's Commissioning Strategy and St Helens Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Members of the PEIG promote engagement and consultation work through their groups, in line with the communications and engagement strategy. This enables the CCG to ensure that they are exhausting all channels of communication and engagement and are able to reach seldom heard or vulnerable groups.

A large part of the PEIGs role is to make sure that the CCG follows their consultation and engagement processes which have been developed alongside commissioners. The PEIG also uses the best practice consultation timeline to refer to when reviewing proposals.

8.2 Patient Participation Group Forum

We host a PPG Forum bringing together patients and representatives from each of the 34 GP member practices. The group is used as a two way communication tool between the CCG and practices to ensure patients are up to date on development within the CCG and primary care as well as us finding out what happening within our primary care services.

The forum will also allow us to involve patients and members of the public in the review, development and planning of services commissioned by NHS St Helens CCG and to influence the wider development of health and wellbeing services in St Helens.

8.3 Stakeholder Reference Forum

The Stakeholder Reference Forum (SRF) has been established to build and sustain meaningful engagement with people across all communities within St Helens, enabling them to have a voice in improving their health and in shaping services as part of St Helens Cares. As such, the SRF will play a key role in providing feedback to the St Helens Cares Provider Board and the St Helens Cares Executive Board, as well as other governance groups within St Helens Cares, on proposals for service change.

This Forum will be made up of patients, public and carers, and representatives from groups and organisations that represent them or that have an interest in this area. They will offer their perspectives on how St Helens Cares can inform and engage with people on its programmes of work.

We firmly believe that to be properly engaged, people must feel included and valued. Our Stakeholder Reference Forum will promote a culture where inclusiveness is our baseline not an initiative. We will be diverse in age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, and perspective and we will create an environment where everyone, from any background, can participate fully in our work.

To this end, the aims of this Forum will be to:

- Act as a sounding board for testing early plans, and information materials
- Share insights to influence / inform areas requiring redesign
- Offer perspectives on how individual work programmes can engage more widely with people
- Advise on the development of information for wider public use
- Strengthen and play a significant role in wider public communication.

This Forum does not supersede any individual organisation's legal duties to undertake public and patient involvement as may be required, although it can be used as one option to discharge and support such involvement duties as appropriate.

8.4 Children's and Young People's Participation Network

This network was established to provide an opportunity for participation leads from range of services to share resources, opportunities and best practice in respect of the voice of the child and to improve standards of participation across the borough. This group will capture feedback / experiences triangulate and trends identified and feedback to health and social care providers.

9.0 Political Communications and Engagement

9.1 Public affairs

It is important to understand the political landscape, both locally and nationally, and work within that to deliver the best healthcare possible for the people of St Helens. It is not realistic to expect support from politicians at all times, however transparent and proactive engagement will help the CCG to deliver its objectives.

We continue to develop productive relationships with local politicians, engaging fully with formal structures and committees and liaise regularly with local MPs and local councillors.

We greatly value the local scrutiny process and continue to work closely with the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel Committee to increase engagement in and scrutiny of our commissioning activity, plans and proposals.

9.2 Parliamentary briefings

We will respond to all Parliamentary briefing requests in a timely way, ensuring a consistent, high-quality response. We will also continue to invest resource to compile a database of:

- Complaints, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, MP and councillor briefings, comments and complaints
- Serious untoward incidents, including suggestions from patients and the public
- Feedback from patients, engagement and consultation events, social media and other digital platforms.

10.0 Statutory duties

10.1 Governing Body meetings

Our Governing Body meets in public throughout the year. All information about this meeting such as dates, times, venues, agendas and papers are available on our dedicated Governing Body section of the website.

10.2 Primary Care Commissioning Committee

The Primary Care Commissioning Committee is established to enable members to make collective decisions on the review, planning and procurement of primary care services as part of the CCG's statutory commissioning responsibilities in St Helens under delegated authority from NHS England.

10.3 Annual reports

We will produce a formal annual report, as required by NHS England, to meet our statutory requirements. This is published in an electronic format. We also produce a public-friendly summary version, written in plain English.

10.4 Annual General Meeting

We will organise an Annual General Meeting to share our progress as an organisation and the challenges we face in an interactive and engaging way.

10.5 Freedom of Information

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests are frequently made by interested parties, including the media, and are collected by the CCGS governance team. As an organisation that firmly believes in openness and transparency, we will respond to Freedom of Information requests in line with legal requirements.

11.0 Internal Communications and Engagement

11.1 The importance of internal communications and engagement

Achieving the vision of St Helens Cares and managing the challenge of change requires a robust internal communications function. Effective employee communications and engagement will also help to build committed staff members, focused on achieving the Clinical Commissioning Group's goals and objectives.

We will:

- Promote clear, consistent messages
- Be accessible, honest and open
- Ensure that staff understand the organisation's priorities, take ownership of them and understand progress against them
- Ensure staff members are well informed, well supported and valued
- Find a balance in our tone to ensure people can relate.

11.2 Internal communications channels

In addition to standard channels such as e-mail, our internal communications channels include:

Face to face stand up team brief – A weekly briefing takes place for all staff across St Helens Integrated Peoples Services. These sessions are led by the Executive Leadership Team. All notes from the briefing are circulated to all staff and uploaded to the intranet.

Team Meetings – regular team meetings take place across the integrated team. A standard template is used for each meeting to ensure consistent / timely updates are provided across all teams

Commissioning Bulletin – Our fortnightly Commissioning bulletin is circulated to our GP membership and published on our intranet.

Regular Update Video – We produce regular video updates led by the CCG Accountable Officer / Strategic Director of People’s Services and upload this to both CCG and local authority intranet sites.

11.3 Internal Communications Principles

We strive to foster a culture in which the sharing of general information, lessons learnt and good news is an expectation for staff at all levels. We know that effective internal communications is essential for the smooth running of the organisation as it ensures that everyone understands what is expected of them, what the CCG is and what it is trying to achieve enabling all to work towards the same purpose.

Although the communications team takes responsibility for managing the corporate channels (including digital, face to face and printed channels) and for facilitating the regular dissemination of centralised messages - internal communication in its broadest sense remains the responsibility of all staff.

All senior managers and clinical leads within the CCG know and understand that communicating effectively to their team and colleagues is a matter of priority - ensuring that any message, news or update issued by the CCG is appropriately circulated and explained using language that will be understood by all. There are a variety of ways in which regular face to face communication takes place including all staff sessions, team sessions and one to one meetings.

11.4 Internal Engagement Principles

Feedback has demonstrated that involving staff in making decisions that affect their professional lives increases their self-esteem and self-confidence - in turn improving their working life experience and their health and wellbeing. All staff must feel as though they have a voice within the organisation, therefore, it is vital that we maintain a constructive dialogue with staff.

For more information on our approach to internal engagement, please refer to the CCG’s Organisational Development Plan.

12.0 Evaluation and Feedback

12.1 Evaluation

On-going evaluation of our communications and engagement activity will help us to:

- Learn how well our communications and engagement systems work and how they can be improved
- Be held to account by internal and external stakeholders
- Test and demonstrate that the feedback we receive from patient and public involvement and engagement has a direct and positive impact in shaping and influencing decision making
- Develop measures for the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement activities to demonstrate continuous improvement in patient outcomes and experience

12.2 Feedback from our Stakeholders

NHS England commission an annual 360 degree stakeholder survey for every CCG. The survey is distributed to a wide range of stakeholders including voluntary, third sector, statutory organisations and GP membership. Results from the survey identify any steps we need to take to address any issues / challenges. The results are then discussed at our Governing Body meeting.

13.0 Governance and accountability

We hold patient and public involvement and the relationships with our stakeholders in the highest regard. We want to enable everyone to have a voice in shaping and influencing the provision of local health and social care services.

The Governing Body retains overall accountability for the delivery of effective communications and meaningful engagement, with a dedicated Lay Member responsible for ensuring public and patient involvement is considered and demonstrated at all stages of the commissioning cycle.

13.1 Working arrangements and reporting

The communications and engagement team works closely with the quality team, integrated commissioning team and Programme Management Office to support the management of interdependencies, risks and challenges to the benefit of operational delivery.

The Project Management Office ensures that no new project or initiative can be introduced in any of our programmes of work unless plans are in place to ensure the effective communication, engagement and involvement of patients and the public

The Engagement and Involvement Lead is a member of the Quality Committee and reports regularly to highlight any communication and engagement activities and identifies issues/risks that require further exploration

Our communications and engagement strategy and an annual communications and engagement report is presented to the Governing Body for approval and sign off. Regular updates are also shared at Quality Committee for them to monitor and gain assurance that our local community have been involved in the work of the CCG.