



Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021 – 2023

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1. Communication and Engagement – Introduction

Integration of community health and social care services began in Orkney in 2010 when Orkney Islands Council (OIC) and NHS Orkney (NHSO) established a partnership which we called Orkney Health and Care; joint working has become the norm in Orkney.

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 led to the establishment, in 2016, of the Integration Joint Board (IJB), in Orkney, to provide oversight and governance of the integrated services and resources provided by OIC and NHSO. Operational delivery is through the health and social care partnership which is known as Orkney Health and Care. OIC, NHSO and the IJB are key partners in the Orkney Community Planning Partnership which ensures that Orkney's overall priorities and equalities gaps are addressed through co-ordinated planning by the Orkney Partnership Board

The IJB wants to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable people are heard in Orkney and ensure that OIC and NHSO are proactively involving service users, their families, carers, staff, the Third Sector and other key partners, to inform future commissioning decisions.

In this regard, the IJB wants to make sure that stakeholders have positive opportunities to get involved and influence the way services are commissioned.

We know that people who are better informed and engaged about services are far more likely to feel satisfied with those services. Effective communication leads to better planning and commissioning decisions, an improved reputation, and stronger, more positive relationships with stakeholders.

The way we communicate is evolving to meet changing needs and expectations, as does the way we engage with our stakeholders, notably OIC, NHSO and wider community planning partners. The Strategy reflects these changes. It is designed to guide the work of the IJB over the period 2021-2023 in how it communicates with its wider stakeholders. Clearly, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on the ways we can communicate, and will continue to do so throughout the period of this strategy.

It sits alongside the OIC Communication Strategy, the NHSO Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Orkney Partnership Board Communication and Engagement Strategy.

2. Background

The functions overseen by the IJB are important to people across our community. As we plan and commission services, we will ensure people are well informed about community health and social care services, and how they can share their views and ideas with us. As well as more traditional methods of communication, we are developing innovative new approaches to communication, active participation and community engagement.

3. Legislative Context

Integration of health and social care is the Scottish Government's ambitious programme of reform to improve services for people who use health and social care services. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, is the legislative context of integration and sets out key planning, commissioning and outcomes principles of which Communication and Engagement are key components. There is a requirement for a service user representative and a carer representative to be key members of the IJB.

There are several other drivers, including local and national policies, guidance and legislation, which place a duty on IJBs to communicate and engage with the public.

3.1. Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Act helps to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

Part 10 of the Act focuses on **Participation in Public Decision-Making**, 'a new regulation-making power enabling Ministers to require Scottish public authorities to promote and facilitate the participation of members of the public in the decisions and activities of the authority, including in the allocation of its resources. Involving people and communities in making decisions helps build community capacity and also helps the public sector identify local needs and priorities and target budgets more effectively.'

The Orkney Partnership Board leads on this locally through a number of groups which champion key priorities for Orkney, all of which directly relate to health and care services. We have produced a Community Plan, incorporating a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) for 2019-2022 that describes what Orkney aims to achieve by working in partnership, over and above what could be achieved by working as individual organisations. It shows the strategic priorities for action and how they have been selected. These are 'strong communities', 'living well' and a 'vibrant economy'. If you would like to know more about the community planning arrangements in Orkney and who the key stakeholders are, please click [here](#).

3.2. National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

The National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes are high-level statements of what health and social care partners are attempting to achieve through integration and, ultimately, through the pursuit of quality improvement across health and social care.

Outcome 8 concentrates on engagement: 'People who work in health and social care services feel engaged with the work they do and are supported to continuously improve the information, support, care and treatment they provide'.

3.3. NHS Reform (Scotland) Act 2004

This Act places a duty on NHS Boards to engage with local communities in developing the shape of health services. The duty to engage with the public extends to every part of NHSO, including those functions delegated to the IJB.

3.4. NHS Staff Governance Standard

This is the overarching NHS policy for partnership working, employment practice and employee relations. The standard specifies that all NHS staff are entitled to be:

- Well informed.
- Appropriately trained and developed.
- Involved in decisions which affect them.
- Treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect, in an environment where diversity is valued.
- Provided with a continuously improving and safe working environment, promoting the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and the wider community.

3.5. Co-production

This is essentially where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support services together, recognising that both partners have a vital contribution to make. Further information on co-production can be found at the [Scottish Co-production Network](#). This links to the development within OHAC of Community Led Support, which is about having 'good conversations' with communities to help identify solutions to health and care needs which are community driven, and effectively supported by the IJB.

It is the aim of this strategy to define the vision and the framework, and create the conditions, where people's views really do count. It is about creating an environment in which more people actively work in partnership, alongside the IJB, shaping how we plan and commission services that improve the health and well-being of the people of Orkney.

4. How will the IJB Communicate and Engage?

The following guiding principles are at the heart of our communications and engagement activity:

- Good communication is everyone's responsibility - from the Chief Officer (who is accountable to the Chief Executives in OIC and NHSO) to their respective front-line staff.
- This needs to be a two-way process. It is important to seek and listen to the views and opinions of the public and staff.
- Communications and engagement activity will be focused, targeted and relevant.
- Communications should be timely with information quickly communicated once available.
- Communications will be proactive, open and transparent.
- The language and format used to communicate and engage will be right for the target audience. In most cases this means in plain English and jargon free.
- Written materials will be made available in formats that are accessible to all.
- Staff have a right to be well informed and have the opportunity to provide views, ideas and other feedback.

5. National Standards for Community Engagement

Communication and engagement provides residents and other stakeholders with the opportunity to have a say in the planning, prioritising and development of services.

As explored later in this document, the way we do this embraces modern and traditional methods of consultation and engagement. The Orkney Partnership Board has developed guidelines for good practice (available [here](#)), a template upon which all IJB consultations are based.

Included in the guidance are the National Standards for Community Engagement between communities and public agencies:

- Inclusion: We will find out which people and organisations will be affected by the issues. We will then involve them.
- Support: We will remove barriers so everyone can take part.
- Planning: There will be a clear purpose and plan for the engagement.
- Working Together: We will work well together to achieve the aims of the engagement.
- Methods: We will use different ways to involve people.
- Communication: We will communicate clearly and often with the people, organisations and communities involved.
- Impact: We will learn about what works well and use this learning to make community engagement better.

These National Standards are currently being revisited by Scottish Government. In September of 2020, the IJB contributed to a national consultation on the revised standards, and will adhere to them, on publication.

6. Our Communications and Engagement Activity

Our communications and engagement activity needs to evolve over time to reflect changes in the way people expect to be informed, find information for themselves, and provide us with feedback, not least in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

6.1. Publicity Methods

Traditional media remains important, but as more and more people go ‘digital by choice’ we need to make good use of social media and other digital channels as well. The Coronavirus pandemic has ensured that communication online has become “the new normal”, with people becoming used to meeting using their digital devices and social media. This provides a great opportunity for the IJB to reach a wider number of people. However, it is critically important to ensure that we have a safety net for those who do not have the opportunity to communicate digitally. People must not be digitally excluded through decisions about communication channels, hence the focus on ‘digital by choice’ rather than ‘digital by default’.

Key information for staff, and service groups will be disseminated using existing channels. We are also exploring new channels of communication with digital communications at the forefront of the strategy. This will allow use of innovative

solutions to improve quality and increase the effectiveness of how we communicate with staff across OIC and NHSO.

For a wider audience, media releases, feature ideas and interview opportunities are provided for local and, where appropriate, more specialist media outlets.

The IJB section on the OIC website, with links from the NHSO website, provides content including case studies, news items and video content, and is updated on a regular basis.

Social media enables wide dissemination of information, and gives individuals, communities and organisations the opportunity to provide valuable feedback. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are increasingly the communications channels of choice for many in our community, reflecting exponential growth in the use of social media.

As a result, it has become increasingly important for OIC and NHSO to use the most popular social media platforms to communicate and engage with the public.

Since the publication of the first version of the Strategic Plan, video content filmed and edited in-house, and shared on social media channels, has been used to highlight the positive impact of services commissioned by the IJB on people across our community.

Since March 2015, OIC has audio cast meetings of Committees and the full Council meetings, and this has been extended to IJB Meetings. However, it is critically important to ensure that we have a safety net for those who do not have the opportunity to communicate digitally. People must not be digitally excluded through decisions about communication channels, hence the focus on 'digital by choice' rather than 'digital by default'.

6.2. Communication and Engagement Methods

Methods used include Teams meetings, face-to-face conversations, public meetings, online surveys and meetings, and Facebooks chats.

6.2.1. Orkney Opinions

The IJB has been a consistent user of Orkney Opinions, OIC's public consultation group, whose volunteer members are consulted when a range of views is sought on a given topic. Both the qualitative and quantitative input received has been consistently high, and the IJB will continue to draw on Orkney Opinions as a 'go-to' method of public consultation and engagement.

6.2.2. Joint Consultations

There is always a danger of the public suffering from 'consultation fatigue'. In response to this, recent consultations have run alongside those from other services, giving the public the opportunity to contribute to several consultations, at the same time. For example, OHAC officers contribute to OIC's Communication and Engagement Officers Group, where opportunities for co-produced consultations are identified and prioritised.

6.2.3. Specific Questions

Experience has demonstrated people respond to specific questions that directly address their health and social care needs. This tells us that we need to continue to ensure that questions are focused and couched in plain English.

As well as utilising the methods outlined above, NHSO has established mechanisms for engaging and communicating with members of the public on health-related matters, including Microsoft Teams.

6.2.4. Social Media

Innovative approaches such as live Facebook discussions have already been trialled. It is recognised that social media is an effective means of consultation on broader issues of public interest, and this will continue to be used as appropriate.

6.2.5. Patient Public Reference Group

The Patient Public Reference Group was established to ensure that staff and patients/carers, as well as the wider public, are involved and engaged in the development of health services.

The core group is made up of members representing a wide range of patients, carers, members of the public, voluntary organisations and community council representatives. Each member brings to the group particular knowledge or expertise. They are also able to draw upon or consult with groups, organisations, networks or individuals when they feel it is relevant.

6.2.6. Person Centred Care

Person centred care is included in the remit of the Quality and Safety Group. The overarching aim of this group is to improve patient outcomes and demonstrate the delivery of high-quality reliable care based on what matters most to patients, their families and carers. The group reports to the Clinical and Care Governance Committee to ensure there is strategic oversight and a systematic approach to the improvement, delivery and sustainability of person-centred care including the services for which the IJB is responsible.

6.3. Summary

Our communications and engagement activities need to be relevant to people and their lives. They will help people better understand the integrated community health and social care arrangements and what differences these are making. They will provide reassurance that excellent community health and social care services continue to be provided throughout Orkney under the oversight of the IJB.

Through our engagement and communications' activities we will:

- Ensure that, as we work within the constraints of the Coronavirus pandemic, we contact as many people as we can through digital and other means.
- Discuss what areas of community health and social care matter most to people.

- Help ensure people are able to influence their own health and well-being and contribute to the commissioning and improvement of services.
- Support measures to ensure people are helped to live at home or in a homely setting for as long as they want.
- Explore ways to get the public involved and increase participation.
- Enable people to engage with health and social care providers, and all associated community planning partners, to help improve and transform services,
- Ensure as many people as possible take part in this conversation.
- Seek to give a voice to all in our community – we'll work hard to communicate with seldom-heard groups or individuals.
- Provide feedback on the impact of their engagement with us and how their views have been considered.
- In recognition of 'consultation fatigue' amongst the public, we will work with OIC, NHSO, other statutory bodies and the third sector to deliver co-produced engagement, wherever possible.

7. Communication and Engagement Groups

There is a number of local groups already established which communicate and engage with the public, elected members and IJB members, as well as the Health Board and health and care services.

7.1. The Orkney Partnership Board

In order to comply with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the Orkney Partnership Board lead on communication and engagement through 3 delivery groups. All of these groups have elements of health and care services provided in Orkney. There is a range of stakeholders including IJB members, the council, the Health Board, services users and the voluntary sector which the groups engage with in order to deliver the strategic priorities, aims and outcomes.

7.2. Service User Focus Groups

These groups are set up in specific locations such, as care homes, with the aim of engaging service users, their families and carers providing an opportunity to contribute to changes in the delivery of services.

7.3. Staff Communication Groups

NHSO has a well-established forum (Team Orkney Communication) where representatives of each department engage with a member of the Executive management team. NHSO also has an Area Partnership Forum (APF) involving staff side (union) representatives and an Area Clinical Forum (ACF) involving clinical staff. The Council holds a regular meeting with Union representatives and senior managers.

7.4. Patient Participation Groups

There are currently two groups set up in Orkney at Dounby and Heilendi GP Practices. These groups are established to support and improve the services of their respective surgeries through patient engagement.

8. What Happens Next?

This updated Strategy sets out the overarching aims for the IJB's communications and engagement activities. It will be reviewed and updated again in 2023.