

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Communication Strategy, 2024 – 2027

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Introduction

This communication strategy sets out our approach to meet the communication needs of East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership. It follows a three year cycle, aligning with the review period of the partnership's strategic plan.

The partnership has dedicated communications staff in place to deliver the strategy and support the partnership and its workforce delivering health and social care services to our communities. Participation with and supporting local and national campaigns also ensures we are connected across Ayrshire and at a national level.

The partnership, along with our partners and our communities, are experiencing the pressures of the current financial climate. Our strategic plan has been reviewed in this context and our communications strategy will continue to support the plan's ambitions to achieve the best care for the people who need us the most.

Communications considerations

Providing information and timely communications is important throughout the partnership as we continue to improve and deliver health and social care services for our communities. To do this effectively we need to maintain awareness of a wide range of stakeholders and factors, including:

- the existing communications channels used in community settings by local residents, members of the public and community groups
- the rural localities of many communities with limited access to communication channels
- communication with employees from NHS Ayrshire and Arran, East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and independent contracted employees
- communication with third sector partners , forums and networks
- internal communication requests
- the communications needs of our localities
- the communication needs of third sector partners
- communications with and from independent sector partners
- the communications required to support national health and social care campaigns
- the Scottish Government's public health priorities
- the communication of planning and performance data and policy documents
- the communications required to collect essential data to provide the measurements for core indicators reporting
- feedback from all sources
- East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan and supporting strategies, policies and guidance.

Audiences

Activity driven by our communications strategy must consider the requirements of our target audiences. Our audiences will vary across our activity, and we will pay particular attention to who we need to liaise with, share information with, and communicate with. Through our continuing work in communications and engagement, we are understanding more about the different audiences we have identified, including:

- local residents, members of the public
- community groups, community councils
- third sector voluntary groups and organisations

- East Ayrshire's third sector interface
- independent sector, including care homes, primary care providers (e.g. dental , optometry and general practices)
- Integration Joint Board Stakeholders Forum
- community planning and locality groups
- employability support services
- community justice services including people in prison
- sports and leisure clubs
- town centre regeneration and business networks
- partnership employees
- East Ayrshire Council communications teams and staff
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran communications and engagement teams
- North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- Health and Social Care Scotland
- schools, colleges, parent group, child minding services and early learning centres
- local trust funds and potential investors
- local radio.

Communications framework

All communications will be delivered with the achievement of the partnership's 15 health and wellbeing outcomes and strategic plan priorities in mind.

Likewise, before a communications campaign is planned, careful consideration should be given to the purpose of the campaign and what it is trying to achieve.

In assessing the communication campaign the following questions will be asked to ensure there is a link to a clear objective and the campaign's impact can be evaluated:

- what do we want to achieve with this campaign?
- how does the campaign contribute to the 15 health and wellbeing outcomes?
- does it fit in with the strategic priorities?

To assist in delivering clarity and consistency the UK Government Communications Service has issued guidance on the management of communications campaigns. The guidance sets out the OASIS model for communications.

In addition, working towards longer term campaign planning and prioritisation will help to improve and maintain our impact where it is needed most.

The OASIS communications model

We will adopt the OASIS model for all our communication campaign planning. The OASIS model sets out a series of steps that can help bring clarity to the assessment and planning of any campaign and ensures the process is thought through and consistent.

The OASIS model provides five steps to create a campaign:

1. **Objectives**
2. **Audience/Insight**
3. **Strategy/Ideas**
4. **Implementation**
5. **Scoring/Evaluation**



The approach will be reviewed and refreshed if required after each phase of the campaign, and ongoing feedback will be used to optimise implementation.

Objectives: what you want to achieve

The objectives of any campaign should be clearly defined and must align with either a strategic priorities or health and wellbeing outcome. Having a clearly defined purpose allows the desired outcomes to be clear and thereafter be evaluated.

Audience insight: who the campaign is aimed at and why

This stage identifies if we need to change or influence behaviours or attitudes and whether the campaign will help achieve that objective. It is also important at this stage to identify any barriers to change so the campaign can be designed to address these. Knowing your audience is very important to the success of the campaign and insights into the audience and any barriers to achieving your objective, will allow the campaign to be designed to remove barriers and achieve more.

Strategy/ideas: the campaign concept

Where a campaign aims to change behaviours it needs to be planned in stages. To bring about change in behaviours or attitudes, messages have to be delivered in stages to match the audiences'

journey. The approach to the campaign should be planned with messages tailored to guide the audience step by step to the desired outcome. Any approach can be tested on a smaller scale and adjustments made to messages or communication channels if indicated.

Implementation: channels that will be used

Once the approach is identified, the communication channels used to deliver messages need to be planned. Different audiences have different preferences about the communication channels they are willing to engage with. The range of communication channels used needs to be planned with each specific audience in mind. The resources available for the campaign will also impact on the channels used for the communication. Using radio or even using printed media usually have associated costs which mean they cannot be used without an allocated budget.

The partnership is fortunate to have a wide range of partners in the independent sector, third sector and amongst voluntary organisations. These contacts are an invaluable resource in the dissemination of communications with a wide reach to communities and people who use services who may otherwise not previously have been involved

Scoring/evaluation: how we will know we have achieved what we set out to do

Outputs of communications campaigns should be monitored in some way. What to measure should be decided in advance so we know if there have been any changes to indicators following the campaign. Some measurements commonly used are:

- attendees at conferences or engagement sessions
- website or webpage visits captured
- engagement with social media posts
- numbers calling for information
- numbers enquiring to an email address
- trends that emerge in opinions expressed via focus groups
- media monitoring
- surveys can be sent out to capture responses which can be measured.

How we will communicate

Clear and well established communication channels encourage the flow of information between partners, residents, communities and people who we have not previously engaged.

While we have well established communication channels already in place, where appropriate, additional communication channels and developing existing channels will allow us to improve and become effective in our communication. Better communication will increase involvement between people who use our services, carers, members of the public, employees, partners and communities.

Our communication channels

The partnership has established communications channels available to it for communications:

- use of East Ayrshire Council's Granicus email system where distribution lists can be added and categorised
- partnership 'Living Well' website
- social media (Facebook, X and LinkedIn)
- paid for social media advertising
- dedicated email address for news items to the partnership communications team: HSCPcomms@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
- the monthly partnership newsletter, The Tea Break
- emails to internal staff using MS Outlook system
- emails using distribution lists to external third sector and voluntary organisation partners using the Outlook system
- independent sector forum meetings and communication networks can support wider distribution
- active and reactive media releases using East Ayrshire Council's PRGloo system to local and national media
- agreed statements (agreed across East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and our communications teams) issued in response to press enquiries
- distribution of communications to NHS Ayrshire and Arran staff in partnership through NHS emailing system
- locality newsletters
- communications with pan-Ayrshire and national communications and engagement groups
- webpages on the partnership section of East Ayrshire Council's website
- request homepage presence when appropriate on East Ayrshire Council's website
- service listings on The Alliance's ALISS directory
- digital and printed publications
- display of physical posters
- creation and distribution of leaflets and printed materials
- distribution of bulletins and other communications to third sector partners for cascade and dissemination amongst their members and those who use their services
- information page on Health and Social Care Scotland website
- good news stories for online, social media, board papers and local press
- focus groups
- input into/engagement with community groups
- engagement events.

Increasing our audience reach

The partnership will follow best practice when delivering communications, use current market intelligence, and will make use of all channels identified as most appropriate for the audience, including digital channels.

Where audiences are identified as not previously involved, we will consider creative solutions to reach them. Use will also be made of staff with local knowledge to identify community areas where contact and communications can be deployed through local connections. Other methods of communication may include peer to peer communications, local presentations to community groups and open door sessions. Efforts will be made to provide communication materials in other formats or languages where indicated, and we will aim to meet accessibility best practice and regulations.

Over the course of the year there are many national campaigns which all local authorities, health boards and partnerships support. Recent examples include the Challenge Poverty campaign, Care Experienced Week, Alcohol Awareness Week, 16 Days of Action, and Foster Care Fortnight. East Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran provide the partnership with communications support for many of our campaigns which continues to work well.

Operational framework

This communications strategy is intended to support East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership achieve its priorities as set out in the overall Strategic Plan 2021 – 2030 and support the delivery of the nine Scottish Government's health and wellbeing outcomes along with East Ayrshire's six additional health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and people using the justice services. The communications strategy will also work in support of the public health priorities for Scotland. These outcomes focus on the experiences and quality of services for people using those services, their carers and their families.

These plans and strategies aim to tackle Scotland's public health priorities and specific population health challenges by providing high quality services. The partnership additionally seeks to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, adults and older people and importantly tackle the health inequalities within our communities.

We publish an annual performance report, setting out how we are delivering the national health and wellbeing outcomes and evidencing any improvement achieved. These reports include information about how improvement or otherwise has been achieved using indicators, supported by local measures and provide data to provide a broader picture.

Outcomes and evaluation

In order to know whether our communication messages are reaching the intended audiences, delivering the key messages we planned and having the desired outcome, we need to find ways to measure success or otherwise. What to measure and what success looks like should be decided at the beginning of a campaign.

Success can be measured using qualitative (feedback, comments and changes in behaviour or attitudes), or quantitative measures (number of people attending, clinics or sessions delivered, reaching a larger number of people).

Methods of evaluation can include surveys, interview feedback, focus group feedback, social media analytics, media monitoring and tracking, attendance rates, engagement rates to a specific prompt. Evaluation will show trends or shifts in behaviours as a result of a campaign and is important in determining what works and what doesn't in order to know that we are supporting individual's families and communities to maintain their health and wellbeing and to live the best life possible.

Our Strategic Plan sets out how we plan to do this and at the same time works towards satisfying the national health and wellbeing outcomes and public health priorities for Scotland whilst using resources effectively and efficiently in the provision of services.

Communications plan

The partnership's successes in supporting people to maximise their health and wellbeing will continue to be communicated both to internal and external audiences. The engagement and feedback from people who use our services will be used to shape and improve on the delivery of the integration of the health and social care services.

The range of communication approaches will assist our own partnership and, as a model of best practice, benefit the wider health and social care sector across Scotland. The partnership will continue to strive for a pro-active approach to the communication of our services and developments, and during the period 2024 – 2027 will focus on ten strands of work:

1. Tailoring communications to meet needs of individuals, people who use services, their families and carers.
2. The OASIS model of communications used across our campaigns.
3. Campaigns contributing to our health and wellbeing outcomes and strategic plan priorities.
4. Review of our social media channels to further support our communications strategy.
5. Increase awareness of services in East Ayrshire, including promotion of The Alliance's ALISS directory.
6. Foster close communication links and engagement with third sector, independent sector and wider community partners and groups.
7. Cultivate close working relationships with NHS Ayrshire and Arran and East Ayrshire Council communications teams, and engage with multi-agency, pan-Ayrshire and national communication forums and groups.
8. Support improved internal communications in the partnership and its promotion as an employer of choice.
9. Provide guidance to support staff in developing their communications.
10. Proactively identify and communicate good news stories from across the partnership and the wider health and social care sector in East Ayrshire.