

Building a communications and engagement plan

Does your work impact on service delivery or the way people access them? If so, involve them. This guide has been designed to help you build effective communications and engagement into your work.



The Communications and Engagement Team are here to help, advise and support you. To help you achieve your goals they need to be able to understand the aims and objectives of your project and the timelines involved.



When you talk to people better outcomes are seen for patients, services and the organisation as a whole.

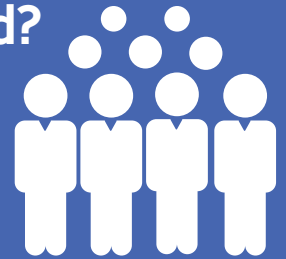
Context



- What is the piece of work?
- What is your goal and why are you doing it?
- Who is leading and who is supporting?
- What are the deliverable milestones and associated timelines?
- What is your budget for communications and engagement?
- Have you done an equality and quality impact assessment?
- Is this system-wide?

Who's involved?

- Staff
- Statutory bodies
- MPs
- Patients
- Specific groups
- Public



Research

What do you already know? What does it tell you?



Public Health

Quality

Media

Performance

Best practice

Previous engagement

Engagement – why and who with? Make it meaningful and make it count

- Prioritise who to speak to
- Go to where the people are
- Consider who has influence
- Who or what could have the greatest impact on your work
- Evaluate and reassess your work regularly



Communications – developing key messages Be clear, jargon-free and relevant

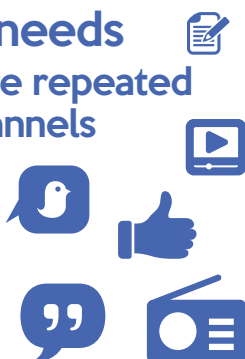
- Develop key messages
- Consider your audience
- Work to the timescale in your project plan
- Maximise the message
- Who can deliver it?
- What channels are available?
- Give it a go and make a start!



Community Ambassadors are here to help test your plans.

Consider people's needs Make sure messages are repeated and use a variety of channels

- Social media
- Press release
- Radio
- Website
- Campaigns
- Promotion
- Newsletters
- Community Meetings
- Email
- Posters
- Staff Intranet



Always evaluate

What can you measure? What does good look like? Feed this back into your work.



Tell the stories - you said, we did

How did it go? What went well and what needs work? Share your learning (stories, case studies, videos, voice recordings, photographs, summaries, quotes).



Communications and Engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic

We have a duty to engage and the COVID-19 pandemic does not excuse us from doing this. Now more than ever you may find services within your portfolio are impacted in both their delivery method and in the way people access them. This guide has been design to partner with our 'Building a communications and engagement plan' poster and the 'Principals of engagement' poster to help you consider and plan effective communications and engagement during this time.

Has your audience changed? Who do you really need to speak with?

COVID-19 means that many services stopped – bringing them back may require specific engagement especially if they look different – has the service or the way it's accessed changed?
What about it's location or regularity?
Think broadly – Consider who this could effect and how.
Have you carried out an Equality and Quality Impact Assessment form? This could help you in your approach and identify any groups disproportionately effected.



Insight

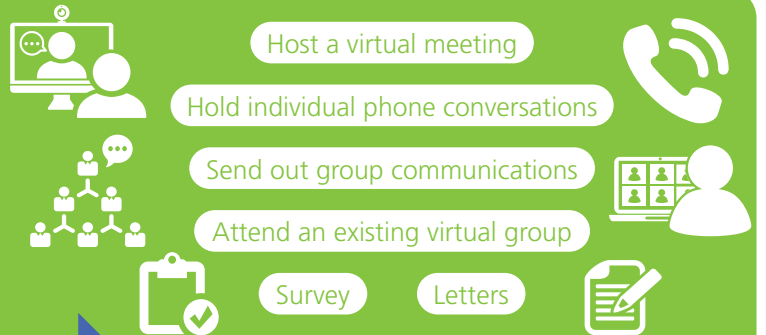
There is a lot of information currently being collected on how this pandemic has affected people. Could this help?
The CCG has strong links with Healthwatch, local councils and the Voluntary Sector. Where could their insight assist? Can providers help? They have a duty to engage as well.



Delivery method

NHS England have stated that there is no obligation for patient and public participation to be face-to-face and any such engagement activity should only be undertaken where not prohibited or discouraged by the latest government advice. So once you have developed your plan how can you best deliver it?

Preparation is key:
What tools could you use?
Will this be interactive or more presentation based?
What can be shared before or after the engagement process?
Do you have suitable instructions and guidance so people know what to expect. Virtual engagement won't suit everyone so don't forget about traditional methods.



Be Honest –

Tell people what is and what isn't possible at this time. Acknowledge the speed of change which is currently occurring.

Potential barriers and sensitivities

What do you need to consider?

This becomes even more key when using alternative methods.

- Access to technology
- Subtitles
- Easy read materials
- Individual's health
- Familiarity with the software
- Interpreters
- Personal circumstance
- Possibility of bereavement



Evaluation

What are you able to measure?

Have you spoken to a variety of people?
Did the method work for the audience?
Have you achieved clear outcomes which can impact delivery?
Were issues raised which require further engagement?

Remember to tell your stories internally and externally –
Capture, share and demonstrate impact 'you said, we did'.

