

Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board

Communications Strategy

Background

Health and wellbeing boards were established in 2013 as forums where leaders from the health and care system would work with local Healthwatch and the voluntary and community sector to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

Gateshead has its own Health and Wellbeing Board which is a statutory committee of the Council. Board members work together to understand their local communities' needs, agree priorities and encourage commissioners to work in a more joined up way. As a result, patients and the public should experience more integrated health and care services in the future.

Health and Wellbeing Boards are a key part of broader plans to modernise health and social care in order to:

- Ensure stronger democratic legitimacy and involvement
- Strengthen working relationships between health and social care, and,
- Encourage the development of more integrated commissioning of services.

Gateshead's Health and Wellbeing Board will work to give communities a greater say in understanding and addressing their local health and social care needs.

Objectives of the Communications Strategy

The Communications Strategy aims to:

- Promote awareness of the role, functions and governance arrangements of our Health & Wellbeing Board
- Increase public awareness of the work of the Board and outcomes achieved
- Publicise the progress of the Board to partners both within and outside the NHS
- Promote behavioural change within our communities and organisations to help address key health and wellbeing challenges facing Gateshead
- Promote closer working between the communications teams of partner organisations, including co-ordinated communications between teams
- Present the board as a campaigning/lobbying body for the health and wellbeing of the people of Gateshead

Our Target Audience

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a key strategic and leadership role to play; a significant amount of communications activity will therefore be targeted at health and care professionals, the voluntary and community sector, other partners and key influencers to convey the Board's vision for improving health and wellbeing across Gateshead and to engage with them regarding their role in helping to deliver it.

Communications activity directed at patients and service users, their carers, families and the public generally will include a focus on the Board's work to achieve key health and wellbeing outcomes as well as more tailored activity relating to the particular needs of these groups.

On this basis, our key stakeholders include:

Member organisations of the Board

- NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group
- Gateshead Council (elected members and officers)
- Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
- Gateshead Federation of GP Practices
- Healthwatch Gateshead
- Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council
- NHS England Cumbria & the North East

Other key stakeholders

- Gateshead Children's Trust Board
- Economy, Environment and Culture Board
- Gateshead Community Safety Board
- Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Local Safeguarding Adults Board
- Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group
- Gateshead Strategic Partnership
- Overview & Scrutiny Committees
- Local MPs

Members of the public

- General public
- Those who are affected by health and wellbeing issues linked to the Board's priorities and work programme
- Carers and families

Key Messages

The top two messages of the Health and Wellbeing Board are that it aims to:

- be the driving force for health and wellbeing in Gateshead in order to lead change
- act as the focal point for health and social care organisations and partners to agree and take forward priorities in response to local needs..

We will work together to:

- Better understand the health and wellbeing needs of the people of Gateshead.
- Listen to feedback and engage with local communities, patients, service users and their carers to help them access the services they need.
- Tackle key health and care challenges through new ways of working and protect people's health.
- Support people to help themselves to improve their health and wellbeing and to remain independent for longer.
- Narrow the health inequality gap between communities in Gateshead, ensuring a focus on the wider determinants of health through a 'whole place' approach.
- Lobby government and others on issues that impact upon the health and wellbeing of local people and how we can best respond to those challenges locally.

Strategy and Approach

The content of communications activity will primarily be produced and delivered by colleagues supporting the Health and Wellbeing Board, while the Gateshead Communications Team will set up and provide the tools to enable this to happen, co-ordinate arrangements and lead on media activity.

The following channels will be used to communicate with stakeholders and the general public:

Visual identity

A visual identity for the Board will be developed across all materials, linking with the Gateshead Strategic Partnership. This will be led by the Communications Team and agreed by the Board.

The visual identity will be applied across all materials including on-line and hard copy publications. Templates will be produced for an electronic newsletter, report documents, presentations, etc.

Newsletter and Briefing Notes

A quarterly electronic newsletter will be produced and sent to key stakeholders; it will also be added to the Board's webpage. An electronic template will be designed by the Communications Team, but the content of the newsletter will be provided by officers supporting the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Communications Team will co-ordinate arrangements for populating and disseminating the newsletter using existing communication channels and networks of organisations represented on the Board.

Briefings will also be prepared to update stakeholders on particular issues as required during the year and disseminated using existing communication channels and networks.

Media

Proactive media relations work will be undertaken at regular intervals throughout the year to highlight improvements and issues relating to the health and wellbeing of Gateshead residents. This will include 'calls to action' and engagement on how people can help themselves to improve their health and wellbeing and to remain independent for longer, as well as changes in services and ways in which they will be delivered to benefit communities. The work of the Board will also be cross referenced in media relations activity carried out around campaigning activities and the work of individual organisations represented on the Board.

The Communications Team will coordinate proactive media activity and also handle reactive media enquiries, calling on members of the Board to act as spokespeople when required.

Workshops and Events

Workshops and events will be held throughout the year to engage with key stakeholders including the voluntary and community sector to share ideas, update on progress and develop programmes of work. These will be branded as Health & Wellbeing Board sponsored events. Opportunities will also be explored to link the Board with other activity taking place across the Borough relating to its health and wellbeing agenda, making the most of those opportunities to promote the Board's work.

Board members will use speaking opportunities as appropriate to communicate the work of the Board to different audiences and target groups.

Website

The Board's webpage will be reviewed and updated to convey its visual identity. It will share documents and materials and provide access to archived quarterly newsletter updates and other resources.

The website will also be used as a vehicle to engage with the public and partner organisations on health and wellbeing issues, including behavioural change to address key challenges.

Social Media

Opportunities will be explored to make the most of social media to update and engage with stakeholders/professionals on the work of the Board and to promote discussion prior to Health and Wellbeing Board meetings. This could include the promotion of 'thought leadership' by Board members e.g. through the use of a Blog which could be uploaded onto the Gateshead Council website/Health and Wellbeing Board microsite. Guidance and support would be provided by the Communications Team. <requires further discussion>

Gateshead Council's Twitter account has a large organisational following and could also be used to make people aware when a new blog comment is live.

Opportunities will also be taken to leverage the power of existing social media networks across the Council, NHS and other organisations in a co-ordinated way.

Engagement of MPs

Opportunities will be explored for Board members to have regular dialogue with Gateshead MPs on the progress of the board and the challenges faced by Gateshead on health and wellbeing issues. MPs will also be included on the newsletter distribution list.

Assumptions

The strategy assumes a co-ordinated communications approach amongst professionals that represent the Board. Joint 'core' scripts will be developed as required for particular issues to help ensure consistent and timely messages are disseminated to stakeholders and the public.

It is proposed that each member organisation shares contact details of their communications team/officer and spokesperson with the Gateshead Communications Team.

Communications Progress Update and 'Forward Look' to the Board

Six monthly updates will be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the implementation of this communications strategy. This will include details of communications activity undertaken, progress in relation to areas identified for development within the strategy and a 'forward look' of activity over the next six month period. This will also provide opportunities for the Board to further develop and refine its approach both in response to feedback received and the changing context in which the Board operates.

Summary of Commitments and Evaluating Success

Health & Wellbeing Board partners commit to:

- Contribute to four electronic newsletters to be issued annually on behalf of the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- Develop more co-ordinated communications across communications teams where appropriate, promote key communications messages of the Board and share stakeholder briefings with Board members.
- Contribute to six monthly progress reports on actions taken to take forward the communications strategy.
- Develop a forward schedule of communications activity that will form the basis of a Communications Plan for the Health & Wellbeing Board, to be reviewed on a six monthly basis.
- Make the most of opportunities to promote the Health & Wellbeing Board, including the branding of events and workshops as Health and Wellbeing Board events where appropriate.
- Explore opportunities to develop the use of social media to promote the Board's key messages and behavioural change.
- Use speaking opportunities to communicate the work of the Board to different audiences and target groups.
- Work together to campaign and lobby on health and wellbeing issues for the benefit of Gateshead people.
- Develop other areas of action as identified within the strategy.

Success in taking forward the Communications Strategy will be evaluated in the light of the progress made in delivering these shared commitments.

Resourcing the Communications Strategy

There is no dedicated budget to implement the Communications Strategy; this will need to be achieved within existing resources, having regard to existing capacity across partner organisations. At the same time, it is recognised that key actions of the strategy to join up communications activity across health and wellbeing partners will yield benefits around:

- more consistent and timely messages on issues linked to the work of the Board
- more efficient ways of working and potentially less duplication across partner organisations.

DRAFT