



**south ayrshire**  
health & social care  
partnership

# Communications Strategy

## March 2018



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## FOREWORD

Providing effective supports for people to help improve their personal outcomes is a priority for the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Whenever possible, we will work to support people to live healthily and well within their local communities with their families and friends.

To achieve this, we need to engage fully with everyone supported by our services or who has an interest in them. This requires effective channels of communication, which are designed to ensure that our information is clear, easily available to all and gets the right messages to the right people in the best possible way. For this reason, we have developed this Communications Strategy.



The strategy provides the framework for our overall approach to communication – who we communicate with and how we do it – and largely focuses on reaching wide audience groups. It also sets out a defined programme of engagement activity with our Partnership colleagues.

It complements our approved Participation and Engagement Strategy, which is for individuals, groups and communities engaging in service planning and development. A significant amount of engagement activity already takes place in our six localities and at an individual level.

This strategy is designed to support these activities in a clear, consistent and engaging way – ensuring we communicate effectively with all our stakeholders. I hope you find it a valuable and useful framework that supports both individual and collective efforts across the Partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Eltringham'.

Tim Eltringham

Director, South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

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## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Effective communication is vital to the success of the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership ensuring that stakeholders are aware of, understand and are engaged in all relevant aspects of our work.

Good communication supports the planning, delivery and transformation of services, promotes effective professional practice and helps increase stakeholder satisfaction. In turn, this will assist in improving outcomes for stakeholders and achieving our vision for health and social care services within South Ayrshire:

**Working together for the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes of our communities.**

This Communications Strategy:

- sets out a framework for effective communication;
- identifies our stakeholders and who we will communicate with – both internally and externally;
- identifies the ways in which we will communicate; and
- sets out how we will further improve the effectiveness of our communication activities.

It applies to everyone within the Partnership – regardless of whether employed by South Ayrshire Council or NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

## BACKGROUND TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION

The way in which health and social care services are planned and delivered across Scotland changed as part of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. This created a requirement, in law, for Councils and Health Boards to work together in planning and delivering – as a minimum – adult social care and community health services, including services for older people.

This new way of working is known as health and social care integration. This means ensuring that those who use health and social care services get the right care and support – whatever their needs – at the right time and in the right setting at any point in what is called their ‘care journey’, with a focus on community-based and preventative care and support.

Within South Ayrshire, **all** community and primary health and care services, including services for children, adults, older people, as well as criminal justice services, have been integrated by South Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

The Council and NHS deliver these services under the banner of the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership. The South Ayrshire Integration Joint Board – which is a separate legal entity from the Council and NHS Board – is responsible for the strategic planning, funding and operational delivery of the services within the Partnership and is supported in its mission in this regard by others from the Third and Independent Sectors and by others representing the interests of Service Users and Carers.

The Partnership’s mission is to work with partners, people and communities to improve health, support social care, tackle health inequality, and improve community wellbeing.

At the heart of this is the provision of services that are easily understood, accessible and timely, well-co-ordinated, safe and ‘person-centred’, effective and efficient.

For service delivery, this means:

- being integrated from the point of view of service users;
- taking account of the particular needs of different service users;
- taking account of the needs of service users in different parts of the area in which the service is being provided;
- taking account of the particular characteristics and circumstances of different service users;
- respecting the rights of service users;
- taking account of the dignity of service users;
- taking account of the participation of service users in the community where they live;
- protecting and improving the safety of service users;
- improving the quality of services;

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- ensuring services are planned and led locally in conjunction with the community;
  - anticipating needs and prevents them from arising; and
  - making the best use of available facilities, people and other resources.

## COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

We are committed to effective communication with all our stakeholders so that they are aware of, understand and are engaged with our services as appropriate.

Taking a positive and proactive approach to communication ensures that information about what we do, why we do it and how we do it is provided in a clear and effective way.

It helps promote the services and activities available to people and communities and can help build trust and confidence in the Partnership, which – in turn – helps build positive relationships and improves reputation.

Through this Communications Strategy, we will:

- deliver a co-ordinated, managed and consistent approach to communications;
- create awareness and understanding of, and engagement in, our vision for health and social care services;
- promote the Partnership and build a positive reputation and image;
- increase recognition for services provided by the Partnership;
- support the development and promotion of our shared culture, values and behaviours;
- provide information about our services and activities;
- provide stakeholders with opportunities to share their views and ideas and to contribute to the planning and delivery of health and social care services;
- support people and service users to make better informed decisions about their health and social care needs;
- assist in developing, sharing and promoting best practice;
- raise awareness of, acknowledge, promote and celebrate successes of the Partnership; and
- uphold, promote and embed approaches, standards and governance for effective communications by the Partnership as set out within the Communications Strategy and the Participation and Engagement Strategy.

The Strategy is underpinned by key standards, policies and guidelines from both the Council and NHS on:

- branding and corporate identity – for use on all digital and printed materials;
  - accessible communications – tailored to the specific audience, as appropriate;
  - media relations protocols – setting out how we manage reactive enquiries and proactive communication with the media; and
  - acceptable use of social media – applies to both corporate and personal use of social media.
- Data protection – compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998  
<https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/documents/DOC%2020170615%20HSPC%20Looking%20After%20You%20and%20Your%20Information.pdf>

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## COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

Our communications and engagement activities will be:

**Clear:** jargon-free, in Plain English and tailored to the needs of the targeted audience.

**Concise:** relevant and easy to understand.

**Consistent:** building awareness of who we are and what we do.

**Accessible:** use styles, formats and materials that are accessible and appropriate to the needs of the audience.

**Timely and accurate:** support transparency, accountability and fairness.

**Three-way:** work as a conversation – not a broadcast – with means for people to actively contribute at all levels and across the organisation.

**Evidence-Based:** research, statistics, proof of concepts, and case studies will provide real-life examples of how we are making a difference and tell the Partnership's story in an effective and compelling way.



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## GOVERNANCE

To ensure the consistency and accuracy of our information and communications, all Partnership communications will be approved by the relevant member of the Partnership's Directorate or Senior Management Team for the service area it relates to. Where a communication cuts across service areas, a member of the Directorate Management Team (or his/her nominee) will give final approval.

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## AUDIENCES

Our key audience groups include:

- patients, service users, carers and their representatives;
- the public;
- employees working within South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership;
- South Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire & Arran employees;
- South Ayrshire Integration Joint Board Members;
- South Ayrshire Council Elected Members;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran Executive & Non-Executive Director Board Members;
- Trade Unions/staff representatives;
- Contractors/providers of health and social care services and their representative groups (including third and independent sector and General Practitioners);
- South Ayrshire Community Planning Partners;
- MPs/MSPs within South Ayrshire and those with a health and social care remit;
- Locality planning groups;
- Community councils;
- Relevant external organisations (e.g. Scottish Government & Scottish Health and Social Care Regulators); and
- the media.

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## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Appendix 1 shows existing communications channels within both NHS Ayrshire & Arran and South Ayrshire Council and how they are used. Below is a list of Partnership-specific communications activities and channels, which are intended to contribute to and complement existing channels:

- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership public website (ongoing development);
- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership intranet site/alignment of content of Council Rewired and NHS AthenA sites;
- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Twitter account;
- South Ayrshire Integration Joint Board/committees agendas, minutes and reports;
- Council and NHS Board meetings, committee, approved agendas, minutes and reports;
- Contributions to the VASA-led South Ayrshire Life website via service managers;
- Service-specific newsletters;
- Service-specific leaflets and posters;
- Service-specific projects/initiatives/campaigns;
- Local engagement groups;
- Promotional, planning and improvement workshops and events;
- Service directories;
- Healthy Working Lives newsletter;
- Partnership employee briefings;
- Team meetings;
- Staff engagement opportunities including Chief Officers and Heads of Service sessions, Partnership-wide Leadership sessions and iMatter survey and results feedback; and
- all staff e-mails.

## ACTION PLAN

In order to progress in the development and roll-out of improved and effective communications activity the following high-level action plan is proposed:

Number	Action	Owner	Timescale
1	<p>Develop and conduct a communications survey with current internal and external audiences to gain a better understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of channels used to communicate;</li> <li>• The effectiveness of existing communications channels;</li> <li>• Preferred communications channels; and</li> <li>• Internal and external stakeholder awareness of the Partnership, the IJB and their work.</li> </ul> <p>The first survey will provide a baseline, with future surveys providing the opportunity to track changes and identify opportunities for improvement</p>	Senior Manager – Planning & Performance, with input from NHS and SAC communications teams.	<p>By September 2018 (Baseline)</p> <p>By September 2019</p>
2	Develop a public-facing website for the Partnership and Integration Joint Board to communicate with internal and external stakeholders including patients, service users, carers and their representatives and the public.	Directorate Support and Administration Co-ordinator, with input from NHS and SAC communications teams.	Ongoing
3	Develop the Partnership's contribution to the public website of social care supports (South Ayrshire Life) to reflect Partnership arrangements and include community health information and resources.	Team Leader SDS with VASA	By March 2018 and ongoing
4	Explore different and better ways of communicating with patients, service users, carers and their representatives, particularly hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups.	Planning Co-ordinator, with support from NHS and SAC communications teams as required.	By October 2018
5	Develop and support the Partnership social media presence	Directorate Support and Administration Co-ordinator, with support from NHS and SAC communications teams.	By September 2018
6	Develop and implement a programme of additional internal engagement opportunities for staff: Chief Officer and Head of Service sessions and iMatter (continuous improvement tool to help improve staff experience).	Policy & Planning Officer	By October 2018
7	Develop and implement a framework for Team Meeting Communications Briefing for staff.	Directorate Support and Administration Co-ordinator	To launch October 2018

<b>8</b>	Review and redevelop the content on staff Intranets (both Council and NHS) to reflect Partnership arrangements and ensure consistency and synergy of content.	Learning Officer, with support from NHS and SAC communications teams as required.	November 2017 - ongoing
<b>9</b>	Develop and co-ordinate Partnership staff awards to highlight and celebrate innovation, new ways of working and success.	Director of Health and Social Care	To run annually from Autumn 2018.

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## COMMUNICATIONS ADVICE & SUPPORT

Signposting, advice, and support on the full range of communications channels and activities across the Partnership, Council and Health Board are available via the Partnership's Planning and Performance and Administration Support Services, in conjunction with the South Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire & Arran Communications Teams. This helps ensure co-ordination across communication strategies, standards, policies and guidelines.

Advice and support is provided within the following areas:

- Reputation, crisis and issues management.
- Application of communications standards, policies and guidelines, particularly in relation to the Partnership's brand identity, accessible communications, working with the media and the acceptable use of social media by Council and NHS employees.
- The development of service-specific communications strategies/plans and activity.
- Sharing Partnership stories through existing Partnership, Council and Health Board communications channels.
- Web and online content and management, including internet/intranet and the use of social media.
- Design, graphics and printing.
- Support with event organisation and promotion.
- Co-ordination of responses to crises management and media queries involving potential reputational impact.

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## MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

It's vital to assess how effective – or not – our communications activities are and whether they meet the objectives and outcomes we want to achieve.

To do this, we will need to undertake regular monitoring and measurement to understand our baseline starting point and then to assess levels of awareness and understanding of our messages and information, and the impact these are having on our people and communities. (See Action Plan No. 1)

Other measurement methods, which can help provide an indication of whether we're getting things right or not, include:

- media coverage;
- website hits/visitors;
- social media reach/engagement; and
- service user/client enquiries/complaints.

There will be regular reporting regarding communication activities to the IJB and /or its committees.

All communications activities will be evaluated continually to ensure they meet the needs of the target audiences. Any improvements identified will be incorporated into subsequent versions of both this Strategy and related action plans.

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## COMMUNICATIONS CONTACTS

Further guidance and information can be obtained by contacting the following teams and/or individuals:

Miriam Porte  
Communications Manager  
NHS Ayrshire & Arran  
01563 8260108

Denise Robertson  
Public Affairs Manager  
South Ayrshire Council  
01292 612211/07581 007258

NHSAA Press Office:  
Office hours: 01563 826111  
E-mail: [comms@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:comms@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk)

SAC Press Office:  
Office hours: 01292 612173150  
E-mail: [communications@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Out of hours: 07769 648975  
(calls only, no texts)

Out of hours: 07974 174 231



## APPENDIX 1

### Current NHS Ayrshire & Arran Communications Matrix

Comms Channel	Internal/ External	Frequency	Communications Audience										
			Patient, S/U, Carers & Their Reps	The Public	SA HASCP Staff	SAC & NHSAA	SA IJB, Elected Members, NHS Non-Exec Directors	Trade Union/ Staff side	Contractor/ Provider	Community Planning Partners	Scottish Govt and/or MPs/MSPs	The Media	
Manager's Briefing/Team Talk	Internal	As and when required			X	X	X		X				
Stop Press Bulletins	External						X		X				
AthenA (home page and site pages)	Internal	Ongoing			X	X	X		X				
Chief Exec's Blog	Internal	As and when required			X	X	X		X				
e-News Staff Bulletin	Internal	Weekly			X	X	X		X				
News Flash/News Alert	Internal	As and when required			X	X	X		X				
Media releases	External	As and when required	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X
Social media	External	As and when required	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Public website	External	As and when required	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Payslips	Internal	As and when required			X	X			X				

## Current South Ayrshire Council Communications Matrix

Comms Channel	Internal/ External	Frequency	Communications Audience										
			Patient, S/U, Carers & Their Reps	The Public	SA HASCP Staff	SAC & NHSAA	SA IJB, Elected Members, NHS Non-Exec Directors	Trade Union/ Staff side	Contractor/ Provider	Community Planning Partners	Scottish Govt and/or MPs/MSPs	The Media	
Media Releases/ Briefings	Both	As and when required	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Formal Council/Panel Meetings	Both	As scheduled	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promotional & Marketing Campaigns	Both	As and when required	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SAC Public Website	External	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Media	External	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plasma Info Screens	Both	Ongoing	X	X	X	X		X					
Tenant's Newsletters			X	X									
Chief Exec's Monthly Update	Internal	Monthly	X (staff service users too)		X	X	X	X					
Council-Wide E-mail	Internal	Ongoing	X		X	X		X					
Events/Road-shows	Both	As scheduled	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
South Ayrshire Weekly email	Internal	Weekly	X		X	X	X	X					
Re-Wired	Internal	Ongoing	X		X	X	X	X					
Community Council Updates	External		X	X			X						
Payslips	Internal	Monthly	X		X	X	X	X	X				

This information can be made available, on request, in braille, large print or audio formats and can be translated into a range of languages. Contact details are provided below.

درخواست کرنے پر یہ معلومات نابینا افراد کے لئے ابھرے حروف، بڑے حروف یا آڈیو میں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہے اور اس کا مختلف زبانوں میں ترجمہ بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ رابطہ کی تفصیلات نیچے فراہم کی گئی ہیں۔

本信息可应要求提供盲文，大字印刷或音频格式，以及可翻译成多种语言。以下是详细联系方式。

本信息可慮應要求提供盲文，大字印刷或音频格式，以及可翻譯成多种語言。以下是詳細聯系方式。

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਬੋਲ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਪ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਇਹਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

Niniejsze informacje mogą zostać udostępnione na życzenie, w alfabecie Braille'a, w druku powiększonym lub w formacie audio oraz mogą zostać przetłumaczone na wiele języków obcych. Dane kontaktowe znajdują się poniżej.

Faodar am fiosrachadh seo fhaighinn, le iartras, ann am braille, clò mòr no clàr fuaim agus tha e comasach eadar-theangachadh gu grunn chànanan. Tha fiosrachadh gu h-ìosal mu bhith a' cur fios a-steach.

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