Seamless services for people with Learning Disabilities

Communication Strategy

1.0 Document Control

Overview

DOCUMENT	Communication Strategy and Action plan for the *North Wales Together: Seamless Services for People with Learning Disabilities* Project
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REVIEWED BY	LD Transformation Team
DATE CREATED	May 2019
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	January 2020
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Communication Activity Plan

Revision History

Version	Issue Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V1		Sian Croston	First version

Consultation

Version	Who	Date
V	LD Transformation Team/ North Wales LD Partnership board	Early June 2019

Approval

Version	Who/Where	Date
V	North Wales Learning Disability Partnership Board	17/06/2019

2.0   Introduction

The aim of the project is to develop seamless health and social care services for people with learning disabilities. Through better integrating health, social care and the third sector, the project aims to help people with learning disabilities live more independently and get the care they need to closer to home.

The project aims to achieve this in a number of different ways:

- Better integration of health and social services and less duplication of record systems so people only have to 'say it once'.
- Workforce development to create better awareness of disability issues among the wider public sector workforce. This approach should reduce the demand for specialist learning disability services in future.
- Work with other organisations to improve commissioning and procurement and make sure we have the types of housing and support people need.
- Uses of assistive technology to help people with learning disabilities become more independent in their everyday lives.
- Community and culture change. Increasing the number of people employed in paid work, accessing training, and volunteering.

The project is based on the North Wales Learning Disability Strategy which was written by health and social care services together with people with learning disabilities and their families and carers. It's based on consultation and engagement with people involved in learning disability services across North Wales.

The transformation team are taking forward a programme of practical work and a key strand across all work streams is ***communication.*** The overall aim of the communication strategy is to support the transformation programme through timely and interactive internal and external communications, which creates an understanding of and commitment to the programme.

As the work of the transformation team is taken forward over the next 18 months, there should be a strong focus on the need for effective communication about all aspects of the programme which engages our stakeholders.

3.0   Statement of Purpose

This communication strategy outlines the approach that will be used to engage the programme stakeholders. It summarises the overall communication objectives and establishes some general principles to which communications will adhere. The communications strategy identifies the stakeholder groups and corresponding

communication needs. It also identifies key messages for the programme, together with some specific deliverables and communication channels.

4.0   Communication Objectives

The key communication objectives are to:

- Elevate and raise awareness of the importance of communications;
- Ensure that all key internal and external audiences impacted by the LD transformation programme are fully informed and engaged.
- Improve the management of stakeholder expectations including ensuring consistent dialogue with them.
- Ensure that internal and external stakeholders understand the vision, milestones, key activities, challenges and opportunities.
- Exploit innovative and existing communication channels and techniques to maximise awareness of and promote understanding of the LD transformation programme.
- Ensure that each communication is consistent with the principles detailed in section 5 of this document.
- Monitor and measure feedback.

The benefits of effective communication include:

- Communication tailored to the specific needs and preferences of stakeholders;
- Local Authorities and the Health Board understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from the project team.
- Other organisations, such as Housing Associations, Voluntary organisations and providers of service understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from the project team.
- Increases acceptance of proposed changes
- Stakeholders more likely to support proposed changes

The Risks of ineffective communications include:

- Confusion
- No clear indication of stakeholders/audiences
- Inconsistent engagement among key stakeholders resulting in communications that are not fully integrated.
- Failure to listen to stakeholders leading to resistance and rejection of proposals.
- Decision not to implement changes
- Loss of support

- Programme aborted.

5.0   Communication Principles

The communication strategy has been developed according to the following principles:

- Visible and accessible – Key senior management (LD project board) should deliver key overarching messages, with the LD transformation team facilitating key messages to key people via relevant networks and key personnel such as service managers and team managers across the six LA's and Health.
- Communicate the vision – all stakeholders need to understand the vision of the project and the expected improvements that can be expected as the project delivers.
- Competent and professional – making use of a wide range of communication methods and channels.
- Relevant, open and honest – information should be up to date and consistent, and should reflect the position accurately.
- Timely, flexible and appropriate – information must be available when it is needed, and the right information must be given, using the right methods and to the right people, avoiding duplication and overload.
- Comprehensive and focused – communications should address all the issues that audiences are likely to want information about; and
- Clear, direct and two-way – it is essential that there is provision for feedback so that audiences can ask questions and raise issues of concern. Plain language will need to be used, jargon free and without abbreviations, clear short messages should be the norm.
- All communication needs to be bilingual in Welsh and English as the languages spoken across the region.

The following communication strategies will also be adopted:

- Communicate frequently
  - Once is rarely enough: repeat, repeat and repeat and
  - Repetition will increase the likelihood of retention and demonstrate importance.
- Communicate as early as possible
  - Early communications do not have to provide commitment's or promises, just relevant information (for example send save the date invites for events early).

6.0 Key Messages

Different audiences will require different messages. To facilitate this, communications must deliver simple, explicit and easily understood messages. Key documents need to be converted into easy read to make accessible to citizens interested in the project. It also needs to be recognized that people will not always absorb information completely at first hearing, and messages will need to be repeated where necessary – using different media and messages where appropriate.

For key stakeholders, the **key messages** need to address:

- The key vision that *"people with learning disabilities will have a better quality of life, living locally where they feel 'safe and well', where they are valued and included in their communities and have access to effective personal support that promotes independence, choice and control".*
- New integrated structures in place so fewer people will fall between the gaps in services and no-one will experience delays in support due to disagreements between services.
- People with a learning disability will engage more in healthy lifestyle behaviours such as healthy eating and mental well-being interventions such as the five ways to well-being.
- Any health inequalities are reduced. It will be easier for people with learning disabilities to take up health screening opportunities and to have an annual health check.
- All GP surgeries will be signed up to delivering the learning disability annual health check and to change their services to make them easier to use. These changes are called 'reasonable adjustments'.
- Reduced demand on specialist learning disability services.
- People with learning disabilities and their parents/carers will have access to good, consistent and accessible information and advice.
- There will be fewer out of area placements. More people with learning disabilities will have choice and control over where they live and how they are supported.
- Increased take-up of support budgets / direct payments.
- Carers will have access to a range of flexible carer breaks.
- More people with learning disabilities will use technology safely to be able to live in a safe and secure home catering for their needs to help promote independent living within the community.

In effect, these are the core messages in relation to the transformation programme. They set out in clear and unambiguous language what we are doing, and how we are hoping to do it. The team will take every reasonable opportunity over the lifetime of the

programme to communicate and reinforce these messages ensuring they continue to be relevant and appropriate.

7.0   Audiences

A key benefit of conducting an audience analysis is that identification and analysis of audience groups allows for targeted messages to each group, making communication more efficient and effective and accommodating the respective needs of different groups through customised communications. Tailoring communications accordingly shows a commitment to the stakeholders and a sincere interest in their understanding and acceptance of the transformation programme.

The stakeholder groups identified include:

Stakeholder Group	Description
RPB (Regional Partnership Board)	The Regional Partnership Board is the statutory Board set up under Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act to drive partnership and integrated working across health, social care and partner organisation's including Housing Associations, third and private sector agencies. The Regional Partnership board is overseeing all the transformation programmes across North Wales at a high level.
LD Partnership Board	The Learning Disability Partnership Board is supporting the LD transformation programme with members of the board making high level decisions on things such as budget spend.
Neil Ayling – Project Sponsor	Chief Officer for Social Services at Flintshire County Council who are hosting the transformation team. Line Manager to Programme Manager and chair of the LD partnership board and overall project sponsor.
North Wales Participation Group	Representatives from across North Wales with a Learning Disability with support from advocates.
Parent and Carers	Parents and carers of children and adults with a Learning Disability.
LD Providers	Commissioned provider organisations supporting people with a learning disability.

Stakeholder Group	Description
Advocacy Group and Representatives	Groups or organisations who provide support to an individual to assist them in expressing their opinions and make their views heard.
Political Stakeholders	Elected members in each of the local authorities and politicians in Welsh Government.
Key Senior Personnel	Chief Executives/Senior Leaders and Directors of Social Services in other Councils and Health boards outside of North Wales with an interest in the project.
Learning Disability Specialist Teams	Specialist Operational Teams across the region
Other organisations within the field	LD Wales, Mencap, Social Care Wales, Housing Associations etc – Organisations that we can partner with and need to keep updated on progress.
Wider Communities	Messages to wider communities and the wider workforce.

Key to the provision of effective communication will therefore be the delivery of the right messages, to the right people, at the right time. This will require a mix of overall programme communications and individual messages. The messages, audiences and timescales will vary and it is important that the project team take a clear view on what needs to be communicated as part of their work programme.

8.0   Communication Channels

Media	Local, national, international, print, broadcast, web, social media such as Twitter, facebook and instagram – Linked'in presence

Lobbying	Local and National government, funding bodies, special interest groups

Marketing	Brand, website, advertising, brochures, fliers, videos, project briefings & bulletins, posters, blog

Events	Conferences, launch events, public speeches, roadshows, General events such as Eisteddfod, Denbigh & Flint Show

Communication Element	Available Channels
Internal team day to day information sharing	Staff Briefings Team Meetings Email
External campaigns, promotions and information sharing	Website updates/campaigns Email Publications Social Media Engagement Events
External – Positive news sharing / influencing	Website updates/campaigns Social Media Leaflets and brochures Events
Stakeholders – Reputation building, partnerships and Engagement	Website Social Media

Communication Element	Available Channels
	Reports and Publications
	Email/networking/events
Media Relations	Proactive/reactive press
	Photo opportunities
General outreach	Events, Eisteddfod, leaflets, marketing and general awareness of what the project is about.

9.0 Evaluating Success

Collecting feedback and measuring the effectiveness of communication efforts validates that messages are received and understood by stakeholders. This allows the communications team to assess whether our development and deployment strategies are effective in achieving stated goals. In addition feedback from stakeholders will help the team assess the timeliness and appropriateness of messages, improve communications by updating the communications strategy to incorporate what was discovered during the feedback process, and assist in identifying key deployment issues, stakeholder concerns, and possible resolutions.

Feedback mechanisms will be put in place to support two-way communication, stakeholder engagement, and communication effectiveness. To ensure success of the communication strategy, feedback from stakeholders is imperative.

Mechanisms to collect feedback to measure performance can be formal and informal. Formal mechanisms may include surveys, a suggestion box, or focus group sessions. Floor representatives may also be appointed to collect feedback. Informal mechanisms may consist of in-person discussions and emails.

Specific measures to review effectiveness will be developed and deployed in the communications feedback matrix (appendix A). These will include reviewing:

- The Learning Disability Partnership Board – the extent to which the board is content with the communications strategy.
- Employees across all regions – the extent to which they are aware of the transformation project and how it is being taken forward and its benefits.

- All stakeholders – the extent to which everyone is aware of the transformation programme and its benefits and to enable them to provide feedback.

10.0 Appendix

Appendix 1 – Communication feedback matrix

Appendix 2 – Communication Action Plan

Appendix 1 - Communication Feedback Matrix

Feedback Mechanism	Timing	Purpose	Responsibility	Measure
Online Surveys such as survey monkey	As needed	Informal mechanism to determine if communication activities are effective and to assess the level of understanding/awareness of particular issues	Communication Sub Group	XX% acknowledged that they understood and agreed that a particular communication message was effective
Stakeholder Engagement Events	6 monthly	To verify stakeholders needs are being met and identify new needs and issues	LD Transformation Team	
Team Meetings	Monthly	To get feedback on whether our communications are effective	LD Transformation Team	
Anonymous feedback suggestion box	As required	To get feedback on whether our communications are effective	Communication Sub Group	

Appendix 2 - Communication Action Plan

Communication	Key message	Vehicle	Frequency	Target Delivery Date	Target Audience	Owner	Complete Y/N	Comments
Project Briefing/Bulletin	Update on how the programme is going and any key deliverables	Electronic	Bi-monthly	1st of the Month	All stakeholders. Easy read developed	SC and Comms Sub Group		
Project Newsletter	More detailed update on how the project is going (bi-lingual magazine style)	Electronic and Print & distribute	6 monthly		All stakeholders	SC and Comms sub group		
Launch Event Blog	How did the launch event go, why did we do it and what we have taken away from it	Electronic Blog – Launched via website and social media	As required	July 2019	All stakeholders	Comms Sub Group		
Development of Values Blog	Blog explaining how the values and principles have been developed and how we plan to use them going forward	Electronic Blog – Launched via website and social media				SC/MJW		

Communication	Key message	Vehicle	Frequency	Target Delivery Date	Target Audience	Owner	Complete Y/N	Comments
Update reports – Kathryn to include all formal reports/comms and to who								
Political and Senior Leadership Engagement and Updating	Project updates and key milestones delivered					Neil Ayling as part of Leadership networks		