

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00275 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Social Work Adult Services Community Care	Lead Officer Name:	Paul Surgenor
		Team:	Policy, Planning and Performance
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Proposal:	<p>The Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership Communications Strategy (2021 - 2024) sets out a new framework for communications activity. The document supports the implementation of existing Partnership strategic documents such as the Strategic Plan and the Participation and Engagement Strategy. It's principles apply to all Partnership staff and their communication activity.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy establishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework for communications: vision, standards, key messages, and governance • Defined audience groups and stakeholders • Defined communication channels, tools and methods to communicate with audiences • An agreed measurement and evaluation process for Partnership communication activity and campaigns. • An accompanying action plan to be progressed, monitored and improved upon. <p>The Communications Strategy has been developed with the support of a communication and engagement working group, which identified the following communication priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the reputation of the health and social care sector, the Partnership, and its partner 	Reference No:	

- organisations.
- Build understanding of the Partnership’s services and how to access them.
- Ensure effective communications across the integrated workforce.

The strategy recognises that inclusive communication is good for everyone, highlighting that by making everything easy to access and simple to understand, our message will go further.

The Partnership will always aim to support as many people as possible in the local population to take part in communication with its services. This includes considering the specific communication needs of people with protected characteristics. All communications activity should be adapted to provide appropriate communication styles, methods, and channels for the intended target audience.

The Partnership’s approach to accessible and inclusive communications is set within the wider context of equalities and human rights as set out by the Equality Act 2010.

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
		No	Yes	No
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Other, please specify:				
Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):				
04/06/2021	To establish effective communication practices which support the Partnership achieve its strategic vision. This will be achieved through implementation of new frameworks, standards, and key messages which are tailored to audiences.			
04/06/2021	To build understanding of the Partnership’s services and how to access them among all audiences.			
04/06/2021	To protect and enhance the reputation of the health and social care sector, the Partnership, and its partner organisations.			

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	
04/06/2021	To ensure effective communications across the integrated workforce and its partner agencies. This will allow messages to reach as many audiences as possible and support people to understand and access Falkirk's health and social care services.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	N/A	N/A
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	N/A
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	N/A
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	N/A	N/A
	Expected Annual Income Total:	N/A	N/A
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	04/06/2021	
	End Date (if any):	04/06/2024	

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

The new Communication Strategy aims to improve the Partnership's relationship with all local audiences, rather than targeting those who access a specific service or support option.

Serving a local population of over 160,000 across rural and urban communities, the Partnership's local audience includes service users, unpaid carers, supported individuals and their families, and staff working across Falkirk's health and social care sector employed by NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk Council and commissioned partners.

The Partnership's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016, and 2018 refresh, provides further insight to Falkirk's local population and its demographic and protected characteristic groups. The Partnership reviews and updates local demographic insights regularly to support informed service planning, communication activity will use the latest available data to ensure a tailored messaging approach.

B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

Best Judgement:	
Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes
If NO, please state why.	

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	The Partnership set up a Participation, Engagement and Communications task group to support the development of Engagement and Communication Strategies. This included representation from internal staff and external partners including NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk IJB, Royal Voluntary Service, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre and the Forth Valley Sensory Centre.	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	Yes	The Partnership's Participation, Engagement and Communications task group supported the development of the new Communication Strategy. The group considered the responses gathered via the survey and considered examples of best practice from other organisations and Health and Social Care Partnerships which could inform Falkirk's strategy.
Survey	Yes	A Participation, Engagement, and Communications Survey was sent to internal and external service providers on 31 March 2021. The survey received 19 responses - respondents identified areas of improvement for the Partnership's communication including internal comms needs, and digital improvements covering the website and the establishment of new social media channels.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes	
Is further engagement recommended?	No	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age		✓		<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences, including those associated with age.</p>

Disability		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences, including those associated with disability.</p>
Sex		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>

Ethnicity		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>
Religion / Belief / non-Belief		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>

Sexual Orientation		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>
Transgender		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>

Pregnancy / Maternity		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>
Marriage / Civil Partnership		✓	<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), tailoring the Partnership's communication activity to audience needs and preferences, and working with stakeholders to utilise the most appropriate communication channels to reach audiences.</p> <p>A communications standards and brand guide will be developed for the Partnership as part of the Communication Strategy's action plan. This will provide a range of resources for all staff to utilise in tailoring appropriate communication materials to their audiences, particularly ones with a protected characteristic</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format to the audience. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>

Poverty		✓		<p>The communications strategy is committed to a multi-channel approach which provides information in various formats (print, digital, and face to face), taking into account those without access to IT and digital resources.</p> <p>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format. This acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences, including those associated with socio-economic status and social class.</p>
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.		✓		<p>Carers, Travelling Communities, Refugees, Migrant populations - the Communication Strategy sets out how strong working relationships should be maintained with stakeholders and external organisations, such as the Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre, to allow messaging and communications to be shared collaboratively across organisations. This ensures audiences belonging to minority groups are informed as possible, receiving targeted information through relevant and accessible channels.</p>
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	The Partnership's new Communication Strategy and associated activity does not create unlawful discrimination. The outlined approach to communication actively seeks to engage all audiences, taking into account the unique needs, preferences, and challenges faced by different groups, particularly those with a protected characteristic.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	The new Communication Strategy and action plan provides additional channels of communication to allow the Partnership to reach more audiences - ultimately increasing the understanding and awareness of the Partnership's services and support options, which will help to advance the equality of opportunity and access to services.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	The Communication Strategy commits the HSCP to strong partnership working with external organisations - helping to tailor communications to audiences with protected characteristics. As part of the Strategy's action plan, a new communications standards and brand guide will be developed, providing a range of resources for all staff. The guide will aid understanding of accessibility requirements and language preferences - promoting understanding of audience needs and reducing prejudice.

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	Yes	The Communication Strategy commits the Partnership to strong joint-working with external organisations to help messaging reach further. Where appropriate, the Partnership will engage with local business to reach relevant audiences.
Councils	Yes	The Communication Strategy commits the Partnership to strong joint-working with external organisations to help messaging reach further. The Partnership will closely work with Falkirk Council and other public sector bodies in the Forth Valley area to increase internal and external understanding of the Partnership's services and support options. Elected members will benefit from an increased understanding and awareness of the health and social care landscape, allowing them to better inform their constituents.
Education Sector	Yes	The Communication Strategy commits the Partnership to strong joint-working with external organisations to help messaging reach further. Where appropriate, the Partnership will engage with local education establishments to reach relevant audiences.
Fire	Yes	The Communication Strategy commits the Partnership to strong joint-working with external organisations to help messaging reach further. Where appropriate, the Partnership will engage with local fire services to reach relevant audiences.
NHS	Yes	The Communication Strategy aims to increase public and internal audience understanding and awareness of the Partnership's services and support options, this includes services provided directly by the NHS. This will in-turn empower and encourage people to access services and local support, which is in line with the aims of NHS Forth Valley.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The Communication Strategy aims to increase public and internal audience understanding and awareness of services and support options. This will in-turn empower and encourage people to access services and community support, which is in line with the aims of the IJB.
Police	Yes	The Communication Strategy commits the Partnership to strong joint-working with external organisations to help messaging reach further. Where appropriate, the Partnership will engage with the local police service to reach relevant audiences.
Third Sector	Yes	The Communication Strategy commits the Partnership to strong joint-working with external organisations to help messaging reach further. Where appropriate, the Partnership will engage with the local third sector to reach relevant audiences.

Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Current limited availability of accessible communication formats	People who do not hold English as a first language, have a learning disability, low literacy skills, or a sensory condition such as loss of sight, speech, or hearing.	<p>Development of inclusive communication guidance and materials - including video and easy read information.</p> <p>Review the Partnership's website content to ensure all information is accessible.</p> <p>Work towards Communication Access UK accreditation - embedding best practice into the Partnership's communication channels and providing guidance and training to staff.</p>	Communications Officer		The communication strategy supports the Partnership's outcome that 'Individuals, their carers and families can plan and manage their own health, care and well-being. Where supports are required, people have control and choice over what and how care is provided'. By providing targeted, accessible information, audiences will be equipped with the knowledge and awareness of services and support option available to them.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
People who are digitally excluded	Particularly people who are older, minority ethnic populations including gypsy travellers, people who are homeless, remote and rural communities, and people within lower socio-economic groups.	While increasing the Partnership's digital presence (website and social media), a wide range of communication methods will continue to ensure information is accessible to all groups - with information also provided in print, radio, and face-to-face formats.	Communication Officer		The communication strategy supports the Partnership's outcome that 'Individuals, their carers and families can plan and manage their own health, care and well-being. Where supports are required, people have control and choice over what and how care is provided'. By providing targeted, accessible information, audiences will be equipped with the knowledge and awareness of services and support option available to them.

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?	Yes
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If yes when and how ?

Actions will be reviewed and monitored through the Integration Joint Board, via regular Communications updates and summaries provided to the IJB.

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	The proposal is designed to increase communication and engagement with all audiences, with the strategy setting out principles and tailored approaches for all audience and equality groups.
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Paul Surgenor</i>	Date:	20/04/2022
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA: Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes / No
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS		
If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA		
If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA		

Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes / No	If YES, please describe:
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LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL	Yes / No	COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes / No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Martin David Thom</i>	Date:	02/02/2023