

# Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00670 (Version 1)

## SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

<b>Service &amp; Division:</b>	Social Work Adult Services Community Care	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b>	Paul Surgenor
		<b>Team:</b>	Policy, Planning and Performance
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<b>Proposal:</b>	<p><b>Communication Strategy 2024 - 2027</b></p> <p>The Partnership will refresh its Communication Strategy for the next three year period, 2024-2027. The document supports the implementation of the Partnership's overarching Strategic Plan and sits alongside the Participation and Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>The Communication Strategy sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A framework for communication activity - standards, key messages, and governance.</li> <li>• Defined audience groups and stakeholders</li> <li>• Defined communication channels, tools, and methods</li> <li>• An agreed measurement and evaluation process</li> <li>• A combined Communication and Participation action plan.</li> </ul> <p>The strategy is being developed using feedback and ideas gathered during the Strategic Plan development stages, which identified Communication as a key area which will help deliver the Partnership's 4 priorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance community-based services</li> <li>• Improve the way people access care</li> <li>• Minimise the affect of conditions via early intervention and prevention</li> </ul>	<b>Reference No:</b>	

- Assist, inform, and empower unpaid carers to manage their caring role and have a fulfilled life outside of caring.

Feedback gathered from Strategic Plan engagement identified a need to improve engagement, feedback opportunities, and signposting information.

The Communication Strategy will set out how the Partnership will promote and develop inclusive communication practices which help make services and information easily understandable and accessible. 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, and anticipates the introduction of a new Scottish-specific Public Sector Equality Duty from April 2025 on Inclusive Communication (proposed by the Scottish Government, subject to Parliamentary process and approval).

<b>What is the Proposal?</b>	<b>Budget &amp; Other Financial Decision</b>	<b>Policy (New or Change)</b>	<b>HR Policy &amp; Practice</b>	<b>Change to Service Delivery / Service Design</b>
	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Who does the Proposal affect?</b>	<b>Service Users</b>	<b>Members of the Public</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Job Applicants</b>
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Other, please specify:</b>				
<b>Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):</b>				
30/06/2027	To protect and enhance the reputation of the health and social care sector, the Partnership, and its partner organisations			

<b>Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):</b>	
30/06/2027	To build understanding of the Partnership's services and how to access them among all audiences
30/06/2027	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.
30/06/2027	To raise awareness and understanding of the various barriers and needs which can affect people's interaction with services. The Partnership will celebrate diversity and inclusion within Falkirk to demonstrate the tailored health and social care support that is available and needed.
31/12/2024	To set primary formats for accessible and inclusive communication, improving the range of formats available as default for information used to access services. It is proposed that materials which help people access services or understand support options should also be provided in summary, easy read, and audio formats.

**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	
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	N/A	
	Expected Annual Income Total:	N/A	
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	28/06/2024	
	End Date (if any):	30/06/2027	

**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 2024 – 2027 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 over 160,000 people across Falkirk's rural and urban communities, the Partnership's local audience includes people who access or may need to access our services; their families; their carers; and staff working across health and social care in Falkirk.

The following demographic information provides an insight into our local population and those with protected characteristics. This will influence our general approach to communicating with a wide audience, however services should consider their own audience needs when planning targeted communication to people who access their support.

The below information is largely drawn from the Partnership's latest Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan, and Census Data. When developing and delivering communication activity, the Partnership will use the latest available data to ensure a tailored messaging approach.

**Age**

- Falkirk has a broadly similar distribution between the age bands as Scotland, with only slightly higher proportions of people aged between 0-15 and between 50-64, and a slightly lower proportion of people aged between 16-49.
- In the next 25 years it is predicted that percentage of people falling within the 'older adult population' aged over 75 will increase by 80.3%.
- People aged over 75 are more likely to live without internet access at home, compared to an average of 6% for all adults over 18. (OFCOM, 2022).
- More than half (53%) of people aged 70 who live alone do not use or have access to the internet at home. (OFCOM, 2022).
- 80% of people in the Falkirk area with a physical disability are aged over 50. (Census, 2011).
- 70% of people with hearing loss are aged over 70.
- The risk of dementia increases with age. There are an estimated 90,000 people living with dementia in Scotland – around two thirds of which live at home, with the remainder in acute or residential care.

**Disability**

- 10,800 people in Falkirk recorded as having a physical disability, 7% of the total population. (Census data, 2011)
- It is estimated that one in six people in Scotland suffer from hearing loss.
- There are over 3,700 British Sign Language users in the Falkirk area. (Census data, 2022)

### **Gender reassignment**

- While it is not possible to find a precise estimate of the number of trans people in Scotland, the most commonly used figure is 0.5% of the population, which would be just under 24,000 adults across Scotland. The number of trans people accessing services at Scottish Gender Identity Clinics is much smaller than this, around 1800 adults and 600 children over the four year period from 2014 to 2017.
- In 2017, it was estimated that the average age of referral to Scottish Gender Identity Clinics was 26 years in adults and 14 years for young people.

### **Marriage and civil partnership**

- Further information on marriage and civil partnership will be published as part of the 2022 Census, the of which were not available at the time of writing.

### **Race**

- As of the 2022 Census, the vast majority of Falkirk's 158,000 population were white (including white British, White Irish, White Scottish, White Traveller, White Polish, other white) (Census data, 2022).
- 1125 people in the Falkirk area were mixed or multiple ethnic group; 3,245 were Asian; 594 were African; 117 were Caribbean or Black; and 423 from other ethnic groups, Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British groups. (Census, 2022)
- 149,052 of Falkirk's 154,078 population reported English as their main language during the 2022 Census. In addition, 387 people used Scots; 28 used Gaelic; 92 used Sign Language; and 4,515 used 'other languages' (Census 2022).

### **Religion or belief**

- 86,376 of Falkirk's 154,078 population reported no religion during the 2022 Census. The religious population in the Falkirk area includes Church of Scotland (35,952); Roman Catholic (17,529); Other Christian (6,377); Muslim (2054); Pagan (541); Hindu (269); Buddhist (256); Sikh (149); and Jewish (50).
- As of the 2022 Census, for the first time, the majority of Scots now say they have no religion with 51.1% describing themselves as having no religion - up from 36.7% in 2011.

## Sex

- There are slightly more males aged 0 to 15, but from 65 upwards there are markedly more females in Falkirk.

## Sexual orientation

- Further information on sexual orientation will be published as part of the 2022 Census, the of which were not available at the time of writing.
- However, figures from the 2021 Census in England and Wales suggest that 3.2% of the population identify as “Gay or Lesbian”, “Bisexual” or “Other sexual orientation”.
- Research by NHS Digital found that a slightly higher proportion of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people (7%) reported ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ health compared to heterosexual adults (6%).
- LGB adults also experienced a higher prevalence of limiting long-term illness (26%) than heterosexual adults (22%). The picture of general health among LGB adults was mixed, however, with other indicators, such as levels of obesity, being better than for heterosexual adults.

## References

- Scotland’s Census (2011 and 2022) Census Data. Available at <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/>
- OFCOM (2022), ‘Digital exclusion: A review of Ofcom’s research on digital exclusion among adults in the UK’, Available at: [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/234364/digital-exclusion-review-2022.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/234364/digital-exclusion-review-2022.pdf)
- Scottish Public Health Network (2017) Community Briefing Paper. Available at <https://www.scottishtrans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Community-briefing-paper.pdf>
- NHS Digital (2021), ‘Health and health-related behaviours of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual adults’, Available at: Health and health-related behaviours of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual adults (digital.nhs.uk), Accessed on 21 May 2024

### 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

As part of the development of the Partnership's 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan, extensive community engagement gathered feedback about a range of issues which were important to people accessing our local services. Communication was identified as a recurring theme throughout feedback opportunities, with the following needs identified:

- Need to raise awareness of what support is available.
- Provide regular communication to service users to keep them informed and help manage expectations.
- Better information sharing required between services regarding service users.

In addition, staff sessions held to inform the drafting of the new Communication Strategy identified a need for:

- Visible leadership communication.
- Improved understanding of decision making processes.
- Support and guidance to deliver inclusive communication.

<b>Best Judgement:</b>	
<b>Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?</b>	No
<b>Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?</b>	
<b>What gaps in data / information were identified?</b>	Detailed local data relating to some of the protected characteristics will become available when the Census results are published. Particular data gaps that the Census will help to address relate to the size of the transgender population, proportion of people with a disability, the size of ethnic minority groups and the size of the LGB population.
<b>Is further research necessary?</b>	No
<b>If NO, please state why.</b>	No. The equality impact of health and social care services is relatively well researched, even if local data can be difficult to ascertain. Research relating to Scotland or the UK as a whole can be used to fill gaps in local data. Further local data will be made available during the next year as the 2022 Census data is released in phases.



**SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT**

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

<b>Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?</b>	Yes	
<b>If YES, please state who was engagement with.</b>	<p>The Partnership will always seek to reduce ‘consultation fatigue’ on our audiences and partners. As such, knowledge and insight gathered during the engagement process for the 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan has informed this Communication Strategy.</p> <p>The Partnership set out to involve key stakeholders during the production of the Strategic Plan. Service users, carers, health and social care staff, the public and key partners have had various opportunities to tell us what they think and participate in the production of the Strategic Plan. This was done through a series of information and consultation methods.</p> <p>Details of the public engagement process can be found at <a href="https://falkirkhscp.org/draft-strategic-plan-published/">https://falkirkhscp.org/draft-strategic-plan-published/</a></p> <p>In addition, a draft Communication Strategy and proposed actions were presented in early 2024 in sessions delivered to the council-wide Community Empowerment Action Team (CEAT) networking group; the Policy, Planning, and Performance team; and service/team managers. These sessions gathered staff feedback and comments, which have informed the final Strategy.</p>	
<b>If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.</b>		
<b>How was the engagement carried out?</b>	<b>What were the results from the engagement? Please list...</b>	
<b>Focus Group</b>	Yes	<p>Details of the public engagement process which gathered related feedback for the Strategic Plan can be found at <a href="https://falkirkhscp.org/draft-strategic-plan-published/">https://falkirkhscp.org/draft-strategic-plan-published/</a></p> <p>In addition, a draft Communication Strategy and proposed actions were presented in early 2024 in sessions delivered to the council-wide Community Empowerment Action Team (CEAT) networking group; the Policy, Planning, and Performance team; and service/team managers. These sessions gathered staff feedback and comments, which have informed the final Strategy.</p>
<b>Survey</b>	Yes	Details of the public engagement process which gathered related feedback for the Strategic Plan can be found at <a href="https://falkirkhscp.org/draft-strategic-plan-published/">https://falkirkhscp.org/draft-strategic-plan-published/</a>
<b>Display / Exhibitions</b>	No	

<b>User Panels</b>	No	
<b>Public Event</b>	No	
<b>Other: please specify</b>		
<b>Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?</b>	Yes	
<b>Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?</b>	No	
<b>Is further engagement recommended?</b>	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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences, including those associated with age. For example, we understand from feedback and data available that older age groups are more likely to be digitally excluded, while younger audiences may prefer or be more likely to be digitally native. Therefore communication channels and methods should be tailored to the age demographics of the intended audience.</p>

**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:**

				<p>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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences, including those associated with a disability. We understand that using Plain English, summary information, audio, video, BSL, and easy read formats are key to communicating with audiences with disabilities, therefore will tailor the format information is provided in when communicating with people with a disability.</p>
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<p><b>Sex</b></p>		<p>✓</p>	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences. This includes the different health needs dependent on a person's sex, such as experience of menstruation and menopause - requiring access to information about related services.</p>
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<b>Ethnicity</b>		✓	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences. The needs of people from different ethnicity will vary and are more likely to include language and cultural barriers. The Partnership will access appropriate translation and interpretation services to communicate and connect with external cultural organisations to aid engagement with people from different ethnicities.</p>
<b>Religion / Belief / non-Belief</b>		✓	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences. The Partnership will connect with external religious organisations to aid engagement with people from different religions and beliefs.</p>

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		✓	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences. The Partnership's communication will recognise the health needs of people from the LGBT+ community; the barriers that may prevent LGBT+ people from accessing the support they need; and will work with external organisations to ensure appropriate outreach with the LGBT+ community.</p>
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<p><b>Transgender</b></p>		<p>✓</p>	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences. The Partnership's communication will recognise the health needs of people from the transgender community; the barriers that may prevent transgender people from accessing the support they need; and will work with external organisations to ensure appropriate outreach with the wider LGBT+ community.</p>
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<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>		✓	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences. This includes the different health needs prior to and following pregnancy; and the barriers to accessing services which people may experience after the birth of their child.</p>
<b>Marriage / Civil Partnership</b>		✓	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p>

<p><b>Poverty</b></p>		<p>✓</p>	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences, including those associated with a socio-economic status and social class. This includes recognising that poverty can affect people's access to digital resources and educational resources which inform them about local support and services. The Partnership will work with external organisations to reach people from various socio-economic groups, and will provide training to staff about the factors which can affect people's relationship with our services.</p>
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<b>Care Experienced</b>		✓	<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>Plain language and accessibility is core to the communication strategy's ethos - ensuring all information is provided in an understandable format.</p> <p>New accessibility standards and guidance will be applied to the Partnership's communication activity, strengthening the inclusive communication approach. Staff are provided with resources which aids the tailoring of communication materials to their audiences, particularly those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges the communication needs and preferences of different audiences.</p> <p>The strategy also 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.</p>
<b>Other, health, community justice, carers etc.</b>		✓	<p>Travelling Communities, Refugees, Migrant populations - the Communication Strategy sets out how strong working relationships should be maintained with stakeholders and external organisations 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>
<b>Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)</b>			
		<b>Evidence of Due Regard</b>	
<b>Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):</b>	<p>The Partnership's 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.</p>		

<b>Advance Equality of Opportunity:</b>	The refreshed Communication Strategy and action plan supports various channels of communication which allows the Partnership to reach as many audiences as possible using tailored communication activity - ultimately this will increase 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.
<b>Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):</b>	The Communication Strategy commits the HSCP to strong partnership working with external organisations - helping to tailor communications to audiences with protected characteristics. Staff guidance is available, and will be continually refreshed, to provide a range of resources for all staff. The guidance aids 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.
<b>Business</b>	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.
<b>Councils</b>	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 benefit from an increased understanding and awareness of the health and social care landscape, allowing them to better inform their constituents.
<b>Education Sector</b>	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.
<b>Fire</b>	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.
<b>NHS</b>	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.
<b>Integration Joint Board</b>	Yes	The Communication Strategy aims to increase public and internal audience understanding and awareness of the decision making process of the IJB. This will in-turn raise understanding of services and encourage people to access services and community support, which is in line with the aims of the IJB.
<b>Police</b>	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.

<b>Third Sector</b>	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.
<b>Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.</b>		

## 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>Application of Accessible format guidance, produced alongside this Communication Strategy. The guidance outlines what constitutes as accessible formats - defining easy read, BSL, audio, and summary formats. Guidance from external organisations has been collated to help staff produce materials to a consistent standard.</p> <p>The Partnership will also roll our Communication Access UK training to frontline 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.**

<b>Are actions being reported to Members?</b>	Yes
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**If yes when and how ?**

Actions will be reviewed and monitored through the Integration Joint Board, via quarterly Communications updates 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:	21/05/2024
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**SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY**

<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:</b>	<b>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?</b>	Yes
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<b>ASSESSMENT FINDINGS</b>	Sufficient information provided	
<b>If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA</b>		
<b>If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA</b>		

<b>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>?</b>	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		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes	Communicating with local audiences will have a low level impact.

**SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF**

<b>Director / Head of Service:</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>Suzanne Thomson</i>	<b>Date:</b> 13/01/2025