

NHS FORTH VALLEY

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

2015 - 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

NHS services in Scotland have always been subject to change however the next two years will see a transformational programme of reform as health and social care integration is taken forward across the country and plans are implemented to deliver the Scottish Government's 2020 Vision.

A rising elderly population, growing numbers of people experiencing dementia and an increase in the number of people living with long-term health conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease will also require new and innovative ways of working with a major shift to deliver care in people's homes and local communities rather than in hospitals. There will also be an increasing requirement for 7 day working in both hospital and community-based health services.

In addition, developments within the media and wider culture such as 24 hr news, the increasing expansion of online media and the ever growing use of social media present require a shift in emphasis from traditional communication channels such as print media to online and digital communication channels.

These changes will require a joined up approach to communications with greater partnership working at a local, regional and national level, more creative, innovative and cost-effective use of resources, innovative approaches and greater use of technology.

The NHS Forth Valley Communications Strategy 2015 – 2017 sets out the key aims, principles and challenges and highlights the key communication priorities. It also builds on the previous Communications Strategy for 2009 – 2014, reflects the changes and improvements which have taken place during this period and provides a framework for next two years.

2. KEY AIMS

- To effectively communicate with staff, patients and other key stakeholders using a range of different tools – working collaboratively with key partners to maximise coverage and reach
- To ensure staff across the organisation are well informed on developments, changes and decisions which affect them and have access to professional communications support and advice
- To effectively manage the communications response for key incidents and outbreaks, working closely with relevant key partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and local authorities
- To raise awareness of key health service developments, changes and improvements across Forth Valley, both internally and externally
- To educate and inform local patients and the general public by providing health information and advice on a range of services, support and facilities
- To protect and enhance the reputation of NHS Forth Valley as an excellent employer and service provider which is committed to providing high quality, safe and person-centred care
- To continually review and develop and improve existing communication tools to reflect best practice and address feedback from staff and service users

3. KEY PRINCIPLES

NHS Forth Valley aims to improve the health and healthcare of our population by providing healthcare that is efficient, effective, equitable, patient-centred, safe and timely.

The Board has a good track record in communicating with the public, patients and staff, and ensuring that key stakeholders are involved in the ongoing development of services across NHS Forth Valley. This Communications Strategy, which builds on this work, is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Open, honest, timely and accurate communications
- Respect for patient and staff confidentiality
- Clear and accessible information – reflecting Plain English standards and avoiding the use of jargon
- Commitment to ensuring, wherever possible, staff and other key stakeholders are informed about key NHS Forth Valley initiatives or announcements in advance
- A joined up and consistent approach to communications on joint issues, services and initiatives
- Two way communications with managers taking responsibility for ensuring staff are regularly updated on relevant information
- Willingness to listen and learn from feedback and reflect good practice internally and externally
- Adherence to NHS brand identity guidelines

4. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The next few years will see a major programme of reform across the public sector as NHS Boards implement plans to deliver the Scottish Government's national healthcare strategy and take forward the integration of adult health and social care services with local council partners. These policies, along with other key national drivers, will have major implications for the planning and delivery of health services across Scotland and, in turn, the communications activity which supports these plans.

- [The Scottish Government's 2020 Vision](#) – outlines the Scottish Government's Vision for health services and aim to ensure that, by 2020, everyone is able to live longer healthier lives at home, or in a homely setting
- [Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) – provides the legislative framework for the integration of health and social care services across Scotland
- [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Bill](#) – which aims to ensure local council, health, police, fire and transport services work together and with local communities to improve services. It also gives community organisations more power to have their ideas listened to.
- [NHS Scotland Staff Governance Standard](#) is the overarching policy for partnership working, employment practice and employee relations and specifies that all NHS staff are entitled to be:
 - Well informed
 - Appropriately trained
 - Involved in decisions which affect them
 - Treated fairly and consistently
 - Provided with a safe working environment
- [Informing, Engaging and Consulting](#) - In February 2010 the Scottish Government published updated guidance on informing, engaging and consulting people in developing health and community care services. This is supplemented by [guidance](#) produced by the Scottish Health Council. Boards should also follow the principles and practice endorsed in the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#).
- **National legislation** – including
 - Patients Rights (Scotland) Act 2011
 - UK Government's Equality Act - 2010
 - The NHS Scotland Code of Practice on Protecting Patient Confidentiality – 2003
 - Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
 - Data Protection Act 1998

5. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

NHS Forth Valley's agenda over the next two years is a challenging one as it takes forward a major programme of work to review clinical services across the organisation. This work, which started in October 2014, is due to be completed in 2015 to inform the development of a new healthcare strategy which will set out the plans and priorities for the next five years. The organisation has also embarked on work to integrate local health and social care services for adults, in line with national legislation. This will lead to the development of two new Health and Social Care Partnerships – one covering Falkirk which will be developed in partnership with Falkirk Council, and one covering Stirling and Clackmannanshire which will be run in partnership with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils. Both Partnerships, which will be developed from 1 April 2015, will produce strategic plans which will set out local priorities and goals to meet the needs of local communities and describe how these will be achieved.

Work will continue to improve the way patients move through our hospitals as part of an innovative pilot project which is being carried out in Partnership with the Institute of Healthcare Optimisation (IHO) in Boston. The patient flow initiative is looking at ways to reduce delays and variation in the way patients are admitted, transferred and discharged from our wards. It forms part of a wider programme of work to improve the quality, safety and effectiveness of care across the organisation.

NHS Forth Valley will also continue to take forward actions to meet key national performance targets which are designed to ensure services are safe, timely, effective and efficient, equitable and person centred. This will require new and innovative ways of working to meet increased demand and ensure services continue to be delivered within existing budgets over the next two years.

Key organisational priorities for 2015– 2017

- Deliver more healthcare in homes and local communities across Forth Valley
- Reduce avoidable hospital admissions and ensure that, where patients do require inpatient care, they are able to be discharged as soon as they are well
- Implement further changes and improvements to enhance the quality and safety of patient care we provide
- Consistently meet key national and local performance targets which aim to ensure services are safe, timely, equitable, effective, efficient and person centred
- Prevent ill health and improve health outcomes in local communities across Forth Valley
- Continue to recognise the work and achievements of staff across the organisation
- Further enhance the profile and reputation of NHS Forth Valley as a caring, innovative and effective organisation which meets the needs of local patients and communities

These will be achieved by:

- Developing and implementing NHS Forth Valley's new Healthcare Strategy
- Integrating local health and social care services for adults from April 2015 onwards
- Continuing to work with the Institute of Healthcare Optimisation (IHO) to reduce delays, increase consistency and improve productivity across our inpatient wards

- Developing and improving new and existing healthcare facilities – including the development of a new Care Village on the Stirling Community Hospital site, the creation of a new health centre in Doune and the creation of a new Maggie’s Centre which is due to open in 2016
- Increasing capacity in areas where we are not meeting current demand
- Listening and responding to feedback from patients and staff
- Recognising and rewarding staff awards and achievements
- Promoting service developments, innovations and improvements across the organisation
- Developing and piloting initiatives to improve the communication skills of frontline staff
- Increasing participation in key health improvement initiatives and screening programmes

6. KEY COMMUNICATION ISSUES

NHS Forth Valley serves a population of around 300,000 people covering a diverse geographical area from Killin and Tyndrum in the North, Strathblane to the West and Bo’ness to the East.

The Health Board works closely with its three local authority partners, other public agencies and several hundred independent health contractors including GPs, dentists, pharmacists and opticians. It employs more than 6,000 staff who work in a number of different locations across Forth Valley including Forth Valley Royal Hospital and four community hospitals in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Bo’ness and Stirling. This can present challenges for internal communications, although, fortunately, a high percentage of our staff have access to email.

Changes in media and wider culture such as 24 hr news, the increasing expansion of online news sites and the ever growing use of social media present significant communication challenges as well as key opportunities. For example, the use of social media makes it quicker and easier to share information and updates on a wide range of health issues. This would be particularly useful in the event of a major incident where it is important to quickly provide health advice, information and reassurance to the general public. The growing number of local people using social media and the sharing of information by followers and partner agencies also increases the potential to reach a much larger and more diverse population than some more traditional methods of communications. While this can be extremely helpful, it also brings challenges in terms of the time and resources required to regularly monitor and update social media sites, continue to develop these channels and respond to growing numbers of comments, questions and requests for information.

Social media also brings challenges in terms of organisational reputation as, although the vast majority of comments and feedback posted by people are positive, negative comments can harm the reputation of our staff and services and have the potential to be shared and picked up by the wider media. The expansion of online news websites and 24 hr news reporting has changed the dynamics of traditional media requests and deadlines. While this increases the potential to share information far more quickly, it also increases demand for regular updates and enables coverage, positive and negative, to be shared far more widely. In addition, it also means that a permanent record of any coverage remains online and can be referred to and linked to from any subsequent online articles. This increases the importance of correcting any inaccuracies to ensure that they are not repeated or referred to in future.

The development of health and social care integration will also require a more joined up and consistent approach to communications. NHS Forth Valley’s Communications Department works closely with communication colleagues from partner agencies across Forth Valley and has developed good working relationships over the last five years. Further work, however, will be required to develop and implement joint communication arrangements, to support the two new Health and Social Care

Partnerships. Greater partnership working at regional and national levels within NHS Scotland will continue to be taken forward to ensure more creative, consistent and cost-effective use of resources.

Effective communication relies not only on the work of the Communications Department but also on clear, accurate, timely and person-centred communication between managers and their teams, staff and patients and other key stakeholders. Many complaints received from patients and their families cite communication issues as one of the key factors. This coupled with rising public expectations, means that it is important to ensure that we continue to deliver consistently high standards of care and treatment which meet the individual needs of our patients. While the vast majority of patients are very satisfied with the care they receive, it is important to acknowledge when things do go wrong and to take steps to help prevent similar problems from happening in the future. In addition, although NHS Forth Valley has a good track record of involving and engaging staff, patients and the wider public on the way services are designed and delivered, there is a need to ensure that this work continues to help maintain confidence and trust as we take forward the development and implementation of our new healthcare strategy.

8. KEY AUDIENCES

Our potential audiences are broad and vary depending on the nature of individual health issues and priorities.

These audiences include:

Internal

- NHS Forth Valley Staff
- Staff of other organisations working within our premises - e.g. SERCO, voluntary and charitable organisations e.g. Friends of Forth Valley Royal Hospital, RVS, Maggie's Caring Cancer Centres
- Independent contractors and their staff
- Non- Executive Board members

External

- Patients and their families
- Carers
- General Public
- Local councils – Clackmannanshire, Stirling and Falkirk including elected representatives
- Local voluntary and community groups/organisations
- Third sector service providers of health and social care services
- Patient/Public involvement groups
- Local service user groups – e.g. cancer services and women and children's services
- Charitable organisations – e.g. RVS, Friends of Forth Valley Hospital, So Precious
- Scottish Government
- Police, fire and prison services
- Media – local, national and specialist health media
- NHS Boards operating within our area - NHS 24, Scottish Ambulance Service
- Neighbouring NHS Boards – regional partners in the West and East of Scotland
- Special NHS Boards (e.g. National Services Scotland, NHS Health Scotland, NES)
- Further and Higher education institutions in the Forth Valley area
- Local businesses

9. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

Significant progress has been made in developing and improving internal and external communications across the organisation since the last Communications Strategy was published in 2009. These have included the introduction and ongoing development of new social media channels, the wider use of digital communications and significant improvements to the layout, design and functionality of the NHS Forth Valley website and intranet.

As a result, the number of page views on the NHS Forth Valley website has doubled over the last five years from less than 50,000 to more than 100,000 page views a month. The number of followers on twitter has doubled in the last two years to more than 4500 and our facebook audience continues to grow at a steady pace since a greater focus and attention was given to developing this tool over the last 12 months.

Comprehensive communication plans have been developed and implemented to support key service changes and developments, including the phased opening of Forth Valley Royal Hospital and the subsequent redevelopment of services and premises on the Stirling and Falkirk Community Hospital sites. In addition, the Department has managed communications for a wide range of events and initiatives including the Annual Review, official service launches, service changes and a number of high profile media issues. Staff have continued to work closely with local authority, the Scottish Government and other key public sector partners to make best use of existing resources and take forward the development of a number of joint communication initiatives.

Collectively this work has enabled us to reach a far greater and more diverse audience, enhanced the reputation of the organisation and considerably increased our profile locally and nationally. For example, by working with colleagues in Falkirk and Clackmannanshire, we have been able to include important health information and updates in Council newspapers which are distributed to every household in both council areas – thereby reaching a potential audience of more than 200,000.

10. COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITIES FOR 2015 – 2017

The Communications Department aims to maintain and build on this work over the next two years to take forward further developments and improvements, making use of new technology and testing new approaches, wherever possible.

Given the financial pressures facing all parts of the public sector and the expectation that these will continue to grow over the next two years, the Department will continue to explore creative and cost-effective methods of reaching target audiences – working closely with local and national partners to make best use of the resources available, share best practice and maximise the use of existing communication tools and channels.

The priorities for 2015 – 2017 are:

(a) Develop and implement plans to raise awareness of the new Healthcare Strategy

This will include work to raise awareness of the outcomes and recommendations of the Clinical Service Review. These will inform the development of a new healthcare strategy for the period 2015 – 2015 which will be subject to wider consultation before it is finalised. The Communications Department will develop and implement plans to ensure staff, patients and the general public are informed of the new strategy and kept updated on progress as plans progress over the next five years.

(a) Develop and implement plans to support health and social care integration

Joint communication protocols and plans will be developed with council partners to ensure a joined-up and co-ordinated approach to communications, internally and externally. Work will also be undertaken to support effective consultation and engagement on the new strategic plans which will be developed by each of the two new Health and Social Partnerships.

(b) Develop and further improve communication tools

The Communications Department will develop and improve existing internal and external communications tools to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the organisation.

Plans to increase and expand our potential audience through the use social media, such as facebook and twitter, will continue and the use of new technology will also be explored to identify efficient and cost-effective and innovative methods of communicating with patients and the general public. For example, work has been undertaken with the surgical unit, maternity department and physiotherapy service to produce a series of online information videos for patients which have reduced the need for follow up appointments and visits. New online forms have also been developed which enable patients to complete questionnaires on an Ipad at various stages before and after surgery to help staff monitor their recovery.

Work will be undertaken with HR colleagues to identify and develop further tools to aid effective communication with our staff. This will be informed by the results of local and national staff surveys, including the roll-out of the iMatters initiative over the next two years.

In addition, the Communications Department will continue to provide communications support and advice to all staff, promote the use of clear language across the organisation, provide guidance and support for those who represent NHS Forth Valley in the media and work closely with key staff to ensure communications are timely, consistent and effective.

(b) Raise awareness of regional and national developments

As regional planning takes on a greater emphasis, the need for regionally supported communications is likely to increase.

The NHS Forth Valley Communications Department is involved in both the Strategic NHS Communications Group which meets monthly and the West of Scotland Communications Group which meets every 6 weeks.

This joint working has proved invaluable over the last few years with close working and co-operation on a number of key issues including flu vaccination, winter planning, medicines management and ebola. It has also ensured a joined up and co-ordinated approach to the promotion of a number of important health campaigns such as detect cancer early, smoking cessation and organ donation.

The Communications Department will continue to work with regional and national communications colleagues to make best use of communications resources, share good practice, develop joint communication plans and coordinate a wide range of joint initiatives and health campaigns. This will include work to raise awareness of the new services and facilities available to Forth Valley patients at the new South Glasgow Hospital in Glasgow and the Lanarkshire Beatson at Monklands Hospital in Airdrie. Communication plans will be developed to respond to the outcomes or recommendations from relevant regional or national service reviews. These include reviews currently underway on out-of-hours care, vascular and major trauma services which are expected to conclude in the next two years.

(c) Build effective relationships with key local partners and stakeholders

NHS Forth Valley's Communications Department will continue to foster links with key partners and stakeholders including charitable and voluntary organisations, MSPs, independent health contractors (GPs, dentists, opticians and pharmacists) and other key community organisations across Forth Valley.

The Department will also continue to develop and build on our relationship with key local partners to raise awareness of health service developments and changes and provide important health information and advice. This will include work with communication colleagues from local council police and fire services on a number of joint issues including child protection, road safety and drug and alcohol misuse. In addition, we will continue to explore opportunities to develop joint campaigns and initiatives with our partners, where appropriate. It will also include on-going work with Forestry Commission Scotland to encourage the use of green spaces around our hospitals and promote a number of joint events, work with Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres to publicise plans for the new Maggie's Forth Valley centre which is due to open in 2016 and work with Stirling Council, the Scottish Ambulance Service and Forth Valley College to support the development of proposed new Stirling Care Village which is scheduled for completion in 2017.

By working together with our partners we can reinforce important health messages, information and advice and reach a wider and more diverse audience.

(d) Continue to raise the profile and enhance the reputation of NHS Forth Valley

The Communications Department will continue to develop and implement plans to raise the profile of the organisation and positively promote the work of local staff. This will include work to further develop and improve relationships with the media, both locally and nationally. Emphasis will also be placed on effectively targeting and tailoring stories in line with the needs and priorities of individual media, developing feature ideas and working with colleagues across the organisation to identify potential stories, case studies and initiatives which are likely to be of interest to the media. This will include developments linked to innovation, technological advances and medical research. There will also be opportunities to promote wider non-clinical developments including those linked to our arts strategy, positive patient case studies and work with local charitable and fundraising organisations such as RVS, So Precious and the Friends of Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

Trade and specialist publications in addition to mainstream media, will also be targeted where appropriate, to increase the profile of the organisation across key sectors. Media monitoring will continue to form a key part in the overall assessment of performance.

The Communications Department will continue to provide an effective media management service by ensuring a prompt and accurate response to all enquiries which occur both during and out-with normal working hours. In addition, staff will continue to work with the Scottish Government Health Communications Team, local authority communications departments and key communication leads within the Emergency Services to ensure a joined up and consistent approach to communications at national and local levels.

(e) Encourage and promote public involvement, engagement and volunteering

NHS Forth Valley has a good track record of communicating with and involving the public, patients, carers and their representatives in the way our services are designed and delivered. The Communications Department will continue to provide communications support and advice to the Patient Relations and Person Centred Care Team who are responsible for public engagement and involvement across Forth Valley. Work will also be undertaken with the Scottish Health Council and local patient representatives to ensure they are aware of proposed future service changes or developments and have the opportunity to inform the development of future plans. These include the new Healthcare Strategy, Strategic Plans developed by the two new Health and Social Care Partnerships and relevant regional or national service changes.

(f) Provide communications support for major incidents and public health outbreaks

A number of major incidents and public health outbreaks have highlighted the important of effective communications. Underpinning all plans and procedures is the need for effective communication and coordination between agencies to manage a wide range of health incidents and issues. These include outbreaks of diseases and infections such as botulism, suspected cases of viral hemorrhagic fever (including ebola), TB, norovirus and legionnaire's disease, the health response to a major incident involving many casualties and the potential risk to public health from a number of environmental factors or hazards including gas, oil leaks and other hazardous substances.

In any incident or emergency, clear, timely and accurate communications are essential to provide reassurance, minimize any potential risks to public health while protecting the confidentiality of those affected.

The Communications Department will continually review its protocols for responding to these situations, participate in relevant multi-agency training exercises and contribute to the work of the Regional Resilience Partnership (RRP) Communications Group for the East of Scotland which was established in 2014.

(g) Promote action on all aspects of inequality

The Communications Department will continue to work the Board's Equality and Diversity lead to raise awareness of the importance of equality, highlight best practice and demonstrate progress against national targets and goals.

10 CORE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

NHS Forth Valley's Communications Department uses a wide range of communications tools and resources available to support effective internal and external communications.

External Tools

(i) The NHS Forth Valley website

The NHS Forth Valley website (www.nhsforthvalley.com) is one of the most important and increasingly popular tools used by patients and the general public to access information and advice on a wide range of local health services and facilities. The site was revamped in 2014 to introduce a more responsive design which makes it easier and more accessible to access content from a number of platforms including mobile phones and tablets as these now account for around half of all visits to the site. The multi-media section continues to grow and develop to meet increased demand for online content and information – for both clinical and non-clinical related issues. Much of this is hosted on NHS Forth Valley's own YouTube channel. Separate sections have also been created to highlight recent news, awards, achievements and feedback from patients. A rotating feature section has also been developed to promote a wide range of local and national events, campaigns and initiatives. Work will continue to monitor, review and develop the website over the next two years to ensure it meets the needs of the organisation, patients and the general public.

(ii) Social Media Channels

Social media enables the organisation to quickly share information and updates with a wide range of followers and plays an increasingly important role in communications, particularly in relation to fast changing and developing incidents or health issues. It also provides a useful vehicle for sharing

health information and advice and encouraging feedback from service users, staff and local organisations.

NHS Forth Valley has a corporate Twitter account (@NHSForthValley), a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/nhsforthvalley) and a YouTube channel which are monitored and updated by the Communications Department. The sites are used to provide our followers with updates on the latest news, events, service developments and changes as well as highlighting key national campaigns and initiatives. The Communications Department works closely with local partners and other health boards across Scotland to share relevant news and information via their own social media channels. This ensures information reaches a wide and diverse audience and helps raise the profile of the organisation across Scotland and beyond. Guidance on the use of social media, both personally and professionally, is available on the NHS Staff intranet along with copies of our social media policies. This will be reviewed and updated during 2015 to reflect feedback and best practice.

(iii) Community Health News

Community Health News is NHS Forth Valley's quarterly magazine produced by the Communications Department to update patients, the general public and local organisations on key developments, changes and achievements across Forth Valley. The content and style of magazine is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains attractive, informative and accessible to a broad section of readers. The circulation is also reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it reaches as many potential readers as possible. An electronic version is also available on the NHS Forth Valley web and links to the online version are also emailed or posted to members of the Public Involvement Network (PIN) and a wide range of other community groups and organisations across Forth Valley. A number of distribution boxes have been provided in key outlets to increase availability and ensure the newsletter has a dedicated space within our main facilities.

(iv) Media Relations

NHS Forth Valley's Communications Department receives a wide range of enquiries from national and local media including newspapers, magazines, television, radio and press agencies. The Department also proactively works with the media to raise awareness of key service changes, developments and improvements across the organisation as well as highlighting the work and achievements of staff. A forward planning system is in place to ensure all media opportunities across the organisation are captured and managed to maximise coverage and avoid potential duplication.

Any media enquiries and requests received by staff should be directed to the Communications Department who work with relevant staff and service leads to agree appropriate responses. Advice and guidance is also provided to help staff prepare for media interviews.

The Communications Department also provides a 24-hour, seven day-a-week service on behalf of the organisation, ensuring prompt, accurate briefings and statements are issued in response to all media enquiries and major incidents. Details of the on-call communications officer can be obtained for the Forth Valley Royal Hospital switchboard on 01324 566000. In addition, the Department also provides advice on guidance on working with the media and arranges media training for key service leads and managers who may require to speak to the media on a regular basis.

(v) Health Campaigns

The Communications Department works with a number of services to develop and promote a wide range of health information campaigns. These include local Public Health and Health Promotion campaigns to raise awareness of specific health issues e.g. cancer detection, flu vaccination, Hepatitis C screening and others which are designed to encourage healthier lifestyles and behaviours. The Department also works closely with the Scottish Government, Health Scotland, Health Protection Scotland and West of Scotland communication leads to promote key national and regional campaigns and health initiatives.

(vi) Consultations

Formal consultation is a statutory process for communicating proposed service changes to the people affected by the change. The Communications Department co-ordinates public information and publicity for all consultations on proposed major service changes and also provides communications advice and support in relation to local service changes and developments.

(vii) Public Involvement Network (PIN) database

The database was established to ensure the regular distribution of information to key individuals and community groups with an interest in NHS Forth Valley. The database contains around 3,000 individuals who receive information on any key consultations, events and opportunities to get involved in specific projects. PIN members also receive a copy of *Community Health News*. The Public Partnership Fora (PPFs), Patient Public Panel (PPP) and local service user groups also play an important role in disseminating information and providing valuable feedback.

(viii) Parliamentary Liaison

The Communications Department works closely with the Scottish Government Health Directorate Press Office to ensure a joined up and consistent approach to communications on key national and local issues. It also assists in responding to enquiries and requests for information from Scottish Government Ministers and elected representatives and ensures that local MSPs are kept informed of key developments. In addition, the Communication Department plays a key role in the planning, organisation and promotion of Ministerial visits and other official events.

(ix) Feedback Mechanisms

Patients and members of the public can provide feedback in a number of ways. This includes an email address (FV-UHB.yourhealthservice@nhs.net) for general enquiries, feedback and comments, a freephone telephone number for general enquiries, social media and an online form for general queries.

Internal Tools

NHS Forth Valley employs more than 6,000 members of staff and, together with their families, they make up an important part of the local Forth Valley population. Many of our staff are therefore both service users and employees with significant power to influence public and patients' perception of the service and the organisation. As a result, staff can play an important role in communicating effectively, acting as ambassadors for the organisation and managing the reputation of NHS Forth Valley.

In addition, there are more than 600 independent contractors working within Forth Valley including GPs, dentists, pharmacists and opticians who interact with thousands of local people every day and are therefore ideally placed to help share important health information and advice.

(i) Staff Intranet (*StaffNet*)

StaffNet – the NHS Forth Valley staff intranet was redesigned in 2013 to improve the layout and content and make it more accessible and relevant for staff. A new rotating feature section was added to highlight key messages, campaigns and initiatives. A Social Zone was also introduced to enable staff to post appropriate non-work related information including details of items for sale, requests for

sponsorship and details of social events. These developments have proved very popular, encouraged more staff to access and use other areas of the intranet and reduced the inappropriate use of email.

A What's New section is used to highlight key news and information for staff and a new content management system was introduced 2013 to improve the functionality of the site and make it easier for local authors to add and amend content.

The Communications Department will continue to review and develop the Staff intranet and provide ongoing support and advice to departments on the development of their own local intranet pages to help improve the quality and range of information available for staff.

(ii) Staff Magazine (*Staff News*)

The Communications Department produces a quarterly staff magazine (*Staff News*) which is widely distributed to staff across the organisation to update them on key service developments and changes as well as highlighting the work and achievements of staff across the organisation.

An online version of the Staff Newsletter <http://staff.nhsforthvalley.com> is also available to increase access across the organisation and also enable staff employed by Serco and local independent contractors to view content. The portal, along with an electronic PDF of the newsletter, can be accessed via the Staff Intranet. The Communications Department works with staff across the organisation to develop content and encourage suggestions or contributions for future issues. Ideas or suggestions can also be emailed to nhsfvcomms@nhs.net or discussed with a member of Communications staff by phoning 01786 457236.

(iii) Staff Brief

Staff Brief is regularly distributed to staff across the organisation to keep staff updated on relevant local and national NHS news, events, training opportunities and service changes. The *Staff Brief* is sent electronically to all users across NHS Forth Valley and posted on the Staff Intranet. Managers are also asked to share information or make copies available to staff who do not have access to the intranet.

(iv) Chief Executives Brief

The Chief Executive issues regular briefing updates to staff to provide information and updates on a number of key issues and service developments, highlight local awards and achievements and recognise the work of staff across the organisation.

(v) Board Briefing Updates

Briefing updates are issued after every Board meeting to update staff on the discussions and key decisions taken as well as highlighting the presentations made by frontline staff.

(vi) Partnership Forum

The Area Partnership Forum provides a valuable arena for joint working on a wide range of issues affecting staff, including the development and approval of key policies. Staff representatives also play an important role in informing, engaging and communicating with staff across the organisation on a wide range of workforce and service issues.

(vii) Face-to-Face Staff Briefings

The value of face-to-face communication is well known and is a key strand of the Staff Governance Standard. Staff briefings are arranged to give information, publicise key messages, listen to the views and concerns of staff and provide updates on key projects and service developments. Regular briefings are also organised for Non-Executive Directors to keep them informed at an early stage of major developments. In addition, there is a programme of Board seminars to update Board members of relevant topics and health issues.

(viii) Staff Meetings

Every member of the organisation has a responsibility for communication and Line Managers have a specific responsibility for ensuring that their staff have access to information and feel enabled to seek information and express their views. All staff should have regular opportunities to meet face-to-face with their managers and regular meetings are also held to agree and review the development and performance of staff as part of the NHS Scotland Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF). Each department and service is required to meet the requirements of the NHS staff governance standards which aim to ensure staff are informed of the key issues which affect them.

(iv) Staff Feedback

An email address (FV-UHB.yourhealthservice@nhs.net) is available on the website and intranet which staff can use to feedback views, questions or comments. Staff can also email the Communications Department direct via the communications email (nhsfvcomms@nhs.net) and many staff use social media and provide feedback and comments direct to our facebook page and twitter feed. Feedback from staff is also obtained via national and local staff surveys, focus groups, briefing sessions, meetings and engagement engagements coordinated by HR and Organisational Development leads.

11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A number of tools, methods and feedback mechanisms will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Communications Strategy. These include:

- Media monitoring and evaluation
- Feedback from internal and external audits
- Feedback from external reviews and assessments including IIP reviews and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) inspections
- Feedback from key meetings – regular discussions on communications take place at key meetings and quarterly updates are discussed at the NHS Forth Valley Board
- Evaluation of specific health initiatives and campaigns
- Feedback from staff, patients and the general public
 - Comments and feedback received from patients and the public via email, phone and social media, complaints and patient opinion
 - The results of the national and local staff surveys
 - Feedback and enquiries from Staff Brief, Staff News and Community Health News
 - Feedback from NHS Forth Valley's website – via the online feedback form
 - Staff focus groups and responses to questionnaires and surveys on specific issues