

COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK 2023 - 2028



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1. INTRODUCTION

NHS services in Scotland have always been subject to change and this is set to continue over the next three years with work to implement NHS Forth Valley's refreshed Healthcare Strategy (2024- 2029), develop new local and regional services and implement key national healthcare priorities.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on local health and care services, a rising elderly population with 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 to keep pace with rising demand.

In addition, developments within the media and wider society such as the increasing expansion of online media and a 24/7 culture require changes in the way health services are designed and delivered services as well as how we communicate with patients, staff and partners.

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

The NHS Forth Valley Communications Framework sets out the key communication aims, principles and priorities for 2023 - 2028. It builds on the previous Communications Strategy for 2018 - 2021, reflecting the many changes and improvements which have taken place during this period and provides a framework for next five years.

This Framework should be read in conjunction with the following policies and information which are available on the NHS Forth Valley intranet.

[NHS Forth Valley Media and Communications Policy](#)

[NHS Forth Valley Social Media Policy](#)

[NHS Forth Valley Web, Intranet and non-Clinical Apps Content and Development Policy](#)

[NHS Forth Valley Communications Department - overview and contact details](#)

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

NHS Forth Valley aims to improve the health and healthcare of our population by providing health services that are efficient, effective, equitable, patient-centred, safe and timely. The Communications Strategy seeks to support this by:-

- Effectively communicate with patients and other key stakeholders using a range of different tools – working collaboratively with partners to maximise coverage and reach
- Ensuring staff across the organisation are well informed on developments, changes and decisions which affect them and have access to expert communications support and advice
- Promoting key health service developments and changes and improvements across Forth Valley
- Encouraging engagement with local services and screening programmes by providing patients and the general public with simple, accessible health information and advice
- Ensuring the achievements of staff, volunteers and fundraisers are recognised, internally and externally
- Protecting and enhancing the reputation of NHS Forth Valley as an excellent employer and service provider
- Ensuring the communication tools evolve to reflect best practice, address feedback and meet the future needs of the organisation
- Effectively managing the communications response for key incidents, issues and outbreaks, working closely with relevant partners, where appropriate. These include local and national NHS Boards, local councils, the Scottish Government, Police Scotland as well as voluntary organisations, charities and community-based organisations across Forth Valley and beyond.

3. KEY PRINCIPLES

The Board has a good track record in communicating with the public, patients and staff, ensuring that key stakeholders are involved in the ongoing development of services across NHS Forth Valley. This Communications Framework, 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 which avoids the use of jargon
- Commitment to ensuring, wherever possible, staff and other key stakeholders are informed about key NHS Forth Valley initiatives or announcements before information is shared externally
- Consistent and co-ordinated 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 corporate identity guidelines

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NHS Forth Valley's Communications Department has a central role to play in achieving the objectives of this strategy however every member of staff has a role to play in communicating effectively with patients and their families, members of the public, community groups and partner organisations. Key responsibilities are outlined below:-

All Staff

- Ensure patients, public and staff receive accurate and up-to-date information which is easy to understand and free from jargon
- Take personal responsibility for being well informed by seeking information on relevant issues and making use of the range of communication tools available
- Share relevant information from briefings, meetings and other forums with colleagues, patients and relatives, where appropriate
- Share details of local service developments, changes, patient stories, awards, achievements and successes so that these can be promoted internally and externally, as appropriate
- Contact the Communications Department for advice and support, whenever required
- Notify the Communications Department of relevant communications issues raised by patients, visitors or general public and refer any media enquiries to the Department if they are contacted direct by a journalist
- Alert their line manager and the Communications Department of any potential issues or concerns which may generate media interest

Service, Clinical and Professional Leads

- Alert the Communications Department to service developments, changes and potential good news stories as well as highlighting any potential risks and reputational issues
- Ensure effective systems are in place for two-way staff communications and that information provided by the Communications Department is cascaded effectively
- Ensure the service has a nominated lead (s) who maintains information on the staff intranet and regularly reviews information published on the NHS Forth Valley website, patient leaflets and other printed materials to ensure these are accurate, up-to-date and meet the needs of patients and their families
- Ensure regular and timely communication with patients, carers and staff within their departments/services
- Hold regular staff meetings to share relevant information and capture feedback, ideas and suggestions for future stories or features
- Capture and respond to feedback from patients and visitors

5. POLICY CONTEXT

National

The next few years will see changes to the way health services are designed in response to a number of key national strategies and plans. These include: -

[Scottish Government's 14 Health and Social Care Priorities](#) (*Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership - A fresh start – April 2023*)

[NHS Recovery Plan](#)

[Mental Health Strategy 2017 – 2027](#)

[National Cancer Strategy 2023 - 2033](#)

[National Drugs Mission Plan-2022-2026](#)

[National Care Service](#)

[NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy: 2022-2026](#)

Local

Work is underway to review and refresh NHS Forth Valley's healthcare strategy [Shaping the Future](#) which will set out our vision for the future along with key plans and priorities for the next five years. This will be supported by a workforce strategy and the Strategic Plans developed by the two local Health and Social Care Partnerships which set out the key priorities to meet the needs of local communities over the next three years and describe how these will be achieved.

6. 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 working in our two local Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Board members
- Independent contractors and their staff (GP Practices, pharmacies, opticians and dentists)
- Serco colleagues working at Forth Valley Royal Hospital

External

- Local patients and their families
- General public living and working in Forth Valley
- Local councils – Clackmannanshire, Stirling and Falkirk, including elected representatives
- Local community groups and organisations
- Voluntary and charitable organisations and fundraisers (e.g. RVS, Maggie's Forth Valley, RSVP, Friends of Forth Valley Royal Hospital, So Precious)

- Public involvement and service user groups (e.g. CAMHS)
- Patient and public representatives
- Scottish Government
- Police, fire and prison services
- Media – local, national and specialist health media
- National NHS Boards operating within our area - NHS 24, Scottish Ambulance Service, PHS, NSS, NES
- Neighbouring NHS Boards – regional partners in the West and East of Scotland
- Further and Higher education institutions in the Forth Valley area – Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership
- Local businesses

7. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

Significant progress has been made in developing and improving internal and external communications across the organisation since the last Communication Strategy for 2018 - 2021. These have included ongoing development and growth of 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.

Comprehensive communication plans were implemented to support key service developments including the creation of a new Alongside Midwifery Unit in the Women and Children's Unit at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, the opening the new Doune Health Centre, Stirling Health and Care Village and The Meadows (Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service). The Communications Department also managed communications for a wide range of official visits, events and high-profile media issues. These included annual reviews, staff awards and ministerial visits to local medical centres and acute services to highlight the wider range of healthcare staff working within primary care and the advanced practice roles within nursing and AHP services.

Staff featured in a number TV programmes and news reports including a live broadcast of BBC Radio Scotland's Good Morning Scotland programme, which was recorded in the staff marquee outside the entrance to Forth Valley Royal Hospital. This was just one of a number of media features arranged to highlight the work of local staff during the Covid-19 pandemic, including those working within local vaccination and testing centres, ITU and Covid-19 wards. Collectively, this coverage enhanced the reputation of the organisation and increased the profile of NHS Forth Valley's staff and services, locally and nationally.

A refreshed Media and Communications Framework and Protocol was developed for the two local Health and Social Care Partnerships and a new communication plan was developed to support the launch of the new Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership in October 2022.

A number of new communication tools were introduced during the period, some specifically in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This included a new monthly e-bulletin and digital staff newsletter to help keep the public, partners and staff informed and updated on the latest news and service developments. Regular online briefing sessions for local reporters were arranged with NHS Forth Valley's Director of Public Health and Medical Director to provide information, advice and reassurance during the pandemic and respond to any questions or concerns raised by local residents. New lift wraps were installed on the doors of the main public lifts at Forth Valley Royal Hospital to promote a range of services including the Pharmacy First scheme, Minor Injuries Unit and Right Care Right Place campaign. These were supported by the application of new graphics in the seating area and large posters displayed on a temporary dividing wall installed in the main atrium.

In addition, we worked with a range of partner organisations to produce videos to showcase the work of local staff and boost recruitment in a range of areas. These included videos highlighting student nursing placements, different pathways into nursing, advanced practice roles across urology, breast

and radiography services, opportunities in prison healthcare, stroke services and psychological therapies. Short videos were also produced to highlight the latest research and advances in skin cancer diagnosis and as well as eye testing and assessments.

Many digital changes and improvements were taken forward during the period including the development of a new [HR Connect](https://staffnet.fv.scot.nhs.uk/guidelines/) hub, [Learning Zone](#), [Clinical Guidelines](#) and [Policies and Procedures](#) <https://staffnet.fv.scot.nhs.uk/guidelines/> section on the Staff Intranet which make it easier for staff to find information and resources. The homepage of the Staff Intranet was also redesigned to create a simpler, less cluttered layout and menus which make it easy to find and access the most frequently used sections and pages. New and refreshed sections were also created for the NHS Forth Valley website. These included sections on [maternity](#), [diabetes](#) and [podiatry](#) advice and support, [working in NHS Forth Valley](#) and career opportunities in [prison healthcare](#) as well as refreshed layouts for both HSCP websites. New websites were developed for NHS Forth Valley's [Medical Education Service](#) and the [Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership](#).

8. COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITIES

Communication priorities are aligned to support the organisation's key strategic and operational plans and priorities – including those set out below. Individual projects and initiatives will also be supported by more detailed communication action plans and additional plans will be developed to support any new and emerging priorities over the next five years.

NHS Forth Valley's Healthcare Strategy (2024 – 2029)

NHS Forth Valley's new Healthcare Strategy will build on the previous strategy '[Shaping the Future 2016 – 2021](#)' and set out the Board's plans and priorities for the next five years, taking account of national priorities and targets as well as the Strategic Plans developed by our two local Health and Care Partnerships.

Responding to Stage 4 Escalation

NHS Forth Valley was escalated to Stage 4 of the NHS Scotland Performance Escalation Framework on 23rd November 2022. An Assurance Board, set up by the Scottish Government, is supporting the organisation to deliver improvements in governance, leadership and culture and well as performance in a number of service areas. Ensuring that staff, patients, partners and local communities are kept updated on progress is a key priority as we take forward the changes and improvements required in response to escalation.

Service Developments

Future priorities include the completion of the National Treatment Centre – Forth Valley. The two additional operating theatres and second MRI scanner are already in place and the final element, a new inpatient ward which is being developed in the grounds of Forth Valley Royal Hospital is due to open during 2023. Work is underway to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the development of primary care premises in the Stirling locality. These focus on the need for improved GP and primary care premises for Plean, Cowie and Orchard House which have been identified as the key priority areas, along with other a range of service improvements across the wider Stirling locality area. Business cases for the development of primary care premises in the other locality areas along with ongoing work to develop a new masterplan for the Falkirk Community Hospital site will now be incorporated into a new whole system development plan in response to changes to national planning arrangements for healthcare projects recently introduced by the Scottish Government. This plan will be informed by the NHS Board's refreshed Healthcare Strategy and the Strategic Plans of the two Integration Joint Boards. The Communications Department will continue to provide communications support and advice for the development of new and existing healthcare facilities, particularly in relation to public involvement and engagement.

Improving Health

As an organisation, NHS Forth Valley is committed to reducing health inequalities and, not only improving the health and wellbeing of local patients and staff, but also improving health outcomes for the wider population. This includes work with public health and health improvement leads to improve access to health information and advice, increase uptake of national screening and vaccination programmes and raise awareness of the wide range of health services and support available locally and nationally.

National and Regional Campaigns and Programmes

NHS Forth Valley's Communications Department is involved in both the NHS Scotland Strategic Communications Group, which meets monthly and the West of Scotland Communications Group. Communications staff continue to participate in and support relevant multi-agency training exercises and contribute to the work of the Regional Resilience Partnership (RRP) Communications Group for the East and West of Scotland and the West of Scotland Innovation

Staff will continue to work with national and regional 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 joint working has proved beneficial for a number of key issues, including Covid-19 and flu vaccination, mental health and changes to arrangements for accessing urgent care. It has also ensured a joined up and co-ordinated approach to the promotion of a number of health campaigns such as detect cancer early, smoking cessation and organ donation.

NHS Forth Valley's Communication team will continue to work closely with Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland colleagues to ensure a joined up and consistent approach to future health campaigns and programmes. Work will also be developed to respond to the recommendations of any national reports, plans and priorities.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

Efforts will continue to positively promote NHS Forth Valley as an excellent place to work and live. This includes work to develop and improve the content of the job pages on the NHS Forth Valley website, promote job vacancies, especially in areas where it is harder to recruit staff like prison healthcare and showcase local career opportunities. Work will also be undertaken to highlight advanced practice roles across a range of services, showcase the work of local staff, promote the organisation's commitment to training and development and support plans to increase international recruitment.

In addition, work will be undertaken, in partnership with HR and OD colleagues, to promote the roll out of a new culture change and compassionate leadership programme, the ongoing development of the Staff Support and Wellbeing programme and support the recruitment of staff locally and internationally.

Celebrating Success

Recognising the commitment and achievements of staff across the organisation, including Serco colleagues, which may often go unnoticed or unrewarded is extremely important as highlighting these achievements, not only raises the profile of the organisation, but also helps boost the morale of local staff as they feel valued and appreciated. This includes work to highlight individual awards and achievements, internally and externally. Positive feedback from local patients and families is also shared on social media and via weekly 'Feedback Friday' posts.

Work will be undertaken in partnership with HR and OD colleagues to promote the revamped NHS Forth Valley Staff Awards, which were paused for several years during the Covid-19 pandemic. The

Communications Department will also continue to work with staff across the organisation to showcase their work and achievements via local media, social media, internal communications as well as providing advice and support to staff submitting nominations for key awards.

Community Engagement and Public & Public Involvement

NHS Forth Valley and the two local Health and Social Care Partnerships follow national [Planning with People guidance](#) and best practice to effectively engage and consult with public, communities, patients, staff and wider stakeholders in a meaningful way, proportionate to the scale of any planned changes.

The Scottish Community Development Centre has also developed [seven national community engagement standards](#) - inclusion, support, planning, working together, methods, communication and impact. NHS Forth Valley's Community Engagement Coordinator works closely with local health and social care staff, community groups, voluntary and partner organisations across Forth Valley to raise awareness of service developments, changes and improvements, capture feedback and involve local people in a wide range of healthcare projects and initiatives.

Different methods of engagement are used including the recruitment of individuals who are given training and support to help represent their wider communities, questionnaires and focus groups. Local meetings, events and forums are used to capture feedback on specific issues or services and regular engagement in local voluntary sector, carers and older people's forums also helps support effective and meaningful community engagement. In addition, social media, online discussion groups/e-panels, websites, newsletters and other publications (in print and digital formats) are used to support public engagement.

There will continue to be close liaison with colleagues from Health Improvement Scotland's Community Engagement Team to ensure effective engagement in the development of new healthcare facilities as well as any major proposed changes to existing services. This includes inviting representatives from the Team to participate in meetings with local staff, members of the public, local community groups and voluntary organisations.

The Communications Team works closely with NHS Forth Valley's Person Centred Manager, who is responsible for patient engagement and involvement across NHS Forth Valley, and the Patient Relations Team, which is responsible for investigating and responding to complaints from local patients and their families. 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.

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.

Fundraising and Volunteering

Volunteers support local patients and families in a wide range of wards and departments across NHS Forth Valley. These include the Oncology Unit, the Children's Ward, the Mental Health Unit and the Emergency Department. Many are individuals while others volunteer for organisations such as the Royal Voluntary Service which run cafes in a number of local hospitals.

In addition, there are hundreds of fundraisers who collectively raise thousands of pounds every year to improve healthcare facilities and services. These include individual patients and families as well as local fundraising organisations such as So Precious and the Friends of Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

The Communications Department will continue to work closely with local staff to ensure that the work of our local fundraisers and volunteers is recognised by highlighting their contribution internally and externally.

Communication Tools and Resources

Existing internal and external communications tools will develop and evolve to ensure they meet the changing needs of the organisation. The Communications Department will also continue to explore creative and cost-effective methods of reaching target audiences, working closely with local and national partners to share best practice and maximise the use of the resources available. This will include specific plans to:

- Expand our audience on existing social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by continuing to share informative and engaging content with our followers.
- Use more efficient and cost-effective methods of communicating with patients and the general public including online information and advice which provides an alternative to attending classes/outpatient clinics or help people prepare for being admitted and discharged from local hospitals. A number of health information videos and webpages on specific health conditions (e.g., diabetes) have already been produced and others will be developed, as required, to meet growing demand from local patients and their families.
- Continue to grow an online database of individuals, community and voluntary organisations who we can communicate with direct to share local news and service developments (including regular e-bulletins) and obtain feedback on a range of issues.
- Develop new online resources, including online forms and questionnaires, to make it quicker and easier for services to capture and analysis information and for staff and patients to provide information and share feedback.
- Create new forums to facilitate networking with other NHS Boards and partner organisations, share best practice and address common issues or challenges. This includes digital and website forums to support the ongoing development of the website and intranet.
- Trial the use of new platforms such as Yammer to support staff engagement and information sharing by creating new online communities for specific programmes, initiatives and projects.
- Develop and redesign the Staff Intranet to tie in with the planned roll out of SharePoint across NHS Scotland.

Partnerships

Partner organisations, community groups and local businesses have an important role to play in sharing information and gathering feedback. Efforts will therefore continue to develop and build our relationships with key local partners to raise awareness of health service developments and provide important health information and advice. This includes work with colleagues from HSCPs, local councils, police and fire services on a number of joint issues including child and adult protection, poverty reduction, suicide prevention and harm caused by smoking, alcohol consumption and drugs.

An initial communication action plan has been developed for the Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership, a partnership between NHS Forth Valley, the University of Stirling and Forth Valley College which was launched in October 2022. This ambitious Partnership builds on a long-standing relationship between the three institutions and works across four priority areas: learning, careers, research and innovation. Regular communications meetings with Serco and ForthHealth colleagues at Forth Valley Royal Hospital also take place to identify potential promotional opportunities, plan for any high-profile visits and events, highlight local training programmes for young people and promote staff awards and achievements.

Work will be undertaken with local and national leads to promote NHS Forth Valley's role as an Anchor institution. Anchors are large not-for-profit organisations which are committed to using their role as a major employer, buyer of goods and services and owner of land and buildings. An NHS Forth Valley Anchor Board was established in December 2022 to drive forward action to address a number of local priorities. These include increasing local employment opportunities, tackling child poverty and inequalities, supporting the development of a strong local economy and improving health and wellbeing across Forth Valley.

Reputation Management

The Communications Department will continue to develop and implement plans to raise the profile of the organisation, enhance and protect its reputation, promote key service developments, celebrate successes and highlight achievements. This includes developments linked to service innovation, research and improving the health and wellbeing of local people.

Emphasis will be placed on effectively targeting and tailoring stories in line with the needs and priorities of local and national 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. In addition, work will continue to protect the reputation of NHS Forth Valley by effectively managing the communications response to any major incidents, outbreaks, sensitive, high profile or contentious issues.

9. 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. In recent years we have taken forward several key developments in both internal and external websites to meet the changing needs of the organisation. We are committed to continuing the pace of development to improve upon the following areas:

External Tools

(i) The NHS Forth Valley website

Website

The [NHS Forth Valley website](#) is one of the most popular tools used by patients and the general public to access information and advice on a wide range of local health services and facilities. People can also [cancel or request to change their appointment online](#) and provide feedback or suggestion via an [online feedback form](#).

A number of developments and improvements have been taken forward to improve the design, content and functionality of both internal and external websites. These include new sections on [diabetes](#) and [podiatry](#) advice and support, [working in NHS Forth Valley](#) and career opportunities in [prison healthcare](#) as well as refreshed layouts for both HSCP websites and an [events calendar](#).

Partner Websites – As well as managing the main NHS Forth Valley website www.nhsforthvalley.com, the Communications Department is also responsible for managing a number of other websites. These include:

- [NHS Forth Valley's Medical Education Service](#)
- [Scottish Centre for Simulation Centre and Clinical Human Factors](#)
- [Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership](#)

- [Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership](#)
- [Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership](#)
- [Central Sexual Health](#)
- [NHS Forth Valley Travel Vaccination Service](#)
- [Community Pharmacy Forth Valley](#)
- [NHS Forth Valley Staff News](#)

These websites will continue to be maintained and developed to meet the needs of the wider organisation and partners while managing any new developments as required.

(ii) Social Media Channels

Social media enables the organisation to quickly share information and updates with a wide range of followers and continues to be an important communication tool. It is particularly useful to promote local healthcare services to help people access the right care in the right place. It is also a useful way of sharing information and advice on fast changing situations and developing incidents or changes. In addition, it provides a platform to raise awareness of local events and encourage feedback from service users, staff and local organisations

NHS Forth Valley has a Twitter account (@NHSForthValley), a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/nhsforthvalley), an Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/nhsforthvalley/> a YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/nhsforthvalley> 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 health campaigns and initiatives.

(iii) e-bulletins and publications

Regular e-bulletins are produced by the Communications Department to update patients, the general public and local organisations on key developments, news and achievements across NHS Forth Valley. The distribution list is also reviewed and updated regularly to share news and updates with as many individuals, organisations and community groups as possible. Individuals can sign up to be added to the distribution list by entering their email address on the homepage of the NHS Forth Valley website.

The Department also produces a range of publications including Annual Report summaries, patient information, leaflets, posters and flyers. It also designs a number of infographics, illustrations and visuals for use on social media, the website, intranet, printed and online publications.

(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.

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. In addition, the Department also provides advice on working with the media and arranges media training for clinical and service leads who may be required to speak to the media on a regular basis. Further information is provided in NHS Forth Valley's Media and

Communications Policy which is available to read on the [Policies and Procedures section](#) of the Staff Intranet.

(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 Public Health and Health Promotion campaigns to raise awareness of specific health issues e.g. vaccination programmes, Hepatitis C screening, stop smoking services and sexual health testing as well as campaigns which are designed to encourage healthier lifestyles and behaviours. The Department also works closely with the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland communication leads to promote key national health campaigns and initiatives including early detection of cancer and organ donation.

(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. Details of current consultations are posted on the [public consultation section](#) of the NHS Forth Valley website.

(vii) Public Affairs

The Communications Department works closely with the communication leads from the Scottish Government's Health and Social Care Directorate 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, MSP briefing sessions and official events.

(viii) Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback from patients and members of the public is gathered in a number of ways. This includes social media and an [online form](#) on the NHS Forth Valley website. Key contacts for a range of services, including Patient Relations and Information Governance Department (which manages [Freedom of Information requests](#)) can be found in the [Contact Us](#) section of the website. In addition, the Patient Relations team gathers feedback from patients and service users in a variety of ways including regular surveys and focus groups. Staff also respond directly to feedback received via the [Care Opinion website](#).

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 enables staff to access a wide range of service information, news, resources and systems from a single online hub. It is updated daily with the latest news and has links to Staff Briefs, Staff News, Training and Events, Staff Support and Vacancies as well as quick links to a range of corporate and clinical systems. Staff can also access and share information on a Social Zone which features non-work-related activities including fundraising and sponsorship events and items wanted or for sale.

The intranet has undergone a number of redesigns and refreshes and is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to improve the layout, design, content and accessibility of information for staff across the organisation as well as primary care colleagues. In addition to the main hub site, there are a number of micro-sites which have been developed, including HR Connect, Learning Zone, Clinical & Corporate Policies, which bring core content together in the one place, making it easier and quicker for staff to access the information they require.

(ii) Staff Newsletter - [Staff News](#)

The Communications Department produces regular issues of (*Staff News*) which is distributed by email to all 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.

All of the articles in each issue are also available to read online on the [Staff Newsletter](#) website and individual articles are also promoted on the home page of the Staff Intranet.

(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 with staff who do not have regular access to the intranet.

(iv) Chief Executive's Updates

NHS Forth Valley's Chief Executive issues regular briefing updates to staff to provide information and updates on a number of key issues and service developments and highlight local awards and achievements. These are posted on the homepage of the Staff Intranet and links are also included in the Staff Brief.

(v) Board Meeting Updates

Briefing updates are issued after every Board meeting to update staff on the discussions and key decisions taken as well as summaries some of the key reports. Links to all papers discussed are also available on the [Board Matters section](#) of the website.

(vi) Partnership Forum

The Area Partnership Forum provides a valuable forum 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) 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 are 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.

(viii) Staff Feedback

Staff can contact the Communications Department direct via the communications email fvcomms@nhs.scot or by phoning 01786 457243. Many staff also use social media and provide feedback and comments direct via the organisation's 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.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A number of tools, methods and feedback mechanisms will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Communications Framework in line with the overall aims and key priorities. These include:

- Media monitoring and evaluation
- Feedback from internal and external audits
- Feedback from external reviews and assessments including Investors in People (IIP) and Healthcare Environment Inspections, Mental Welfare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
- 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, social media, local and national media, the online feedback on the NHS Forth Valley website and Care Opinion
 - Patient complaints and cases investigated by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO)
 - The results of the national and local staff surveys including iMatter
 - Feedback and enquiries from Staff Brief, Staff News and Chief Executive's Brief
 - Focus group feedback and responses to questionnaires on specific issues