



West Lothian Integration Joint Board

Communication and Engagement Strategy 2020-23

Approved 21 January 2020
Last reviewed 29 June 2021

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1. Introduction

This Communication and Engagement Strategy will have meaningful input to the way services are provided and will create the framework within which the Health and Social Care Partnership can deliver the West Lothian Integration Joint Board’s vision and aims as set out in its [Strategic Plan for 2019-23](#) and summarised below:



The strategy replaces and builds upon the Participation and Engagement Strategy approved by the IJB in 2017.

The IJB recognises that good communication and engagement is crucial in creating a culture of co-operation, co-production and co-ordination across all partners. Through working with people, their families, Health and Social Care Partnership staff and the wider community, we can create effective and sustainable solutions and achieve the best outcomes for the people of West Lothian.

The IJB is committed to working with partners, service users, their families and the wider community to find effective and sustainable solutions and achieve the best outcomes for the people of West Lothian. The following priorities can only be achieved by building trust through good engagement being embedded in everything we do:



This includes working with community planning partners to address underlying social inequalities that result in health inequalities. The recently refreshed Strategic Planning Group will provide a key mechanism for taking account of communities and other stakeholders, ensuring that services are planned according to local need and contributing to effective strategic commissioning for the functions delegated to the IJB:

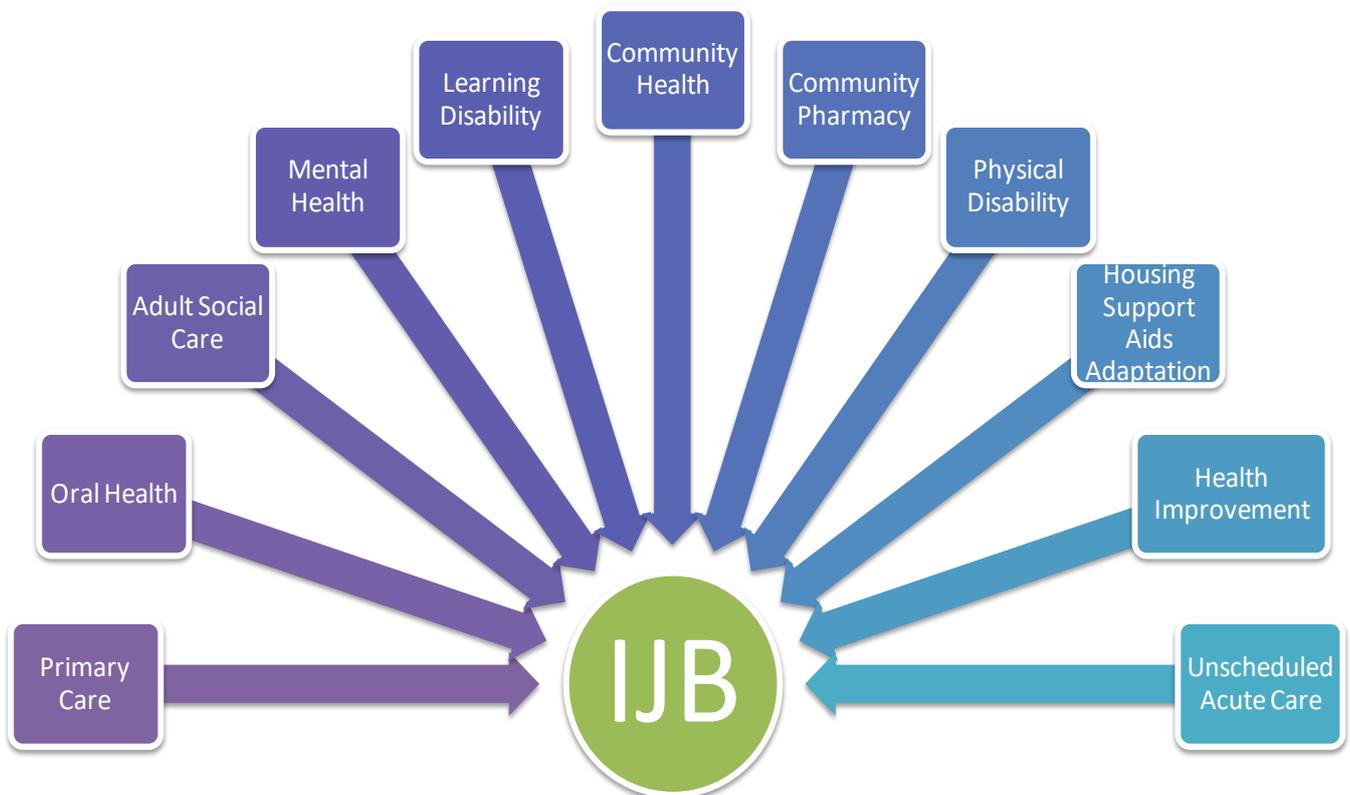


Figure 1: Functions Delegated to the IJB

This is a high-level strategy, which sets out the approach for involving and communicating with stakeholders through the Health and Social Care Partnership to:

- Achieve our vision and strategic objectives
- Share information in a way that people understand
- Be more coordinated when planning and delivering services
- Communicate our achievements and be honest, open and accountable

The Health and Social Care Partnership Management Team will be responsible for overseeing and reporting on this strategy.

A detailed action plan is appended to the strategy. This is a fluid operational document and will form the basis of communication and engagement activities. A separate action plan will be developed for staff.

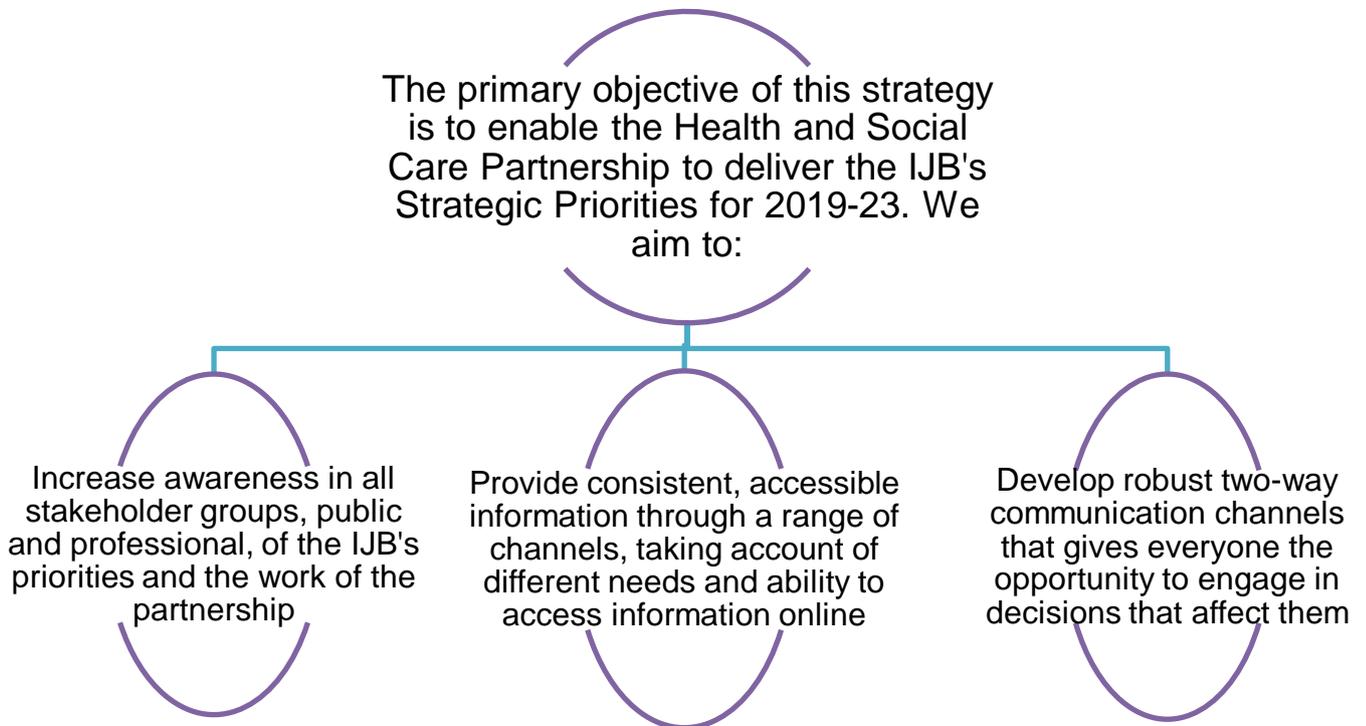
More information about the West Lothian Integration Joint Board can be found in its [Strategic Plan for 2019-23](#).

2. Communication and Engagement Objectives

Purpose of the Strategy



Aims of the Strategy



Benefits

It is recognised that public services who engage well with those who use their services or have an interest in their services, provide better, more responsive services that meet the needs of the communities they serve. Ultimately, this leads to better outcomes.

Building strong relationships with the public, the third and independent sectors, carers, staff and other stakeholders is more important than ever in the currently challenging financial climate. Good engagement allows public bodies such as the IJB to focus its resources on the priorities of its communities and empowers people to do more to improve their own health and wellbeing.

External Benefits

- Increased awareness and understanding of services and how they operate
- People are more active in managing their own health and wellbeing
- Promotion of social inclusion - people can be involved in the planning of services
- Services will be more effective, more responsive and better received by communities
- Increase local ownership and enhanced civic pride – if people feel valued and included they are more likely to participate
- Increased dialogue and trust between local people and organisations
- Increased openness and accessibility

Internal Benefits

- Increased awareness of aims and strategic priorities of the IJB
- Staff understand the HSCP and represent it in a consistent way, with awareness of all shared goals and key messages
- Open and transparent opportunities to consult with staff
- Better working relationships between organisations
- Opportunities for collaborative commissioning and delivery of services
- Staff feel engaged and valued

Locality Planning

Good engagement is the foundation of effective planning at a community level. The IJB agreed a revised remit of its Strategic Planning Group in November 2019 that more strongly links the IJB's strategic planning to Community Planning and its Regeneration Planning process. This will ensure a robust foundation for engaging with communities

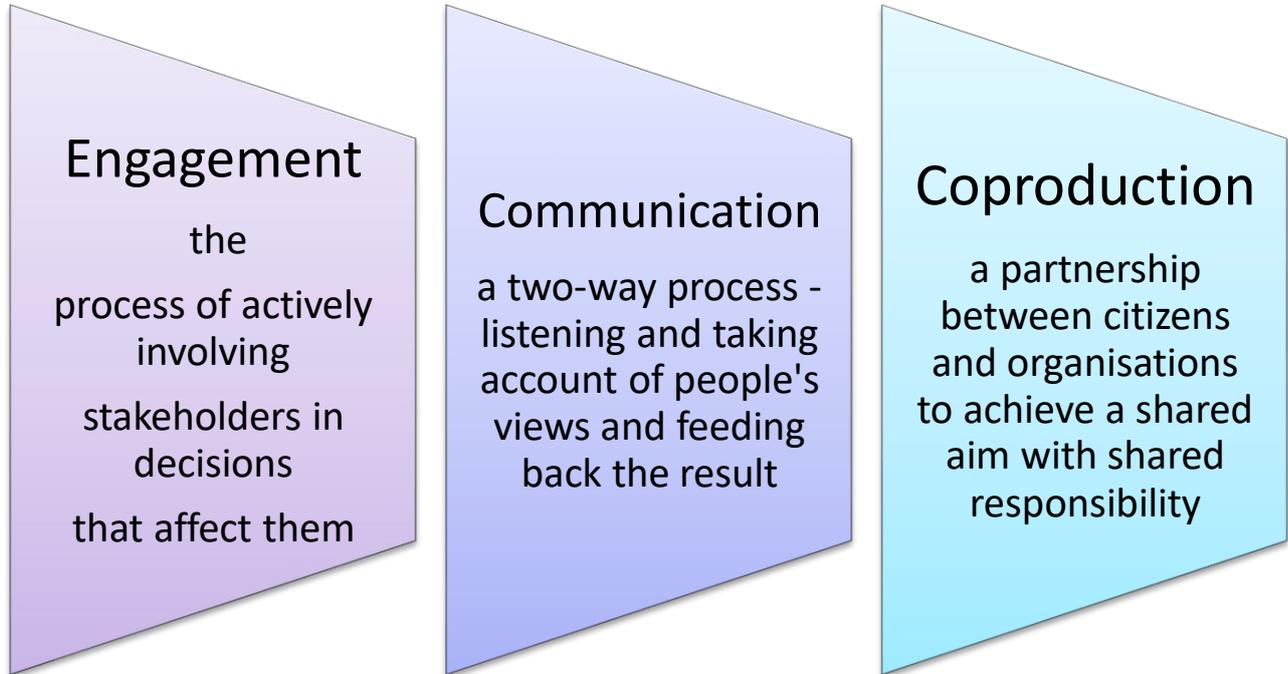
(particularly the most deprived), identifying local issues and planning services at a local level.

Going forward, Community Planning will be represented on the IJB's Strategic Planning Group and the remit and membership of the Strategic Planning Group will be widened to ensure both East and West Localities are represented at a strategic level.



3. Principles for Communication and Engagement

Key Definitions



National Standards for Community Engagement

West Lothian IJB commits to implementing the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#), the principles of which are:



The [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) are, in summary:

INVOLVEMENT: we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement

SUPPORT: we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement

PLANNING: we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken

METHODS: we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose

WORKING TOGETHER: We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently

SHARING INFORMATION: we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants

WORKING WITH OTHERS: we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement

IMPROVEMENT: we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants

FEEDBACK: we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected

MONITORING AND EVALUATION: we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement

Guidance and Legislation

[The Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) places certain duties in relation to engagement on the IJB and, therefore, on the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership acting on its behalf. For example, there is a prescribed list of stakeholders that must be consulted when a local authority and health board are agreeing or reviewing their Integration Scheme.

NHS Boards are required to involve people in designing, developing and delivering the health care services provided for them. This is underpinned by, among others, the [NHS](#)

[Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) and the [NHS Scotland Healthcare Quality Strategy](#).

The Scottish Government and COSLA have developed guidance to support greater collaboration between those making decisions about care services in Scotland, those delivering services, and people in communities who are affected - [Planning with People: Community engagement and participation guidance - COSLA/Scottish Government](#). This guidance is intended to replace previous guidance for NHS Boards, 'Informing, Engaging and Consulting People in Developing Health and Community Care Services CEL4' (2010). All engagement activities must be planned with due regard to this guidance.

[The Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) was enacted to help empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services to ensure they are built around people and communities. The Act means Community Planning Partnerships must develop Local Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIPs) and must support community bodies to participate in all parts of the process. It also entitles anyone to make a Participation Request where community bodies can request to take part in a process with a public body to improve an outcome it believes it can contribute to. The public body must agree to the request and set up a process unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal. At the end of the process the public body must publish a report on whether the outcomes were improved and how the community body contributed to that improvement. A link to guidance on participation requests is included [here](#).

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Consultation and engagement is a vital part of measuring the impact of policies and service change against groups of people characteristics protected by the [Equality Act 2010](#).

As a public body the IJB is required to assess the impact of its decisions, changes to policies, practices and services against the requirements of the public sector equality duty. An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) must be completed as part of the development of new policies, strategies, and significant changes in existing service provision to assess what impact, if any, the changes are likely to have. IIAs consider evidence of any potential impact on those who share a protected characteristic including any feedback from consultation or engagement with those groups. The standard report template for the IJB and its associated committees and groups includes a section on whether an IIA has been completed prior to seeking a decision from the IJB.

Both NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council have toolkits for conducting Integrated Impact Assessments:

[NHS Lothian IIA Toolkit](#)

[West Lothian Council IIA Toolkit](#)

Resources

The Scottish Health Council has produced a comprehensive [Participation Toolkit](#) to support health and social care staff to more effectively involve patients and service users, carers and members of the public in decisions about their own care and in the design and delivery of local services.

Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) published an [Engaging Differently](#) resource during the Covid-19 pandemic on how engagement approaches can be adapted so that community engagement remains possible and meaningful. It includes advice, tools and methods on how health and social care organisations can overcome the challenges of increased physical distancing through digital and non-digital means to ensure engagement remains inclusive.

In addition, West Lothian Community Planning Partnership published its own [Engaging Communities Toolkit](#), designed to support a whole range of individuals such as local workers, voluntary organisations and community members in the planning and delivery of different types of engagement.

4. Communication and Engagement Approach

Identity

In order to further integration, support engagement and maintain a consistent approach across the Health and Social Care Partnership, a clear identity should be established. There will be occasions where it is appropriate for communications to be issued in the name of “West Lothian Integration Joint Board”, for example, the publication of its Strategic Plan, but for most operational communications, the “West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership” brand should be used.

Stakeholder Outcomes

To ensure communication and engagement is effective, consideration should be given to who the target audience is and the outcome that is desired from engaging with them.

Who are our stakeholders?	Desired outcomes
People who use health and social care services and the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People know what the Health and Social Care Partnership does under the direction of the IJB • People know when the IJB and its associated committees meet are aware they can attend • People feel confident in what we do and feel able to get involved if they want to • People feel empowered to influence decisions and take ownership of their own health and wellbeing
Carers and their families	
Representatives, advocates, guardians and power of attorneys	
Health and social care engagement and reference groups	
Peer support groups and special interest groups	
NHS Lothian Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed leaders, consultants and ambassadors • Support for and buy-in to the priorities of the IJB • Receiving appropriate information at the right time and have opportunities to learn
Council Elected Members	
MSPs and MPs	
Local media	
Government and other	

regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared pupose
Third Sector Interface	
Third sector service providers	
Social Enterprises	
Community bodies and groups	
Independent providers	
Partner organisations	
Partnership staff from NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed workforce • Support for and buy-in to the priorities of the IJB • Staff feel engaged, consulted and are active participants in decisions • Staff are empowered to share good practice and ideas
Wider staff groups from NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council	
Trade Unions	
Professional Bodies	

Methods and Deliverables

Communication and engagement methods should be inclusive and accessible to a wide range of people with different needs. Consideration should be given to the intended audience and a range of methods should be employed to ensure no one is disadvantaged by disability, cultural or language barriers, access to the internet or difficulties with literacy, for example.

Alternative formats should be offered on all communications, for example, Easy-Read, Braille or different languages.

The following methods should be considered for communication and engagement activities:

Online Resources

- Promotion of HSCP website as source of information - <https://westlothianhscp.gov.uk>
- Promotion of self-help websites such as NHS Inform or West Space
- HSCP website well maintained and maximised as a tool for engagement

Publications

- Production of high quality, equality impact assessed material that delivers key messages in a clear, concise and plain-English manner
- Use of infographics and visuals for ease of reading and understanding
- Presence in council's Bulletin where appropriate
- Posters and flyers/postcards for awareness raising campaigns

Social Media and Technology

- Development of HSCP Social Media e.g. Twitter to communicate key messages - clear governance route to be established to control content
- Utilise existing West Lothian Council social media for reach to large audience
- Utilise screens in council and health buildings including GP practices

Media/External Agencies

- Work closely with council and NHS Lothian Media teams to further reach on communications
- Consider local news agencies for good news stories and awareness raising
- Utilise reach of other organisations, particularly where there is a shared purpose

Themed Events

- Engagement events on specific topics - consider creative methods to encourage participation and give consideration to location and accessibility
- Outcome of events should inform planning
- Feedback should always be given to contributors on the impact of their participation
- Staff engagement events for networking, development and finding solutions

Community Groups and Networks

- Utilise existing groups and networks for engagement - go to them so they don't have to come to us
- Disseminate information through groups and networks
- Have conversations about what matters to the community and support their participation

Individual Feedback Mechanisms

- Utilise council's esurvey creator license through Civic Centre Admin Team for questionnaires, comments and suggestions
- Make use of existing feedback from sources such as the National Health and Wellbeing Survey, Citizen's Panel or staff surveys

Service User and Carer Representatives

- Clear roles and responsibilities for service user and carer representatives
- Service user and carer representatives to be supported in their role

5. Monitoring and Reporting

Evaluation of Engagement Activities

It is good practice to evaluate engagement activities on an ongoing basis and a number of methods can be employed to do this, for example:

- How many responses/attendees/website hits were there?
- What is the level of engagement on social media
- What was the general tone of the feedback?
- Were there public enquiries or complaints and what was the content of these?
- Benchmarking against other organisations or previous engagement activity

The Scottish Health Council have developed an [Evaluating Participation Toolkit](#), which is a stand-alone guide for assessing the way in which engagement has been undertaken and the results of that activity. It aims to provide resources, references and tools to help you to develop a local approach to evaluation.

Governance

A Health and Social Care Partnership media and web content management group will be established to ensure the HSCP website is kept up to date, to maximise the use of the website as an online service tool and identify new ways in which service areas can use digital and online methods to engage with people.

The Customer and Community Team have primary responsibility for the HSCP Communication and Engagement Action Plan. Regular updates will be reported to the HSCP Management Team.

An update on implementation of this strategy will be provided to the IJB on an annual basis. The strategy will be reviewed in three years.