



# Communication and Patient, Carer and Public Involvement Strategy and Plan

2021-2024



# Introduction

Wessex Cancer Alliance’s Communication and Patient, Carer and Public Involvement<sup>1</sup> Strategy and Plan sets out its expectations to improve the culture and delivery of effective communications and involvement across all its areas of work.

Communications and involvement are two sides of the same coin. One cannot be done without the other. To be effective and bring about the improvements to cancer services and health outcomes for people of all ages<sup>2</sup> living in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and for those who come for treatment from elsewhere, the Alliance recognises it needs to be good at both.

This document sets out for the Alliance, its partners, patients, carers and the public, the outcomes it wants to achieve for both functions and provides a roadmap of how it is going to get there. In this way, anyone interested can see the Alliance’s intentions and hold them to account in terms of progress against these commitments.



<sup>1</sup> This will be referred to as involvement throughout the remainder of this document.

<sup>2</sup> Includes children and young people with cancer and their carers.

# Background

The Alliance is not starting from scratch and there are already areas of good practice with regards to communications and involvement. There is however still work to do in terms of improving how we do both more effectively, for example by building team capacity, creating resources and ensuring closer working with organisations and health and care systems across Wessex. This will make this easier to do and to develop consistent high quality, joined up practice to support the Alliance's 5-year Delivery Plan across its four pillars of work:

- Early Diagnosis and Prevention
- Faster Diagnosis
- Treatment and Care
- Personalised Care

The COVID19 pandemic has put a spotlight on how essential communications and involvement are, as well as provided us with intelligence into communities where messaging around cancer awareness needs to be strengthened. Proactive communications with all stakeholders have never been more needed, to ensure patients, the public and staff are kept up to date with clear, relevant information. Learning from people's experiences during this time; their feedback on information they are given; and the stark health inequalities that have been highlighted, particularly for

Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, gives us rich insight to inform how we need to recover services<sup>3</sup> and urgently address the needs of specific groups of people, working across health and social care systems.

This strategy will continue to be developed and shared with a wide range of people, including the Dorset and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Systems and their communications and engagement groups; Dorset Cancer Partnership, Wessex Cancer Alliance workstream leads; and patients, carers and the public, to ensure our approach will meet the needs of those we expect to communicate, involve and provide support to.

The Alliance is already investing in resources to ensure it has the support to develop the skills and confidence across the team to deliver this strategy and plan.



<sup>3</sup> Known as 'Adapt and Adopt' action plan.

## Vision

The vision is that in three years all Wessex Cancer Alliance communications and involvement will be:

- Meaningful and impactful to those involved in these activities
- Accessible and inclusive
- Proactive, well planned and coordinated across all systems and activities
- Supported, valued and joined up across a wider set of stakeholders



## Aims

The aims of this strategy are:

- To provide Wessex Cancer Alliance and its stakeholders with a clear, concise strategy for the next 3 years that outlines how it will achieve and measure the effectiveness of its communications and involvement
- To provide a clear plan of how the Alliance will share, develop and deliver communications to and with partners, stakeholders, NHS England and Improvement, patients and the public to support each of its areas of work
- To provide a clear plan of how the Alliance will build a culture of meaningful partnerships with the health and care systems, the public and patient for all its workstreams
- To set expectations, maximise our joint reach and gather intelligence with other health and care organisations and systems to ensure more local people benefit from lessons learnt through our communications and involvement activities
- To set clear measures to be able to demonstrate the outcomes of this strategy

It should be noted that this strategy and plan will be supported by specific communications and involvement plans related to each workstream and project. These will also be shared with all relevant organisations and partners.

## Strategy outcomes

The outcomes that this strategy will deliver are:

- There will be a culture of understanding around communications, sharing of information and PPI within the Alliance team and our systems
- The team will undertake more meaningful PPI involvement (as reported by those involved and our partners). This will shape and influence their workstreams
- The public and patients will receive timely updates and messages about cancer that will be informed by the insight and reports we and others gather from them
- Alliance stakeholders will be involved and informed of Alliance communications at the right time, in the right way for them (via website, social media and other communication channels)
- Proactive media coverage will be part of business as usual
- People (patients, carers and the public), specifically those communities who experience worse health outcomes, will be more aware of how they can be involved and influence improvements in cancer services across Wessex
- That the way communications and involvement is collectively carried out across organisations and systems will be better coordinated, planned and executed, and evaluated, meaning the way we share intelligence is much more effective.

## Evaluation measures

We will know we have achieved this because we will be able to demonstrate:

- Increased reach and engagement with our website and social media
- Improved media coverage around cancer services
- Increased confidence in the team to undertake patient and public involvement
- Improved reach of patients, carers and the public that are involved in activities and people's satisfaction in getting involved
- Improved stakeholder satisfaction with Alliance communications
- Improved outcomes from workstream projects where there has been significant communication and involvement, e.g. increase bowel screening uptake in areas of health inequalities
- Improved joint communications and involvement with health and care organisations and Integrated Care Systems in Wessex with opportunities to feedback and highlight areas for improvement.

One of our first tasks, following the adoption of this Strategy, is to assess where we are now and set clear measures and targets to be able to demonstrate the above. We will report these to the Board at least annually.

## Who we will communicate with and involve

Who we communicate with and involve will vary depend on our workstream goal. We do not underestimate the importance of involving a wide range of people and organisations as equal partners to enable us to achieve our ambitions as an Alliance.

Wessex Cancer Alliance is responsible for keeping a large number of stakeholders informed and involved in our work. This is achieved through strong links and relationships with and not exclusive to Dorset Cancer Partnership, our local NHS Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Groups, our primary care leads and Primary Care Networks, the Academic Health Science Network, other academic organisations, industry, Integrated Care Systems and Public Health teams. Part of this strategy will be to build on those links and establish projects where there is a clear benefit in working as a whole system or in partnership, for example around cancer screening messaging with Public Health.

We know our involvement of the public, patients and carers, particularly those who experience health inequalities, could be better and it is our intention to improve this. They should be an equal partner in all that we do.

We have long standing relationships with a number of voluntary sector organisations, such as Cancer Research UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, Wessex Cancer Trust, local Healthwatch, and we continue to build newer ones through the **Communities Against Cancer** project, hosted by Action Hampshire. We know the value partnering with these organisations and how much they support our work, help provide insight, and different perspectives to guide our thinking.

## How we will communicate and involve people

Communication and involvement will be carried out in a variety of different ways depending on the audience and activity. Accessibility and inclusion will be our primary consideration.

This may be via media/press releases, use of the **Cancer Matters Wessex** and **Wessex Cancer Alliance** websites, virtual consultations or meetings, case studies, leaflets or face to face engagement, where possible. It is important that we utilise all the channels we have for communicating our messages and engaging people and ensuring we reach all areas of the Wessex region.

**Cancer Matters Wessex** is a new website that was developed, in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, to provide the population of Wessex with local information and updates on cancer services and support. This website, built in 2019/20, is regularly reviewed by a dedicated project team. Content will continue to be developed and will support this strategy.

For each workstream and project the Alliance will work with partners to consider the best way to do this at the start of any work.

Examples of how people have been involved in cancer services to date can be found on the **Wessex Voices website**.

As part of our planning, we will continue to review existing intelligence and feedback from across local health and care organisations, the voluntary sector and other sources to help us to shape future communications and involvement. For example, during 2020, there have been a number of useful evaluations into people's use of digital technology, inclusion and patient experience during a national pandemic. We will utilise all of this and look for further evidence to support any plans we develop. The way we communicate must be meaningful and impactful in order to affect change.

## Risks

The main risk to delivering this strategy is having sufficient resources in place to deliver our communication and involvement action plan. Unforeseen events may divert existing resources and may take longer to deliver the strategy outcomes.

An external risk will be the pressures that our NHS and Public Health colleagues may face with at various times of the year (e.g. winter pressures) that will mean their support may not always be possible to a level that we would want. The best risk mitigation will be to prepare toolkits and briefings, making the task less onerous but the impact, hopefully can remain unaffected. We will also need to consider appropriate timings of campaigns and projects to allow for the most support.

## Review and reporting

The Alliance will review its' progress against this strategy at least annually. This will be reported to the Board and shared on the **Alliance website**. Should circumstances require a change in reporting, the Board will be informed and this will be made public. All Board papers and minutes will be published on the **Wessex Cancer Alliance website**.



## Strategy Action Plan

Strategy outcome	Action	Timescales	Lead
<b>1. Found a culture of meaningful communications and involvement</b>	1.1 Coproduce a set of involvement and communications principles with patients and the public	December 2021	SN/JJ
	1.2 Promote the tools and support available to the team to undertake effective communications and involvement	Ongoing	SN
	1.3 Provide support to workstream leads to develop and plan communications and involvement at the start of projects, with evaluations of these functions built in from the outset	Ongoing / Annual Review	JJ/SN
	1.4 Provide communications and involvement training and support to WCA colleagues and partners to improve how we do this	Ongoing	JJ/ SN
	1.5 Create a culture of continuous learning by linking to and sharing good practice around communications and involvement	Ongoing	JJ/SN
<b>2. Timely, relevant communications, informed by patient feedback, to the right people in the right way</b>	2.1 Build and maintain content both for WCA and Cancer Matters Wessex websites, using case studies and sharing feedback in a timely manner via these sites	Ongoing	JJ
	2.2 Communicate messages and share information, including opportunities for patients and the public to get involved, via social media channels – twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube etc	Ongoing	JJ
	2.3 Share fortnightly stakeholder bulletin with Cancer updates from WCA and regional/national messages as appropriate	Ongoing	JJ
	2.4 Develop the WCA existing database to ensure we have a wide and diverse range of organisations and other stakeholders to extend the reach of our communications and involvement activities (see Equality Health Impact Assessment)	Ongoing	JJ/SN
	2.5 Provide briefings to the team on the Accessible Information Standard and ensure all public facing communications meet it	May 2021/ Ongoing	JJ/SN

Strategy outcome	Action	Timescales	Lead
<b>3. Greater awareness and involvement, particularly of people who experience worse health outcomes, who are partners in WCA work</b>	3.1 Maximise the potential of organisations by linking with the Dorset and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System Inequalities Leads and Boards to develop joint intelligence and plans to address health inequalities	June 2021	SR
	3.2 As part of Alliance Health Inequalities planning, establish a coordinated plan to reach and develop relationships with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and other groups who experience health inequalities (see the Equality Health Impact Assessment for this strategy)	Sept 2021/ Ongoing	SN
	3.3 Support the Communities against Cancer project, which raises awareness of cancer and prevention messaging to health inequality groups	Ongoing	ND/ SN
	3.4 Develop, grow and manage a representative and accessible Patient, Carer and Public Involvement Network	July 2021/ Ongoing	SN
	3.5 Establish the training and support needs for people to get involved with Alliance and provide this on an ongoing basis	March 2021/ Ongoing	SN
	3.6 Organise regular WCA involvement steering group meetings to shape the way the Alliance undertakes its involvement	Sept 2021/ Ongoing	SN
	3.7 Promote opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved in shaping cancer services in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	March 2021/ Ongoing	SN



Strategy outcome	Action	Timescales	Lead
<b>4. Better coordinated, planned and executed activities, and more effective intelligence sharing effective</b>	4.1 Continue to attend the following health and care communications and engagement meetings as follows: Dorset Cancer Partnership Communications and Engagement Group Dorset Integrated Care Systems (ICS) Engagement Leads Group Hampshire and Isle of Wight Communications and Engagement Network HIOW Health Inequalities Engagement Group AHSN Innovations Communications	Ongoing	JJ/SN
	4.2 Establish links and a working relationship with the Dorset ICS Communications Leads Group and the HIOW ICS Director of Communications and Engagement	May 2021	JJ
	4.3 Establish and link with existing involvement mechanisms in cancer and wider health and care services across Slight Specific Groups, cancer pathway reviews and Trusts, CCGs, ICSs, Councils and voluntary sectors to create a more joined up network of cancer involvement activity	July 2021	SN
	4.4 Create and update a central place for sharing insight and continuously promote these findings to inform services and reduce duplication	June 2021/ Ongoing	SN
<b>5. Evaluated our progress</b>	5.1 Baseline strategy performance measures	May 2021	JJ/SN
	5.2 Develop and undertake a stakeholder WCA communications and engagement feedback survey	December 2021	JJ
	5.3 Review, replan and report to Board annually	March 2022	JJ/SN

## Accessibility Standards and Guidance

There are a number of standards and guidance that Wessex Cancer Alliance will start to use to ensure inclusive, accessible communications and involvement. These include:

- Collecting equality monitoring data across the protected characteristics for relevant communications and involvement activities
- Follow the Accessible Information Standard and the NHS Accessible Information and Communications Policy
- NHS Inclusive Language Guidance
- Plain English guidance
- Undertaking Equality Health Impact Assessments for each new or changing area of work, which will consider impacts on the communications and involvement.

We also recognise the images we use in our communications need to reflect the diverse range of people and communities we serve and will make sure this is the case.

This guidance is highlighted in an Equality Health Impact Assessment that supports this Strategy.

## Our thanks

Thank you to everyone, especially patients, who contributed to this document and sent their feedback.

We would also like to thank Wessex Voices for their support to the Wessex Cancer Alliance around patient, carer and public involvement.





For a translation of this document or to request  
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