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Agenda Item: 13

Integration Joint Board

Date of Meeting: 30 April 2025.

Subject: Communications and Engagement Strategy.

1. Purpose

1.1. To present the updated Communication and Engagement Strategy for Members' consideration.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended:

2.1. That the updated Communication and Engagement Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Background

3.1. The IJB's first Consultation and Engagement Strategy was approved in 2018, with updated versions approved in 2021 and 2023.

3.2. The present iteration examines the legislative context of consultation, national and local standards for consultation and engagement, as well as the methodology for dissemination of information and consultation with stakeholders.

4. Key Changes

4.1. The layout of the Strategy has been changed to focus on how the partnership will engage, followed by details of the current and proposed engagement activity. In doing so, officers have sought to bring the strategy more in line with the strategies of the IJB's service delivery partners, NHS Orkney and Orkney Islands Council.

4.2. Officers have sought to use plain English in recent iterations of public facing documents. The revised Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, seeks to continue in this endeavour.

5. Contribution to quality

Please indicate which of the Orkney Community Plan 2025 to 2030 values are supported in this report adding Yes or No to the relevant area(s):

Resilience: To support and promote our strong communities.	Yes.
Enterprise: To tackle crosscutting issues such as digital connectivity, transport, housing and fuel poverty.	No.
Equality: To encourage services to provide equal opportunities for everyone.	Yes.
Fairness: To make sure socio-economic and social factors are balanced.	Yes.
Innovation: To overcome issues more effectively through partnership working.	Yes.
Leadership: To involve partners such as community councils, community groups, voluntary groups and individuals in the process.	Yes.
Sustainability: To make sure economic and environmental factors are balanced.	Yes.

6. Resource and financial implications

6.1. There are no financial implications to the adoption of this strategy. Any cost associated with implementation of the strategy will have to be met from within the IJB's approved funding envelope, and the approved budgets of its constituent partners.

7. Risk, equality and climate change implications

7.1. There is an identified risk of inadequate communication and engagement, on behalf of the IJB, with key stakeholders and the wider public, which could result in poorer planning and delivery of services, along with less joined-up working. Developing and implementing this Strategy is part of the risk mitigation activity for the identified risk.

7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

7.3. An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

7.4. There are no climate change implications directly associated with the proposed Strategy.

8. Direction required

Please indicate if this report requires a direction to be passed to:

NHS Orkney.	No.
Orkney Islands Council.	No.

9. Escalation required

Please indicate if this report requires escalated to:

NHS Orkney.	No.
Orkney Islands Council.	No.

10. Authors and contact information

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11. Supporting documents

11.1. Appendix 1: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2025 – 2027.

11.2. Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.

11.3. Appendix 3: Island Communities Impact Assessment.



Communication and Engagement Strategy 2025 - 2027

Version.	Communication and Engagement Strategy 2025 - 2027.
Strategic Lead.	Chief Officer.
Date Approved.	
Date for Review.	April 2027.

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Note: Links are included to several websites where you can find more information. They are highlighted in blue, [like this](#).

1. Introduction

In 2014, the Scottish Government introduced an [Act](#) that required local Councils and NHS Boards to work much more closely together, delegating some of their services, such as social work and community health services, to a new organisation, called an Integration Joint Board (IJB).

IJBs are responsible for planning what community health and social care services the area needs, and how those services can be better delivered, making sure they are more “joined up”.

The Orkney IJB wants to make sure that everyone, especially the most vulnerable, are heard. This means working with our partners who deliver services, NHS Orkney and Orkney Islands Council (OIC), making sure they are involving people who need to use services, their families, their carers, staff, the Third Sector, and other key partners, to help us make decisions about community health and social care services.

We know that people who better understand services, how those services are delivered, and who feel their voice is heard, are far more likely to feel satisfied with services.

Making sure that everyone has a voice is known as **Communication and Engagement**, and this Strategy is designed to guide the work of the IJB over the next two years in how it communicates and engages with all its partners, especially the wider Orkney community.

2. Strategic Context

This Strategy sits alongside the Communication and Engagement Strategies of both delivery partners, NHS Orkney and OIC, as well as [The Orkney Partnership Board](#), who are Orkney’s Community Planning Partnership.

It also supports delivery of NHS Orkney’s [Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2028](#) and OIC’s [Council Plan 2023 - 2028](#).

3. Background

There are several Acts, passed by the Scottish Government, that tell IJBs, as well as many other public authorities, how and when they should communicate and engage with their partners and the wider public. Please click on the links below if you wish to read more about these acts and how they affect communication and engagement.

3.1. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014

This is the [Act](#) referred to in the Introduction, above, which led to the formation of the IJB. This Act describes how health and social care services should be planned more effectively and includes aspects of communication and engagement.

There are several other Acts, local and national policies, and official guidance, which tell IJBs to communicate and engage with the public.

3.2. Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

This [Act](#) gives community organisations the power to own and control some land and buildings that were previously owned by local councils and other public authorities. It also strengthens their voices in decisions about public services.

The [Orkney Partnership Board](#) leads on this work. They have produced a [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#) (LOIP), a document that describes what the member organisations of the Orkney Partnership Board aim to achieve by working in partnership, over-and-above what could be achieved by working as individual organisations.

3.3. National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

The [National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes](#) are Scottish Government's description of what health and social care partners should be attempting to achieve through the integration and, ultimately, improvement of services.

There are nine Outcomes, in total. Outcome 8 concentrates on engagement: 'People who work in health and social care services feel engaged with the work they do and are supported to continuously improve the information, support, care and treatment they provide'.

3.4. National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2004

This [Act](#) describes how NHS Boards must engage with local communities when shaping local health services. This applies to every part of NHS Orkney, including those areas of NHS services that are not the responsibility of the IJB.

3.5. NHS Staff Governance Standard

This is the [NHS policy](#) that describes how NHS staff should be managed and, importantly, how they feel they are managed. The Policy specifies that all staff are entitled to be:

- Well informed.
- Appropriately trained and developed.
- Involved in decisions which affect them.
- Treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect, in an environment where diversity is valued.
- Provided with a continuously improving and safe working environment, promoting the health and wellbeing of staff, patients, and the wider community.

3.6. OIC Staff Consultation Protocol

This is the agreed Protocol between OIC and the Trade Unions, setting out how OIC will consult with their staff and what they will consult on, and was developed in consultation with all the recognised Trade Unions.

It explicitly states the circumstances under which a consultation with staff and the Trade Unions will occur, how the consultation will be undertaken, who will perform the consultation, and for how long the consultation should last. There is also a step-by-step process for how to conduct the consultation.

3.7. Co-production

Co-production is where professionals, like the NHS and the local council, and people share power to plan and deliver support services, recognising that both partners have a vital contribution to make. Further information on co-production can be found at the [Scottish Co-production Network](#).

3.8. National Standards for Community Engagement

The Orkney Partnership Board has written [guidelines](#) for how local organisations should communicate and engage with people here in Orkney; all IJB consultations are based upon these guidelines.

Included in the guidance are the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#), a description of how public organisations, such as the local council or the NHS, should communicate with their local community. Here are the seven standards:

Impact: We will assess the impact of the engagement and use what we have learned to improve our future community engagement.

Communication: We will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement.

Methods: We will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.

Working together: We will work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement.

Planning: There is a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions.

Support: We will identify and overcome any barriers to participation.

Inclusion: We will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement.'

4. How will the IJB Communicate and Engage?

Several years ago, a set of principles were put together which would be at the heart of our communication and engagement activity and continue to be as relevant today as they were a few years ago. Those principles are:

- Good communication is everyone's responsibility: from the Chief Officer to their respective front-line staff.
- This needs to be a two-way process: it is important to seek and listen to the views and opinions of the public and staff.

- Communication and engagement activity will be focused, targeted and relevant.
- Communication should be timely, with information quickly communicated once available.
- Communication will be proactive, open, and transparent.
- The language and format used to communicate and engage will be right for the target audience. In most cases this means in plain English and jargon free.
- Written materials will be made available in formats that are accessible to all.
- Staff have a right to be well informed and have the opportunity to provide views, ideas, and other feedback.

5. Communications and Engagement Activity

The way we communicate and engage needs to evolve over time, reflecting changes in the way people expect to be informed, find information for themselves, and provide us with feedback.

5.1. Newspaper and Radio

Traditional media, such as newspapers and the radio, remain important, perhaps more so in Orkney than elsewhere. We work closely with the Communications Teams at both NHS Orkney and OIC and will continue to look for opportunities to issue press releases, undertake interviews, and promote the work of health and social care services, in The Orcadian and on Radio Orkney.

5.2. Social Media

Increasingly the first choice for communicating with people in Orkney; the Council's Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) platforms have the highest number of followers, per head of population, in Scotland! The IJB uses the Council's social media channels, as well as those of NHS Orkney, to reach folk of all backgrounds, throughout the county.

Whilst Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) remain the favourite apps for many people, the increasing popularity of the likes of Tik Tok, Instagram, and WhatsApp, means there is a need to stay ahead of the apps and channels that people prefer to use.

5.3. Websites

The IJB has a dedicated section on both the [NHS Orkney](#) and [OIC](#) websites. Both the NHS Orkney and OIC websites are undergoing a process of upgrading and improvement that will make it easier for people to get information on services, as well as the latest news, something that is especially useful and popular during periods of bad weather, which might affect services.

These planned improvements include making the websites easier to navigate, making sure there is more up to date information, and even looking at new tools such as live chat.

5.4. Video

Feedback shows that people are much more likely to watch a quick video rather than read a piece of text, which means more people can be reached this way. But not only this, videos let people see and hear those who make decisions about services and, most importantly, those who are delivering services.

We have recently used videos, shown in the cinema at the Pickaquoy Centre, as the centrepiece of a recruitment campaign for the Care at Home service, and this has encouraged us to look at other ways to use videos to reach people.

5.5. Audio-casting

OIC has for some time now provided the opportunity for people to [listen to meetings](#), including the IJB and the Performance and Audit Committee, held in the Council Chamber. This is known as audio casting.

Audio casting gives people the opportunity to listen live to meetings, as they happen, helping people to understand the policy and decision-making process, and giving people a greater understanding of the work of the organisation. There is also a listen-again facility available on the Council website, which is available for one year after the original recording.

5.6. Staff Engagement and Communication

Almost all communication with staff across both NHS Orkney and OIC is via email. Whilst rare, there are still some groups of staff who do not have access to secure NHS Orkney or OIC email accounts, and are contacted through postal services, or through noticeboards.

5.7. Orkney Opinions

The IJB has been a consistent user of Orkney Opinions, OIC's public consultation group, whose volunteer members are consulted when a range of views is sought on a given topic. Both the numbers of responses, and the quality of those responses, were consistently high.

Unfortunately, Orkney Opinions has been on hiatus for a while, but the IJB has been pushing to reinstate Orkney Opinions, as soon as possible, as it became a 'go-to' method of reaching a wide range of people in Orkney, and will continue to do so.

5.8. Joint Consultations

It has become clear over recent years that people are increasingly suffering from 'consultation fatigue', where they are tired of being given the opportunity to have their say. To tackle this, some consultations have run alongside those from other services, giving the public the opportunity to contribute to several consultations at the same time.

5.9. Campaigns

Campaigns are often planned to communicate with people about specific services or to tell folk about an upcoming event.

For example, we have heavily promoted the work of unpaid carers in Orkney, helping people to understand the support that is available to unpaid carers, and will continue to do so. Also, recently several schemes to attract people to jobs and careers in caring have been promoted.

5.10. Summary

Communications and engagement activities need to be relevant to people and their lives. They will help people to better understand the arrangements for integrated community health and social care, as well as the differences these arrangements are making, and will reassure people that excellent community health and social care services continue to be provided, throughout Orkney, under the oversight of the IJB.

Through this engagement and communication activities we will:

- Discuss what areas of community health and social care matter most to people.
- Help ensure people are able to influence their own health and wellbeing and contribute to the improvement of services.
- Support measures to ensure people are helped to live at home, or in a homely setting, for as long as they want.
- Explore ways to get people involved.
- Enable people to engage with health and social care providers, and all associated community planning partners, to help improve and transform services,
- Try to give a voice to everyone in the community – we will work hard to communicate with seldom-heard groups or individuals.
- Provide feedback on the impact of their engagement with us and how their views have been considered.
- Recognise ‘consultation fatigue’ amongst people in Orkney by working with NHS Orkney, OIC, other public authorities and the Third Sector to deliver co-produced consultation and engagement, wherever possible.

6. What Happens Next?

This updated Strategy sets out the broad aims for the IJB’s communications and engagement activities. It will be reviewed and updated again in 2027.



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of the Integration Joint Board (Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership) by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy, or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated, or minimised, and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Communication and Engagement Strategy 2025 – 2027.
Service / service area responsible.	Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Shaun Hourston-Wells, Project Manager. Email: shaun.hourston-wells@orkney.gov.uk . Telephone: 01856873535 Extension 2414
Date of assessment.	10 March 2025.
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced, or changed significantly).	Existing.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	To articulate the Integration Joint Boards plans for communication and engagement, over the next 2 years.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	All health and social care staff; service and other statutory partners, and the Orkney public.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	Yes. This policy will have significant influence upon how the Integration Joint Board is perceived by its partners and the Orkney public.

How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	Each and every occasion that we engage with partners and those that use health and social care services, their commentary and feedback influences the way we engage in the future.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).	No.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	Please complete this section for proposals relating to strategic decisions). No. Anecdotal evidence is that older people are less likely to engage with social media and the internet, so the Communication and Engagement Strategy must reflect this.
Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?	(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts, and reasons).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour, and nationality.	No.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No.

6. Age: people of different ages.	There is some evidence that older people may be less likely to use the internet/social media.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No.
9. Care experienced.	No.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Many instances of engagement will specifically seek the input of service users who may have a disability and will be tailored accordingly.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	There is a small possibility that electronic engagement will disqualify people unable to afford an electronic device. All engagement exercises will include the opportunity to participate through face-to-face meetings, or by paper submission.

3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes. Not all people will have access to the internet or social media, so other opportunities to engage, through paper submission or face-to-face meetings, will be offered.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	Please see above.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes.

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	Yes. We will ensure there are multiple formats available for people to participate in engagement.
What action is to be taken?	See above.
Who will undertake it?	Engagement Officer.
When will it be done?	On each occasion that we undertake an engagement exercise.

How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	The engagement officer will monitor how this is applied.
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Signature:



Date: 10.03.25.

Name: Shaun Hourston-Wells.

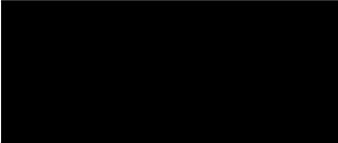


Island Communities Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) is to improve the work of the Integration Joint Board by making sure it considers whether the impact of any policy, strategy or service on an island community is likely to be significantly differently from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS	Responses
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy, or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	Communication and Engagement Strategy 2025 – 2027.
STEP 1 - Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Responses
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy, or service?	The Communication and Engagement Strategy articulates the Health and Social Care Partnership's plans for publicity and engagement with stakeholder partners and service users.
Do you need to consult?	No. There would likely be considerable cynicism around a consultation about how we consult.
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy, or service?	Orkney's ferry-linked islands.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	The Communication and Engagement Strategy articulates the Integration Joint Boards plans for publicity and engagement with stakeholders and the community. Health and social care services have an excellent record of directly engaging people in the isles, in consultations, including visits to the isles in most cases. As such, there is not anticipated to be a significant detrimental impact in the ferry-linked isles.
Is the policy, strategy, or service new?	No.
STEP 2 - Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Responses
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	There is no directly relevant data available.
Do you need to consult?	No.
How does any existing data differ between islands?	N/A.
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	No.
STEP 3 - Consultation	Responses
Who do you need to consult with?	N/A.

How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	N/A.
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	N/A.
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	N/A.
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	N/A.
STEP 4 – Assessment	Responses
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No.
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	There will be occasions when face-to-face consultation is difficult. However, it is now rare that any form of engagement involves inviting people in a community to visit a public building and meet with officers. Nonetheless, if there are occasions when this is considered essential, every effort will be made to visit the island(s) involved.
How will you address these?	See above.
<p>You must now determine whether, in your opinion your policy, strategy, or service is likely to have an effect on an island community that is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).</p> <p>If your answer is NO to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required, and <u>you can proceed to Step SIX</u>. If the answer is YES, an ICIA must be prepared, and <u>you should proceed to Step FIVE</u>. To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)? • Are these different effects likely? • Are these effects significantly different? • Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community when compared to other islands in Orkney (especially the Mainland)? 	
STEP 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Responses
In Step Five, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy, or service:	
Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy, or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	

Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
STEP 6 - Making adjustments to your work	Responses
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	There will be occasions when face-to-face consultation is difficult. However, it is now rare that any form of engagement involves inviting people in a community to visit a public building and meet with officers. Nonetheless, if there are occasions when this is considered essential, every effort will be made to visit the island(s) involved.
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	No.
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	Throughout the process.
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	No.
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	Any engagement exercise that involves all the communities in Orkney asks where the respondent lives. The number and proportion of responses from the ferry-linked isles is always considered.
How has the policy, strategy, or service, affected island communities?	There has been no effect, to date.
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	Service proposals will always consider the impact upon people in the isles, as distinct from those in the Mainland.
STEP 7 - Publishing your ICIA	Responses
Have you presented your ICIA in Easy-Read Format?	No.
Does your ICIA need to be prepared in Gaelic, or any other language?	No.
Where will you publish your ICIA, and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	The ICIA will be published, alongside all ICIA's and EqlAs, on the OIC website.
ICIA completed by:	Shaun Hourston-Wells.
Position:	Acting Strategic Planning Lead.
Signature:	
Date complete:	10 March 2025.

Who will sign-off your final ICIA and why?	Stephen Brown, Chief Officer.
Signature:	
Date approved:	10 March 2025.