

Background

Shropshire is a vibrant and diverse county with varied and unique health and social care needs. In particular, Shropshire's rurality and demographic structure bring specific challenges with regard to communication and engagement. Although largely a fairly affluent county, Shropshire has areas of deprivation which combined with rural sparsity create issues for access to services.

As an example, we recognise that making information available online cannot be our only method of communication with the public as many of our residents have inadequate internet access. Similarly, Shropshire has an ageing population with a high proportion of individuals aged over 50 years old. This brings challenges around the requirements for provision of social care and ensuring that individuals are not socially or geographically isolated.

In Shropshire, strategic health and care decisions are made by the Health and Wellbeing Board which has membership from the Local Authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch, the VCSA and NHS Local Area Team. The Health and Wellbeing Board acts to ensure that key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of Shropshire residents. Health and Wellbeing Board members collaborate to understand their local community's needs, agree priorities and work together to plan how best to deliver services.

Introduction

Health and social care have recognised that we all work with patients, carers and service users to gather feedback and design services. Through this strategy, we can work more collaboratively in our communication and engagement by sharing information, skills and best practice. Shropshire's health and care services are committed to the provision of a responsive local health and social care system that reflects the population we serve.

All organisations linked to this strategy are committed to seamless and effective communications and engagement for everyone who uses health and social care services in Shropshire. This strategy focuses on building upon good practice principles and values highlighted in the Shropshire Compact¹ and the joint streams of work across the health and social care system of Shropshire. Individual health and social care organisations across the county will have their own communication and engagement strategies and plans that feed into and support this overarching strategy.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to create transparency, consistency, to join up working and to avoid duplication in communications and engagement work. It intends to support the Health and Wellbeing Board in the delivery of its strategy.

This agreement will increase knowledge and understanding of health and care across Shropshire, helping the people of Shropshire to be better informed and involved in decisions around their care and, as a result, have better access to services. This will help health and social care organisations to achieve their individual priorities and aspirations around health and wellbeing.

¹ For more information on The Compact in Shropshire, please see: vcsvoice.org/the-compact/

Health and social care partners want to ensure that, where possible, communication and engagement is co-produced across the health and social care economy alongside other partners and the people of Shropshire.

All partners aim to make most effective use of all networks across health and social care systems.

Principles

All organisations signed up to this strategy are committed to the following principles and will:

- Adopt good practice and operate in a transparent, targeted, objective and timely fashion with the spirit of openness and candour
- Work together; sharing information and making use of skills across networks
- Ensure accessibility and equality needs are respected and accommodated at all times; this includes children and young people, vulnerable people and those with protected characteristics
- Take an approach that fosters continuous engagement and reflects two way dialogue with our local people
- Facilitate positive relationships with our employees and empower staff to be communications and engagement ambassadors
- Support health and care providers achieve priorities through good communication and engagement
- Provide the public with simple and clear information to enable better access to the right service

Information sharing

All of the organisations that have signed up to this strategy agree to share findings and information learned from engagement and communications activities, such as consultations and wider communications campaigns, in order to improve the experience that local people have of health and social care services. This will also reduce the risk of duplication of work and ensure that active conversations with communities are shared across the health and social care system. This strategy is not about sharing personal information or commercial in confidence data.

Platforms such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) will be utilised in the sharing of information common across the health and social care landscape in Shropshire.

Approaches

We will use the most relevant and targeted methods to ensure that we communicate and engage effectively with the people of Shropshire. We will use a combination of tools such as demographic profiling, grass roots knowledge and experience, and engagement with stakeholders to ascertain how best to communicate and engage with relevant individuals, groups and communities.

A combination of approaches will be deployed to ensure that every contact with the people of Shropshire counts. When devising specific communications and engagement plans we will incorporate all channels that are deemed most effective to target people. Our communications and engagement will be outcome-focussed and there is an efficient feedback loop to demonstrate that we are listening and acting upon feedback.

We will use a range of channels, for example; websites, newsletters, press releases, social media, surveys, face-to-face events, focus groups, community conversations and staff as advocates. Also by using our networks to strengthen the channels that we use and ensure that the mechanisms utilised reflect the best method of communication and engagement for that group.

We consider there is an importance in capturing the views and experiences of the people of Shropshire, and this detail will inform the update of the JSNA and be used in the development of services. By using a targeted, relevant and outcome-focussed approach we will aim to achieve good communications and engagement with people and by definition we will develop a network of trusted communicators.

Feedback loop and making a difference

For all activities there will be a feedback mechanism to share the messages that have been generated as a result of any communications and engagement. We are committed to sharing any outcomes where there are changes as a result of engagement and communications. We understand that good communications and engagement is a cyclical process and we believe that this will underpin achieving a healthy Shropshire.

This strategy will be reviewed in the first 6 months, and will be reviewed annually thereafter.

Our Partners:

[Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group \(CCG\)](#) the local NHS organisation responsible for commissioning local healthcare for the people of Shropshire. This includes commissioning services like acute and community planned hospital care, rehabilitation care, urgent and emergency care, community health services and mental health and learning disability services.

[Healthwatch Shropshire](#) is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Shropshire. Healthwatch Shropshire seeks the views of patients, carers, service users and the wider public about how their health and social care services are run. Healthwatch has the right to visit places providing publicly funded health and social care services (such as hospitals, GP practices and residential homes). It makes reports and recommendations, publicises its findings, and it uses its statutory powers to influence change.

[Shropshire Council](#) provides a range of services to Shropshire residents including the delivery of health and social care services. This incorporates children's services, social care placements and support, safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults, information, advice and guidance, public health support around healthy lifestyles and services from the leisure and outdoor recreation teams.

[Midland and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit \(CSU\)](#) provides specialist support to Shropshire CCG, particularly around back office functions. In Shropshire, the CSU is helping to support the CCG with its communication and engagement, including the NHS Future Fit programme.

[South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#) provide adult and older people's mental health services and learning disability health services. They work in partnership to promote the independence, rehabilitation, social inclusion and recovery of people with a mental illness.

[The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust \(SaTH\)](#) is the main provider of district general hospital services for half a million people living in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and mid Wales, Services are delivered from two main acute sites: Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH) in Shrewsbury and the Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) in Telford.

[The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust \(RJAH\)](#) is a leading orthopaedic centre of excellence. The Trust provides a comprehensive range of musculoskeletal surgical, medical and rehabilitation services; locally, regionally and nationally from a single site hospital based in Oswestry, Shropshire.

[Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust](#) provides community health services to people in their own homes, local clinics, health centres, GP surgeries and other locations across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and some surrounding areas. These services include Minor Injury Units, community nursing, health visiting, school nursing, podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and support to patients with diabetes, respiratory conditions and other long-term health problems.

GP Practices - There are 44 GP practices in Shropshire and local practices have formed a GP Federation. The single Walk in Centre is currently located on the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site.

[Shropshire Doctors Co-operative Ltd \(Shropdoc\)](#) provides urgent medical services for patients when their own surgery is closed and whose needs cannot safely wait until the surgery is next open. ShropDoc provides out of hour's primary care services to 600,000 patients in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Powys.

[West Midlands Ambulance Service \(NHS Foundation Trust\)](#) - The Trust serves a population of 5.36 million people covering an area of more than 5,000 square miles made up of Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Coventry, Birmingham and Black Country conurbation.

[NHS England](#) is an executive, non-departmental, public body of the Department of Health. NHS England oversees the budget, planning, delivery and day-to-day operation of the commissioning side of the NHS in England as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

[Shropshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee](#) – The Shropshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee is the representative statutory body for all Community Pharmacy contractors in the county of Shropshire.

[People 2 People](#) is a not-for-profit independent social work practice working with Shropshire Council to provide adult social care support to older people and those with disabilities. The aim of People2People is to offer a different way of supporting individuals to keep their independence for as long as possible.

[Shropshire Partners in Care \(SPIC\)](#) represents independent providers of care to the adults of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. Its purpose is to support the development of a high quality social care sector in the areas of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. They provide information, support training and signposting to relevant services to everyone that contacts the office.

[The Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly \(VCSA\)](#) works to facilitate partnership between the voluntary and community sector and public sector, ensuring that the VCS are represented on groups led by the CCG, Shropshire Council and other partners. Members of the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly include many VCS organisations who deliver health and social care services in Shropshire.

Help2Change provides a single point of access to a suite of services to help individuals improve their health. Services are aimed at keeping individuals well, improving their wellbeing and preventing illness. Information and advice is also available via the [Healthy Shropshire](#) website.

[IP&E](#) provides public services on the Council's behalf, enabling the Council to reinvest profits from any trading back into services. Their aim is to deliver better outcomes for the public by designing services around customer need and maximising public profit.