

REPORT TO: East Lothian Integration Joint Board

MEETING DATE: 26 February 2026

BY: Chief Officer

SUBJECT: IJB Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026-2030

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the East Lothian Integration Joint Board Communications Strategy 2026-2030 (referred to as 'the Communications and Engagement Strategy' in this paper) to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) for their information and approval to progress to sign off.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The IJB is asked to:

- 2.1 Read and reflect on the Communications and Engagement Strategy and its suitability as a strategy on which all communications and engagement for the IJB and HSCP will be based for the next 4 years.
- 2.2 Consider the content of the Integrated Impact Assessment.
- 2.3 Approve the Communications and Engagement Strategy for implementation.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Communications and Engagement Strategy is an extension of a statutory requirement to develop and publish a document that sets out how the IJB will ensure that the community is included in co-production for the IJB activities and the services delegate to it.
- 3.2 The Communications and Engagement Strategy is the first strategy in East Lothian IJB history to combine communications and engagement in one strategy. The decision for this is two-fold:
- How we communicate to people and how we involve them with planning, design of services, and services change goes hand in

hand. One compliments the other by improving understanding about community/audience needs, preferences, and communicative styles.

- The Equalities and Engagement Officer and the Senior Communications Adviser cross over professionally on a regular basis, working alongside services and functions of the IJB to assist them with communications and engagement activities. The combination of the two areas felt like a natural combination of two adjacent but aligned workstreams that benefit from a combined/fully joined up approach.
- 3.3 The Communications and Engagement Strategy development was led jointly by the Senior Communications Adviser and the Equalities and Engagement Officer.
- 3.4 The Communications and Engagement Strategy explains:
- Approach, standards, and methods that will be used to ensure all communication materials are accessible, informative, consistent, empowering, and raise the profile of the IJB/ELHSCP's delivered services;
 - Ways in which the community can participate with, and work with the IJB and HSCP as partners, to design, plan, and evaluate health and social care services in East Lothian;
 - How the IJB seeks to support and enable everyone to contribute to health and social care planning and services; and
 - The values that will underpin IJB/HSCP actions, our engagement goals and approaches, the standards we will work to for our communications and engagement, and our action plan.
- 3.5 The Communications and Engagement Strategy will be a resource that enables staff and the community to better understand their rights, what they can expect from the IJB, and what the IJB expects from them.

4 ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 The community has been asked for their opinions and perspectives from the earliest stages of development of this strategy.
- 4.2 The strategy values and approaches are built on feedback we have received from the community over the last two years via four main engagement activities: Planning for Older People's Services project, Strategy Plan Engagement, Carer's Strategy, and Equality Mainstreaming Outcomes.
- 4.3 Staff and our stakeholder list (a database of several thousand people and emails for partners, third sector/community organisations, and charities across East Lothian) were offered the chance to complete an online survey on the values and approaches of the strategy early in its development to check it was on the right track. The community was also

invited to engage with us via email or arrange for us to visit at their group if they prefer.

- 4.4 Responses were very positive towards the new values and approaches, so we developed the concepts and tested them with community groups we already have relationships with, via the ELC Poverty Plan stigma subgroup, and through health and wellbeing groups.
- 4.5 The draft strategy passed through a number of internal staff reviews and partner reviews, leading to the draft being distributed for an IIA.
- 4.6 The IIA incorporated further engagement on the strategy by combining a wider pool of experiences, perspectives, and voices that represent some of the most vulnerable parts of the community that lead on trauma-informed practice, substance use challenges, primary care, unpaid carers, and volunteers/the third sector.
- 4.7 If/when the strategy is approved by the IJB, the strategy will be published online and communicated with IJB, HSCP, and third sector partner groups in line with the values, approaches, methods, and standards outlined in the strategy, including feedback to the community on how we used their contributions.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The paper itself will not affect policy, but the Communications and Engagement Strategy will have impacts across the IJB/HSCP in relation to how services and functions plan, produce, carry out, and evaluate communications and engagement activities during 2026 – 2030.
- 5.2 This strategy links with a range of existing and developing strategies and plans across the IJB, HSCP and ELC, such as:
 - IJB Strategic Plan 2025-2030 – under development
 - IJB Equality Outcomes 2025-2029
 - ELC Poverty Plan 2024-2028
 - ELC Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) – under development

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The Communications and Engagement Strategy undertook a final Integrated Impact Assessment process on 8 January 2026.
 - There is strong support for the strategy from participants of the IIA that attended the session, with a wide range of opportunities for improving communications, engagement, equality, and fairness for the community considered possible through the approach set out in the strategy.

- No major negative impacts were identified. All minor negative impacts identified were accompanied by suggestions for improvement which were accepted and included into the final draft strategy.
 - A range of positive impacts were raised, such as the focus on the voices of people with lived experience and the human rights-based approach.
 - Thirty-two suggestions to improve the strategy, maximise positive equality impacts, and minimise or eliminate negative impacts were made and were considered for integration into the strategy by the professional leads (Equalities and Engagement Officer/Senior Communications Adviser).
 - **Of the 32 suggestions received during the session, 30 of these were integrated into the final draft. The other two were outside of the scope of the document, but will be passed on to the most appropriate service area.** Many of the points have been included in a new section called Preparing Engagement Activities.
- 6.2 More details on the findings, recommendations, and things that will be monitored as a result of the IIA can be found in the IIA report (pages 2-5):
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210558/social_care_and_health/12776/elhscp_integrated_impact_assessments

7 DIRECTIONS

- 7.1 This strategy does not affect Directions unless the IJB decides to issue new or change existing ones to reflect work recommended in the strategy via Directions, rather than through other means.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Staff resourcing remains the same, with the lead coming from the Equalities and Engagement Officer and the Senior Communications Adviser.
- 8.2 Staff across the IJB/HSCP remain responsible for planning engagement in their areas of responsibility.
- 8.3 The IJB remains responsible for ensuring that services and functions are abiding by the principles of the Communications and Engagement Strategy and that they feel the strategy is demonstrating IJB commitment to community engagement and inclusive communication in practice, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.
- 8.4 A point raised at the Integrated Impact Assessment suggested that to better support engagement from people on the lowest incomes (demonstrating our commitment to the Fairer Scotland Duty), the IJB could consider setting aside a small budget for refreshments for

engagement activities and publicise/ensure that participants are being offered the option of subsidising or reimbursement for any costs they incur as part of participating with IJB/HSCP activities (e.g. travel/transport, etc.).

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

APPENDIX

9.2 East Lothian Integration Joint Board Communications Strategy 2026-2030

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Engagement Strategy**
2026–2030

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Our Vision



To support people in East Lothian to live healthy lives, to achieve their potential, to live independently, and exercise choice over the services they use.

To achieve the East Lothian Integration Joint's Board's vision, we must understand the needs, wants, ambitions and concerns of the people of East Lothian. The best way for us to do this is to listen, communicate, engage, and involve you (the people and communities of East Lothian) in the process of designing, delivering and improving services.



Listen



Communicate



Engage



Involve

In this Communications and Engagement Strategy we explain how East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELHSCP) aims to:

- Connect and communicate with you.
- Ensure that we provide information in an accessible format that is easy for everyone to access and understand.
- Invite, enable and empower you to have conversations with us that offer your perspectives.
- Enable you to share your experiences and insights to help us provide health and social care services that best balance your needs and human rights.
- Actively listen to your suggestions.
- Explain how we will respond, or why we are unable to deliver on your suggestions.

Introduction

Who are we?

East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership brings together services from East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian to jointly deliver health and social care services to support the people of East Lothian to live healthy, independent lives.



The Health and Social Care Partnership is overseen by a group of board members known as the Integration Joint Board or IJB for short. The IJB has 8 voting members, 4 local councillors and 4 non-executive directors from NHS Lothian. They are joined by Health and Social Care professional leads, senior staff members, as well as community representatives from the third sector and people with lived experience.

East Lothian Council budget allocation for delegated services is allocated to IJB to spend in line with strategic objectives.



NHS Lothian budget allocation for delegated services is allocated to IJB to spend in line with strategic objectives.

The IJB receives funds from East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian on an annual basis to deliver health and social care services.

Using the funds available, the IJB develops a strategic plan to deliver the Scottish Government's national health and wellbeing outcomes.

Through the strategic plan, the IJB directs the Partnership's teams on the aims, objectives and priorities for delivering health and social care services.

Why are we writing a communications and engagement strategy?

The East Lothian IJB has a legal requirement (under the Scottish Government Joint Working Act 2024) to explain how it will include the community voice in its decision making.

The process of involving communities in public service changes, design and decision making is co-production.



Co-production requires people to act together on an equal basis, contributing their lived experience, skills and ideas about what works to make our communities better. By adopting a co-production approach, decisions affecting people are made with them, not for them.

Through the presentation of this Communications and Engagement Strategy we explain the ways in which you can participate with, and work with us - as partners, to design, plan and evaluate health and social care services that ELHSCP is responsible for delivering on behalf of East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian. We also help that you understand your rights, and role in this process.

The list of services that ELHSCP is responsible for delivering can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Communicating with our audiences

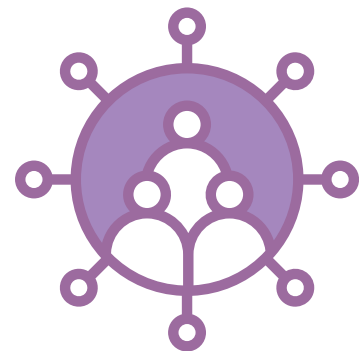
Our audience includes any resident of East Lothian or someone that:

- Has an interest in health and/or social care,
- Has engaged with our services,
- May have a need for our services in the future,
- Is a Carer,
- Supports individuals to access our services, e.g. support services (Carers of East Lothian), peer support and independent advocacy groups, or
- Has a direct role in delivering health and social care (HSCP employees, third sector and partner organisations).



Our wider stakeholders include:

- Elected representatives (Council, MSPs, MPs)
- NHS Lothian Board Members
- Government and service regulators
- Trade Unions / Professional Bodies
- Community councils and local groups
- Area partnerships
- Independent providers and third sector providers



What you have already told us





When we have spoken to our audiences during previous community engagements^[1], before creating this strategy, you have told us:

“Engagement is about listening and responding”

[1] Previous engagement has included Equality Outcomes Survey 2024-2025, Planning for Older People’s Services Project 2023-2025, Community Panels, attendance at Information Hubs, community group feedback. Further information can be found at www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elhscp

Communicating with our audiences

Your comments:

-  *"We want to know what is going on in health and social care, especially changes to our services."*
-  *"We want you to make it easy for us to engage with you as community or interest group."*
-  *"When we share our views and ideas, we want them to be listened to and be visible in the final product. If you do not act on our contributions, we want to understand the reasons why."*
-  *"We want to be able to participate in a variety of ways that we are comfortable with and suit our different lifestyles, communication needs/styles and time/transport constraints."*
-  *"We don't want to be asked the same thing over and over (we want the ELHSCP, East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian and other partners to share anonymised engagement results)."*

We have used this feedback to incorporate these community wishes into this Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Our values

Across our communication and engagement practices we commit to being:



Communicating with our audiences

1. Inclusive: We aim to meet the communication needs of everyone

Across our communications and engagement activities we will:

- ✔ Think carefully about the different communications needs people have and do our best to meet them (e.g. large print and Easy Read versions, braille, British Sign Language, languages other than English).
- ✔ Design web-based resources and documents with assistive technologies in mind and offer a range of different formats.
- ✔ Consider the language that we use and simplify it as far as possible.
- ✔ Consider the design, text styles, and use of colour we use to suit different learning and physical difficulties and disabilities.
- ✔ Clearly indicate where people can request different formats of information from and provide them in good time to enable individuals to process the details, to be able to ask questions and participate in engagement activities.
- ✔ Plan our engagement activities to reach out to community groups that we know encounter disproportionate barriers to participation, for example, those that are house-bound, people living in rural areas, unpaid carers, those that encounter language and/or cultural barriers, are integrating into the community, have learning disabilities and/or limited capacity.
- ✔ Make engagement more accessible by going to where these people already meet and feel confident to share views and opinions.



2. Honest: We aim to present the whole picture

When we communicate and prepare engagement briefing materials:

- ✔ We will provide you with background information and context.
- ✔ Commit to being honest with you about our decision making.
- ✔ Present this information in manageable, easy to understand 'bite-size' chunks, using plain language, with clear definitions of acronyms.



- ✔ Provide feedback on the difference your engagement and contributions made to decisions, offering reasons for the factors that either enabled or restrict our decisions.

3. Empowering: We commit to informing you of your rights



We commit to promoting understanding of community rights in shaping and co-producing health and social care services. We will do this by following the:

- ✔ Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This act was introduced to strengthen the role of communities in decision-making processes and to provide them with greater control over local resources.
- ✔ COSLA Planning with People Guidelines. A best practice guide for engaging with community on public services to achieve co-production.
- ✔ Panel Principles as set out by the Scottish Human Rights Commission. The five Panel Principles include participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment and legality.

4. Human rights based: We commit to enabling community participation and championing human rights



In practice, this means that we will

- ✔ Follow the Panel Principles as set out by the Scottish Human Rights Commission; as detailed above.
- ✔ The Equality Act 2010 was produced to take this further. It is more specific about how human rights must be respected, especially by the public sector and employers. (The preceding act was the Human Rights Act 1998).

The Equality Act 2010 identifies 9 characteristics that are legally protected from discrimination:

Age | Disability | Gender Reassignment
 Marriage or Civil Partnership | Pregnancy and
 Maternity | Race and Ethnicity | Religion or
 Belief | Sex | Sexual Orientation









In our communication and engagement approaches we will be mindful of these laws and regulations and apply them accordingly.

Our approach

At the heart of this strategy is our commitment to take a positive and proactive approach to communication and engagement. We promise to deliver accessible, open and transparent activities that support the IJB and ELHSCP's priorities and objectives.

Our aim is to deliver communication and engagement activities that strengthen our messaging to support greater understanding and awareness of the availability and future planning of East Lothian's health and social care services.

Our communication and engagement activities will be:

-  **bespoke** Bespoke to our community - recognising and celebrating our differences.
-  **responsive** Responsive to what we are told.
-  **co-produced** Co-produced with the community / your input.
-  **accessible** Accessible so everyone can understand any information provided.
-  **coordinated** Coordinated and organised for greatest impact and least overlap.
-  **effective** Effective, so the right audiences are reached in the right way, at the right time.



Co-production requires people to act together on an equal basis, contributing their lived experience, skills and ideas about what works to make our communities better. By adopting a co-production approach, decisions affecting people are made with them, not for them.

Embedding the voice of lived experienced

We will focus on involving the voice of people with lived experience in everything we do.

To achieve this, we will take a new approach to community engagement. We will focus our efforts on engaging with people where they are already comfortable, and with people they have trusted relationships with.

We will invest time to build relationships with people through grassroots community groups and activities, third sector and voluntary support groups, unpaid carers, our commissioned partners and their clients, and through community hubs and centres across East Lothian.

Through these networks and relationships across East Lothian, we aim to open two-way communication channels that reflect our diverse communities, their priorities, ambitions and challenges.

When ELHSCP is considering changes to its services, developing policies or asking what is most important to people, the lived experience network will be the first to know. Between engagement activities we will encourage these groups, hubs, networks, partners and individuals to contact us directly with questions, suggestions or feedback on issues that are important to them.

Our goal: to develop a richer, more genuine understanding of one another, the constraints and opportunities that we have, and what we can do together to make the best of our health and social care services.

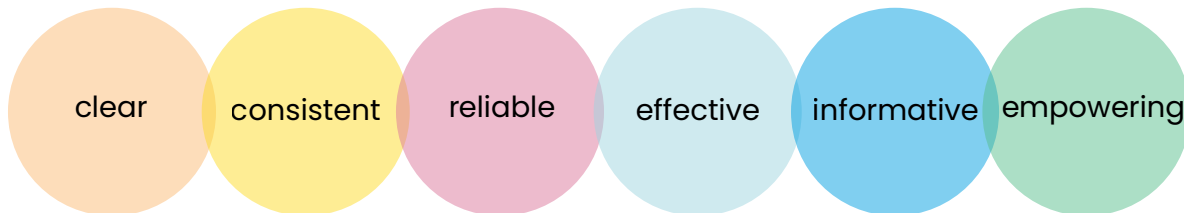
Communicating with our audiences

What this will look like in practice:

- We will build on our existing relationships to start new conversations with groups and people that are work / connect closely with.
- We will nurture these relationships and ask for new contacts that they know or work with.
- We will use the media, our staff and existing connections to approach new organisations and groups to introduce ourselves and help support our shared goals.
- We will ensure our contacts reflect the full diversity of our community e.g. geographical areas, incomes, disabilities, ethnicities, age groups, and life experiences, including mental health concerns, those integrating into the community, unpaid carers, and those with different medical and social experiences.
- We will endeavour to go to people where they already meet and feel confident to share views and opinions, making use of language and interpretation services, including BSL if required.
- We will communicate regularly with our lived experience network, keeping them up dated on engagement activities, strategies and policies.
- We will listen to our contacts and respond to them when they reach out to us.
- We will integrate their suggestions and feedback into our work and services that they use.
- We will communicate how we used their suggestions, so they feel valued, and their contributions are respected.
- We will create a database of engagement responses, coded by theme and service area which can be used as a reference guide for future engagement and evidencing 'what we already know'.
- We will report on our engagement practices. We will share anonymised feedback and insights with services. In line with data governance policies, we will extend these insights to our partners and commissioned services, along with best practice approaches to support future engagement activities and related areas of interest to improve service delivery.

Our communications standards

Whenever we are communicating with our different audiences, we will follow a set of standards to ensure a consistent style of approach, structure and tone is present to effectively share content that is informative and engaging.



Our communications will be:

Clear	Understandable, well-presented, compassionate, trauma-informed, anti-stigmatic, equalities sensitive and formatted for readability and accessibility in line with national guidelines.
Consistent	Managed and delivered using a consistent approach, that is clearly recognisable and distinguishable as ELHSCP.
Reliable	Open, honest and recognised as a source of trustworthy advice and information, actively promoting the availability and accessibility of health and social care services within local communities.
Effective	We will maximise opportunities to harness new and effective communications and engagement tools, to reach our target audiences, taking into account accessibility requirements, such as use of language, interpretation, and varying capacity levels.
Informative	We aim to increase understanding of the IJB and ELHSCP's role, vision and values, in order to build public trust, confidence and foster positive relationships. Additionally, we will produce clear information explaining what local health and social services are available, what they do, how to access them, and how people can share feedback on their experiences.
Empowering	We will deliver communications campaigns that promote a collective sense of purpose, increasing dialogue, participation and engagement, while encouraging people to support their own independence, through effective self-management.

ELHSCP's brand guidelines will be used to ensure consistent delivery of design components including the logo, colour palette, font family, hierarchy, house style, imagery, signposting, social media and digital assets, correspondence, language, print, and promotional goods.

Our communications channels



Website and social media

The ELHSCP website is an integral component of communications activity acting as a central information hub and resource for all health and social care services. In addition, it signposts visitors to further advice, support, and assistance available through third sector, community, and partner organisations.

The ways people engage with social media continuously evolves. For ELHSCP it is important that we make appropriate use of social media platforms to ensure our messages are reaching our key audiences and are providing opportunities for engagement, as well as informational updates.

Campaigns and initiatives

East Lothian IJB and the HSCP's core objectives include championing early intervention and prevention and reducing health inequalities. This can cover a wide range of themes around health preventions, e.g. vaccinations or cancer screening, accessing mental health and/or substance use support, promoting healthy, active lifestyles, using technology for independent living, public protection concerns and national awareness campaigns.

We will use a range of information materials, that use consistent branding applications, that is approved by the delegated service areas to ensure accuracy, reliability and trust in messaging.

Printed publications

While there is a strong focus on using easily accessible online and digital communication tools, there is still a place for more traditional formats such as printed leaflets and promotional materials. There is need for ELHSCP to ensure that it does not digitally exclude any of its target audiences. As such, consideration will be given for the need of Easy Read publications, large print options, as well as translations into other languages including BSL.

Community networks

ELHSCP would not be able to deliver the IJB's vision and priorities without the support of its community networks and partners. As well as providing services, these networks provide fantastic opportunities for targeted promotion, communication, and engagement with service-users and patients.

Where possible, we will go to them, so they don't have to come to us, and will provide meaningful, clear, accessible resources and information to help them disseminate key messages to their networks.

These networks include:

- Area Partnerships
- Community Councils
- Health and Wellbeing Groups
- Tenants & Resident Associations
- Third sector interface (VCEL)
- Unpaid carers groups
- Service user / patient groups
- Independent Advocacy

News and Media

We will provide a full media response service, working closely with local journalists to proactively increase our profile, develop positive relationships, and share information about the availability and developments of local services. We will support service managers, leads and elected members by providing a media relations service to issue news stories and answer questions on behalf of the HSCP as they arise.

Underpinning these services will be compliance with communication and engagement standards, protocols, national agendas, supporting wider communication and engagement campaign agendas in line with public sector agendas.

Internal communications

ELHSCP's employees come together from our two employing organisations, East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian. Collectively they deliver various services, and specialities, across numerous geographical locations within dedicated premises and throughout the community.

Our staff are our greatest asset. Our employees are reliant, versatile and go the extra mile to adapt the challenging situations without compromising on the quality and delivery of care.

It is imperative that they are informed, engaged, and motivated to deliver the Partnership's strategic objectives and have their voices heard in achieving our collective vision.



Our engagement goals

Our engagement goal is to build a network with a culture that promotes cooperation, coproduction and coordination across all partners and stakeholder groups.

When we engage with you, we commit:

To you, as a person

- To make you feel welcome, supported and invited to participate in, and lead engagement opportunities
- To embed, recognise and empower you as an essential part of health and social care planning in East Lothian

To support you to understand and use your rights

- To enable your voice to shape the services you access.
- To inform you about your human and given rights.

To enable you to participate in practice

- To meet your communication needs so that you are enabled to participate in health and social care.
- To communicate effectively in plain, concise, accurate language, and provided in formats that are accessible for target audiences.
- To ensure that you understand our communication and are able to interact with us.

To involve you in the planning of changes to service delivery or strategic policy changes/redesigns

- To give you your right to comment on service designs or policy changes that will affect how you access services.

Our engagement standards

As a public body, we must maintain certain standards to our community engagement to satisfy laws, regulations and guidance that applies to us.

A key resource that we must refer to and use as a basis for our engagement activities is COSLA's Planning With People. This resource outlines how planners and commissioners of health and social care can '*continually improve the ways in which people and communities can become involved in developing services that meet their needs.*'

It provides practical suggestions for how public sector organisations can approach this continual improvement process (such as via Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Quality Framework for Community Engagement) and outlines statutory and legal obligations that govern why we engage. It makes the case for the benefits of co-producing services with the people that use them and explores different methods of conducting and evaluating engagement.

For example, conducting an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), which ELHSCP commits to being an integral part of the engagement process to collect and influence decision making and ensure all equality impacts identified and mitigated.

Planning With People in turn tasks us with bringing the National Standards for Community Engagement into our strategies, plans and approaches. These standards provide a framework from which meaningful engagement can be built.

Co-designers of the National Standards for Community Engagement, the Scottish Community Development Centre, defines engagement as:

'A purposeful process which develops a working relationship between communities, community organisations and public and private bodies to help them to identify and act on community needs and ambitions. It involves respectful dialogue between everyone involved, aimed at improving understanding between them and taking joint action to achieve positive change.'

Seven key standards were identified and must work together to enable high quality community engagement and co-production.

There are 7 Standards:

- Inclusion
- Support
- Planning
- Working together
- Methods
- Communication
- Impact



As part of our IJB Equality Outcomes 2025 – 2029 we are committed to taking a human rights approach to community engagement. One of the ways that we will do this is by putting the Scottish Human Rights Commission’s PANEL Principles at the centre of our engagement.

Our engagement methods

We will match our engagement methods with:

- **The preferences of the community with which we are engaging.** For example, if a group meets to offer each other support on a topic and would like someone to visit the group to explain a policy change and what that might mean for people in that group, we will arrange for a staff member to visit / talk to the group directly.
- **The type of document, policy or service design that we are exploring with the community.** For instance, if the community feels that there is a gap in our knowledge of their lives and the challenges they face as a whole, we will listen to their stories by carrying out in depth interviews or small focus groups (collect qualitative information).
- **The questions we want to answer to improve services.** If we want to find a simple answer about whether the community agrees or disagrees with a change, we may use a survey or another method that will allow us to find how many people agree / disagree (quantitative feedback) and why (qualitative feedback).

Preparing engagement activities

One of the actions of this strategy, we will include developing a model of engagement for East Lothian HSCP. This will include a set of guidelines, resources, and requirements to support the delivery of engagement activities – regardless of scale and size – across the partnership.


The model will outline:

- The desired content and format of engagement information packs; to include a summary of the subject / service area, what information is known already, and what the engagement activity seeks to identify, which is quick and easy to digest.
- Training on delivering engagement sessions; how to present topics, collate feedback, summarise actions and present findings. There will also be a recommendation that people delivering training sessions complete trauma-informed practice training and are aware of putting in place safeguarding practices – such as breakout areas.
- Guidelines on organising engagement events, either online or in-person. The resources required, taking into consideration suitable venues, locations, timings, presentation materials, provision of refreshments, and consideration of participant expenses.
- Further recommendations will be included to ensure that the engagement sessions take into consideration disability, age, sex, race, religion, mental health, and other protected characteristics, so they are inclusive and accessible to all.
- Provide advice on how to support people with potential barriers to engagement to actively participate in sessions, by utilising advocacy services, language or BSL interpreters, offering carer support, and / or presenting information materials in appropriate accessible formats.

How does this strategy relate to other plans and strategies in East Lothian?

ELHSCP's Communication and Engagement Strategy will not exist or be delivered in isolation. To be effective, it must integrate and support delivery of wider ELHSCP, IJB and Partner strategies.

The community has already informed us:

 "We don't want to be asked the same thing over and over (we want the ELHSCP, East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian and other partners to share anonymised engagement results)."

We are committed working closely with our partners on engagement activity. Where appropriate, and in compliance with data protection guidelines, we will share our engagement feedback and insights with our partners.

We will create a database of feedback, which is themed and coded to support future engagement activities, and related area of interest to support development and improvement of service delivery.

Linked plans and strategies

IJB Strategic Plan 2025–2030

This strategy will support the IJB Strategic Plan by enabling better planning of services and by providing a framework through which we can accurately collect community needs and build services that reflect them.

IJB Equality Outcomes 2025–2030

The Equality Outcomes identify 5 objectives topics which we will work on in the next three years to advance equality outcomes and opportunities and eliminate discrimination.

These 5 objectives align strongly with what we are aiming to achieve through this strategy, especially participations and co-production and reducing health inequalities. [View a one-page of the strategy objectives here.](#)

How does this strategy relate to other plans and strategies in East Lothian?

East Lothian Council Plan 2022–2027 and NHS Lothian Plan

Through effective communications and engagement activities, this strategy will contribute and support the delivery of the wider objectives of both partner organisations, [East Lothian Council](#) and [NHS Lothian](#).

East Lothian Poverty Plan

The East Lothian Council Poverty Plan aims to tackle the social determinants of inequality (aspects of life that contribute to decreasing positive health and social outcomes) through an all-round approach across the county where East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, ELHSCP and third sector organisations work together to find solutions for community issues or barriers. Through this strategy, we will work closely with the poverty working group to ensure our language and methods of engagement reflect a trauma informed approach, and reduces barriers to participation in health and social care services.

Commitment to taking a trauma-informed approach

Through this strategy we will improve our understand of the features of taking a trauma-informed approach and embed them into our communications and engagement activities. Doing this should reduce or eliminate unintended negative consequences for people in the community that live with trauma and help them to feel seen, invited and supported when interacting with health and social care services in East Lothian.

For example: [Charter of Rights for People Affected by Substance Use 2024](#)

Outcome 1	Action
<p>Building and maintaining strong relationships with our community that facilitate two-way communication (from the community to us, from us to the community).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will build relationships with individuals and third sector contacts to create a Lived Experience Network. • We will keep in regular contact with network contacts (monthly), offering opportunities to participate in services design/changes, policy developments, strategies, plans and equality impact assessments. • We will develop information that clearly outlines what HSCP services provide, what clients can expect from that service, and how they can make contact with them. • We will encourage client and patient feedback through the use of satisfaction surveys, the online Care Opinion platform, East Lothian Council's feedback procedures, email correspondence and open conversations. • All feedback received will have its importance acknowledged by the relevant HSCP service that will assist and/or respond to their enquiry.

What does success look like?

- The Lived Experience Network will be populated with a diverse group of individuals and community contacts that reflect real experiences, interests, priorities and lifestyles in East Lothian.
- The network will be an essential part of our service design and policy development.
- Participants in the network will be present at equality impact assessments and in decision making in health and social care.
- There will be a group of Community Champions that have agreed to represent different geographical areas of East Lothian and different lived experiences. This group will be in regular contact with services and reflect the diversity of lifestyles and experiences in East Lothian.
- All comments, compliments and complaints received by ELHSCP will be logged, monitored and responded to within specified timescales.
- The IJB, delegated health and social care services and the community will benefit from better, more community focused, person-centred services.
- A suite of information / promotional materials will be available to explain each service offering.
- A database of satisfaction reports / feedback / engagement will be collated. This will be reported back to services and used as a means of tracking public opinion for future engagement activities.

Outcome 2	Action
Develop a model of engagement for East Lothian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will work together with people in our Lived Experience Network, our Community Champions, staff, third sector, grassroots organisations and commissioned partners to co-produce the aims, features and processes that we think should underpin engagement in East Lothian.• We will establish a system, resources and training that support this model.• We will develop briefing packs in accessible formats that enable networks to support the engagement process and share with their participant groups.• We will collate all engagement feedback centrally which will be themed and coded to enable effective monitoring and evaluation and be used as a reference for future engagement activity, being mindful of information governance regulations.• We will assess and evaluate the model annually and make changes that reflect our co-production.

What does success look like?

- The health and social care partnership and the community will benefit from a co-produced, agreed way that we will approach engagement in East Lothian bring consistency, familiarity and quality to our engagement processes.
- Staff at the health and social care partnership will be able to refer to a suite of resources when they need to engage with the community. This will save them work time, help them feel more confident as engagement leaders and establish a standard at which engagement should be completed.
- The community will be familiar with how the health and social care partnership engages with the community and feel confident, supported and enabled to exercise their rights to co-design services that they access.

Outcome 3	Action
Raise the profile of East Lothian IJB, ELHSCP and its services to East Lothian residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactively promote the availability and how people can access local health and social care services.• Identify the most appropriate means of reaching target individuals / user groups to achieve the greatest impact and distribution, utilising the resources available.• Celebrate success of services, individuals, and partners organisation through press releases, community updates and internal cross-organisational promotion.• Collaborate with community networks to further spread the word and reach user groups accessing their services.• Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communication methods to ensure best practice.

What does success look like?

- Increased awareness of IJB, ELHSCP and its services.
- Monitoring call to action responses. Change in behaviours as directed by communication messages.
- Increase in people 'going direct' to access services via the single point of contacts promoted
- Utilising monitoring and engagement KPIs to measure effectiveness of communications – e.g. website analytics, social media engagement, survey responses.

Outcome 4	Action
Integrating a systematic approach to ensuring accessibility guidelines are embedded into communication practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop communication materials that conform to accessibility guidelines for print, visual and digital communications, e.g. alt text, closed captions on videos, image descriptions, formatting web content and PDFs for speech readers.• Ensure that communication materials are created, designed and adapted for accessibility in line with the intended audience e.g. always writing in plain English, providing translations in other languages and BSL, providing 'Easy Read' versions to support people with learning disabilities or limited capacity.• Ensure that communication materials take a trauma-informed approach and uses language that is anti-stigmatic.

What does success look like?

- Communication outputs are assessed and conform to accessibility guidelines checklist.
- Communication materials meet the needs of intended target audiences.
- Target audiences understand the information that is being explained to them.

Measuring effectiveness

Like all other ELHSCP services, communication and engagement activities need to be evaluated. Doing so enables us to demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy, and the ways in which it has supported the delivery of the IJB Strategic Plan's priorities.

Communications

We will:

- Maintain a record for all communications activities delivered for HSCP, referencing how each activity / campaign directly links to the IJB's core strategic priorities.
- Measure the balance of positive, negative and neutral media coverage, as well as social media messaging and sentiment.
- Track and report on KPI statistics regarding website analytics, including visits and search terms.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of social media engagement, using KPIs including reach, engagement, shares and click-through link rates
- Produce reports measuring the outcome of specific targeted communications campaigns.
- Engage with services to encourage monitor and evaluating of behaviour change following an awareness raising or direct call to action campaign.
- Deliver a suit of communication literature and/or online resources that inform the public of availability of services and how to access them.

Engagement

We will:

- Maintain a comprehensive record of all engagement activity undertaken on behalf of ELHSCP and/or the IJB, issuing a summary report on an annual basis.
- Use KPIs to measure the effectiveness of engagement activity, including reach, respondents, comments and actions.
- Maintain a central database of responses from engagement activity, which is cross-referenced to services and themed to identify key issues raised by the community.
- Expand the Lived Experience Network contacts, to incorporate as wide a reach as possible across multi-agency, experience and cultural groups.

Health and social care services managed by East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership

<p>Acute and Ongoing Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Community Hospital • Care at home services • Care Homes • Hospital at home 	<p>Adult Social Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care home assessment and review team • Community review team • Duty / adult social work • Justice social work • Mental health officers
<p>Community, Mental Health and Learning Disability Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult day services • Adult learning disability services • Community mental health team • CWIC mental health service • Intensive Home Treatment Team • Psychological services • Substance use service 	<p>East Lothian Rehabilitation Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community rehabilitation • Discharge to assess • Discharge without delay • Exercise referral programme • Fall prevention service • In-patient rehabilitation • Occupational therapy service • Physiotherapy service
<p>Nursing and Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care home nursing team • District nursing • Health visiting team • Palliative care • School nursing 	<p>Planning and Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned services • Communications and engagement • Performance and improvement • Strategic planning • Workforce and organisational development
<p>Primary Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP Contract (supporting medical practices) • HSCP managed primary care services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Care When It Counts (CWIC) Service ▪ Community Link Worker Service ▪ Community Treatment and Care Service (CTACS) ▪ Pharmacotherapy ▪ Vaccination Programme 	

NHS Lothian Hosted Services

ELHSCP manages a number of 'hosted services' on behalf of NHS Lothian, which can be accessed by individuals in East, West, Mid Lothian and City of Edinburgh residents.

The budget to deliver these services comes directly from NHS Lothian.

Astley Ainslie Hospital Site

ELHSCP has site management responsibility for the Astley Ainslie Hospital.

Outpatient services at the Astley Ainslie Hospital include:

- Amputee Rehabilitation
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Neuropsychology
- Neurorehabilitation
- Pain Management
- SMART Centre

Lothian Specialist Rehabilitation Unit

- Based at East Lothian Community Hospital, ELHSCP manage inpatient specialist rehabilitation services for amputees, orthopaedic and neurological rehabilitation.
- This service transferred from the Astley Ainslie Hospital site in September 2025.

Robert Ferguson Unit, Royal Edinburgh Hospital

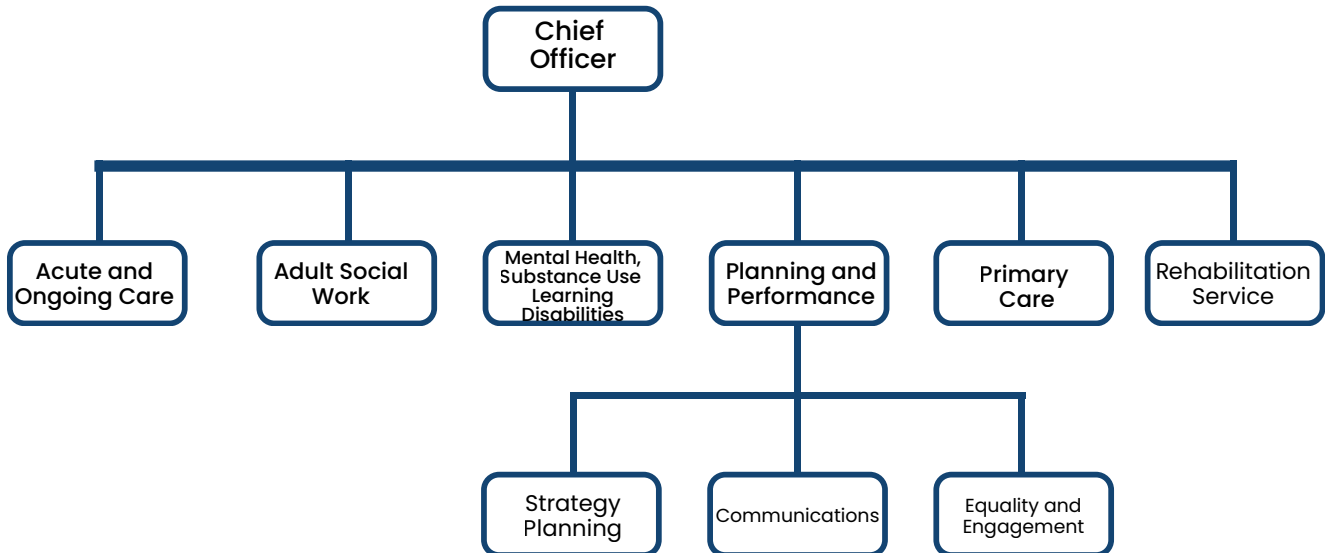
- Scottish national inpatient unit for patients with acquired brain injury and challenging behaviour

Lothian Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

- Based at the Chalmers Centre in central Edinburgh and outreach clinics across the Lothians.

Communication and engagement contacts

Responsibility for communications and engagement fall under the remit of ELHSCP's Planning and Performance Team.



Colleagues managing communications and engagement activities work with services and departments across the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Key contacts include:

Senior Communications Adviser

Jennifer Jarvis

Equality and Engagement Officer

Kate Thornback



**Working together
to deliver the
Best health
Best care
Best value for our
communities**

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