

Communications Report March - September 2017

Purpose

1. This report is to update the Board on activities to merge the communications of our combined Healthwatch.

Key issues

2. Developed a joint communications plan to inform different stakeholders about the merger. A key message during the first six-months has been around the working together as one organisation.
3. Reviewing current communications approaches across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to streamline activities and develop an effective approach to developing communications in the short and longer term.
4. Important not to confuse the name of our organisation with the service we provide in developing future communications approach. Suggest a campaign / impact focussed approach to promoting Healthwatch.

Action required by the Board

5. The Board is asked to:
 - Note the report.

Author

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6. Developed a joint communication plan for period around the merger to let stakeholders know why we merged and how it would affect activities in each local authority area. Included joint statements on both websites and inclusion in core e-newsletters for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
7. Continued with separate communications activities in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough since April, but have shared some key messages and news stories across both. Key message from April have been around working together as one organisation. Shared a number of joint stories across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough communications channels, including:
 - Information about the merger, including frequently asked questions. Aim to re-assure people and answer any queries.
 - Launch of the Being Happy, Being Me report on the joint youth engagement project.
 - New CEO
 - Improving wheelchair services for people in Cambs and Peterborough
 - Fertility services consultation response.
8. Jointly agreed to use the 'Tone of Voice' guidance launched by Healthwatch England to make sure that we talk about Healthwatch in the same way. Have run initial session on this with staff. Key element of this is communicating in a way that is clear and understandable to people who aren't health or care professionals, e.g. use of plain English.
9. There is a requirement to continue using individual local Healthwatch logos for both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, rather than a joint logo. The need to use both logos creates logistical issues around the merger of our online presence and the design of new materials.

Advice from Healthwatch England is that we need to be careful not to confuse the name of our organisation with the service we provide, i.e. a local Healthwatch in Peterborough and a local Healthwatch in Cambridgeshire. We will need to be thoughtful and creative about our approach here. There is room to look at more campaign focused approach to promoting Healthwatch.

10. Communications merger activities includes:

10.1. **Social media.**

- Currently have individual Facebook pages and Twitter accounts for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We have begun to jointly manage these using a Hootsuite to help get key messages out on all social media platforms in a timely and consistent way. It enables staff in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support each other.
- There are social media accounts for the local Healthwatch on YouTube, Pinterest and LinkedIn. We will be rationalising these, looking at which ones to develop and which to close down.

10.2. **Current e-newsletters and newsletters:**

- **Fortnightly Your Voice e-newsletter in Cambridgeshire and a weekly e-news bulletin in Peterborough.** Currently reviewing the frequency of both existing e-newsletters. Plan to merge to one e-newsletter after analysis of who readership is on each list, what they value about each approach, what our editorial focus will be and the best way of doing this in a sustainable way.
- **Monthly volunteers' newsletter** to Cambridgeshire volunteers - propose to roll out to Peterborough volunteers from Sept 17.
- **Youth Connect - monthly newsletter** across Cambs and Peterborough - need to review this in light of capacity and loss of core funding for post, and look at best way of informing and engaging with young people.
- **Health Aware bulletin** to Patient Participation Groups in Peterborough. Propose to look at opportunities to develop this and roll out to Cambridgeshire PPGs.
- **Hardcopy newsletter to be developed for publication in autumn.** Historically this was only produced in Cambridgeshire with last edition in Spring 2017. Need to review editorial focus and distribution.

10.3. **Websites**

- Currently managing two sites for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough based on two different system. Need to get advice from Healthwatch England on whether we can merge our websites and use a new combined organisation URL. After that, we need technical advice and support on any merger and development options. Will review in October alongside options for information management systems as these potentially impact on each other.
- Currently supporting a Healthwatch England project to re-develop the web-in-a-box template used in Cambridgeshire and joining a workshop in September.

10.4. **Literature and merchandise**

Review of current merchandise, literature and promotional materials taking place in September so we can plan future options.