Somerset Acute Hospital-based Stroke Services Reconfiguration

Pre-consultation communications and engagement

During this pre-consultation engagement phase, our approach focuses on engaging with people with lived experience and carers to inform the development of the solutions. A key part of this work programme is listening to the views of people with lived experience of stroke to understand their experience and ensure the programme responds to what matters most to those people the service treat.

Our aim is to create meaningful engagement with local people and stakeholders to involve them in deliberations about the future configuration of hyper acute stroke services in Somerset. The approach will be responsive and proportionate to the community as a whole.

We will also ensure up-to-date and accurate information is available , through the website and our engagement channels.

We need to ensure that leading up to formal public consultation we provide regular communications to stakeholders and the wider public. Communications will need to provide clear information which also highlights the context within the wider stroke strategy and Fit for my future programme.

We will work closely with health, public and voluntary sector colleagues to ensure relevant and timely messages are shared with their colleagues, as well as through their channels to the people of Somerset as appropriate.

Our communications approach and channels used will take into account the inequalities in the health and care system and across the county so we ensure that everyone has fair access to information.

We will use our core messages as the basis for all of our communications, but our communications will also be tailored to meet the needs of our different stakeholder groups. This will be particularly important for groups who may be more impacted by any potential changes.

During this pre-engagement phase as we work towards the completion of a pre-consultation business case, the approach will be to ensure information is available to all, through the Fit for my future website and social media channels for the Fit for my future, NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board and relevant partners. It will be important to consider messages tailored to particular stakeholder groups relating to 'what this means to me' – helping them to understand the part they have to play in shaping hyper acute services and considering all those who might interact with this service.

Our pre-consultation engagement and communications objectives include:

- To identify and engage with relevant audiences in a timely fashion, with clear information via effective channels for discussion and feedback

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- To manage a robust process of listening that meets national guidance and is regarded by the people it involves as open, reasonable, fair and meaningful. This includes involving Somerset Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- To ensure representative views of the Somerset population are sought and inform the pre-consultation business case.
- Keep staff working in stroke services in Somerset informed of plans and opportunities during this phase of the programme.
- To ensure an open and transparent approach to sharing information and opportunities with staff, stakeholders and patients.
- To keep project stakeholders apprised of key milestones, plans and opportunities by ensuring the continued provision of accurate and timely information related to progress in the programme.
- Support the project team to ensure plans and proposals inform and, where possible, reflect the needs and views of patients, staff and stakeholders.

Our communications need to be:

- simple and to the point
- factual and accurate – quick to dispel myths and correct inaccuracies
- provide clear signposting
- supportive in their tone, so that people understand this vision is for the benefit of everyone and can only be properly shaped with their feedback and input
- open and inclusive
- clear on any calls to action and encourage people to get involved.

We will publish information and materials on the Fit for My Future website.

Although the majority of our current engagement and communications will be aimed at key stakeholder groups, social media and our existing communication channels will also be important channels for providing public information and updates about the engagement process and development of the programme.

We will use existing internal channels of communications to communicate with and inform colleagues. We will tailor the channel used to the communication requirements. Channels may include internal staff newsletters, intranets and colleague briefings and staff meetings.

Key materials

At this stage the programme will be mainly engagement led and the communications activity will support the engagement to ensure information is accessible and transparent and anyone interested in the programme and key stakeholders can be kept informed of activity and next steps.

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As we move towards consultation the communications activity will be increased to ensure widespread and proactive communications to partners, public and other stakeholders.

We will ensure relevant materials are available to stakeholders and members of the public on the Fit for my future website. This will include:

- Summary Case for Change document
- Case for change animation
- Background information to the programme
- Opportunities to get involved
- FAQs.

Spokespeople

Confirmed spokespeople for the programme include:

- Dr Rob Whiting, Consultant Stroke Physician, Somerset FT
- Julie Jones, Programme Manager Stroke

Communications activity undertaken

- Development of the summary case for change
- Case for change summary has been reviewed by Healthwatch Somerset Readers' Panel and feedback obtained to inform the development of materials.
- Development of key lines to take
- Continue to develop the Fit for My Future brand which will aid how we will present the hyper acute stroke work as part of the wider Somerset programme.
- Animations and videos to support our hyper acute stroke work are being developed. These will be made available on our website and shared on our social media channels.
- Developing a Fit for My Future social media plan to maintain local engagement in the hyper acute stroke work.

Engagement activity undertaken

- Development and continuous update to our stakeholder mapping to ensure we reflect any updates to the EIA and identify gaps in our current engagement approach.
- Ongoing engagement with people with lived experience and support groups.
- Attendance at two stroke support clubs, one in Bridgwater and one in Yeovil, to speak to survivors of stroke and carers/loved ones to inform our thinking and gather insight into lived experience of a stroke.
- Initial introductory one-to-one meetings with experts by experience to understand more about what mattered most to them during their stroke care. The aim is that these relationships will

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continue to develop, rather than being one-off conversations, and will continue to inform the development of the work.

- Regular meetings with Stroke Association.
- Attend Aspire Stroke Group at Yeovil District Hospital to engage with a small group of recent stroke survivors to test and refine what we have heard matters most to people.

Public and patient stakeholder Reference Group – engagement events	
16th March 2022	Provided an overview of the programme of work with an opportunity to ask questions Presented Case for Change with longlist of options and how they were developed Communicated approach to secure shortlist
25th May 2022	Q&A session for group to understand the Case for Change in more detail Presented shortlist of options Facilitated conversation about the shortlist to gather insight to inform finalising shortlist
29th June 2022	Presented more detail of the shortlist options Facilitated conversation and insights gathered Q&A session with lead on modelling of data that informed shortlist
24th August 2022	Detailed discussion of four shortlisted options with modelling for each option Q&A session and insights sought Scoring of each option to map Stakeholder Reference Group's preference (scoring in appendix 9)

Emerging themes from pre-consultation engagement:

Theme	
Communications	Quality of communication with patient should empower them. Quality of listening skills. No person and no stroke is the same - do not make assumptions, make effort to understand each individual and what is happening for them. This is also important for reinforcing trust in healthcare team
Include loved ones/carers	Include the loved one/carer in conversation with person who has the stroke
Provide support at right time for loved ones/carers	Support for loved ones/carers that is offered/made available. A stroke changes everyone's life - loved ones may suddenly become carers. This needs caring for as well as the patient
Empathy, respect, dignity	Remember the whole person
Have fast ambulance response and travel times	Waiting times for ambulances - people seem to trust that the hospital they are taken to is the right one but will the ambulance get there quickly enough for the needed treatment
Treat close to home when possible	Repatriation for acute care close to home at earliest opportunity
Be seen quickly by knowledgeable staff when you arrive at a hospital	Being seen as soon as possible by someone expert in stroke
Have a safe and quality service	Staff who are well trained, experienced and confident in specialised stroke care – matters to the patient so they can trust healthcare professionals treating them

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