

<b>Title:</b>	North West Neonatal Operational Delivery Network Communication & Engagement Strategy for Stakeholders
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# North West Neonatal Operational Delivery Network Communication and Engagement Strategy for Stakeholders

## Executive summary

- The North West Neonatal Operational Delivery Network (NWNODN) will ensure robust systems and processes are in place to communicate and engage with stakeholders, commissioners, patients/parent and the public. The role of the NWNODN will be strengthened by utilising patient/parent experience to support all work.
- Communications and engagement activities outlined in this strategy are compliant with all legislation and locally agreed assurance processes. The strategy reflects the NWNODN's vision and values, which underpin all of its communications and engagement work.
- The communications and engagement strategy is aligned to the NWNODN Work Programme to ensure capacity and capability to deliver excellence in communications and engagement is considered and addressed.
- There is recognition that the changing landscape may impact on the content of this strategy and therefore the objectives are flexible enough to allow for future development of the communications and engagement approach.

## Introduction

Excellent communication is fundamental to the success of any organisation and is vital within the NHS to consistently deliver high quality services and clinical care. Through effective communication and engagement the NWNODN can manage, motivate, influence, create and facilitate conditions for change.

By 'communication', we mean giving messages and informing audiences:

- a) All our published documents, including leaflets, publications (e.g. annual report), website content, engagement and consultation documents, presentations and social media content.
- b) All statements and comments issued to the media.
- c) All face-to-face meetings, events, and telephone conversations

By 'engagement', we mean seeking to understand and being informed:

- a) Activities that are specifically designed to find out the experiences and views of patients, public, and stakeholders in relation to the NWNODN

- b) Relationships with all partners and local partnerships including the voluntary sector and commercial companies
- c) The ways in which we feed back the results of engagement activities and the explanation of how this feedback has been used.

## Vision for NWNODN

*“Working together to provide the highest standards of care for babies and their families.”*

### Our Overarching Principles

- Putting parents at the heart of everything we do
- Removing variation in service provision across the Network to provide consistent quality of care
- Embracing innovation to improve the quality of care outcomes
- Collaborating on a system-wide basis

### The NWNODN’s mission, as described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), is:

‘To be clinically driven and operate within and support a culture of collaboration, to engage and interact with our stakeholders, member organisations and families to deliver agreed outcomes.’

### Equality and Diversity

The NWNODN will:

- Ensure it directly contributes to improve health outcomes for all
- Work with commissioners to provide services on the basis of need and without preference to the personal characteristics of patients or their families
- Proactively seek to ensure access to appropriate services is not adversely affected by the personal characteristics of the patient, location or service

## Purpose of this document

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a clear and consistent approach to internal and external communications and engagement with all our “stakeholders”.

The term stakeholder is used to describe a wide range of people with differing levels of interest and influence in the work we do. The NWNODN have a huge variety of stakeholders including parents, the general public, education establishments, local maternity systems, the national safety collaborative, neonatal services both nationally and locally, other specialist networks and transport services.

This strategy supports the work of NWNODN and should be read alongside:

- NWNODN Operational Policy (STR-ODN-04)  
<https://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk/nwnodn/network-guidelines/>
- Annual Work Plan  
<https://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk/nwnodn/network-guidelines/network-documents-papers/>
- NWNODN Memorandum of Understanding (2018)
- NWNODN Patient and Public Involvement Strategy  
<https://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk/nwnodn/network-guidelines/>

## Strategy aims

The strategy aims to ensure that patients/families, the public and other stakeholders clearly recognise the role of NWNODN as an organisation responsible for; providing an impartial clinically focused expertise to both providers and commissioners to develop equitable, high quality services for patients and improve access to high quality neonatal care.

The strategy will support this by:

- Developing effective structures and mechanisms for meaningful and sustainable communication and engagement with key stakeholders, members, patients/families
- Ensuring that the views, comments and opinions of parents are embedded into our work programme
- Making it easy to access information, help and support in a consistent and appropriate way
- Being an organisation that people want to work with by being open and honest, sharing information, actively seeking and listening to views and ideas, supporting staff and promoting vision, values and objectives across the NWNODN
- Using marketing communication techniques to anticipate and respond in a timely manner to issues, protect the NHS reputation and share best practice across the NW region.

## Current context and challenges

The NWNODN is part of a complex landscape, working alongside Local Maternity Systems, paediatric networks and Specialist Commissioners. The NHS is constantly changing and as such this strategy must be flexible enough to adapt to any changes.

The communications and engagement responsibilities of the NWNODN are:

- Building and protecting the reputation of the local NHS
- Building relationships with stakeholders, providers, staff, parents/families and the media
- Establishing brand and identity
- Providing different ways in which parents/families, and stakeholders can share their views
- Ensuring the provision of information for parents/families is appropriate and timely
- Responding to parliamentary questions and other statutory requests for information , as per host trust processes

- Ensuring consultation and engagement around service changes and developments is carried out and reported within the legal requirements
- Following host trust's processes to handle complaints both about our own activities and for complaints escalated in to the NWNODN from families and provider organisations.

## Collaborative working

The aim of the NWNODN is to promote seamless boundaries, supporting people to see beyond their individual organisations. To bring together all key stakeholders, including Neonatal Service providers, Local Maternity Systems and representatives of voluntary and community organisations and Parent Advisory Groups, to ensure we are joined up in the way we engage, from communicating key messages through to co-design and co-production.

## Legislation

Several pieces of legislation have influenced this strategy including the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which sets out clear responsibilities:

- Put patients and families at the heart of everything it does
- Focus on improving those things that really matter to patients
- Empower and liberate clinicians to innovate with the freedom to focus on improving healthcare services

The NHS Constitution is enshrined in law. It reaffirms the values and principles of the NHS and sets out the rights that patients and staff can expect from the NHS. We have a responsibility to make sure that people are aware of the NHS Constitution so it can be enforced and its values and principles reflected in services.

The **Equality Act 2010** promotes fair treatment of people regardless of any protected characteristic they may have. To support development of commissioning plans and decision making, it is essential that our particular engagement and communication methods take into account the needs of people with a protected characteristic and enables them to fully participate.

## Guiding principles

In order to deliver effective communication and engagement, work will be delivered in a way that encompasses the NWNODN values by:

- Working in partnership with stakeholders to develop and deliver our strategy;
- Focus on listening to people and using their experiences to inform and develop our communications and engagement mechanisms;

- Undertaking communications and engagement work in a way that is cost effective and gives valuable outcomes
- Using best practice to deliver innovative communications and engagement activity.

## How we engage

### Parental Advisory Groups

Parent Advisory Groups (PAG) exist in each of the three North West (NW) localities. The groups are supported by the PAG terms of reference document, which can be viewed at <https://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk/nwnodn/get-involved/>. The groups comprise of parents that have had experience of neonatal care in the NW and support all the work the NWNODN is involved in. A number of the parents are also involved in supporting their local units with family engagement and peer support and therefore offer feedback to the ODN from a wider group of families currently experiencing neonatal care.

### Locality Neonatal Steering Group (NSG)

These quarterly meetings have attendance from all neonatal clinical leads and lead nurses for each organisation within the locality as well as specialised commissioning attendance, to provide expertise, direction and advice to NHS England, service providers, and the wider NHS community to improve the quality, safety and effectiveness of neonatal care across the network.

### Locality Clinical Effectiveness Groups (CEG)

These meetings are attended by each locality organisation with representatives from both neonatal medical and nursing clinical governance colleagues. CEG reports directly to the Neonatal Steering Group (NSG) and is recognised as providing a clinically driven governance assurance framework.

### Managers and Educators groups/meetings

Regular meetings take place of all neonatal unit managers both within locality and annually as a whole region to share challenges and successes and encourage network support and continued engagement. Clinical educators from each neonatal service meet regularly as a locality and annually as an entire region, to share current education focusses and support engagement and support locality wide innovations.

### Special Interest Groups (SIG)

These groups are specific to a particular area of neonatal care and engage clinicians both nursing and medical to come together and support quality improvement work or the creation of guidelines as a network. Engagement of these SIG members raises the profile of the NWNODN and the work we support with wider colleagues than managers and clinical leads in each service.

## Study Days and Conferences

The NWNODN run a number of study days/conferences and events for a variety of audiences to support communication and engagement with a variety of colleagues and disciplines including nursing, AHP and medical colleagues as well as maternity and paediatric services.

## Local Maternity System Board and work stream meetings

The NWNODN is represented at numerous meetings to ensure wider strategic work includes a neonatal focus such as Local Maternity System board meetings, Locality specific maternity and paediatric meetings, regional transformation groups and national working groups. Ensuring the NWNODN have a place on these forums supports engagement and raises the profile of the NWNODN.

## Media

The NWNODN has a social media presence on both twitter - @NWNeonatalODN with over 2000 followers and Facebook. We utilise this forum to share latest news and important updates from other reputable organisations.

## Annual Report

We produce a formal annual report detailing the work and achievements of the NWNODN and this will be available in electronic format on our website.

## Weekly Bulletins

A weekly bulletin is sent to all Clinical Leads and Unit Managers to disseminate through their teams with latest NWNODN news as well as local, regional and national information relevant to neonatal providers.

## Digital

The NWNODN will continually develop and build new ways of communicating and engaging with our audiences and stakeholders to develop strong, enduring and mutually beneficial relationships. Using a multi-platform approach enables us to be more open, accessible and transparent about the work we are doing.

## Website

Our website [www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk](http://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk) helps us to engage with all stakeholders and provide links to network guidelines and relevant documents as well as information about the network and how to get in touch. The website also provides links to national documents to support providers in accessing numerous documents in one place.