

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board

Communications Strategy



1.0 Introduction

What is a communications strategy?

An effective communication strategy agrees the different ways an organisation will deliver messages to its audiences to help achieve the aims of that group in an organised and targeted way.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, describes communication and raising awareness as a core function of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and in particular:

“Communicating to persons and bodies, in the area of the authority, the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so.”

This strategy will outline how Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (PSCB), aims to keep different groups of people informed, encourage two-way communication and explain how everyone can contribute to keeping children and young people safe in the city.

2.0 Objectives/purpose

The communications issued by the PSCB to all our audiences and stakeholders will add value by providing information that is:

- Honest and straightforward
- Topical and timely
- Informative and engaging
- About core business objectives and priorities for the PSCB

PSCB public information will benefit our audiences by providing information about:

- How the PSCB helps to safeguard children and young people
- How everyone in the city can help to safeguard children and young people
- What to do if you fear for a child or young person's safety
- How to make a comment, complaint or compliment about services

3.0 Standards

Visual standards

The PSCB will work with the visual guidelines below:

- The PSCB will adopt its own logo and branding
- To create its own identity, PSCB publications will include a 'house style' of visual standards
- All PSCB publications will have matching colour identity – burgundy and purple, plus predominantly black text
- All PSCB materials will use a set of common images, which relate to the range of services provided – unless information is specifically for the use of children and young people, in which case design will take into account the target audience

Quality standards

PSCB will work with the quality standards below:

- The PSCB logo will appear on all internal and public information
- A reference of contact for more copies, date of issue, date of revision and, where appropriate, date of expiry will appear on all information
- Illustrations and photographs will be of positive images that support the meaning of the text – no clip art will be used
- The content of images and information will be appropriate for the race, cultural needs and age of the target audience
- There is effective use of colour and balance between text, white space and graphic images
- Wherever possible information will be available in a minimum size of no less than 12pt Ariel lettering
- A standard paragraph about translation services, as well as an offer for printing in alternative formats, is advertised where appropriate
- Information, upon request, is translated into language of the reader's choice or made available in alternative formats wherever possible
- Information provided in print will be made available via the intranet – PSCB website pages
- Content pages, page numbers or index are provided where appropriate
- Contact information is provided including postal addresses, telephone numbers, minicom and fax numbers, opening hours, emergency contacts, website addresses and e-mail addresses
- Information is produced clearly, concisely and in plain language

4.0 Who is involved?

Membership of PSCB includes the following agencies:

Plymouth City Council (including Youth Offending Service)

Plymouth Teaching Primary Care Trust

Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

Connexions

Devon and Cornwall Probation Service

NCH

CAFCASS

Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth

Church of England Diocese Board of Exeter

Naval Personal and Family Services and Royal Marines Welfare

City College Plymouth

Strategic Health Authority

5.0 Who is PSCB communicating with?

Identifying our audiences

In order to ensure PSCB communications are effective, information will be targeted and tailored to specific audience needs. The audiences identified are outlined below:

- **Agency staff** – Internal channels of communications will be established in all relevant agencies including print, electronic and face to face, to ensure that internal audiences are well informed.
- **Partners** – To raise the profile of PSCB with partners, either directly or indirectly involved with the PSCB, each agencies' corporate communication channels will be used. Key points of contact will be established and information shared on a regular basis for dissemination by each communications function.
- **Service users** – To ensure core customers involved with the PSCB's member agencies are provided with up to date, engaging information about the work of the PSCB.
- **General public** – Public relations with local and national/trade press will be the vehicle by which the general public are informed. Marketing campaigns promoting different messages will be undertaken. A press protocol will be developed and will guide any dealings with the media.
- **Children and young people** – Information will be designed and distributed specifically for children and young people to help keep themselves and their friends safe.

6.0 Who is responsible for communicating?

It is important to recognise that good communication is the responsibility of everyone in the PSCB. The communication strategy cannot be delivered by one person, or group alone. The key stakeholders in delivering this communication strategy are set out below:

- The PSCB Executive Group will take overall responsibility for implementing communication and public information principles
- The Executive Group and, in particularly high profile cases, the Stakeholders Group (ie. PSCB Full Board) is responsible for the final authorisation of communications material, with the PSCB Chair holding ultimate responsibility
- The Stakeholder Group (ie PSCB Full Board) will be responsible for driving the delivery of core business messages through the Executive Group
- The Executive Group will act as gatekeepers for PSCB communications, ensuring the appropriate consultation takes place before printing and distribution
- Only the Chair/Vice Chair of the PSCB, the Director for Children's Services and the Safeguarding Business Manager will have authority to talk to the media on all PSCB Business matters. However, this provision will not prevent Board Members speaking to the media direct on behalf of their own agencies provided it is made clear that such action is not the official view or comment of the PSCB.
- Communication Officers in each agency will champion internal communications within their agency
- A Communications Service Provider will be asked to manage press coverage, as well as monitoring coverage, at a fee to be agreed
- Distribution of information will be co-ordinated by the Executive Group with support from the Safeguarding Business Team wherever possible. The Print and Document Services of Plymouth City Council will provide appropriate support where it is cost effective to do so.
- Replenishment of materials, requests for alternative formats and the dissemination of leaflets to requesters will be delivered by the Safeguarding Business Team wherever possible

7.0 How is communication achieved

Action plan

A work programme will be created to deliver the communications strategy and will appear within the formal action/work plan developed by the Executive Group. Individual communication campaigns will be added to the work programme when required.

Channels

A distribution list will be drawn up for each target audience to ensure that communications are targeted and delivered to a minimum standard. Briefly, each distribution list will include the following channels of communication:

Face to face - Where appropriate, PSCB communications will be done on a face to face basis, which is considered the most effective method of communication. This will include consultation events, and delivering messages by agency workers directly to service users.

Electronic – Websites, emails and e-zines will be used to deliver speedy and targeted communications to various audiences. As a minimum, at least one form of electronic communication will be used to deliver any one message.

Print – Leaflets, posters, magazines, newsletters and letters will be used to deliver planned communications.

Media – Where appropriate press releases will be issued to the media to promote PSCB messages. Reactive statements will be issued when appropriate and in line with the PSCB's press protocol – see separate document.

Distribution principles

Please see separate distribution lists for target audiences for detailed distribution principles.

In general, distribution principles for the PSCB are as follows:

- Communications will be targeted to specific audiences and distribution will follow this principle
- Where ongoing information is provided, it will be updated and replenished regularly
- Distribution contacts will be established for each PSCB agency

8.0 How effective is PSCB communication?

To deliver the strategy a communications action plan will be developed.

Quality Assurance will be determined by the following:

- Informally surveying staff after communications are issued - ad-hoc
- Formal communication surveys – annually
- Focus groups - annually
- Monitoring feedback into the PSCB inbox – on going/daily

- Bi monthly Executive group meetings to track effectiveness of communications – bi monthly
- Monitoring feedback returned from service users (feedback form to be provided on leaflets and web pages) – ad-hoc
- Service user questionnaires – annually
- Service user consultation events - annually
- Attending and harnessing learning from user and other support networks – annually
- A minimum of two safeguarding campaigns per year, with analysis of feedback – bi-annually
- A minimum of four proactive press releases will be circulated - annually

9.0 Communications Strategy Review

The PSCB Communications Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis in September each year, with amendments/variation to the strategy presented to the PSCB Full Board for ratification prior to implementation.