

Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission Report

Communications and Information
Co-ordinator - Update

Lead Member: Cllr Sarah Russell

Strategic Director: Steven Forbes

Date: 17th December 2019

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission with an update on the role of the Social Care & Education Communications and Information Co-ordinator post
- 1.2. To provide an update on the outcomes and impacts of communication campaigns over the past 6 months.
- 1.3. To provide clarification of key departmental communications priorities and future priorities for the Communications and Information Co-ordinator post.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Since starting in post eight months ago, the Communications and Information Co-ordinator has made some significant progress in improving the communications approach across Social Care and Education.
- 2.2. Communication channels and approaches have been adopted to significantly improve internal communications across the department. This approach is continuing to be developed in the forms of an internal strategy.
- 2.3. External communication channels and approaches have been adopted to improve the positive presence of social care and education stories for external audiences. This approach is to be developed into a strategy and actioned.
- 2.4. Next steps: as suggested by the Local Government Association it is imperative that a communications strategy is developed for social care and education. The strategy will need to be developed with SCE directorate, senior communications officers and the Communications and Information Coordinator post.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission are recommended to note this report and to provide feedback/comment.

4. Report/Supporting information including options considered:

- 4.1. In April 2019 Social Care and Education (SCE) introduced a Communications and Information Co-ordinator post to:

- a. Increase awareness of the Social Care and Education (SCE) department's mandate and services in Leicester through: signposting of services; promotion of partner and commissioned services; and emphasis of the contributions the department makes to individual and societal health and wellbeing.
- b. Celebrate the achievements and positive news stories of the department, partners and commissioned service – both externally and internally.
- c. Develop a more consistent and coordinated internal communications approach to emphasise the departmental merge and need for staff and service collaboration.

These tasks have been worked towards through a number of key projects and deliverables.

Identifying core priorities

4.2. A one-day communication health check was carried out by the Local Government Association (LGA) to support the department to identify the best approach to delivering communications. Through meetings with staff across SCE and communications the assessors highlighted:

- a. The need for the development of an internal and external communications strategy which aligns closely to the council's overall communication strategy.
- b. The need of a clear forward plan of events, campaigns and communication opportunities.
- c. The need to launch a regular internal staff e-newsletter with a focus on quality not quantity and an emphasis on including regular messages from the directorate
- d. The importance of delaying any final decision of a dedicated Twitter account until the internal and external strategy has been developed with directorate input.

Following the review, these recommendations have informed the work of the Communications and Information Coordinator.

Developing strong branding

4.3. Following an audit of the internal communications channels for staff across SCE, a staff newsletter has been developed for monthly publication. The newsletter supports the development of a common departmental brand that cuts across both the children's and adults' sides of the SCE department following the departmental merge in 2018.

4.4. The newsletter celebrates success – both at an individual level through showcasing those staff who have received commendations and at a wider scale through the stories being published. For example, the most recent

edition shared the success of award-winning teams, put a spotlight on a case study illustrative of the positive impact of services and reflected on a hugely informative awareness week for occupational therapy.

- 4.5. In the initial audit of internal comms just 63% of respondents suggested they read previous iterations of an ASC only newsletter, but the new newsletter is attracting audiences of 82% across the whole department. The newsletter will continue to be developed, reviewed and revised, where necessary, in 2020 to ensure it continues to be successful.
- 4.6. In addition to the newsletter, further communications work has functioned to develop brands that are identifiable beyond the internal council audience. For example, an integrated communications approach was adopted for the council's first Festival of Practice event which took place in September 2019. A strong communication plan was instrumental in the week's success and the distinct branding and visual programme that were developed were extremely well received. The promotion of the week through visual material, social media and email briefings resulted in over 1800 members of staff attending the workshops. The event also garnered strong social media presence, with the hashtag used in the event being recommended when searched on Twitter. See Appendix 1 for the Festival of Practice programme.
- 4.7. Furthermore, multiple service areas within social care and education have had marketing improvements made to their external facing branding since the Communications and Information Co-ordinator has been in post.
- 4.8. In response to the need for Leicester's SEND Local Offer to be better promoted, effort has been placed in designing a SEND brand to be used to market the SEND offer online, on printed correspondence and marketing materials. This will improve the visibility of the SEND Local Offer. The brand has been co-produced with the Parent Carer Forum and is a hugely positive step in improving the recognisability of the offer. See Appendix 2 SEND Local Offer Logo.
- 4.9. Future marketing work will be taking place to improve the branding of the following SCE services and events; MyChoice, celebrating success, shared lives, strength-based practice and ASC commendations.
- 4.10. As a result of these efforts, the SCE department has had increased presence in public publications. For example, through joint work with a graphic design team, a long-standing item placed in the Options magazine has been improved and attracted positive feedback from those who have seen it. See Appendix 3 Options magazine advert.

Co-ordinating communications efforts

- 4.11. A calendar of events that identifies key awareness days, strategy launches, consultations, CQC reviews and events etc. has been developed to support a more coordinated approach to communications. This calendar tool has played a key role in focusing staff on identifying opportunities to utilise communication channels to share positive stories and there have been over 60 submissions of items by staff across SCE. To date, approximately 20

campaigns have been supported, resulting in more SCE stories being published externally on social media, in press releases and internally through Face and emailing briefings.

- 4.12. The calendar tool will inform the development of our external communications strategy which will outline the approach to shaping campaigns to ensure that they offer the services and department positive public exposure, meets a statutory requirement need and aligns with the overall vision and values of the department. This external communications strategy will be developed in partnership with the corporate communications team. See Appendix 4 Calendar of Events.

Future priorities

- 4.13. To build upon the work done so far, a number of key priorities have been identified for delivery in 2020. In addition to the drafting of an internal communications strategy, an external communications strategy and a stakeholder analysis, these include:
- 4.14. **Development of a departmental stock image library:** the stocks images that are available for purchase tend not to be representative of the people in Leicester and cost £8 each on average – but can reach costs of £30. In 2020 we will be seeking to develop our own library of stock images, utilising Valuing People assistants to take photos and recruiting volunteers across the department to model for and take the photographs. These images will be more representative of Leicester’s demographics and their use will avoid costs of purchasing alternative stock images. The images will be used on our printed and digital communication material as well as our social media channels.
- 4.15. **SCE recruitment:** In partnership with HR, effort will be put into presenting and positive and rewarding narrative of jobs in social care and education in order to attract a high calibre of candidates for jobs. ‘Hard to fill’ job roles will be identified and positive experiences within SCE and the local authority will be shared in the form of written case studies and short films to attract people to the roles.
- 4.16. **Review and update of our SCE webpages:** To help improve the external facing image of the department and to ensure essential information is available, a review will be undertaken of our webpages.
- 4.17. **The use of videography:** The increased popularity of social media and short, quick and digestible news has seen a rise in the popularity of the use of video. Films have already been produced for the Festival of Practice and Occupational Therapy week and in 2020 further video resources will be produced. Examples of this planned work includes filming of case studies of people who have used Enablement services and filming of senior staff to be used as part of the new starter induction package. See Appendix 5 Festival of practice videos links.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1. Financial implications

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

5.2. Legal implications

There are no legal implications directly associated with this report.

5.3. Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no climate implications directly associated with this report.

5.4. Equalities Implications

There are no directly equality issues associated with this report.

5.5. Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None

6. Background information and other papers: None

7. Summary of appendices:

- 7.1. Appendix 1: Festival of Practice programme
- 7.2. Appendix 2: SEND Local Offer Logo
- 7.3. Appendix 3: Options magazine advert
- 7.4. Appendix 4: Calendar of communication activities
- 7.5. Appendix 5: Festival of Practice videos

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No

9. Is this a “key decision”? No

10. If a key decision please explain reason