



Northern England
Clinical Senate

NORTHERN ENGLAND CLINICAL SENATE

Communications Framework

Version 2.0

April 2020

NHS England and NHS Improvement – North East and Yorkshire



Version Control

Document Version	Date	Comments	Drafted by
Final Version 2.0	April 2020	Refreshed and updated	Jo Poole

1. Purpose

The Senate provides free and full, independent and impartial clinical advice on any proposal for service change in health care that has significant implications for the workforce, patients and the public.

Its role is to act as a clinical critical friend and/or providing formal assurance, advising on the provision of the best overall care and outcomes for patients in Northern England.

This framework sets out the proposals for managing communications across the Northern England Senate. Informing and engaging our stakeholders and the public in our work is fundamental to the Senate's success. This communications framework will support our stakeholders in understanding the purpose of the Senate and demonstrate transparency in advice provision.

2. Communication Objectives

- To ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the Senate communications and to ensure our approach proactively and effectively communicates the purpose, priorities, messages and values of the Senate
- To develop effective communication systems where formal Senate advice is published, in a clear and transparent way
- To share resources, knowledge and expertise between the Senate community, including all identified stakeholders
- Ensure that the Northern England Senate has a positive culture of consistent, open and clear communication
- To pro-actively manage appropriate communications and increase the confidence and understanding in how the work of the Clinical Senate can improve services to patients
- To provide a regular flow of information to key stakeholders

3. Key Means of Communications

The Senate website will be the up to date repository of all Senate business www.nesenate.nhs.uk including all published reports and governance documentation. The website will be maintained by the Senate Manager and the Senate Administrator.

The key outputs of the Senate (all to be published on the website) will include:

- An annual report
- A quarterly e-bulletin sent by email to all stakeholders listed in Appendix A, to summarise Senate progress
- Senate reports on referred topics. All Senate reports will be put into the public domain. The timeframe for publication will be agreed with the sponsor in the Terms of Reference for each topic
- Agendas and minutes of Council meetings
- A regular email update of Senate business to Assembly members

4. Partnership Communications

It is recognised that there is potential for crossover work with partnership organisations, depending on the topic being addressed. The Senate Manager will ensure that information is shared as appropriate (in line with our Standards of Business Conduct) with relevant partners, so that potential areas of conflict or duplication are avoided.

5. Internal Communications

It is important to maintain good communications between the Senate Council and the Assembly and within these two bodies. Email will be the main means of communication with all parties. The following summarises the main approaches to this communication:

- The Senate Manager and the Senate Administrator are the main point for any communication queries from Senate members
- Council members are provided with each other's contact details to aid their internal communications
- All Assembly members will be informed by either email or via the Assembly email update, of any opportunities for involvement as members of expert clinical panels and will be informed of any key decisions / issues raised by the Council
- When expert clinical panels are appointed in response to a particular topic request, the Council will be informed of the membership of that panel
- The panel will be provided with each other's contact details to aid their communications for the duration of the project

6. Individual Reviews

The Northern England Senate will use the following approaches to obtaining referrals for advice, managing review work and communicating our reports:

- The Senate Manager will review the monthly reconfiguration grids developed by the Clinical Delivery Team to help inform a forward programme of work
- The Senate Manager will maintain a log of all potential and confirmed referrals and keep this updated with progress
- The approach to communications for each topic will be agreed with the sponsor within the Terms of Reference for each topic
- It is the intention that all Senate advice is published on the Senate website. The timescales for the publication are agreed within the Terms of Reference for that review

7. Media Enquiries and Press Releases

The work of the Clinical Senate may generate interest from external local and specialist media, therefore, messaging needs to be closely managed to ensure that it is consistent and clear and reflective of the organisations vision and objectives.

- Any member of the Senate who is approached by the media in relation to their work on the Senate should direct the media to the Senate Manager/ Senate Administrator who can co-ordinate a response with the assistance of the communications support. The Senate Manager will contact all relevant colleagues for up to date information in order to collate a response to the enquiry

- The response will be agreed by the Senate Chair and Senate Manager
- A copy of the prepared statement will be circulated electronically to all members of the Council / relevant members of the Assembly, to ensure consistency of approach in the event that journalists follow up their enquiries through contacting other bodies and organisations
- The Senate Chair and Senate Council will need to agree whether a press release is required for a particular review. This decision will be taken in discussion with the NHS England and NHS Improvement Medical Director for the North East and Yorkshire and /or the Deputy Director for Clinical Delivery to determine the most appropriate body to respond, relative to each particular request. The development of the press release will be managed by the Senate Manager in association with communications support. A copy of the press release will be circulated electronically to Senate members and to stakeholder communications teams.

In all cases, the Senate Manager will monitor coverage of the press release/ statement in the media and collate details for the Senate Council to evaluate.

8. Official Correspondence with MPs

The response to any approach from an MP will be co-ordinated through the Senate Manager and communications support.

Appendix A

Distribution list for the quarterly email bulletin

- ❖ CCG Chief Officers
- ❖ CCG Chairs
- ❖ Commissioning Sponsors
- ❖ Chief Executives – provider trusts
- ❖ Medical Directors – provider trusts
- ❖ Chairs of Clinical Reference Groups
- ❖ NHS England and Improvement Directors – North East and Yorkshire
- ❖ Directors of Public Health
- ❖ Chairs of Health & Wellbeing Boards
- ❖ Health & Wellbeing Support Officer Network
- ❖ Healthwatch – Northern England
- ❖ Chairs of Scrutiny Committees
- ❖ Oversight and Scrutiny Committee Support Officers
- ❖ Clinical Networks and Senate Team – Northern England
- ❖ Heads of Senate/Senate Managers - countrywide
- ❖ Senate Council
- ❖ Senate Assembly