

NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Maternity Services in Wigtownshire

Communication, Engagement and Consultation Plan

2023

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1. Introduction

Consultation is to take place on a model for maternity services in Wigtownshire, inviting everyone to share their views on two potential options.

This follows a local review which took place earlier this year under the leadership of independent chairs focused on the provision of intrapartum maternity services in the area.

At present, there are no birthing services within Galloway Community Hospital's Clenoch Suite, having been suspended in 2018 due to challenges around ensuring sufficient staffing so as to be able to provide a safe service.

Home births for low-risk pregnancies are currently provided in Wigtownshire for planned, low-risk births, and births within hospital take place at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary in Dumfries.

An additional, enhanced level of antenatal and postnatal care for both high and low-risk births is provided out of the Oak Tree Family Centre in Stranraer.

A report resulting from the independently-led local review of maternity services within Wigtownshire was brought to the last meeting of the Transformation and Innovation Futures Committee on August 10 2023.

This report resulted from engagement activity which ran from January 23 2023 under the leadership of two experienced and independent chairs, seeking the views of stakeholders including staff and service users to help inform an approach to developing options for intrapartum maternity services in Wigtownshire.

These options were scored, and two were initially tied as the highest scoring options - current arrangements providing only for low-risk, pre-planned home births and a second option which would include pre-planned births at Galloway Community Hospital, again only for the same relatively small number of low-risk births.

The second option was narrowly preferred by the independent chairs when the scores by local professional NHS staff were excluded.

Feeling there was a lack of a decisive outcome, and with no proposals or options having yet been taken out for the public to consider, the Transformation and Innovation Futures Committee recommended to the Integration Joint Board that both options be taken out for formal consultation, and this was agreed at the IJB meeting of 27 September 2023.

The consultation will begin on 20 November 2023 and run for a minimum 12 weeks, with heavy promotion of this opportunity for people to shape the approach around provision of intrapartum services in Wigtownshire for years to come.

2. Aims

The aims of this Communication, Engagement and Consultation Plan (Communication Plan) are to

- provide a timeline for completing the consultation focused on intrapartum maternity services in Wigtownshire (Appendix 1)
- indicate who the key stakeholders for this phase are (see Appendix 2)
- ensure an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is undertaken for each option for this phase of the programme
- identify communication, engagement and consultation methods in order to provide relevant information and promote engagement with stakeholders
- prepare stakeholders for potential changes resulting from this process
- demonstrate how feedback collected during the engagement process is recorded accurately and stored securely
- identify who is responsible for carrying out engagement and consultation activities and any associated costs
- determine success criteria and the resources needed for successful delivery
- measure the effectiveness of communication and engagement against these criteria
- set out the ultimate decision-making route for the adoption of a model for intrapartum services in Wigtownshire

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3. Objectives

Objective One - Ensure that stakeholders have access to information on maternity services with which to inform their responses to the consultation, this can be found at:

[Wigtownshire maternity consultation – Dumfries & Galloway Health & Social Care \(dghscp.co.uk\)](http://dghscp.co.uk)

Objective Two - Ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to engage in the consultation process and help shape the outcomes.

Objective Three – Ensure the Integration Joint Board are provided with a clear understanding of the outcomes from the consultation, and that the recommendation which is presented to them reflects the contributions which were made during the consultation.

Objective Four - Ensure that the communication and engagement activities undertaken around the consultation process follow the 7 National Standards for Engagement (see Appendix 6)

4. Who are we engaging with and why?

Stakeholders	Rationale/reason
Service users past, present and future	To ensure that those with lived and experience or who stand to be most directly affected by change are supported to participate in the consultation and have their views heard and considered.
General public	Recognising that these services affect the wider community, too make sure people have opportunities to be engaged and involved in shaping outcomes for a service within their

	community.
People in protected characteristic groups	To make sure people in protected characteristic groups are supported to participate in the consultation and have their views heard and considered.
Staff and volunteers	Staff and volunteers across all sectors of the Partnership should be supported to share their views, drawn from knowledge and experience, and with a recognition that any changes could impact on their work.
Partner agencies	To ensure that those working in areas connected to this service such as staff within local medical practices are supported to participate in the consultation and have their views heard and considered.
Local elected members	To recognise the role of local elected members at all strata have a role representing the interests of their constituents, and to ensure that they are supported to participate in the consultation and have their views heard and considered

5. Core messages

The core messages are

- Two leading options for delivery of intrapartum services within Wigtownshire have been developed out of earlier engagement with stakeholders, and via a scoring process. Both have been assessed to be deliverable, and the Integration Joint Board is keen that stakeholders have the opportunity to consider, comment and input into these options through a formal public consultation process.
- These models are for provision of pre-planned, low-risk birthing options in Wigtownshire, with a recommended direction to be developed out of the consultation process and presented as the proposed option to the Integration Joint Board to make the final decision.

6. Methods of communication, engagement and consultation

The partnership is committed to using a range of engagement methods that will make getting involved in the consultation process as easy as possible.

Methods include:

- A series of in-person consultation sessions which will take place within Wigtownshire, heavily promoted through communication channels.
- Pop-up consultation booths at a local supermarket and leisure centre, aiming to raise awareness of the consultation and facilitate impromptu engagement.
- Online consultation sessions for small groups, as an alternative to in-person events.

- Hosting online of a consultation survey and supporting documents, with heavy promotion of this means for people to participate as an alternative to attending an event in person.
- Sharing information in accessible formats through existing networks, organisations and groups websites, mailing lists and intranets systems, communicating how to get involved, encouraging engagement, building relationships and trust provide access for a wide range of stakeholders.
- Media coverage including press releases to newspapers and on social media.
- An animation setting out the context for the consultation and its objectives.
- Paid-for newspaper advertising which promotes the consultation and its schedule.
- Provision of both electronic and hard copy resources in Plain English and Easy Read formats to facilitate accessibility.

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6.1 How can people get involved?

People will be encouraged to participate through a variety of options:

- Attending a scheduled in-person consultation session.
- Attending a virtual, online consultation session.
- Engaging at a pop-up consultation booth.
- Completing the online consultation survey.
- Mailing in a physical copy of the consultation survey.

7. Reviewing the responses and arriving at a final decision

External agency Sleeping Giants has been commissioned to undertake a thematic analysis of all the responses provided through the consultation programme.

Their report will consider people's responses to the two options being taken out to consultation, seeking their views on the options, and how they feel these options could be improved.

The report will also reflect the anticipated impact of both options on the community, as reflected through the responses of the consultees.

It will also reflect any further proposals consultees put forward during this stage.

It is anticipated that the resulting independent report will be delivered ahead of a series of organisational committees.

The consultation outcome for consideration will then be brought in the first instance to the Women and Children and Sexual Health Directorate Senior Management Team meeting of March 20 2024.

From there, it will go to the Health and Social Care Leadership Group meeting of March 22 2024. It will then proceed to the Board Management Team meeting of March 27 2024.

The consultation outcome for consideration together with recommendation will then go to the Strategic Planning Delivery and Commissioning Committee on April 23 2024.

The outcome for consideration and awareness will then be shared with the Area Clinical Forum on 24 April 2024 and the Area Partnership Forum on 25 April 2024, before the consultation outcome for consideration and approval will be presented to the meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board on June 4 2024.

8. Reporting on outcomes

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When Sleeping Giants deliver the resulting independent report, it will be shared through the committees set out above.

Input will be provided from the committees to help shape a report containing a formal recommendation which is expected to go to IJB on June 4.

Ahead of the IJB meeting, when papers are being published, feedback will be provided directly to all those who participated in the consultation – sharing the feedback through channels such as the media, to elected members, through comms networks.

The final recommendation will be highlighted, with an explanation that the decision will be taken by the IJB.

Once a decision has been taken, this will also be reported out to consultees and wider stakeholders – along with an anticipated timeline for any resulting changes to be implemented.

9. How will we know we have been successful?

The final recommendation and the context which accompanies it should reflect the views and wishes of people and organisations in Wigtownshire in respect of intrapartum services.

People will feel and see/hear that they have been listened to, as the voices of lived experience are reflected in the outcomes.

Feedback will be sought from stakeholders throughout the consultation.

The outcome will be evaluated against the 7 National Standards for Engagement.

EQIAs for the options will have evolved throughout the consultation process.

Appendix 1 – Timeline and schedule for consultation

Programme for Consultation					
Group	Public	Targeted	Date	Time	Venue
Midwives			22/11/2023	13.30pm	TEAMs
Elected Members/MPs/MSPs			19/12/2023	13.00pm	TEAMs
Community Councils			28/11/2023	18.00pm	TEAMs
GCHAG			30/11/2023	10.00am - 12.00pm	Stranraer Library
General Public - Stranraer			30/11/2023	12.30pm - 15.30pm	Stranraer Library
General Public - Wigtown			06/12/2023	10.00am-12.00pm	Lesser Parish Church Hall, Lochancroft Lane, Wigtown
General Public - Newton Stewart (incl. Mothers and Toddlers Group)			06/12/2023	13.30pm - 15.30pm	McMillan Hall, Newton Stewart
Staff side/HR			18/12/2024	12.00pm	TEAMs
1:1 bookable sessions - public/stakeholders			12/01/2024	All day bookable 1hr slots	TEAMs
Perinatal Network / ScotSTAR / SAS			12/01/2024	14.00pm	TEAMs
1:1 bookable sessions - public/stakeholders			17/01/2024	All day bookable 1hr slots	To be arranged with individuals booking at time
Midwives			17/01/2024	tbc	Oaktree
GCH Staff			17/01/2024	tbc	GCH
GP Cluster Group			Jan 24 - tbc	tbc	TEAMs
Others:					
Supermarkets / public places			Comms to lead		

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Appendix 2 – Stakeholders

Service users past, present and future
General public
People in protected characteristic groups
Staff and volunteers
Partner agencies
Local elected members

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Appendix 3 – National Standards for Community Engagement

“The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to improve and guide the process of community engagement. Community engagement is a way to build and sustain relationships between public services and community groups - helping them both to understand and take action on the needs or issues that communities experience”

(Scottish Community Development Centre [Link](#))

There are 7 Standards

- Inclusion
- Support
- Planning
- Working together
- Methods
- Communication
- Impact



Appendix 4 – Four easy steps for engaging with people

Four easy to follow steps for engaging with people, groups and organisation on the development of plans and strategies

Step 1 - Planning - Setting out how we will all work together to develop the draft Strategy or Plan

Step 2 - Pre-Engagement - getting information out to everyone who needs to know about it. Finding out how people want to be involved and what we need to do to make it easier for them.

Step 3 - Engagement - going out and speaking to and getting feedback from people about their experience, what they think and feel about the actions in the delivery plan

Step 4 - Developing the final Plan - making sure the final draft includes what people have told us in Step 3. It needs to meet people's needs and reflect their knowledge and experience. Making sure people can access it and see how it progresses.

