



Communication and Engagement Strategy

June 2017

Background

The Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership was awarded Department of Education (DfE) funding in Autumn 2016 to drive forward the education and development of pre-qualifying and post-qualifying Social Workers across the partnership. The Partnership includes:

- Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (Children's Services)
- City of York Council
- Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- University of Huddersfield
- University of York

Social Work Teaching Partnerships are defined as: an accredited collaboration between HEIs and employers which delivers high quality training for social work students and qualified practitioners and equip them to practise to specified standards in statutory settings. Teaching Partnerships are part of the government's broader strategy to strengthen the quality of practice learning and continuing professional development (CPD) within the social work profession.

Our Vision

- ❖ We believe that **inspiring, person centred and relationship based social work** delivers transformational improvements in outcomes for people who use services and their communities.
- ❖ By working collaboratively across our partnership (including HEIs, Social Work Employers, and Service User Organisations) we aim to **grow, develop, inspire** and **sustain** a highly skilled and confident social work workforce.
- ❖ By raising standards, and delivering well trained, highly skilled and confident social workers, able to meet the diverse challenges of frontline practice, **we will achieve our overall aim of improving outcomes for all groups** including; children, adults, their families and communities.

Purpose

Meaningful, regular communication is at the heart of successful partnership working. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all partners communicate and promote the Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership and the delivery of the Partnership's vision in the same way, with the aim of raising the profile of the Partnership within member organisations, social work students, practising social workers and other interested audiences.

Getting the right internal communications infrastructure in place can help facilitate a culture of:

- Coherence (everyone knows what is expected of them and why)
- Commitment
- Knowledge

Getting our external communications right is just as important, as it:

- Facilitates a sense of belonging among our social work students and the wider workforce
- Influences the Partnership's reputation
- Is a significant marker for the transparency of the Partnership
- Helps promote the Partnership's 'brand'

The Communication and Engagement strategy aims to outline how the partnership will:

- ❖ **Communicate information about the Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership** in order to:
 - Embed awareness and understanding of the Partnership among the identified target audiences;
 - Develop awareness regionally and nationally about the implementation of the new requirements for social work education.
- ❖ **Ensure effective communications internally within the Teaching Partnership** in order to:
 - Secure commitment and understanding of the Teaching Partnership's aims and objectives within all levels of partner organisations;
 - Ensure that staff within partner organisation are informed about:
 - Their roles and responsibilities within the Teaching Partnership governance and operational delivery structures;
 - Opportunities offered by the Partnership
 - Partnership progress and development.

Our Starting Point

- ❖ **Learning from Teaching Partnership pilots** - Independent evaluation of the four Teaching Partnership pilot projects identified the importance of a clear communication strategy from the outset with partners, front-line social workers, students, HEI staff and service users. The evaluation also highlighted the challenges partnerships faced in realising their communication aims. We have considered this learning in the development of our strategy.
- ❖ **TP Implementation Plan** - The Communication strategy and activity plan don't exist in isolation. The Teaching Partnership's Implementation Plan identifies the activity being undertaken to realise the Partnership's vision; the activity detailed in the Communications Plan needs to be aligned to this and reviewed and updated in line with changes to the implementation plan. The Partnership reviews the plan on a quarterly basis and reports to the project sponsors on progress.
- ❖ **Our stakeholders** - A stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken with partners to identify the key internal and external audiences of interest. As the partnership develops and evolves, this will need to be revisited; all members have a responsibility to identify any gaps or required changes so that the strategy and activity plan can be updated.
- ❖ **Our Resources**
 - TP Board members - Communication Champions who take the lead on cascading information within their own organisations
 - Work stream groups
 - TP posts – Project Manager, CPD Coordinator, Practice Educator Consultants (PECs), Lecturer Practitioners (LPs)
 - Communications, marketing and PR teams within each member organisation
- ❖ **Budget** – The Partnership's Financial Plan for 2017/18 includes limited funding allocated to support communications activity and development of the Partnership's website. Any required expenditure above allocated amounts would require approval by the project executive and must comply with DfE's terms and conditions on the use of grant funding.
- ❖ **Timescales** – Appendix 1 (Communication Activity Plan) identifies the key timescales for communications activity. The current DfE funding award will run until March 2018 any continuation or exit plans should be covered in strategy updates and as part of the regular review of the Communication Activity Plan.

What we want to achieve and how we are going to do it

Communication Objective	Target Audience	Key Messages/Information to share	Communication tools/methods
Inform people about the TP	Social Work practitioners – NQSW to SW managers and leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How national policy around SW education and development is being implemented locally Changes to progression pathways CPD opportunities offered within Partnership Changes to placement provision and role of PECs Research opportunities Employment opportunities in TP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TP Website Monthly e-newsletter CPD marketing material e.g. programme TP roadshows Involvement in work stream groups and delivery of TP activity Information cascaded via PECs Viral change model – engage with our champions and get them talking!
	Current social work students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of studying in the TP in relation to placements, curriculum, progression, ASYE, CPD and progression Employment opportunities in TP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TP website Children Social Work Matters (CSWM) website Promotional material Information cascaded via PECs
	Social Work research and teaching staff within partner HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local approach to implementing national policy around SW education and development Opportunities to spend time in practice/contribute to research informed practice Changes to admissions processes and procedures Increased support and governance to develop courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement in work stream groups and delivery of TP activity Monthly newsletter Information cascaded from HEI leads on Partnership Board

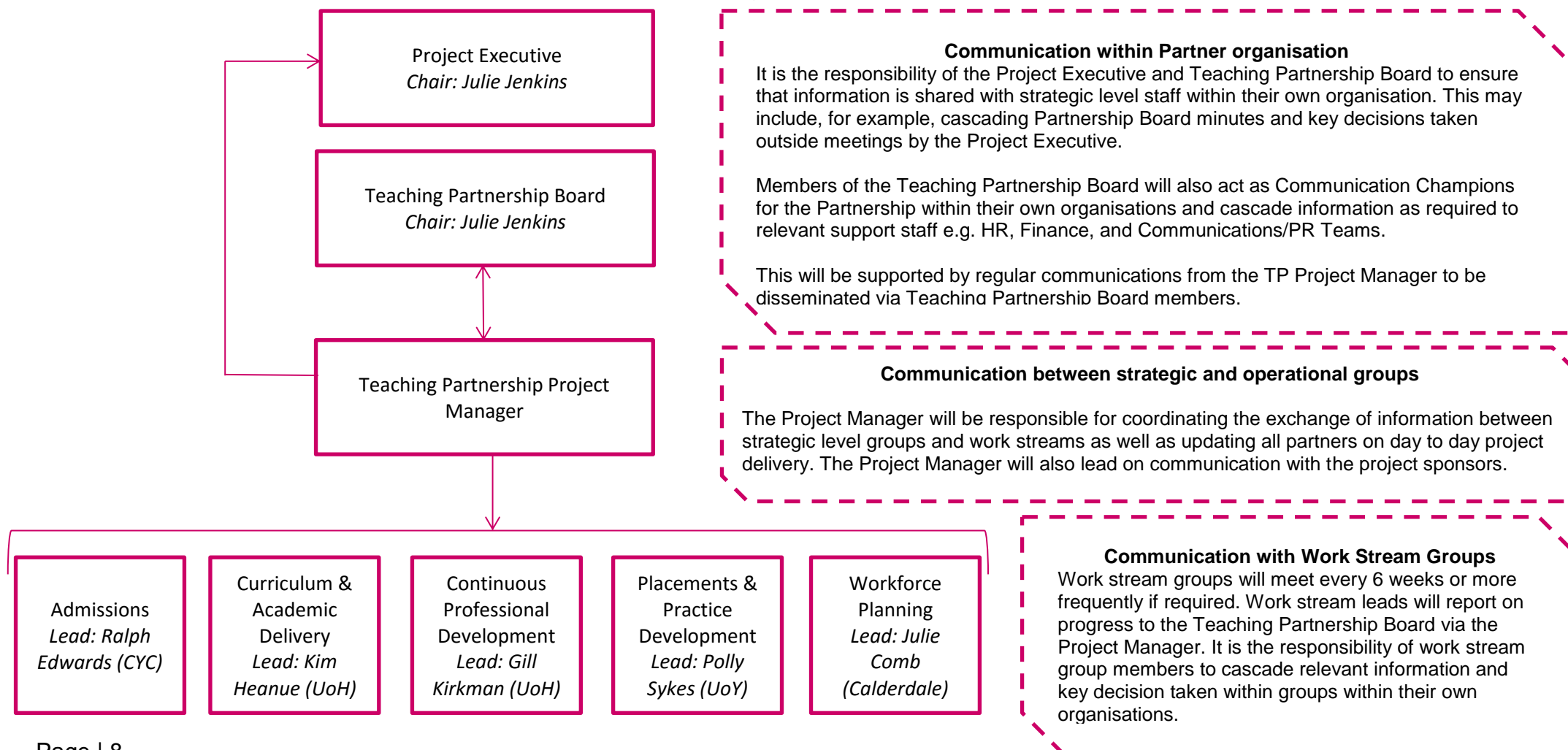
	Local Authority Directors	that meet need of SW market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event to showcase TP progress – early Autumn • Briefings/presentations as required • Information cascaded from TP Board • Case studies • Evaluation reports
	Senior HEI staff, Head of School, Dean of Faculty etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of TP to local authority services • Improved recruitment and retention for statutory posts • Opportunities to deliver training and learning on regional footprint – economies of scale • Strategic workforce planning to deliver more stable workforce; reduce workforce movement within local area and aid succession planning • Opportunity for LAs to shape SW qualifying education to align with local needs • Opportunity for TP shape future policy and lead on innovative approaches to deliver SW reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance to current and future plans for SW education • Opportunities to align HEI offer to meet needs of SW market • Benefits to research through opportunities for academics to engage with practice

Engage with people about the TP	Prospective Social Work students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of studying with TP in relation to placement offer, curriculum, post-qualifying curriculum, ASYE, future development • Employment opportunities within the TP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP website • CSWM website • Twitter • LinkedIn • HEI open days • HEI course information/prospectus (print & online) • Case studies • Sector events
	People who use services and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership is more responsive to needs of s/users and carers and help them achieve desired outcomes • Partnership provides opportunities for involvement in design and delivery of its activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP website • Twitter • TP email address • Experts by experience leads/advisory groups
Advocate for the TP	Elected Councillors including cabinet & Lead Member/Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of TP to local authority services • TP as a leader in the development and delivery of the govt's SW reform agenda • TP as example of innovation and good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event to showcase TP progress – early Autumn • Briefings/presentations as required • FAQs
	Project sponsors (DfE/DH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP as a leader in the development and delivery of the govt's SW reform agenda • TP as example of innovation and good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly progress reports • TP website • Twitter

Promote the TP	Wider social work community – including training providers, PVI organisations, professional membership organisations that promote/share good SW practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive outcomes/impact from TP • Sharing of good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade media e.g. Community Care • Twitter • Opportunities to represent TP at regional/national events
	Other local authorities (not included in Yorkshire Urban and Rural TP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of good practice and learning from TP • Promotion of improved outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Twitter • Opportunities to represent TP at regional/national events • Case studies • Evaluation reports

Partnership Communication

It's important that all partners involved in the development and delivery of the Partnership understand our internal communication structures and their own roles and responsibility within this to ensure effective sharing of information.



Measuring our success

The Communication Strategy is owned by the Teaching Partnership Board which also has responsibility for ensuring delivery of the outcomes. The Communication Activity Plan (Appendix 1) will be reviewed at 6 weekly meetings of the Teaching Partnership Board. We will review the Communications Strategy 6 months from the date of approval or sooner if required.

As our approach to evaluation is agreed we will identify the role that communication has played in contributing to the development and delivery of the Partnership and the impact it has had on our ability to reach our key audiences.