

REPORT CLASSIFICATION	✓	CATEGORY OF PAPER	✓
Official	✓	Proposes specific action	✓
Official: Sensitive Commercial		Provides assurance	
Official: Sensitive Personal		For information only	

BOARD

29 JULY 2026

Report Title:

Fit for the future: a shared approach to involvement and communications

Purpose of report

To seek Board support for a system-wide, shared communications and involvement approach that provides one clear NHS story for change, strengthens public trust and supports service transformation.

Key points

- The presentation proposes a unified NHS narrative, a strategic approach to communications and involvement, system alignment, and clear professional visuals using NHS branding and the Fit for the future identity.
- The approach is intended to support engagement with local communities, ensuring people's views, patient experience and partnership working inform improvement and better quality services.
- The case for change is driven by public expectation and the duty to involve, increasing demand, long-term and complex conditions, persistent health inequalities, workforce pressures and financial pressures.
- Current communications and engagement activity is significant but fragmented across organisations, which risks confusion and missed opportunities for involvement.
- The proposed response is to develop a joined-up approach based on a shared narrative, continuous community engagement and system-level insight through perception research.

Risks and issues

- Loss of public confidence and trust, particularly during service change.
- Failure to meet statutory duties relating to involvement.
- Fragmented messaging that could weaken the case for change.
- Weak evidence base, potentially resulting in poor decision-making and reduced stakeholder support.

Assurances and supporting documentation

- A shared narrative and agreed principles, standards and planning should provide a more consistent basis for communications and involvement.
- Co-ordinated engagement activity, shared planning and insight should reduce duplication and improve reach.
- Perception research and ongoing community dialogue should strengthen the evidence base for decisions.
- The approach should support stronger evidence of impact by showing how patient and public input is embedded in culture, governance, quality and improvement systems.
- Supporting presentation: Fit for the future for Board.

Recommendation/action required						
The Board is asked to;						
- Support a system-wide approach to shared communications and involvement aligned to common principles, standards and planning. - Note that investment will be required to enable consistent, trusted and effective NHS change for communities.						
Acronyms and abbreviations explained						
ICB – Integrated Care Board ICS – Integrated Care System NHS – National Health Service MP – Member of Parliament						
Sponsor/Approving Chief Officer	Claire Riley, Chief Corporate Officer					
Date approved by Chief Officer	21 July 2026					
Report author	Jen Coe, Senior Head of Involvement and engagement					
Link to ICP strategy priorities						
Longer and Healthier Lives						✓
Fairer Outcomes for All						✓
Better Health and Care Services						✓
Giving Children and Young People the Best Start in Life						
Relevant legal/statutory issues						
The presentation identifies a public expectation and duty to involve, which it notes has been further enhanced by the 10 year health plan.						
Any potential/actual conflicts of interest associated with the paper?	Yes		No	✓	N/A	
Equality analysis completed	Yes		No		N/A	✓
If there is an expected impact on patient outcomes and/or experience, has a quality impact assessment been undertaken?	Yes		No		N/A	✓
Essential considerations						
Financial implications and considerations	Has there been appropriate finance involvement if any financial implications: This will be taken to Leadership Committee for discussion and approval as appropriate.					
	Total Contract Value/Cost: to be confirmed.					
	Approval name:					
	Approval Date:					
Contracting and Procurement	Has there been appropriate contracting/procurement involvement or advice? No but we will need to procure for perception research.					
	Length of Contract: to be confirmed.					

Commissioning Team	Communications and engagement teams across the system will need to be involved in shared planning, insight and delivery.
Digital implications	Digital implications to be confirmed as part of engagement planning, including channels for public involvement and feedback.
Clinical involvement	Clinical involvement to be considered where the approach supports specific service change or pathway development.
Health inequalities	Involvement approach will see to hear from those who are seldom heard.
Patient and public involvement	The approach is centred on continuous community engagement, patient experience and public involvement.
Partner and/or other stakeholder engagement	Partner engagement should include Health and Wellbeing Boards, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees, MPs, councillors and other relevant system stakeholders.
Other resources	Additional resources may include programme, communications, engagement, insight, research and design capacity.