

## National Healthcare Communication Group

### Modus Operandi

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*Making communications easier*

## **1. Background**

Research evidence indicates that a healthcare team member's communication skills can have a profound impact on healthcare outcomes and on patient experience of care. The ability of healthcare staff to listen, explain and empathise can influence the patient's capacity to follow through with medical recommendations and empower patients to find solutions to their health challenges. In addition, communication among healthcare team members can encourage good working relationships, job satisfaction and improve patient safety. Healthcare staff will have a multitude of patient interactions during the course of their careers. Akin to other healthcare skills, communication skills can be learned and improved upon.

## **2. Vision**

*'Knowledgeable patients receiving safe and effective care from skilled professionals in appropriate environments with assessed outcomes.'* (Commission on Patient Safety and Quality Assurance, 2009)

## **3. Mission**

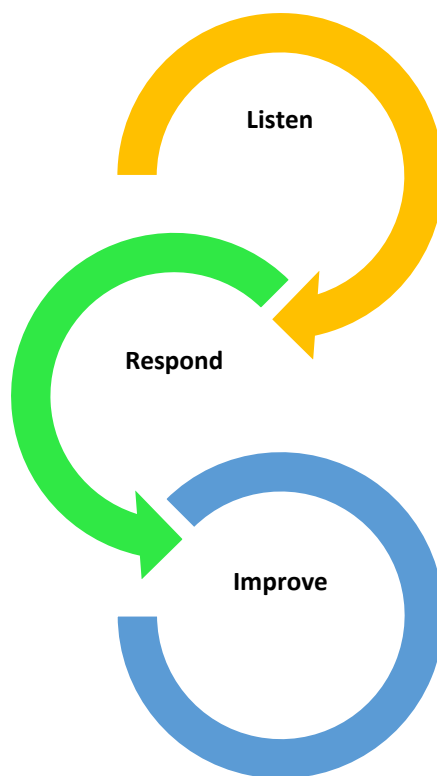
In support of this vision, the mission of the National Healthcare Communication Group (NHCG) is to:

*Improve the quality of healthcare by supporting staff to take a skilled, sensitive and patient-centered approach in all conversations with patients and their families.*

#### 4. Terms of Reference

We will accomplish this by

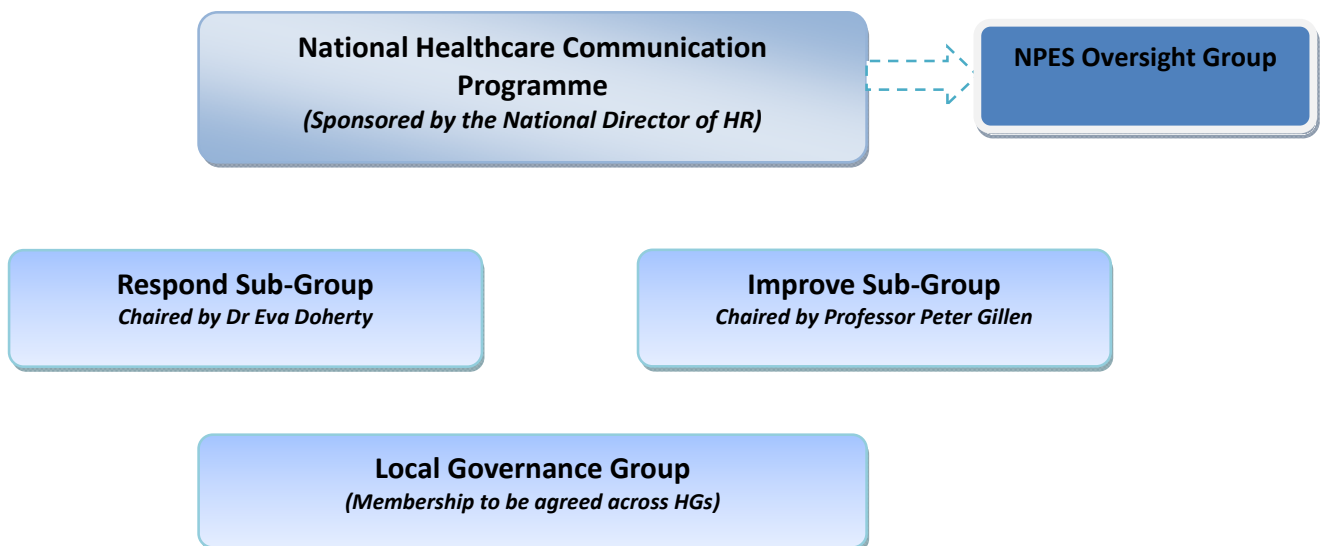
- Gathering knowledge and evidence, including mapping current landscape and practices, ensuring organisational alignment with relevant HSE programmes, reviewing patient and staff feedback and using this to inform improvements in healthcare communication ([Listen](#));
- Creating and disseminating innovative learning and development programmes and supports in partnership with patients, carers, families and staff ([Respond](#));
- Building capacity and advocating for the importance of communication as an essential aspect of healthcare ([Improve](#)).



## 5. Programme Governance

The National Healthcare Communication Programme is a work stream of the National Patient Experience Survey in collaboration with National Human Resources and the International Association for Communication in Healthcare. The National Healthcare Communication Group is led by National Programme Lead, Ms. Winifred Ryan and Ms. Clare Duffy, Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Family Carers Ireland. They are supported by the Respond Education Sub-Group and the Improve Sub-Group.

**Figure 1: Governance Structure**



Overall assurance and oversight of the Learning & Development part of the Programme will sit with the National Healthcare Communication Group. The overall governance for the evaluation of the programme will rest with the National Patient Experience Survey Oversight Group.

## 5.1 Local Governance

The responsibility for the delivery and co-ordination of the programme will rest with the Local Governance Group established in Acute Hospitals in collaboration with local facilitators to manage the programme. This group will provide a governance structure to promote, support, deliver and evaluate the healthcare communication education programme.

**Figure 2: Suggested Membership**

<b>Suggested Membership: (which will be determined locally)</b>
Clinical Director
Nursing Management
Member of Senior Management Team (e.g. Operations Manager or General Manager)
NHCP Facilitator(s)
Health and Social Care Representative
Practice Development Co-ordinators or Clinical Facilitator
Director of Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Education (CNME)
Quality and Patient Safety Manager
Patient Advisory Liaison Services Manager
Human Resources (Learning and Development)
Other – to be determined locally, e.g. representation from areas not already represented through any of the designated roles above

The Local Governance Group will:

- Appoint a local lead for communication and reporting purposes.
- Ensure formal governance arrangements at management level are in place to support roll out of the National Healthcare Communication Programme (NHCP) locally.
- Ensure there is commitment to release staff to attend NHCP Workshops.
- Ensure there is commitment to release the Facilitators to deliver the NHCP Workshops locally.
- Agree a timetable for NHCP Workshops with local Facilitators.
- Support a multidisciplinary approach to education by encouraging staff from different disciplines to attend the Workshops together
- Ensure support for data input and reporting.

## 6. Responsibilities

The NHCG will:

- Develop processes and systems in order to meet its terms of reference;
- Establish three work streams:
  - i. Listen work-stream
  - ii. Respond work-stream
  - iii. Improve work-stream.
- Prioritise, oversee and endorse materials produced by the NHCG work-streams.

## 7. Membership

### *National Healthcare Communication Group*

Name	Title
Angela Tysall	National Lead HSE, Open Disclosure
Ann Martin	Head of Communications, Acute Hospitals Division
Anne Slattery	Hospital Manager
Ben Cloney	Lead for User Engagement Communications
Brigid Doherty	CEO, Patient Focus
Clare Duffy	Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Family Carers Ireland
Clare Hudson	Project Manager, Patient Narrative Project, Clinical Strategy & Programmes
Des Mulligan	Service Improvement Manager, Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons
Eva Doherty	Director of Human Factors and Patient Safety, RCSI
Jean Harrison	National Library Services
Jean Kelly	Hospital Group Director of Nursing
Miriam McCarthy	PALs Manager
Professor Peter Gillen	Associate Dean Professor of Surgery, Department of Surgical Affairs, RCSI
Jackie Nix	Community Services representative
Deirdre Mulligan	Area Director Nursing Midwifery Planning and Development
Winifred Ryan	National HR, Leadership, Education and Talent Development

## **8. Roles and responsibilities of the NHCG**

### **8.1 Membership**

- Members are appointed to represent key strategic and operational stakeholders;
- Members are appointed for a two year term;
- Members must commit to attending a minimum of four meetings per year;
- Members should act as ambassadors and advocates for the NHCG;
- Patients should be represented by a minimum of two members. Patients do not need any formal qualifications to be a member, and they are not required to act as a representative of a patient organisation. However, they should meet the following criteria i.e. understand the range of experiences of patients and be willing to reflect these different experiences, rather than basing their views only on their own experience.

### **8.2 Responsibilities of the NHCG Members**

Members of the NHCG shall:

- Ensure that NHCG meets its terms of reference;
- Commit to attending a minimum of three meetings per year;
- Act as ambassadors and advocates for the NHCG;
- Participate in relevant work streams.

### **8.3 Responsibilities of the NHCG Joint Chairs**

The Joint Chairs will have responsibility for providing leadership and coordinating the work of the NHCG and for managing the relationship with key stakeholders. The Joint Chairs shall:

- Set and manage the agenda for each NHCG meeting to ensure the efficient use of time for each meeting;
- Encourage broad and effective participation from members;
- Conclude each meeting with a summary of decisions and assignments;
- Sign off meeting minutes once approved by the NHCG;
- Submit NHCG-recommended materials through the National Directors of HR and Communications to the Leadership Team for endorsement;

## **9. Working arrangements of the NHCG**

- A minimum of 6 NHCG members are required for decision-making purposes. The quorum must include the Chair (or nominee).
- Meetings will be held at regular intervals, ideally two at the start of the year and two at the end of year in line with work requirements. Additional meetings may be required. The venue for each meeting will be in Dr Steevens Hospital.
- Documentation will be prepared and sent to members by the NHCG secretary, at least five working days in advance of NHCG meetings. Documentation will include the agenda, minutes of previous meeting, a progress report prepared by the Joint Chairs of the NHCG and any other required documentation/information to be considered at the meeting.
- The NHCG may invite external experts to assist or advise with particular pieces of work.