

# A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNICATIONS

2017 – 2022

Building the evidence base to support public health practice

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The NIHR School for Public Health Research has an important communications responsibility, both in respect of its research and in relation to building closer relationships between public health researchers and practitioners. Fundamentally, if we want more *evidence-informed practice*, we need more *practice informed evidence*, therefore effective communication and knowledge exchange are essential.

The School must ensure that the findings of our research reach relevant audiences in appropriate formats to have impact on public health policy and practice, and must also offer stakeholders the opportunity to be part of the research process to ensure SPHR research is both relevant and useful to them. An effective communications strategy, with an inclusive approach, alongside a robust strategy for knowledge exchange is crucial.

This document outlines the communications strategy from 2017 - 2022.

## 2. STRATEGIC AIMS

The NIHR SPHR communications strategy will support the SPHR aims to:

- Increase and improve the evidence base for cost-effective, generalisable or transferable, and equitable public health interventions;
- Create an environment where first class applied public health research, focused on the needs of the public, can thrive, and where local practitioners, policy makers and the public can engage with research from the earliest planning stages; and
- Support practitioners and policy makers to actively seek out high quality research evidence to inform their decisions by making our outputs practical, relevant, accessible and timely.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

The following communications objectives to;

- Increase awareness of SPHR and its research outputs to demonstrate the value of public health research to its stakeholders;
- Support and enhance SPHRs efforts to conduct high quality research and effective translation of findings which positively impact on population health and reduce health inequalities;
- Support and enable further effective multidisciplinary collaboration between SPHR members;
- Ensure stakeholders recognise SPHR as one entity; and
- Raise awareness of SPHR activities to develop capacity in public health research

will support the overarching strategic aims of SPHR.

It will do this by:

- Clarifying and communicating the SPHR vision, values and strategy;
- Prioritising communications for demonstrating impact;
- Further centralising SPHR communications efforts;
- Enhancing collaborative communications between all members of SPHR; and
- Increasing management of the NIHR SPHR brand.

This strategy supports the aims and recommendations of the [NIHR communications](#) strategy (2017-2022) and the NIHR SPHR business plan.

## 4. AUDIENCES & KEY MESSAGES

Tailoring messages for different audiences is critical to successful engagement. It is also important to consider the methods and channels SPHR will use to communicate with each stakeholder group to ensure key messages are communicated to the audiences effectively.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	DESIRED ACTION	KEY MESSAGES
All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPHR is a partnership between eight leading academic centres with excellence in applied public health research in England.</li> <li>• SPHR produces high quality innovative public health research to inform public health policy and practice</li> <li>• SPHR is committed to developing highly effective partnerships with public health policy and practice</li> <li>• SPHR infrastructure is embedded across England enabling research to have a local, regional and national focus</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL AUDIENCES</b>		
Researchers (internal to SPHR)	Be an ambassador for SPHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are part of a valuable community of researchers who are making a difference to the public health of the population</li> <li>• You are an ambassador for SPHR</li> <li>• SPHR research must be of benefit to the health of the population and aim to tackle health inequalities</li> <li>• Involving the public in research enables better research</li> </ul>
SPHR staff (non-academic)	Be an ambassador for SPHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are part of a valuable community of researchers who are making a difference to the public health of the population</li> <li>• You are an ambassador for SPHR</li> </ul>
SPHR Students	Be an ambassador for SPHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are part of a valuable community of researchers who are making a difference to the public health of the population</li> <li>• SPHR is committed to building capacity and developing the public health leaders of the future</li> </ul>
NIHR	Champion and continue to support SPHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPHR is a valuable part of the NIHR community</li> <li>• SPHR produces high quality robust research which provides evidence to improve public health</li> <li>• SPHR is committed to building capacity and developing the public health leaders of the future</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL AUDIENCES</b>		
Politicians and policy makers	Value SPHR research Use SPHR research to inform decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPHR produces high quality robust research which provides evidence to improve public health</li> </ul>
Local government	Collaborate with SPHR Use SPHR research to inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local communities want and value public health research</li> <li>• Research can help to inform practice</li> <li>• SPHR is committed to building partnerships and collaborations to enhance knowledge and learning to develop research which is fit for purpose</li> </ul>

	decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPHR produces high quality robust research which provides evidence to improve public health</li> </ul>
Charities and third sector organisations	Collaborate with SPHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPHR is committed to building partnerships and collaborations to enhance knowledge and learning to develop research which is fit for purpose</li> <li>SPHR produces high quality robust research which provides evidence to improve public health</li> </ul>
Public	Get involved in SPHR research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPHR provides important evidence to improve public health</li> <li>The public can enhance research</li> <li>The public can get involved in SPHR research</li> </ul>
Researchers (not involved in SPHR)	Use SPHR research to inform research  Collaborate with SPHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPHR produces high quality robust research which provides evidence to improve public health</li> <li>SPHR research can inform future research</li> <li>SPHR is committed to building partnerships and collaborations to enhance knowledge and learning to develop research which is fit for purpose</li> </ul>

## 5. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

This strategy is being delivered through a comprehensive communications plan that will be reviewed and updated regularly.

## 6. RESOURCES

To implement this strategy SPHR has a 0.5 FTE Communications Manager and eight 0.2 FTE administrators/communications professionals in each School centre responsible for communications.

SPHR does not have a fixed budget for communications, and is allocated on a project by project basis.

## 7. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Progress against this strategy will be monitored and reviewed by the Communications Manager in conjunction with the KPIs set out in the communications plan. The Communications Manager will report progress to the School Manager, the Director and Management Group. The Strategy will be reviewed every 6 months on a rolling basis, with a formal six monthly review. Dates are below for the biannual reviews (remaining flexible to coincide with Executive Group meetings):

March 2019	October 2020
October 2019	March 2021
March 2020	October 2021

## 8. CONTACTS

For all enquiries regarding the NIHR SPHR Communication Strategy, please contact Zoe Thomas ([zoe.thomas@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:zoe.thomas@ncl.ac.uk)).