

# Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care

## Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Final: June 2020

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out a strategy for stakeholder engagement at the Professional Standards Authority from 2020-22. The strategy outlines the purpose of engagement with stakeholders, the ways in which we currently engage with stakeholders and how we can build on this to ensure a more coordinated approach with greater impact.
- 1.2 A stakeholder is an organisation, group or individual who can affect or who is affected by the operation of the Authority in the pursuit of its objectives. Stakeholder engagement is about knowing who our stakeholders are, understanding them and knowing how best to involve them in our work. Engaging with the right people in the right way can make a significant difference to the success of the Authority. The benefits of effective stakeholder engagement are:
  - developing an understanding of stakeholders' opinions, concerns and operational priorities can help shape our work. Involving them early in change projects makes support more likely and enhances our work
  - joint resources – using the expertise of stakeholders and working in collaboration can be mutually beneficial in terms of resources and impact
  - raising the profile of our work and some of our key policy areas
  - stakeholders can provide links to other organisations, opening up communications channels
  - stakeholders can provide us with feedback to improve our work.
- 1.3 This strategy is intended to outline an approach to engagement with stakeholders which supports our strategic objectives as laid out in the Authority's Strategic Plan 2019-22. The strategic objectives are currently being reviewed however this document is also informed by recent Board workshops and strategic discussions. It also draws on the perceptions audit of the Authority which was carried out between April-June 2020.
- 1.4 The strategy also draws from our Communications Plan 2019-21 which had been developed with a particular focus on raising the profile of the Accredited Registers programme as well as the other areas of our work. The communications plan will be revised to support this engagement strategy.
- 1.5 The development of this strategy began before we entered the pandemic. This has impacted our stakeholders and their priorities, and our ways of working. More recently, the tragic death of George Floyd shocked the world and has brought to the fore issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. This strategy will therefore support our work in responding to Covid-19 and our commitment to improving EDI.
- 1.6 The stakeholder engagement strategy covers:
  - the rationale for engagement with stakeholders, what we want to achieve and priority areas for engagement
  - how we currently engage with stakeholders

- analysis of who our stakeholders are and their importance to the organisation
- objectives for 2020-22 and implementation of the strategy
- how the strategy will be evaluated.

## 2. What do we want to achieve?

- 2.1 The Authority's overarching objective as laid out in its legislation is protection of the public. This is supported by pursuit of the following objectives:
- to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public
  - to promote and maintain public confidence in the professions regulated by the regulatory bodies
  - to promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of those professions.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 These objectives underpin the Authority's exercise of its core functions and frame all activities carried out by the Authority. They also inform the Authority's purpose as laid out in the strategic plan: to protect patients, service users and the public by improving the regulation and registration of health and social care professionals.

### Rationale for strategic engagement

- 2.3 Strategic aim 2 in the Authority Strategic Plan 2019-22 is to maintain strong relationships with statutory regulators, organisations with accredited registers and other stakeholders to improve the impact of our work. In order to achieve this, we will:
- work collaboratively with all regulators in health and social care to improve the effectiveness of regulation
  - be a leading voice in regulation, enhancing effectiveness through sharing research and learning
  - work with statutory regulators and organisations with accredited registers to facilitate the sharing of good practice and to support them in raising standards in professional practice
  - take account of the views of all stakeholders in developing our regulatory approach.

### Objectives of strategic engagement

- 2.4 Based on our Strategic Plan, we therefore want to work with stakeholders to:
- share knowledge, learning and good practice
  - improve the impact of our work on the regulation and registration of health and social care professionals
  - collaborate with professional and system regulators to better protect the public
  - extend awareness of the Accredited Registers programme

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<sup>1</sup> Also: to promote and maintain proper standards in relation to the carrying on of retail pharmacy businesses at registered pharmacies (only applies to General Pharmaceutical Council) and (e) to promote and maintain proper standards and conduct for business registrants (only applies to General Optical Council).

- shape the reform of professional regulation.

### Priority areas for engagement

- 2.5 Stemming from our overarching objective and statutory functions, it follows that all engagement activity by the Authority should be rooted in the public interest and focussed on protecting the public.
- 2.6 There are a number of specific areas relating to both our statutory functions and policy work on which we engage with stakeholders day to day, both on an ad hoc and more regular basis. Business as usual engagement therefore forms a core part of our interactions with stakeholders and should be seen as the baseline level of engagement to ensure we satisfy the needs of our relevant stakeholder groups and get the information and interaction we need to fulfil our statutory functions effectively.
- 2.7 Business as usual engagement should also cover engagement to advance the cause of public protection on an ongoing basis for example through taking advantage of opportunities to engage with stakeholders on our established policy positions and areas of expertise. It should also take into account both current priorities and issues facing our key stakeholders and the engagement requirements of policy work that we undertake over each year. For example, this year this is likely to include identifying priorities and areas for collaboration with and between stakeholders arising from Covid-19 and ensuring that engagement takes account of EDI priorities and supports the Authority's EDI project.
- 2.8 A number of the objectives within this strategy will help to improve the effectiveness of our business as usual engagement activity. However, in order to effectively utilise existing resources and ensure maximum impact we have sought to identify key areas where we will take a more targeted, proactive approach to engaging with stakeholders. These are:
- Regulatory reform – ensuring that the Authority retains an influential voice in discussions on regulatory reform and is able to shape proposals to keep public protection at the heart of any changes made.
  - Accredited Registers – continue to raise professional and public awareness of the programme and ensure its ongoing sustainability whilst strengthening the ability of the programme to protect the public by seeking changes to the relevant safeguarding legislation. Over the next 6-12 months the majority of engagement activity is likely to be focussed around the strategic review of the Accredited Registers programme.
  - Focus regulatory attention appropriately on protection of the most vulnerable, including within standards, guidance, education and training, and fitness to practise.
- 2.9 We will develop individual engagement plans for each of these three areas.

## 3. What do we do now?

- 3.1 The Authority currently engages with a wide range of stakeholders in different ways and for a variety of different purposes. The Chair, Chief Executive and Board members liaise regularly with stakeholders within the four countries of the UK.
- 3.2 A number of staff at the Authority meet regularly with stakeholders in the course of their work. Staff at the Authority are ambassadors for the organisation and some of our most effective engagement has been when individuals have taken responsibility for owning and cultivating stakeholder relationships.
- 3.3 Members of the Standards and Policy team are allocated to liaise with officials within each of the devolved administrations and with policy and research contacts at the regulators. Members of the Scrutiny and Quality directorate liaise with relevant staff at the regulators; and Standards and Policy also maintain some engagement with other stakeholders within the four countries.
- 3.4 The Accreditation team engage with accredited registers and relevant stakeholders as part of their work to raise awareness of the programme. The Communications Officer actively pursues engagement with identified stakeholders and attends external events for that purpose in accordance with the Communications Plan. Members of the Directors Group also have a significant amount of interaction with stakeholders.
- 3.5 Our main current methods of engaging with stakeholders are outlined below.
  - Board members and staff attending bilateral stakeholder meetings
  - events organised by the Professional Standards Authority
  - staff and Board members attending and/or speaking at external events
  - communications activity including emails, letters, telephone calls, the newsletter, briefings, targeted mailings, blogs, social media and publications.
- 3.6 There is a full list of current engagement methods available at Annex 1.

### Stakeholder perceptions

- 3.7 We recently commissioned a perceptions audit of the Authority to explore stakeholder knowledge and understanding of our role and remit, stakeholder perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Authority and the quality of its communications, engagement, value and influence and to understand the areas where stakeholders think we can offer the most value in the future. Overall, the audit was reasonably positive, with the Authority seen as being committed to public protection, professional, expert and independent.
- 3.8 A few areas of interest identified by this report and relevant to this strategy include:
  - The value of the Authority is seen to be in its role providing public protection, raising the standards of the regulators and its research and policy work

- A view that greater value can be provided in encouraging greater collaboration within the health sector, pushing harder for regulatory reform and raising the profile of its work with the Accredited Registers
- The organisation's independence, expertise and staff are seen as assets in engagement and communication with stakeholders
- Lower visibility of the Authority amongst some devolved stakeholders
- The Authority has limited visibility to the public and professionals which may be important to increase for future credibility
- A perception by some that the Authority was not sufficiently present in early discussions on the regulatory response on Covid-19.

3.9 Overall, the audit suggests that where the Authority engages with stakeholders consistently this has been successful. However, it suggests that a more coordinated approach to both business as usual and targeted engagement will ensure a more consistent awareness of the Authority and its work across the four countries and enable us to fulfil our objectives more effectively.

3.10 Staff and Board members were invited to an interactive workshop to explore three areas identified as key themes in the audit: regulation (and reform), visibility and how we act as counsel in the sector's recovery from Covid-19. These discussions will feed into our engagement plans (see 2.9).

## 4. Who are our stakeholders?

- 4.1 The Authority engages with a number of stakeholders in the course of its work, across the four countries. These include the following broad groups:
- Political stakeholders – including Parliament, the Privy Council, Government Ministers and shadows across the four countries, officials in Government and devolved administrations, health committees
  - Health stakeholders - professional regulators, accredited registers, system regulators, devolved social care regulators, NHS bodies, health and social care providers, patient and public groups, carers and families, registrants, thinktanks, representative and professional bodies, Royal Colleges, defence organisations, education and workforce bodies
  - Other - media, accreditation bodies, further and higher education, legal sector, other regulators, finance, supplier and contractors, academics, international organisations.
- 4.2 Approaches to and methods of communicating with stakeholders will depend both upon our aims and the nature and aims of our different stakeholders. in terms of their interest in the Authority's work and level of influence.
- 4.3 Annex 2 includes an overview of our main stakeholder groups and identifies who should be prioritised for proactive engagement based on our stakeholder mapping and analysis. However, our operating context has shifted and is likely to continue to do so. We shall therefore be reviewing our list, approach and relative priority for each group on an ongoing basis. Our levels of engagement based on priority allotted to different stakeholders will be:
- information
  - consultation
  - interaction
  - collaboration.

## 5. Implementation of the strategy

- 5.1 This strategy will underpin the approach taken to stakeholder engagement both in our business as usual activity and in targeted engagement on key priority areas details of which will be laid out in detailed engagement plans.
- 5.2 Effective implementation of this strategy will be based on:
  - Setting the vision – why are they being contacted, what are we communicating and how does it relate to the stakeholder?
  - Articulating clearly our plans and how we would like to work with the stakeholder
  - Paying careful attention to the needs of the stakeholder – a tailored approach often results in a greater level of engagement. This also includes a consideration of the stakeholders of our stakeholders
  - Regular reporting internally to keep everyone updated and to keep a record of engagement for evaluation purposes
  - Regular reporting externally to demonstrate the impact of engagement.
- 5.3 Robust relationship management will be crucial to the success of this strategy and will be conducted in accordance with our Stakeholder Engagement Model (Annex 2). Typically, there will be a relationship lead for each key stakeholder (a lead may manage multiple stakeholders). Engagement should be proactive and based on priorities identified within each area.

## 6. Actions for 2020-22

- 6.1 The following actions are intended to support a more coordinated and effective approach to stakeholder engagement. They build on our current business as usual activity to increase our profile, advance our objectives and make progress in our identified focus areas – regulatory reform, the Accredited Registers programme and the protection of the most vulnerable from harm.
- 6.2 Some of these actions have now been partially completed as part of the process of developing this final version of the strategy. Progressing certain actions fully will be subject to resource and capacity available. This is indicated where relevant.

### Strategy and oversight

- 6.3 Seek feedback from all staff and Board members on the draft strategy to ensure it meets the needs of the whole organisation and ensure regular reviews of the strategy.
- 6.4 Establish central oversight of stakeholder engagement activity and strategy.

### Understanding stakeholders

- 6.5 Ensure organisation-wide support for the stakeholder contact database and make it an ongoing requirement for this to be maintained and updated by all staff.
- 6.6 Carry out stakeholder analysis to establish the level of interest/influence of stakeholders to identify priority stakeholders and identify relevant issues, risks and opportunities.
- 6.7 Implement findings from perceptions audit of stakeholders.
- 6.8 Review approach to engagement with devolved stakeholders, patients and registrants.

### Stakeholder management

- 6.9 Establish formal relationship management system for priority stakeholders.
- 6.10 Review systems for sharing of intelligence from stakeholder engagement activity.

### Tools and support

- 6.11 Establish a contact management system for the Authority to centralise and streamline processes for maintaining contact information about stakeholders. (dependent on budget)
- 6.12 Ensure briefings on key topics are made available to all staff for use when meeting with stakeholders.
- 6.13 Review channels for engagement. These include website, newsletters, publications, social media and events.

## Engagement methods

- 6.14 Develop strategic engagement plans on our key priority areas outlining the stakeholders we wish to target, the objectives of engagement, which engagement methods and messages we will need to use, and the timeframe/resources required (see template at Annex 3).
- 6.15 Create an annual events schedule for the Authority.
- 6.16 Develop a programme of lunchtime learning sessions to which external stakeholders can be invited.
- 6.17 Develop guidance for relationship managers on the nature, frequency and objectives of engagement with priority stakeholders.

## 7. Evaluation of the strategy

- 7.1 It will be vital to monitor and evaluate our stakeholder engagement activity on a regular basis. Through evaluation we can ensure we are meeting our objectives and engaging with the right stakeholders. It is also a good opportunity to reflect on successes and to identify areas for improvement.
- 7.2 Evaluation can help us to: assess relationships, demonstrate relationship development; assess the impact of events; show the effect of interventions; review value for money.
- 7.3 Evaluation will be based on a range of evidence, including activity, metrics (such as social media data) and feedback from stakeholders. Specific actions we will take to evaluate effectiveness of the strategy include:
- Monitoring of engagement metrics through social media data
  - Standardised collection of stakeholder feedback at Authority events
  - Ensure staff update on output from engagement activity regularly at relevant meetings e.g. Directors Group, Managers meeting, all staff meetings
  - Provide updates on engagement activity at every Board meeting
  - Include annual update on stakeholder engagement activity and collaboration in the Annual report
  - Carry out regular surveys of stakeholders to assess impact of engagement activity
  - Commission an update of the stakeholder engagement internal audit after one year of the strategy implementation period to assess progress (2021).

## 8. Annex 1 – Current engagement channels and activities

### 8.1 Bilateral meetings:

- Chief Executive and CEOs of regulators, accredited registers or other stakeholder organisations
- Chair and Chairs of the regulators
- Board members with relevant stakeholders across the UK
- Meetings between Directors and equivalents at regulators
- Engagement between Performance Review leads and contacts at regulators
- Engagement between legal team and legal contacts at regulators
- Engagement between Accredited Registers team and relevant contacts
- Policy team engagement with policy leads
- Policy team engagement with devolved officials and stakeholders
- Legal team training for regulator staff and panellists.

### 8.2 Professional Standards Authority events:

- Academic conference
- Annual Symposium
- Panel Chairs conferences
- Welsh and Scottish seminars
- Wider lunchtime learning sessions
- Policy and research forum
- Annual Accredited Registers Conference
- Accredited Registers seminar.

### 8.3 External events:

- CEO or staff speaking at relevant events e.g. IAMRA, CLEAR
- CEO, staff or Board members attending and networking at relevant events/meetings e.g. Inter-regulatory groups on Education, Continuing Fitness to Practise and horizon scanning.

### 8.4 Communications

- Website
- Quarterly newsletter
- Targeted mailings
- Blogs and social media
- Targeted campaigns to raised awareness of the Accredited Registers programme

- Report publications
- Briefings.

#### 8.5 Other

- Share your experience - Performance Review
- Share your experience - Accredited registers.

## 9. Annex 2 – Stakeholder Engagement Model

9.1 This model describes our allocation of the level of engagement, the engagement channel, frequency of engagement and the engagement manager assigned to each stakeholder group for business as usual engagement activity. The model underpins the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and sets the approach that will be taken with each stakeholder group. This may differ based on priorities identified for targeted engagement activity on key priority areas.

Stakeholder	Area of influence/interest	Stakeholder owner	Engagement approach	Engagement channels	Frequency
Government departments of health/social care	Regulatory compliance, public protection/workforce/Funding	CEO	Interact	Face to face Emails Commissions	Very frequent
Regulators	Regulatory compliance/public protection/professions	Director S & Q	Interact	Face to face Emails Newsletter Events Publications	Very frequent
Accredited registers	Regulatory professions/public protection/professions/sect or access	Head of Accreditation	Interact	Face to face Newsletter Emails Events Publications	Very frequent
Parliamentarians	Regulatory compliance/public protection	CEO	Inform/interact	Publications Face to face	Frequent

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Area of influence/interest</b>	<b>Stakeholder owner</b>	<b>Engagement approach</b>	<b>Engagement channels</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Patient organisations	Public interest in regulation, patient safety, regulator performance	Director S&P	Inform/interact	Face to face Emails Publications	Frequent
Public	Access to registers, complaints, guidance	Director S&P	Inform/interact	Website Social media Concerns/share your experience	Frequent
Professional bodies/Royal Colleges	Registrant interests, training routes, professional identity	Director S&Q	Inform/interact	Face to face Emails Publications	Frequent
Unions/defence bodies	Regulatory compliance/professions	Director S&Q	Inform/interact	Face to face Emails Publications	Frequent
Workforce/education bodies	Workforce planning/education and training	Director S&P	Inform/interact	Face to face Emails Publications	Frequent
Supplier/contractors	Provision of goods and services	Director Corporate Services	Inform/interact	Meetings Email	Frequent
Legal professions	Regulatory compliance	Heads of Legal	Interact	Face to face Newsletter Events Publications	Frequent
Academic institutions	Research/regulators/education/sector impact	AD S&P	Inform/Collaborate	Face to face Newsletter	Frequent

Stakeholder	Area of influence/interest	Stakeholder owner	Engagement approach	Engagement channels	Frequency
				Events Publications	
Health and Care Professionals	Regulatory compliance/guidance	Director S&Q	Inform	Newsletter Social media Publications	Less frequent
Non-health regulators	Regulatory best practice	Director S&P	Inform	Newsletter Social media Events Publications	Less frequent
International	Regulatory compliance/public protection/research	Director S&P	Collaborate	Emails Events Publications	Occasional
Thinktanks	Public protection/research/sector impact	Director S&P	Inform	Newsletter Social Media Publications	Occasional

