

Walsh, Susie, Johnston, Alan, Cock, Steven and Mathew, Ruby (2026) Good Experience Project. Stage Two Report: The Changing Landscape of Communication, Practice and Expectations. Project Report. Project Report. York St John University.

Downloaded from: <https://ray.yorksja.ac.uk/id/eprint/15572/>

The version presented here may differ from the published version or version of record. If you intend to cite from the work you are advised to consult the publisher's version:

Research at York St John (RaY) is an institutional repository. It supports the principles of open access by making the research outputs of the University available in digital form. Copyright of the items stored in RaY reside with the authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full text items free of charge, and may download a copy for private study or non-commercial research. For further reuse terms, see licence terms governing individual outputs. [Institutional Repositories Policy Statement](#)

RaY

Research at the University of York St John

For more information please contact RaY at
ray@yorksja.ac.uk

Est.
2022

PiES
People in Employment Settings
Research Group



YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY
**Institute for
Health and Care
Improvement**

Good Experience Project

Stage Two Report: The Changing Landscape of
Communication, Practice and Expectations

Report written by:

Susan Walsh, Alan Johnston, Steven Cock and Ruby Mathew
August 2026

Est.
1841

**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**

Est.
1841

**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**

York
Business
School

Contents

Contents.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Project Findings	4
3. Key Achievements.....	8
4. Conclusion.....	9
5. References	10

Executive Summary

The Good Experience Project was established to explore and promote approaches for improving communication and experience across NHS organisations through collaborative discussion, shared learning, and the identification of good practice (Johnston et al., 2024). Over the course of the programme, the project brought together colleagues from different health organisations to exchange experiences, identify common challenges, and consider practical interventions to improve communication and engagement.

As the programme reaches its conclusion, it is recognised that a growing number of NHS Trusts and partner organisations are now developing and implementing their own communication and engagement initiatives that align closely with the projects' original objectives. While this is a positive development for the wider NHS system, it results in a degree of overlap with the work of the Good Experience Project. As a result, the role of the Good Experience Project as a distinct programme has somewhat reduced, leading to the closeout of this initiative as the most appropriate next step.

The role and responsibilities of Integrated Care Boards are moving from an operational focus to one of leadership as part of the 10 Year Health Plan for England White Paper (Department for Health and Social Care, 2025). This change also held implications for the Good Experience Project, as patient experience increasingly became a system wide priority, with delivery improvements required across whole pathways. This report summarises the achievements of the Good Experience Project programme and outlines how learning and networks from this initiative can be preserved to support future collaboration.





1. Introduction

York St John University and the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) entered a collaborative partnership with the intention to develop a regional Communications Charter to support effective communication among both patients and staff across health and care organisations. The project sought to develop a Charter and to then evaluate the extent to which proposed frameworks could be embedded within organisational culture and practice, through stakeholder engagement and implementation support from formal user groups.

As part of this work, an initial scoping literature review was undertaken alongside the thematic analysis of preliminary data provided by the ICB (see Johnston et al., 2024). These activities generated valuable insights into the principles of effective communication, organisational engagement, and potential approaches to sustainable implementation. The findings provided a useful foundation to consider how a Communications Charter might be developed and adopted.

2. Project Findings

The wider NHS landscape across the United Kingdom (UK) has evolved considerably since the project commenced. A period of significant organisational change, workforce movement, and shifting national policy has influenced both the context and capacity within which this work was being undertaken. These developments have at times affected momentum and continuity during the lifespan of the project. This changing landscape is evident in the ongoing creation of various national resources, frameworks, and best practice guidance that address many of the objectives originally identified (see Table 1).

As a result, the project team has taken the opportunity to reflect on the extent to which any further outputs would add value rather than duplicate existing work across the organisation. While there remains strong commitment to

improving communication across health and care services, in view of these developments, partners have agreed that it is appropriate to bring the current project to a close.

The work undertaken has contributed to a greater understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing a Communications Charter across a complex healthcare system. The project has also highlighted the importance of aligning local initiatives with emerging national guidance and demonstrated the value and importance of collaborative working between higher education and health sector partners. The insights generated through this project may continue to inform future communication and engagement initiatives across the region when circumstances and priorities allow.



Table 1. NHS Communication Resources

Name of Toolkit/ Standard	Publisher	Summary	Key Features	Link
Accessible Information Standard (AIS)	NHS England, (n.d.a)	To ensure that information is both accessible and understandable by all.	Self-assessment tool, implementation guide for accessible formats, information and guidance.	https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/
NHS Digital Service Manual – Writing NHS Messages	NHS (2026)	National standard for writing clear, simple, accessible patient messages	Clear guidance for a variety of channels/methods of messaging with examples, plain English rules, readability.	https://service-manual.nhs.uk/content/writing-nhs-messages
NHS England Messaging Best Practice	NHS England (2026a)	Guidance for safe, effective patient messaging across digital channels	When to message, governance, safety, NHS Notify guidance, accessibility	https://digital.nhs.uk/services/messaging-best-practice
NHS Health Literacy Toolkit	NHS (2023)	Helps staff communicate in ways patients can understand, evaluate, and use health information to make informed decisions.	Plain language tools, readability checks, patient testing methods	https://library.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/06/Health-Literacy-Toolkit.pdf
NHS Constitution for England – Patient Rights Communication Framework	Department of Health & Social Care (2023)	Sets expectations for how the NHS communicates patient rights and information.	Transparency standards, patient information rights.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england
Duty of Candour Guidance	Care Quality Commission (2026)	Legal requirement for open, honest communication with patients after incidents.	Communication protocols, apology standards, documentation requirements	https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/regulations-service-providers-and-managers/health-social-care-act/regulation-20

Name of Toolkit/ Standard	Publisher	Summary	Key Features	Link
NHS Digital Patient Communication Guidance and Best Practice Examples	NHS England (2026b)	Standards for communicating with patients through the NHS App.	User Feedback Group. Notification rules, tone of voice, clarity, accessibility	https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/digital-first-messaging
	NHS England (2021a)			https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-pilot-research-report/conclusion
	NHS England (2021b)			https://digital.nhs.uk/blog/transformation-blog/2021/from-the-frontline-what-do-the-people-want
NHS Personalised Care & Support Planning Communication Guidance	NHS England (n.d.b)	Supports personalised care conversations and shared decision making.	Patient centred communication, 5 criteria conversation frameworks, Perspective-Process-Plan	https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/pcsp/
NHS England – Shared Decision Making Tools	NHS England (2019)	Supports better conversations with people using services, supporting them to make more informed choices.	Summary Guide. Implementation Checklist - a practical and interactive tool	https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/shared-decision-making-summary-guide/
NHS England – Design System	NHS (n.d.a)	Guidance for producing clear, accessible communications.	Plain language, layout rules, readability. Community resources, design principles. Templates.	https://service-manual.nhs.uk/design-system

Name of Toolkit/ Standard	Publisher	Summary	Key Features	Link
NHS England – the Friends and Family Test	NHS England (n.d.c)	Improvement guidance-Using the Friends and Family Test to improve patient experience	National Quarterly Pulse Survey, Frequently Asked Questions, Communications and Promotional resources.	https://www.england.nhs.uk/fft/
	NHS (n.d.b)			https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/using-the-fft-to-improve-patient-experience-guidance-v2.pdf
NHS England – Complaints Handling & Patient Feedback Communication Guidance	NHS England (2024)	Standards for communicating with patients during complaints processes.	Clear explanations, timelines, compassionate tone, resolution communication.	https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/nhs-england-complaints-policy/
NHS England – Public Participation/ Patient Involvement Resources	NHS England (n.d.d)	Co-designing patient -facing information about new innovative treatments. Supports communications and involvement strategies.	Six strategic aims. Links to resources to support working with others.	https://www.england.nhs.uk/aac/what-we-do/patient-and-public-involvement/
Department for Health & Social Care – Communications Toolkit	Department of Health & Social Care (2025)	A patient safety initiative ensuring the concerns of patients, families, carers and staff are listened to and acted upon.	Resources for patients, their families and staff. Link to Martha's' Rule toolkit	https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/marthas-rule-detecting-deterioration/communications-toolkit/
NHS England – Communications Toolkit	NHS England (n.d.e)	For Employee engagement, HR/OD, and communications colleagues	Generic messages ready to be used Assets with space for your own logo and messaging/ call to action For People Pulse users	https://www.england.nhs.uk/fft/nqps/communications-toolkit/



3. Key Achievements

The Good Experience project has provided an important catalyst for conversations and collaboration producing stronger networks between organisations and an increased willingness to share learning and resources between sub-groups.

Key achievements during this project include:

Formal Report: Production of the *Good Experience Project: Research and Evaluation to Inform the Development of a Communication Charter Stage One Report: Literature Review and Analysis of Preliminary Data*, available at: https://ray.yorks.ac.uk/id/eprint/11096/1/ICB_Report_1.pdf

Creation of a Cross-Organisation Learning Network: The group successfully established a forum for colleagues from different NHS organisations to come together and discuss communication challenges, opportunities, and solutions including shared learning and examples of effective practice and shared barriers to effective communication.

Improved Understanding of Communication Challenges: Through discussion, reflection, and evidence gathering, the group developed a clearer understanding of the factors that influence staff experience and engagement.

Identification and Sharing of Good Practice: The group acted as a vehicle for identifying and sharing interventions that demonstrated potential to improve communication and staff experience.

4. Conclusion

Across the NHS, a growing number of Trusts and partners are now delivering communication and engagement initiatives that address many of the same issues that were originally identified by the group. These developments represent a positive outcome and demonstrate that the sector has continued to innovate and invest in this agenda.

Although the project is concluding, there are important outcomes that should be retained:

Network Building

The relationships developed through the group remain an important asset and provide a foundation for future collaboration.

Learning

The insights generated through discussions and shared experiences should be documented and made available.

Future Opportunities

We, as partners, do not view the closure of the programme as ending our collaboration. Instead, we chose to consider this stage as a pause while the wider NHS landscape evolves. The network remains available should future opportunities emerge that would benefit from a cross-organisational approach.

The relationships, knowledge, and insights generated by the group provide a strong legacy and provide an opportunity for collaboration should future needs arise.



5. References

- Care Quality Commission (2026) Regulations for service providers and managers. Available at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/regulations-service-providers-and-managers/health-social-care-act/regulation-20> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- Department of Health & Social Care (2023) The NHS Constitution for England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- Department of Health & Social Care (2025) Communications Toolkit. Available at: <https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/marthas-rule-detecting-deterioration/communications-toolkit/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- Johnston, A., Cock, S., Walsh, S. and Mathew, R. (2024) *Good Experience Project: Research and Evaluation to Inform the Development of a Communication Charter – Stage One Report*. York: York St John University. Available at: <https://ray.yorksj.ac.uk/id/eprint/11096/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS (n.d.a) Design system. Available at: <https://service-manual.nhs.uk/design-system> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS (n.d.b) NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance: Using the Friends and Family Test to improve patient experience. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/using-the-fft-to-improve-patient-experience-guidance-v2.pdf> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS (2023) *Health Literacy Toolkit*. 2nd Edition. Available at: <https://library.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/06/Health-Literacy-Toolkit.pdf> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS (2026) Writing NHS messages. Available at: <https://service-manual.nhs.uk/content/writing-nhs-messages> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (n.d.a) Accessible information standard: Helping people to get the health and care information they need. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/accessible-information-standard/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (n.d.b) Personalised care and support planning. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/pcsp/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (n.d.c) Friends and family test. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/fft/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (n.d.d) Patient and public involvement. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/aac/what-we-do/patient-and-public-involvement/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (n.d.e) Communications Toolkit. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/fft/nqps/communications-toolkit/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (2019) Shared Decision-Making: Summary Guide. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/shared-decision-making-summary-guide/> (Accessed 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (2021a) Conclusion. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-pilot-research-report/conclusion> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (2021b) From the frontline: What do the people want? Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/blog/transformation-blog/2021/from-the-frontline-what-do-the-people-want> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (2024) NHS England complaints policy. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/nhs-england-complaints-policy/> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (2026a) Messaging best practice. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/messaging-best-practice> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)
- NHS England (2026b) Our digital-first approach to patient communications. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/digital-first-messaging> (Accessed: 20 July 2026)



Est.
2022

PiES

People in Employment Settings
Research Group



YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

**Institute for
Health and Care
Improvement**

Est.
1841

**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**

Est.
1841

**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**

York
Business
School