



Safeguarding
Partnership
Board

Communications Strategy

DOCUMENT PROFILE

Short Title	Communications Strategy
Document Purpose	Outline of SPB strategies for communication
Target Audience	Board members and staff; Agencies, Partners, Public, Children & Young People.
Author	Glenys Johnston OBE, Independent Safeguarding Chair
Publication Date	24 th July 2014
Review Date	Reviewed 30.06.16 Reviewed 13.06.18 To be reviewed June 2020
Approval Route	Safeguarding Partnership Boards
Contact Details	SPB Board Manager. safeguardingpartnershipboard@gov.ie

Communications Strategy

Core Business Group

1.	Background to Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB)	2
	1.1.Core Business Group (CBG).....	3
2.	Introduction to Communication Strategy	3
3.	Principles and Objectives	3
	3.1.Principles:.....	3
	3.2.Objectives	4
4.	Strategies for implementation.....	4
5.	Key messages.....	4
6.	Audiences	5
7.	Channels.....	5
8.	Communicators	5
9.	Risks	6
10.	Measuring effectiveness of communication	6
	10.1.Success Criteria	6
11.	Serious Case Review (SCR) publication	6

1. Background to Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB)

The Safeguarding Partnership Boards were established from January 2013, with separate Boards taking responsibility for safeguarding Adults and safeguarding Children.

The SPB membership is drawn from a number of agencies which include:

Health and Social Services Department;
States of Jersey Police;
Honorary Police;
Education;
Community and Constitutional Affairs;
Social Security;
Family, Nursing & Home Care;
Prison Service
Probation and After-Care Service;
Primary Care Body;
NSPCC
Community and Voluntary sector;
Lay members.

The overarching objectives of the SPB are:

- a) to coordinate what is done by each organisation represented on the Boards, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults and children on the island;
- b) promote understanding of the need and means to protect children and adults at risk from harm; and

- c) monitor and ensure the effectiveness of the safeguarding systems that are in place, both within and between organisations in Jersey.

1.1. **Core Business Group (CBG)**

The Core Business Group is the sub-group of the Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) with the responsibility for coordinating and supporting the implementation of the Board's business plan, monitoring the business agenda for the Board and ensuring the effective communication of safeguarding messages to all audiences.

It is chaired by the Independent Chair of the SPB and its membership includes all Sub Group Chairs plus an Education and Health representative.

CBG - Purpose:

The role of the Core Business Group is to:

- 2.1 Agree, support and monitor the delivery of the SPB annual Business Plan, including performance monitoring
- 2.2 Set the agendas for Board meetings
- 2.3 Proactively horizon-scan for issues which require Board attention
- 2.4 Provide strategy advice for the Chair, Board and office regarding budgetary, risk, HR and capacity issues
- 2.5 Agree the SPB communications strategy and ensure appropriate SPB media engagement, both proactive and reactive.
- 2.6 Support the Independent Chair in the preparation, content and presentation of the Annual Report

2. Introduction to Communication Strategy

This strategy outlines the way in which the SPB will work to promote local safeguarding aims.

The communicating and raising awareness function of the SPB, in line with UK Local Safeguarding Boards, is summarised in *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015* as a core function, specifically:

“Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so.”

This strategy outlines how the SPB will address its responsibilities in this area and further extend that to the protection of adults at risk, to keep different groups of people informed, encourage two-way communication and involve everyone in contributing to the safety of at risk members of the local community. The SPB will engage with the local media to ensure good information for the public about its work.

3. Principles and Objectives

3.1. **Principles:**

Communications issued by the SPB will:

- Be open, straightforward and easy to understand.
- Be topical and timely.
- Be informative and engaging.
- Reflect SPB objectives and values.

3.2. Objectives

SPB will provide published information about:

- How the island community can help to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.
- What to do if you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person or adult at risk.
- The role of the SPB to help safeguard these individuals.
- How to make a comment, complaint or compliment concerning multi-agency child or adult protection services.
- Progress reports on current areas of work.

The SPB will also:

- Ensure that suitable information is available to parents and children who are party to child protection investigations and conferences and Serious Case Reviews.
- Provide suitable information to family members or carers involved in adult reviews.
- Give reassurance and confidence regarding safeguarding to the island community.

4. **Strategies for implementation**

The SPB will promote its own identity, using a recognisable logo and brand, which will be used across all publications.

The SPB will develop its own website presence, which will reflect policies, practice and developments. Details of inter-agency training programmes will be retained here, together with information about forthcoming events and contact details.

The SPB will look to the States of Jersey Communications Department for support. The chair will retain independence over the content of any communication with the public.

The SPB will proactively inform the public about current child and adult safeguarding concerns or issues. It undertakes to keep the public informed by publication of the Annual Report of its Independent Chair and reports into Serious Case Reviews which may be conducted. It will also publish relevant audit and performance material.

The SPB will respond to current news stories and events, to promote the safeguarding of children and young people and to educate the public regarding current safeguarding practice and values.

The SPB recognises that safeguarding messages need to be accessible to members of the public who may require an alternative format of communication and those for whom English is not their first language. Efforts will be made to ensure that key communications are effective in targeting minority groups with such specific communication or language needs.

5. **Key messages**

- Every individual has the right to feel safe, and it is everyone's responsibility to see that this is so.
- The activities of the SPB will help its partners to work together and share information in the best possible way to safeguard adults and children in Jersey.

- The SPB will work to help people to have confidence that services are working together effectively to safeguard adults and children in Jersey.
- The SPB will ensure that everyone with safeguarding concerns will know where to give this expression and will receive an informed response.

6. Audiences

In order to ensure SPB communications are effective, information will be targeted to specific audiences, as outlined below:

- Agencies – Statutory and Voluntary agencies, private sector, clubs, societies and other organisations working with children and young people. Channels of communication will be established, whether print, electronic or face to face, to ensure that these audiences are well informed.
- Partners – channels will be established with partner agencies, through membership representation on the SPB in the first instance, and subsequently through established departmental cascade routes in order to raise the profile of SPB. Key points of contact will be established and information shared on a regular basis.
- General public, including Island visitors – Public relations through local print media will be the route for public information. The SPB will work within the States of Jersey media protocols, and with the support of the Communications Department in dealing with the media.
- Children and young people – Relevant information will be designed and distributed specifically for children and young people to help keep them and their friends safe.
- Older people and adults at risk – Relevant information will be designed and distributed specifically for older people and adults at risk as required.

7. Channels

The following channels of communication may be used by the SPB to communicate:

Face to face – through consultation events, conferences and seminars

Electronic - through the States of Jersey website and the SPB website; through emails;

Social media – through SPB and States of Jersey Twitter accounts; through States of Jersey Facebook account

Print – through posters, leaflets, training programme, strategies, letters and newsletters.

Media – through press releases or interviews/responses to press enquiries.

8. Communicators

Good communication is the responsibility of all members of the SPB. The Communication Strategy is to be reflected in all messages given by members, as outlined below:

- The SPB board members;

- The Sub Groups, as represented by their Chairs;
- The SPB office team;
- The States of Jersey Communications Department.

The first point of contact for media comment is the SPB Chair or a representative appointed by the Chair, which may include Sub-Group Chairs or the Board Manager. See SPB safeguarding sign off procedure (*Appendix 1*) for further details.

9. Risks

The following are potential communication risks:

- Not identifying safeguarding issues before they reach the media; misreporting.
- Release of information identifying individual children & young people.
- Inconsistent and unclear messages delivered from partner agencies.
- Not sharing information which could result in mixed messages being presented by partners.
- Misrepresentation by media of SPB position on a policy or practice issue.
- Potential inability to communicate effectively with those who may require alternative forms of communication or those who are non-English speaking.

10. Measuring effectiveness of communication

The Communications strategy will be ratified by the SPB.

The SPB Communications strategy will be reviewed bi-annually by the CBG.

Specialist short-life groups may be appointed by the Core Business Group in response to particular high profile events or investigations in order to manage the related public communications. Such a short-life group may also be appointed to investigate any occasion when public communications have been seriously flawed and damaged the SPB public profile, with a view to learning lessons from such an occurrence.

10.1. Success Criteria

- SPB website kept up-to-date and providing access to relevant information
- People aware of website and accessing information through it.
- Annual forum event (conference or seminar), with positive feedback.
- Evidence of consultation / participation in SoJ planning and with children and young people and adult service users.
- Increased awareness of SPB and safeguarding messages measured through attendance and engagement with public events e.g. e-safety training for parents.
- Development and circulation of a SPB newsletter.
- Media approaches for comment on child and adult at risk process and practice issues.

11. Serious Case Review (SCR) publication

Particular concerns are associated with the communication process around SCR, which are addressed in the SPB Process for SCR publication (*Appendix 2*)

Process for Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) sign off

The advice for all news releases and statements is that they are signed off by:

- The person who requested the release
- Anyone who is quoted
- The department head and Minister

In addition, any department which is mentioned should be consulted on information contained in the release which either directly affects them or gives information about their procedures/policies which need to be checked for accuracy.

News releases for the Safeguarding Partnership Boards should be signed off by:

- the Safeguarding Office.
- the Independent Chair. The Independent Chair should retain final approval on all releases.
- relevant board members to make sure that departments are aware as required. This board member must also give direction on whether additional members of their department (i.e. Health and Social Services Minister) should be made aware of the release.

If the Community and Constitutional Affairs Department are not already included among those mentioned above, an appropriate contact at the department should be included at draft stage as a matter of courtesy and for accuracy checks.

The Safeguarding Office (with the assistance of the Communications Department, if required) must have the freedom to judge whether a news release issued on operational matters (training, events etc.) requires the approval of all the above.

SPB Process for publication of Serious Case Reviews

The principle of public accountability by publishing overview reports in full is contained within the SPB Memorandum of Understanding, as follows:

“Consideration will be given to publishing either in full or in part, the Overview Report of the SCR and the SPB’s response to the review findings. The SPB will give careful consideration when making a decision about publication of the need to balance the benefits of publishing all or some of the review with the need to protect the rights, including privacy rights, of individuals.”

The independent Chair of the SPB makes the final decision regarding publication.

The States of Jersey communications team will support any publication process as agreed by the SPB and facilitated by the SCR sub group. Individual agencies may also wish to prepare and plan for the publication process being mindful of the agreed SPB multi agency communications plan and joint statement.

1. Establish likely media interest in SCR recommendations

- Establish whether the case is one which needs pro-active media briefing. Each review must be judged individually but the presumption must be that the release of the report/recommendations should be:
 - Accompanied by a SPB news release, and
 - If necessary, by a media briefing led by the Safeguarding Independent Chair.

2. Prepare lines and news release.

- To ensure public understanding of the function of the Independent Chair, communications from the Chair should be separate, even though the process will be co-ordinated.
- Communications Unit and Safeguarding Office. Lines for the Independent Chair should be about what recommendations have been made and why.
- Department about which recommendations have made or whichever agency is answering will need to prepare and approve lines.

3. Ensure news release and lines signed off by relevant parties (for either approval or for courtesy).

- Communications Unit and Safeguarding Office to liaise with departments.

4. Invite media to briefing.

- The advantage of holding a briefing is that it enables the chair to:
 - give them the facts of the case
 - make them aware of any sensitivities which may impact on the manner of reporting. Be as transparent as circumstances allow.
 - provide defined times for interviews to be conducted within.

5. Hold briefing and interviews

- Venue needs to be somewhere that media can listen to the briefing and then conduct separate interviews. Briefings should be held in the morning, where possible to avoid clashes with their deadlines and always avoid late afternoon (particularly Friday). There may always be a need to accommodate media who cannot attend the briefing time.
- News release and copies of report to the media (embargoed if necessary). News release to contain a quote from the Chair.
- News release should be sent to States Members shortly before being released to the media.
- Interviews to be held following the briefing.
- Ensure documents are live on www.safeguarding.ie for publication date.