

North East London Cancer Alliance Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026 - 2027



Document details

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the communications and engagement strategy for the North East London Cancer Alliance for 2026 to 2027.

This document sets out our communications and engagement approach and activities to support the cancer alliance's core programmes of work, as detailed in the Planning Guidance Response, and to support the NHS National Cancer Plan, which was launched on 4 February 2026.

This strategy is intended to be a live document and will be continuously updated as the year progresses, through regular contact with the cancer alliance programme teams, partners, patients and stakeholders.

The strategy looks at the overall vision and objectives of the cancer alliance, and our key stakeholders and messages from a communications and engagement perspective. It then sets out our communications and engagement objectives.

The main section then outlines our overall approach, channels and activities for each stakeholder group.

Finally, the document looks at budgets and resources required to deliver this strategy, along with governance and how to measure success.

For further information and to provide feedback on communications and engagement for the North East London Cancer Alliance, please contact p.thomas6@nhs.net

2. The North East London Cancer Alliance

2.1. About our organisation

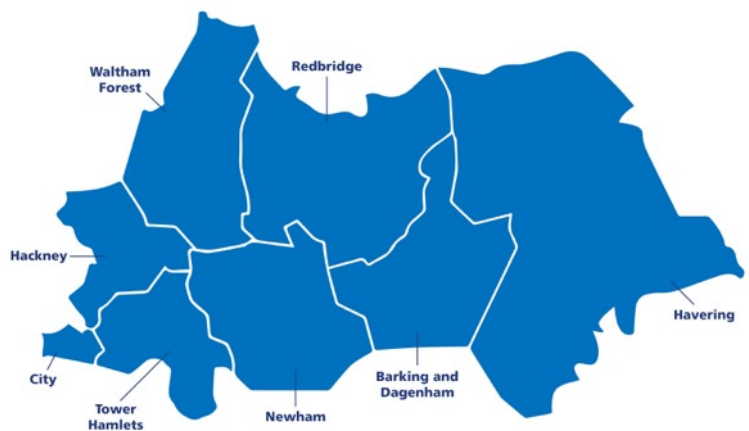
Formed on 1 April 2020, we are the North East London Cancer Alliance, one of 21 cancer alliances across England.

The North-East London Cancer Alliance is part of the North East London Integrated Care System and is committed to improving cancer outcomes and reducing inequalities for local people.

We work with patients, residents, carers, hospitals, GP practices, health and care professionals, local authorities and community and voluntary organisations across north east London.

We cover the following areas:

- Barking & Dagenham
- City of London
- Hackney
- Havering
- Newham
- Redbridge
- Tower Hamlets
- Waltham Forest



2.2. Our vision

Our vision is that every resident in north east London has equal access to cancer services so that we can help to:

- Prevent cancer, helping people live healthier lives
- Spot cancer sooner, making it easier to treat
- Provide the right treatment at the right time, saving lives
- Support people and families affected by cancer, improving quality of life



2.3. Our objectives

Our detailed objectives are set out in our response to the NHS Planning Guidance document for 2026 to 2027.

Our priority programmes of work are as follows:

- Early Diagnosis
- Diagnosis and treatment
- Personalised cancer care
- Workforce
- Patient Engagement and Experience
- Communications and Engagement
- Operational performance and delivery
- Data



Our three core programmes – Early Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Treatment and Personalised Cancer Care – have undertaken strategy work to map out their mission, aims and objectives.

This communications and engagement strategy is designed to support the programmes to realise their strategies.

See Appendix A for the individual strategy houses for each programme.

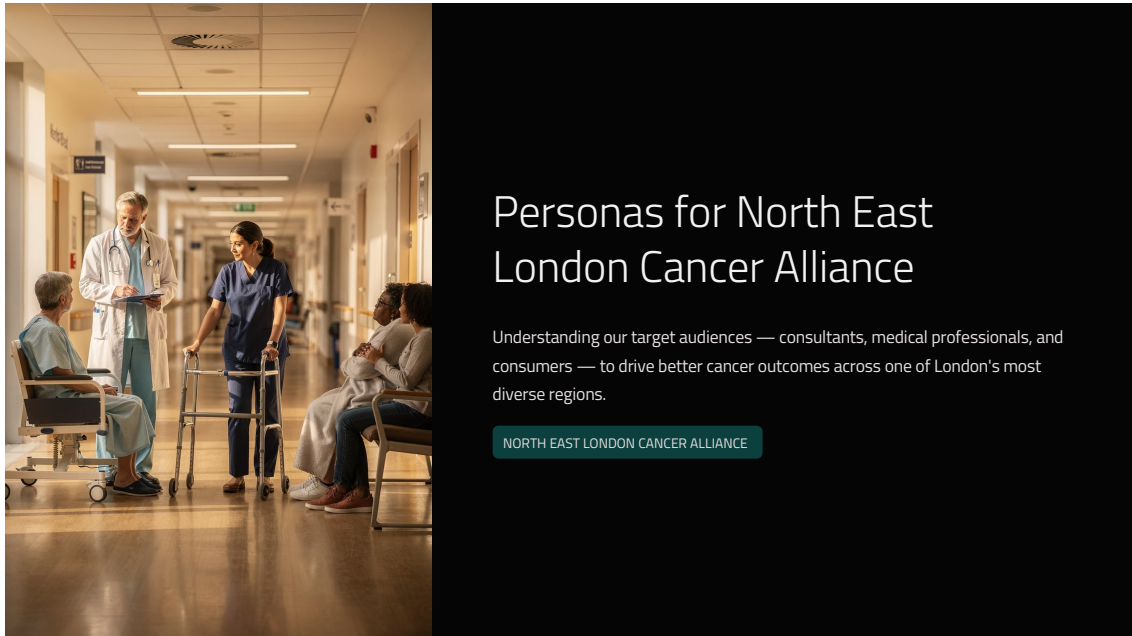
2.4. Our stakeholders

We have previously undertaken a detailed piece of work to analyse the key stakeholders for the North East London Cancer Alliance, as shown below.

National	ICB/ICS	Region	NEL Exec Leadership	Local/Community	Providers/Supplier s/Business	Population/ patients/ residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •NHSE •National Cancer comms team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Acute provider collaborative (APC) •Program Exec and delivery group •Cancer Board •Programme Execs •Delivery Group •Provider Cancer Clinical boards •Different Providers •NEL ICB Board •NEL Accountable Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PAN-London comms team •Other Cancer Alliances •London TCST 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •NEL CMO •Chair •NEL SRO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Primary Care •Place (recognising the diversities across boroughs) •Charities (VCSEs) •Local Authorities, •Local MPs •Health overview and scrutiny committees •Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Media (National, regional and local e.g. HSJ) •Providers •Business Industry •Suppliers supporting the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Patient Engagement Group •Expert Reference Group (ERP) •Community •Patients •Residents •Staff

Alongside this, we have also undertaken some work to establish core ‘personas’ to help us tailor our communications to each stakeholder group. This work will inform our key messages, approach and channels for each stakeholder group.

(Please see slide pack in Appendix B)

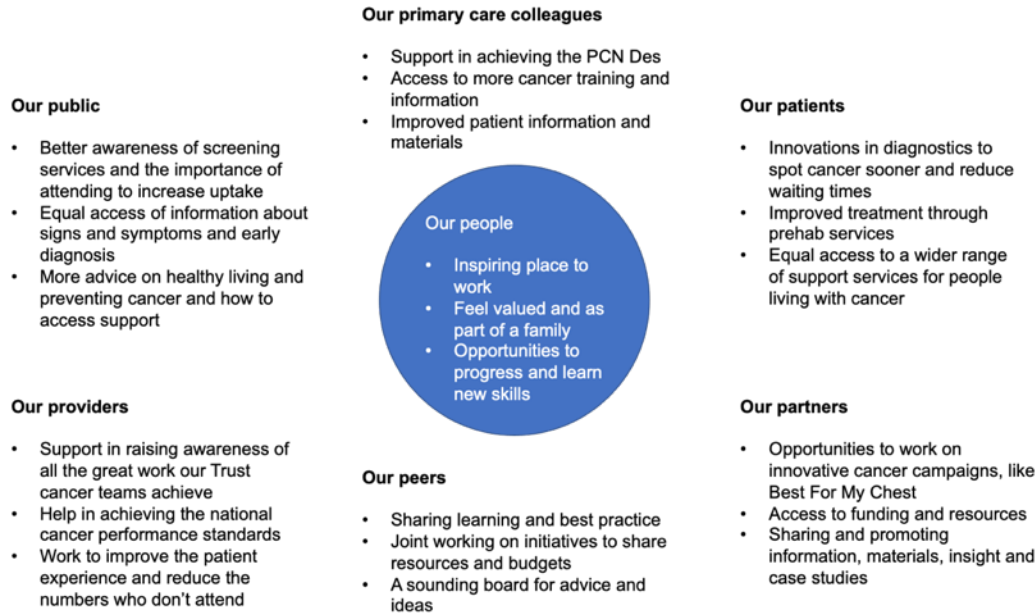


2.5. Key messages

- Our aim is that every resident in North East London has equal access to better cancer services.
- We are committed to improving cancer outcomes and reducing inequalities for local people through better prevention, early diagnosis, diagnosis, treatment, and personalised cancer care services.
- North East London Cancer Alliance brings innovation and creative solutions to delivering cancer services for local people.
- We are here to help both healthcare professionals and residents.
- We work collaboratively with all partners, and we welcome feedback, ideas, and opportunities for more joined up working.

Benefits of the cancer alliance for our stakeholders: The 7 Ps Diagram

Below are the main benefits of the cancer alliance for each stakeholder group. This will need to be refined and updated through further engagement.



3. Communications and engagement objectives

“Overall, we are aiming to get the right message to the right stakeholder at the right time through our communications and engagement activity”.

In 2026 to 2027, we want to build upon what we have achieved over the last three years in increasing the profile of the cancer alliances, establishing core channels and building relationships with our stakeholders. This supports the People and Community Engagement section of the Planning Guidance.

However, we want to take this a stage further and – in line with the NHS 10-Year Plan and National Cancer Plan - allow our patients, the public, health and care professionals, community groups and stakeholders to have a pro-active input into our communications and engagement work so we can be **confident it meets the needs of the local population and reduces inequalities.**

Over-arching objectives of the communications and engagement strategy are:

- Provide access to key cancer information for all our residents across north east London to reduce health inequalities
- To help grow our Patient Community of Practice
- Engage with residents and patients in the planning and development of future communications activity
- Help our stakeholders to better understand the work of the cancer alliance and how we add value
- Keep all stakeholders informed of progress and achievements of the cancer alliance
- Support individual projects to help them achieve their objectives
- Recognise the hard work of all cancer care staff across north east London

Specific objectives are:

Social media

- Grow YouTube followers from 10,000 to 20,000 by the end of the financial year
- Increase YouTube views to an average of 10,000 a month
- Grow followers on X from 1,436 to 2,500 by the end of the financial year
- Post three times a week on Nextdoor and achieve an average number of impressions of 7,500 per post
- Increase the number of followers on LinkedIn from 2,500 to 5,000
- Increase average monthly impressions on LinkedIn from 5,873 a month to 10,000 a month
- Grow the number of Facebook followers to 1,000
- Grow the number of Instagram followers to 1,000

Website

- Increase the number of monthly page views from 5,000 to 10,000
- Increase the number of unique users a month from 5,000 to 7,500
- Post two news stories a week on our news section
- Increase organic search traffic from 1,000 to 2,000
- Increase SEMRush authority ranking to 35
- Remove errors with indexing and 404 redirects
- Increase number of backlinks
- Achieve 1,000,000 impressions per month

Events

- Ensure events take place in all boroughs in north east London
- Map events against each protected characteristic and ensure each group has
- Record attendance at all events, including key outcomes, on a centralised spreadsheet
- Attend over 100 community events in the year

Podcasts

- Release 40 new episodes
- Achieve over 100,000 listens
- Increase followers on YouTube by 20%

4. Overview of our communication and engagement approach

4.1. Introduction

North East London Cancer Alliance has a comprehensive programme of work in place covering both communications and engagement activity and patient engagement and experience.

As well as supporting the Early Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Treatment, and Personalised Cancer Care programmes, this programme is dedicated to tackling health inequalities throughout all the work of the cancer alliance.

The programme has a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy in place, with two core areas which are:

1. Communications and Engagement.

Responsible for:

- Raising awareness of the work of the Cancer Alliance to improve local cancer services and reduce inequalities.
- Understanding our communities to inform future activities and support our local population in accessing cancer care.
- Engaging with our stakeholders, including people and communities, and identifying new ways to work with our diverse communities across north east London.
- Supporting our programmes and projects, such as increasing uptake of cancer screening programmes and raising awareness of signs and symptoms of cancer across our entire population with the goal of reaching everyone living in north east London.
- Identifying opportunities for research and innovation and learning from best practice.

2. Patient Engagement and Experience.

Responsible for:

- Developing our Patient and Carer Community of Practice.
- Recruiting more diverse representation to this group from our local communities.
- Supporting patient representation on Cancer Alliance programmes and projects (including tailored patient input into Expert Reference Groups, feedback on communications work, membership of Programme Delivery Groups and Cancer Alliance programmes such as the Lung Cancer Screening Programme).

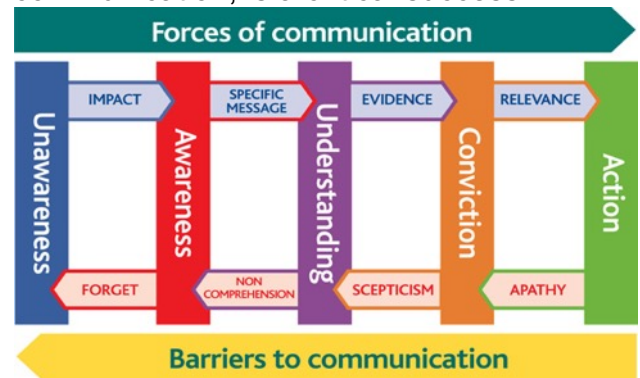
- Promoting patient experience surveys and encouraging uptake from our diverse communities in north east London to help improve local cancer services.
- Working with local grass roots organisations to help tackle inequalities, overcome cultural myths and breakdown barriers to accessing cancer care.

All members of the Cancer Alliance have a role to play in this, including our partners at both a Place Level and across north east London.

The work of the cancer alliance has an impact on both residents and health and care professionals across north east London. People will therefore be at the heart of our approach to communications and engagement.

Transforming cancer services is a big part of what we do, and it is well recognised that successful transformation programmes feature high levels of engagement, communication, and mutual understanding between those designing the change, those implementing the change and those affected by the change. Engagement, rather than push communication, is a critical success factor of this.

It is vital, both in order to create advocates, and from a good practice perspective that we communicate with our stakeholders first hand, before they gain information from other sources in the wider public arena. To be truly effective, we must be joined up so that messages are timely and consistent.



We also recognise that there are different stages of communication and that not all stakeholders will be at the same stage. The diagram shows these different stages.

This year there are five strands to our communications and engagement approach. A fifth one has been added from previous years – Working with our neighbourhoods – to align with the NHS 10 Year Plan and the priority of providing care closer to home.

1. Raising the profile of the cancer alliance (corporate communications)
2. Engaging with our stakeholders (stakeholder engagement)
3. Working with our neighbourhoods (place-based engagement)
4. Supporting our programmes and projects (programme communications)
5. Developing our community of practice (patient engagement)

1. Raising the profile of the cancer alliance

From our stakeholder and SWOT analysis, we are aware that not everyone understands the role of the cancer alliance or is aware of the work that we do. Therefore, our approach will be to:

- promote our vision and objectives, as well as key messages about our role through both face-to-face and written activity
- showcases successes, how we are adding value and the impact this has on patient outcomes in line with each project milestone
- keep our stakeholders informed through regular communications

2. Engaging with our stakeholders

Building on previous engagement events, we want to increase our interaction with our stakeholders, which will help us tailor our communications more effectively.

It will also help us understand current barriers and challenges to accessing cancer services. Importantly, this will have a vital role to play in tackling inequalities and reaching out to all groups across north east London. Through our engagement we want to:

- understand our audience to help tailor our communications
- receive ongoing feedback to inform future activities to support residents and reduce inequalities
- co-design future communications across our diverse communities

This area of work will need to link in strongly with the Patient Engagement Lead for the North East London Cancer Alliance, as well as the Patient Community of Practice.

3. Working with our neighbourhoods

In the NHS 10 Year Plan, the aim is 'to transform care by shifting services from hospitals to "neighbourhood health services," bringing care closer to home'. This strategy supports local neighbourhoods through:

- Going to our local communities directly through events, podcasts, partnerships, social media and leaflet drops.
- Creating local champions who can spread messages on behalf of the cancer alliance
- Understanding local challenges such as language barriers and cultural myths

4. Supporting our programmes and projects

Communications and engagement will continue to support each programme and the individual projects in the following ways:

- Adding content to the website
- Overseeing work from suppliers
- Writing copy
- Pushing out messages via existing communications channels
- Advising on creatives and branding
- Linking in with NEL ICB and ICS communications and engagement contacts

5. Developing our Patient Community of Practice

There are currently over 100 members of this group and we will continue to grow this group, making sure each community group and each borough is represented.

Our Patient Community of Practice webpages and social media platforms are being reviewed and developed, in collaboration with our patient partners, to provide a wide range of information and signposting options (including cancer-related apps).

There is a link to the Alliance's YouTube videos on the website, with the intention to increase the number and content. The aim is to have as many languages as possible available in all the material, including voiceovers in different dialects.

This group will also support us with our communications and engagement activity and will feed into the projects and programmes of the cancer alliance, as required, to help co-design new initiatives and have their say on our work plans.

Again, this area of work will need to link in strongly with the Patient Engagement Lead for the North East London Cancer Alliance, as well as the Patient Community of Practice.

Through developing this group, we want to:

- Record more podcasts directly with patients
- Share more patient stories via social media, including more video clips
- Add more stories to our website and YouTube channel
- Continue to share patient stories at cancer alliance board meetings
- Ask patients to support our comms and engagement activities

5. Tackling inequalities

North East London is one of the UK's most diverse and socioeconomically deprived regions:

- Over half of our population is from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
- A quarter of our population speak a language other than English at home.
- A quarter of our population live in areas ranked in the most deprived 20% in England.

Although progress is being made, we know that significant health inequalities exist. Reducing health inequalities is therefore a key priority for North East London Cancer Alliance and is a feature across all our communications and engagement activities.

The population differs across each of our seven boroughs, with the top ten most common languages in each borough being different from one borough to the next. There are also big differences in breakdown of age and ethnicity.

We have 'at a glance' guides for each of our boroughs which show the breakdown of age, sex, ethnicity, religion, and main language spoken in each borough. This knowledge and information help us to plan our activity.

Data is also a key part of this work. Understanding where the biggest gaps are informs where we need to prioritise our work. Therefore, we are working with partners across the Alliance to build our data and improve the detailed data we have at a local level around health inequalities and access to services.

In addition, the more community events we go to, the more we talk directly with our local patients and residents, and the better we understand their needs.

We have a set approach for engaging with communities to reduce health inequalities, which is as follows:

- Use data to identify any gaps and to help understand the local population
- Work with the community directly to provide support which meets their requirements and speaks to them individually
- Establish focus groups made up of community members
- Understand barriers (e.g. fear, myths, lack of trust, cultural)
- Get feedback on plans for the programme or project
- Provide input into design of the programme or project
- Work together on providing solutions

- Encourage community members to actively participate in the work - e.g. as models for campaign posters, appearing in videos, providing testimonials, speaking at meetings, attending events etc.
- Work with local partners and charities - e.g. OUTpatients, CoppaFeel!, Eve Appeal, Robin Cancer Trust
- Share patient stories as a follow up
- Be brave - understand the risks of doing things differently, e.g. negative feedback from other groups (especially on social media – we use a traffic light system for dealing with negative comments on social media for any of our campaigns designed to support specific community groups)

6. Communications and engagement channels

We have a wide range of stakeholders with whom we need to communicate. We also have a wide range of existing communications channels that we are able to make use of, both for the cancer alliance and across our partners.

We will use as many relevant channels as possible, given the resources we have available.

The table below shows a summary of comms and engagement channels for each stakeholder group:

Stakeholder	How to engage with them	Comms tools
Public/Patients/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient and Carer Voice in Cancer • Focus groups • Roadshows • Public engagement workshops • Public events • Community events and meetings • Multi-faith group meetings • Partner events (e.g. charities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web site • Social media e.g. X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, community blogs, Nextdoor, TikTok • Email updates • Local newsletters • Online surveys • Public leaflets, surveys, and posters • Podcasts • WhatsApp • Reddit • Newsletter
Staff and key internal stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer alliance board • PEG • Delivery group meetings • Team meetings • Roadshows • 1-2-1 meetings with key individual stakeholders • Away days • Social events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEL ICB intranet and bulletin • Email updates • Primary care update • Website • LinkedIn • X • Podcasts • Newsletter
Primary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer alliance primary care meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care update • X and LinkedIn

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local engagement and protected learning sessions New updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website NEL ICB GP Portal NEL Training Hub WhatsApp
Secondary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider events Team meetings Roadshows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Email updates Staff bulletins
Local authorities, Healthwatch and Public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with H & WB Boards Meetings with PH stakeholders Meetings with local authority stakeholders Meetings with Healthwatch Meetings with local comms and engagement leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email updates Websites Social media
Voluntary and charity organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at focus groups 1-2-1 meetings with key representatives Attendance at voluntary group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary group newsletters Websites Social media WhatsApp
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press releases 1-1 meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website

6.1. Raising the profile of the cancer alliance

We will use the following channels to do this:

Website

<https://www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk>

A key tool continues to be our website and we are constantly looking at ways to improve both the design and content.

We have designed and launched a new, stand-alone website for the North East London Cancer Alliance. This has been future proofed in that it has been designed for both the public and health and care professionals to access information. A user guide has been produced for adding or amending content.

The website is a central part of our communications and engagement strategy, and we want to maximise our investment in it. As such, there is a suggested budget allocation for promoting the website via paid search and SEO activity.

We will continue to add news items to the website, with a target of a minimum of one article a week.

Social media

- Regular posting across all our social media channels to promote the cancer alliance work

Podcasts

- Series of podcasts accessible via our website as well as Spotify and Apple Music
- Great opportunity for individuals to raise their profile as well as get important information out to our audiences

Video case studies

- Build up a bank of success stories from patients and health and care professionals following completion of a key project milestone
- Can be played at board meetings and other important stakeholder meetings
- Added to our YouTube channel and promoted via our communications channels

Annual report

- Produce a designed version as a summary of our work
- Make sure an easy read version is available
- Include a video montage of success stories from our video case studies

Ongoing stakeholder communication

- Stakeholders such as political representatives and partner organisations will be fully made aware of the progress of the cancer alliance in a timely manner.
- Timely stakeholder communication will be made possible by maintaining an up-to-date stakeholder database, as well as an engagement tracker to record each meeting and key outcomes.
- Provide comms updates at each Programme Delivery Group meeting.

Primary Care Communications

- We have developed a plan for communicating with Primary Care which covers channels, processes and governance.
- **Primary Care Update:** This is a monthly update which goes out to all GPs across NEL, as well as via a direct email to a named stakeholder list. GPs asked for our updates to be grouped together so they are all in one place, reducing the number of emails they receive. The primary care update achieves this and also gets added to our website here: <https://www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk/primary-care-news>
- Content is created by both the Communications and Engagement Manager as well as the Programme Leads, including the Primary Care Leads. A draft is then sent out for approval to the cancer alliance team and the GP cancer leads.
- Once approved, it then gets cascaded via direct email and via the NEL ICB GP channels.

Media management

- The media plays a key role in helping shape a positive reputation and we aim to increase our activity in this area.
- We have had some success through news items such as coverage of the Mile End Early Diagnosis Centre and Targeted Lung Health Check programme. To provide more opportunities like this, media training for key cancer alliance team members is strongly recommended.
- For each project (both at launch and completion), we will consider press opportunities and work with the NEL media team where possible.

6.2. Engaging with our stakeholders

Last year we attended events at the Royal London Hospital, the East London Mosque, via a national cancer bus outside Stratford and across local community and voluntary organisations. These provided great opportunities to engage with our public and stakeholders. We are planning on doing more of these in 2024 to 2025. This will include:

- Info stalls at other hospital sites
- Linking in with the patient engagement strategy and plan to team up at events
- Regular attendance at stakeholder events
 - Multi-faith meetings
 - Healthwatch meetings
 - Public health meetings
 - Other local authority meetings
- Community engagement events
- Meeting community groups
- Meeting groups across each protected characteristic in each borough and recording feedback, and using it to inform future activity



At these stakeholder events, it is key to have at least one member of the North East London Cancer Alliance management team present. To support with the management of these events, we have created an event spreadsheet which is saved in the MS Teams Comms Channel.

We have also created a series of assets to support out events, which include:

- Event pull-up banners
- Patient leaflets on cancer services in north east London
- Bookmarks
- Keyrings
- Pens

Working with NEL community engagement contacts

A key part of this strategy is working with the local engagement contacts across each borough. This is to understand what existing relationships we have in place with different community groups and identify any gaps.

The aim is to book slots throughout the year for the cancer alliance to attend and provide updates, as well as ask for feedback and ideas from each group. This will help us to reduce inequalities and ensure key cancer information is getting out to the right people.

6.3. Working with our neighbourhoods

Channels to develop closer working with our neighbourhoods include:

- Bespoke campaigns in local languages other than English
- Building community champions
- Attending community events
- Working in partnership with local community groups
- Creating local community patient advocates through our community of practice group
- Developing a toolkit for neighbourhood contacts to use to help promote key cancer messages

As part of this work, we also need to make sure we are linking in with other parts of the north east London system, including other programmes such as Long Term Conditions; Public Health Teams; Primary Care; and local voluntary and community organisations.

6.4. Supporting programmes and projects

Depending on the nature of what needs to be communicated and the objectives of the project, it may be necessary for us to use other forms of communication in addition to those discussed so far.

The following methods should also be considered as part of any communication initiative:

- Advertising in local press and community magazine
- Radio advertising
- Poster sites
- Leaflets
- Pharmacy bags
- Beer mats
- Sponsorship

- Further visuals and infographics to explain the new patient services
- Material translated into different languages, both written and spoken
- Profiling opportunities in local, regional, and national media

6.5. Developing our Patient Community of Practice

The main focus of support is across three areas:

1. Formal launch of the Patient Community of Practice with a public event in September.
2. Recruiting a Patient Experience and Engagement Lead, who will be responsible for developing the patient engagement strategy which will align with the communications and engagement strategy.
3. Recruiting more patient and carer representatives through:
 - Promotion of webpages
 - Social media
 - Attending face-to-face community engagement events
 - Working with NEL ICB communications and engagement events
 - Place-based newsletters, websites and comms channels

7. Communications and engagement activity

To ensure that the diverse voices of local communities are heard and integrated into all work programmes, there are seven key strands of work to support this:

1. Community Engagement
2. Podcasts
3. Social Media
4. Website
5. Branding and campaigns
6. Use of AI
7. Best practice, awards and innovation

7.1. Community Engagement

In 2025 to 2026 we were on track to achieve our target of attending 100 community events, engaging with over 5,000 local residents, patients and partners. The table below shows how this compares to the previous year (based on the first three quarters of this year compared to last year in total):

Region	April 2024 to March 2025	April 2025 to December 2025
Barking & Dagenham	8	9
City and Hackney	7	7
Havering	2	11
Newham	7	14
Redbridge	6	7
Tower Hamlets	20	21
Waltham Forest	1	5
North East London Wide	27	6
National	8	3
Total	86	83

Action areas for 2026 to 2027

- Target boroughs where currently lower attendance – build relationships with key contacts (for example, social prescribing network in Waltham Forest)
- Better tracking for outputs from events – demographics, topics discussed, individual stories, feedback, surveys.
- Wider range of easy read material and targeted translated material
- Improved internal processes for managing attendance at events
- A new inventory list to track all resource material for events, alongside a toolkit for partners to use and a campaign resource centre on our website
- Expanding the number of events attended through using local partners and our patient community of practice - aiming for a 20% increase in attendance, to reach a target of 120 events.
- Through increased attendance at events, generate more patient stories to share through our communications channels
- More speaker slots at events to talk to local residents and patients directly

Other community engagement activity

Building on these engagement events, we want to increase our interaction with our residents, which will help us tailor our communications more effectively.

It will also help us understand barriers and challenges to accessing cancer services, which will feed into our Cancer Alliance programmes and projects so that we are working with the community to overcome these barriers and challenges.

Importantly, this will have a vital role to play in tackling inequalities and reaching out to all groups across north east London. Through our engagement we want to:

- Understand our audience to help tailor our future communications and engagement activity.
- Receive ongoing feedback to inform future activities to support residents and reduce inequalities.
- Co-design future programmes of work across our diverse communities.

Action areas for 2026-2027

- Cancer information stalls at other hospital sites
- Regular attendance at stakeholder events
 - Multi-faith meetings
 - Healthwatch meetings
 - Public health meetings
 - Other local authority meetings
 - Community engagement events
 - Borough summer fairs
- Meetings with community groups
- Speaker slots at events and playing video materials
- Meeting groups across each protected characteristic in each borough, recording feedback, and using it to inform future activity
- Working with our Patient Community of Practice

Working with community partners

A key part of this strategy is working with the local engagement contacts across each borough, with the Trusts and with the NEL ICB. This helps us understand what existing relationships we have in place with different community groups and identify any gaps.

We have built a stakeholder database of contacts in each borough in North East London which includes the following:

- Communications and engagement colleagues from the Providers, the ICB and local authorities
- Primary Care Networks
- Public Health colleagues
- Healthwatch
- Charities
- Places of worship, such as the East London Mosque
- Specialist community groups, such as Bangladeshi Health Partnership Board
- LGBTQ+ community, such as OUTPatients
- Jewish Population, such as working with local charity, Acheinu Cancer Support (ACS)
- Black African and Caribbean, such as The Association of Redbridge African and Caribbean Communities
- ROMA community groups
- Multi-Faith groups

We regularly share updates with these contacts which includes our patient materials (in different formats and languages) so that they can share these via their networks.

Action areas for 2026 to 2027

- Maintain and update the stakeholder database
- Launch a new, monthly stakeholder and community newsletter to connect with our local communities
- Record more podcasts with community members in community settings (see section on podcasts below)
- Update our website to include more information on local support groups, as well as make it easier to search for
- Undertake surveys of our local population to understand challenges, barriers and opportunities, as well as to help us understand the impact of our work

7.2. Podcasts

We have built on the success of our podcast series – Taking Control of Cancer – to increase the number of episodes and to promote them more widely. The series focuses on tackling health inequalities throughout and helps to promote practical advice and support for both patients and healthcare professionals.

In 2025 to 2026, in the first three quarters, we achieved:

- **42,549** listens across **41** episodes
- Downloaded in **52** different countries
- New webpage and individual pages for each episode:
<https://www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk/taking-control-cancer>

The episodes are split across the three core cancer programmes, as well as the alliance as a whole:

	Number of podcasts	Number of Listens	% share of listens
Cancer Alliance	9	15,190	35.70
Early Diagnosis	13	9,861	23.18
Diagnosis and Treatment	10	7,737	18.18
Personalised Cancer Care	9	9,761	22.94
Total	41	42,549	100

Action areas for 2026 to 2027

- Release a further 40 episodes, covering key topics, patient stories and news updates (see Appendix C for more details)
- Record episodes in video format in full and promote more widely across both YouTube and TikTok
- New locations for recording episodes, including more community venues. We have already been approached by a local community and hospital radio station to record episodes in their studio, and they have agreed to broadcast all our episodes on their stations
- More recording out in the community, with community residents and patients telling their stories
- Live sessions at events such as World Cancer Day, as well as at local partner events

7.3. Social Media

We will use the following channels for 2025 to 2026 (please note we are monitoring our use of X, however many of our stakeholders are still on there and so we are continuing to use it)

Social media

- Twitter: @CancerNel
- Facebook: @NelCancerAlliance
- Instagram: @CancerNEL

- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-east-london-cancer-alliance/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@nelcanceralliance>
- TikTok: @nelcanceralliance
- Blue Sky
- NextDoor (neighbourhood app)

We will continue to post regularly via these channels and create new content, such as new videos in different languages and with voiceovers in different dialects.

Media channels

- Local newspapers and radio stations
- Specialist channels such as Bengali TV channel

NEL ICB Channels

- Website
- Social media channels
- Staff intranet (a lot of staff live in the area and may have family or friends in the target group)
- Staff newsletter
- Stakeholder newsletter

Provider comms channels

- Hospital websites
- Hospital social media channels
- Staff intranet (a lot of staff live in the area and may have family or friends in the target group)
- Staff newsletter
- Stakeholder newsletter

Local authority channels

- Website
- Social media channels
- Resident newsletters
- Staff intranet
- Staff newsletter

Voluntary and charity groups

- Website
- Social media channels
- Newsletters

Poster and leaflet sites

- Community venues
- GP surgeries
- Libraries
- Places of worship
- Hospital reception areas
- Charities
- Pharmacies
- Door drops of leaflets directly to people's homes
- Leaflets in different languages and formats

In 2025 to 2026, we were generating an average of around 1,000,000 impressions per quarter and reaching over 400,000 people a quarter, across our social media channels.

April 2025 to June 2025



July 2025 to September 2025



October 2025 to December 2025



Our YouTube channels saw a huge boost in 2025 to 2026:

- **1,600,000** views
- Over **6,500** subscribers
- **8,800** hours of watch time
- Over **43,500** views of D&T innovation video <https://youtu.be/urpQ6-AnExc?si=9O6ZCMnqv0AoGyxG>

Action areas for 2026 to 2027

- We want to build on these results to reach even more of our diverse communities in north east London. To help with this, we have launched two new channels – WhatsApp and Reddit (see outline strategy in Appendix D). These will need building and growing in 2026 to 2027
- Implement AI strategy and adopt best practice – we are an active part of the NHS comms working group on AI and are exploring new tools to support our community engagement work
- Increase accessible content in different languages. Our YouTube channel already has the function of dubbing in different languages, and we have videos translated and with voice overs in different languages and we will build on this work.
- Undertake campaigns in different languages – e.g. Bengali in Tower Hamlets
- Share patient stories in a range of formats and languages

7.4. Website

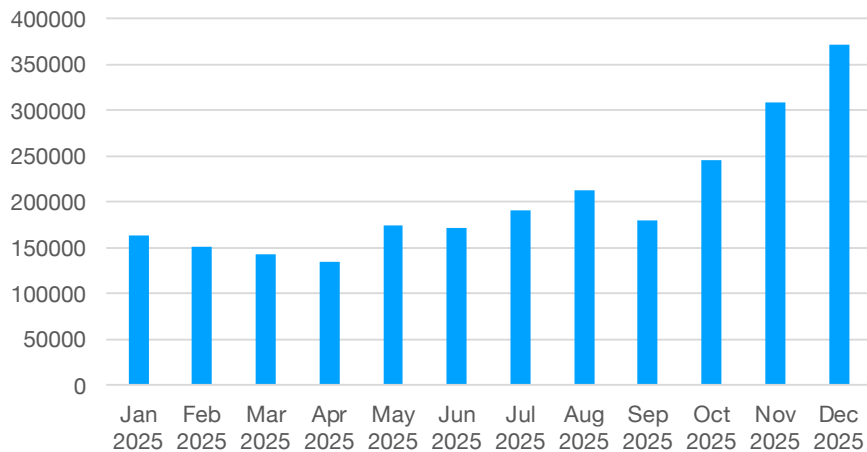
www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk is a key source of information for residents, patients and healthcare professionals across north east London.

With its accessibility and language tools, it is also helping to reduce inequalities and provide more people access to more information about cancer.

In 2025 to 2026, we achieved:

- **1,991,754** impressions from 1 April to 31 December, compared to 1,050,647 for the whole of the previous financial year (an impression is every time a link to your page appears in a search engine results page)
- **1,860** pdf file downloads from our website since 1 April 2025
- A **36% increase** in link clicks from Google searches compared to last financial year

Number of impressions a month



Accessibility

Our website has the Recite Me function, which enables translations in over 100 languages as well as voiceovers to read the text in different languages. This function also features Accessibility Toolbar Software which allows users to customise and adjust website elements to their individual needs. This looks at aspects such as font style, size, colour, zoom functionality, keyboard navigation, screen readers and more to make our content more accessible to more people.

We receive monthly reports from Recite Me showing the usage and we will use this to make improvements as well as increase the uptake so that we are reaching even more people.

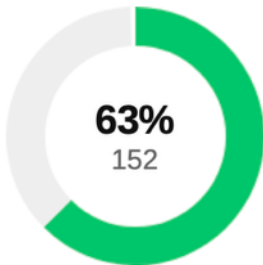
We have also subscribed to their Accessibility Checker Tool which monitors all content across our site and flags anything that needs improving or updating to ensure accessibility – it has given us a score of 95%.

Accessibility Score

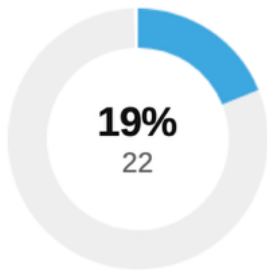
We believe your site has a rating of:

95%





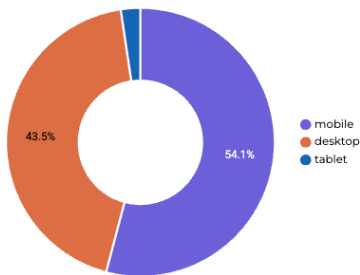
Feature Event	Clicks	%
Bengali	48	32%
English, Traditional	36	24%
Finnish	31	20%
Aymara	9	6%
Bulgarian	9	6%



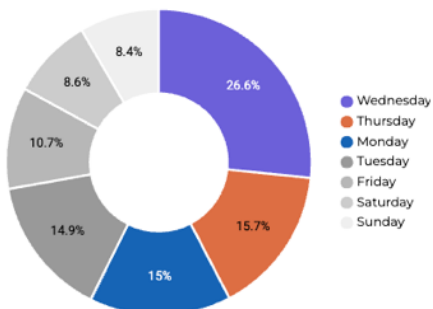
Feature Event	Clicks	%
ScreenMask-colour: #	22	100%

We continue to use an online marketing dashboard to monitor the effectiveness of our website and online campaigns.

What devices are commonly used?

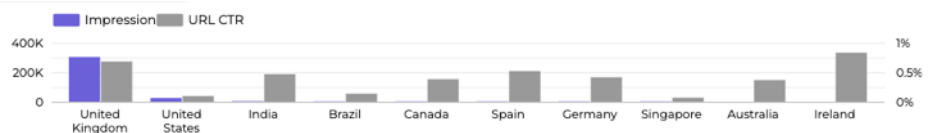


What days are we most likely to see traffic?



Where are our organic clicks coming from?

Query	Impressions	Url Cl...	Average Posit...	URL CTR
1. nel cancer alliance	512	65	1	12.7%
2. north east london cancer allia...	379	21	1	5.54%
3. breast cancer symptoms	9.6K	16	10.5	0.17%
4. psa levels	3.4K	11	10.07	0.32%
5. nhs hpv vaccine	342	10	3.92	2.92%
6. nelca	172	9	1.96	5.23%
7. cancer alliance jobs	51	7	7.65	13.73%
8. how to prevent cancer	1.6K	7	10.87	0.44%
9. hpv vaccine nhs	1K	7	6.67	0.69%
10. what is a dangerous psa level	1K	7	7.17	0.69%
11. free liver scan near me	171	5	7.31	2.92%



Actions for 2026-2027

- Move from Drupal to WordPress to improve flexibility and functionality for our website (see business case in Appendix E)
- Increase the number of backlinks and referring organisations to our site
- Remove toxic backlinks
- Fix google search errors such as 401 errors
- Implement schemas for AI search results
- Implement recommendations from Accessibility Checker Tool to improve accessibility
- Use MS Clarity to improve user journey and experience (see recommendations in Appendix F)
- Create tumour hubs as one stop shop sources of information for residents, patients and healthcare professionals
- Run polls and surveys to gain important insight from our website visitors

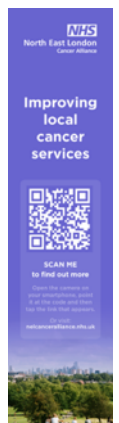
7.5. Branding and Campaigns

We continue to support campaigns across the cancer alliance, ensuring that we get input from the audiences we are trying to target through co-production, research, feedback and active involvement in design. For example, our HPV and lung cancer screening campaigns:





We have also developed an established brand for the cancer alliance, alongside a range of materials and resources (available in different languages) to support our diverse population.





7.6. Use of AI

- We are adopting best practice when it comes to using AI in our communication and engagement strategy. This follows NHS key principles.
- See Appendix G for the NHS AI principles and strategy documents
- We are also part of a working group which is looking at the use of AI in communications, covering guidelines, lessons learned, evaluation of different tools, recommendations and things to look out for.
- We will continue to add to this section as we learn more from the NHS working group.
- All work using AI must be checked by the comms team before also being signed off by the relevant subject matter expert.
- AI tools we are using include:
 - ChatGPT
 - MS Copilot
 - Claude
 - Gemini
 - Google Nano banana

7.7. Awards, Best Practice and Innovation

- An ongoing piece of work is to identify awards, events, and channels where we can both showcase the work of the cancer alliance and learn from other organisations across the country.
- Examples include HSJ Cancer Forum, NHS Excellence Awards and the UK Oncology Forum.

8. Branding guidelines

The cancer alliance is branded using the NHS logo (as shown above), and all associated correspondence and literature should comply with the NHS branding guidelines where possible. However, there is flexibility within this, particularly when it comes to promotional campaigns and working with partners.

8.1. NHS Branding

The NHS Brand guidelines are available here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhsidentity/>

There are rules around the use of the NHS logo which must be adhered to, and best practice is to only use one NHS logo on any material (examples are shown using the link above).

The NHS North East London brand guidelines are here:

<https://intranet.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/policies-forms-templates/branded-templates-guidance/>

8.2. North East London Cancer Alliance Branding

In addition to using the NHS branding, we want our materials to stand out and we are willing to push the boundaries outside of the traditional NHS look and feel.

We have developed our own identity, incorporating the NHS branding, for use across all of our communications channels and assets.

At the same time, we are maintaining a flexible approach, so that what we produce is fit for purpose and so we can tailor it to the audiences we are trying to reach out to.

Font

We use Arial (standard) font for all of our written documents, using font size 12pt for standard text (a minimum of font size 11pt). Text should always be left aligned.

For printed material, our designers also use Gotham as an additional font, with Helvetica as an alternative option to Arial as a secondary font.

Colours

In addition to black, white and the NHS blue in our logo, we have two main colours we use throughout our communications channels and assets:



Logos

EPS, JPG and PNG files of our logos are saved in our [MS Teams Communications and Engagement Channel](#).

Graphics and images

We have a main image that we use across our assets which is a view from a park looking across north east London. For example, this features on our website, PowerPoint intro slide, event banners and bookmarks.

We also have a set of images to use for report covers, as shown on the right-hand side.

All approved images and graphics are saved in the [MS Teams channel](#). Additional graphics, infographics and images can be produced on request.



Tone of voice

We want to speak and write in plain English at all times. The use of acronyms, jargon and medical terms should be kept to a minimum or at least explained.

Our tone is welcoming and friendly, yet professional. It is simplistic, but not slang. It is creative and engaging. It is confident, not aggressive.

Above all, it is tailored to our audience.

Easy read versions should also be produced where appropriate.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a useful tool to assist in writing and producing content. However, it must be used with great care as it is not able to write in our tone of voice and errors can be made. Further guidance on its use is expected from NHSE in the future.

Contacts

For any queries around branding, in the first instance please contact:

Paul Thomas, Communications and Engagement Manager:
p.thomas6@nhs.net

Alternatively, please contact our Graphic Design team via:

Rob Lis at Design Store: rob@designstore.co.uk

Action areas for 2026-2027

- Produce new event materials in a range of languages
- Develop resources in Easy read format – large image left, bullet point text
- Create a photo library of staff and cancer care teams across north east London
- Improve website graphics
 - Images
 - Icons
 - Infographics
- Launch new templates
 - Reports, minutes, agendas

9. Measuring success

We will regularly monitor our data to look at key metrics amongst our diverse communities such as uptake rates of screening programmes, participation in programmes such as Lung Cancer Screening, patient feedback, and membership of the Patient Community of Practice.

We will record the engagement work we have done in each London Borough for each Protected Characteristic group so we can identify any gaps and help us reach all our diverse communities in North East London.

We will also monitor metrics such as social media and website analytics, views on YouTube, demand for language translations, views of Easy Read materials etc. so we can improve future communications materials to also help reduce inequalities and support the face-to-face engagement work.

This will all help us feed into an overall Impact Measurement Framework so we can evaluate the effectiveness of our community engagement and inform future activity.

In summary, the following measures will be used to track our activity:

- Marketing Dashboard (website and social media analytics)
- Podcast Metrics
- Events spreadsheet and record of outputs of face-to-face engagement
- Recite Me website accessibility usage and improvement reports
- Social media metrics
- Patient Community of Practice membership numbers
- Numbers of cancer information leaflets distributed
- Survey results from events and online polls
- Google Analytics and AI search results
- SEMRush authority scores

Sharing and Learning

A key part of our strategy to help reduce inequalities is sharing and learning from experiences in North East London, across London as a whole and nationally.

As well as the data element described above, we are also exploring ways we can pool local intelligence from sources such as:

- Patient feedback
- Polls on website
- Podcast surveys
- Surveys (local, regional and national)

- Healthwatch data
- NEL ICB Community Insights tool (an online tool which provides a range of data on our local population and their experience of accessing cancer services)
- Commissioned community outreach work

We also attend events, meetings and training courses to either share our experiences or learn from others when it comes to reducing health inequalities.

Actions for 2026 to 2027

- Sharing initiatives with the communications leads from the other London Cancer Alliances (meeting every two weeks)
- Presenting our communications and engagement work at share and learn meetings with colleagues and peers
- Producing an annual impact report on the communications and engagement work
- Maintaining attendance at networking and best practice user groups such as the NSH Comms AI working groups and YouTube innovators groups

10. Summary of key milestones for 2026 - 2027

Q1

- Launch new stakeholder and community newsletter
- Deliver 30 community engagement events
- Use new feedback forms for measuring success at community events
- Release 10 podcast episodes
- Launch first tumour hub on the cancer alliance website
- Achieve over 100 followers on WhatsApp channel
- Implement Reddit awareness and engagement campaign
- Launch easy read version of cancer alliance information
- Run targeted campaigns across social media in different languages
- Deliver a launch event for three new strategies for the cancer alliance

Q2

- Launch three new tumour hubs on the cancer alliance website
- Deliver 30 community engagement events
- Release 10 podcast episodes
- Launch new videos in different languages to support the core programmes of the cancer alliance
- Launch a series of patient stories which are tagged to different tumour groups and different stages on the cancer journey
- Release a series of shorts on TikTok to help explain cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment
- Launch language versions of cancer alliance information leaflets

Q3

- Launch new version of the cancer alliance website using WordPress instead of Drupal to enhance functionality and experience for our users
- Deliver 30 community engagement events
- Release 10 podcast episodes
- Launch new, online surveys to get feedback from our web visitors
- Run a promotional 'Top 20 countdown campaign' to boost listeners
- Improve the user journey on our website, as well as making it more accessible

Q4

- Produce annual report
- Provide an impact report on the communications and engagement activity
- Deliver 30 community engagement events
- Release 10 podcast episodes
- Achieve over 1,000 followers on WhatsApp channel
- Improve web impressions to 2,000,000 a month
- Achieve over 1,000,000 listens to our podcast series

11. Communications and engagement resources

The Communications and Engagement Manager for the North East London Cancer Alliance is responsible for delivering this strategy and the activity in the plan.

However, the following resources are available to support this:



11.1. Communications and engagement governance

The communications and engagement manager for the North East London Cancer Alliance reports directly to the Managing Director and also works closely with the Programme Leads. There is also a strong link to the NEL ICB comms team. The following should be observed for gaining approval for sending out communications:

- All comms should be approved first by the individual project manager and then the Programme Lead before being issued.
- For any corporate communications or communications to senior stakeholders, including Primary Care, this also needs to be approved by the Managing Director.
- All comms to GPs needs to have been reviewed by GP cancer leads. We usually give GP leads a minimum of five days' notice to approve comms.
- All patient-facing materials need input from relevant patient and resident groups. This needs to be factored into the planning so that appropriate time is allowed for this.
- All media enquiries should first be directed to the North East London Cancer Alliance Communications and Engagement Manager, who will then discuss with the NEL media team and, where necessary the NHS London and National media teams (via the NEL media team). The Managing Director of the North East London Cancer Alliance needs to approve any spokespeople and interviews with the media.

11.2. Emergency communications and engagement contacts

1. Website

For any urgent amendments or additions to content on our website, please email:

ellen.chesterman@mobas.com or ella.pickering@mobas.com

Any new content for our website must first be approved by the relevant Programme Lead, and by Femi if appropriate (Programme Lead to advise).

2. Social Media

For any urgent actions across any of our social media channels, please contact:

anthony@emotio.co.uk

If Anthony is unavailable, please contact damon@emotio.co.uk

Our social media channels are: LinkedIn, X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube

Urgent actions include: Removing or amending existing posts; Adding new posts; Responding to, or deleting comments.

Any new content or responses to comments must first be approved by the relevant Programme Lead, and by Femi if appropriate (Programme Lead to advise).

3. Graphic Design

For any support with the following: Branding; Amendments to existing communications materials; Quote for new graphic design projects:

Contact Rob Lis: rob@designstore.co.uk

4. Media Enquiries

All media enquires must go via the NEL ICB media team in the first instance and Femi should be copied in too:

Contact: necsu.media@nhs.net

5. Comms to GPs

See separate comms plan for primary care for details of the processes.

Queries should be directed to Saira Parker-Deeks and Rob Palmer in the first instance. Femi should also be copied in.

Contact: saira.parker-deeks@nhs.net and robert.palmer@nhs.net

For distributing comms to GPs and to assist in finding out any primary care contacts across north east London, the NEL ICB Primary Care team can help:

nelondonicb.nel-primarycare@nhs.net

6. Podcasts

For any queries regarding our podcast series, please contact our Podcast Producer, Steve Bland steve@veebie.media

7. Videos

For a quote to produce a video, to make changes to our existing videos or to get copies of the original files, contact:

Films: angus@loadedproductions.co.uk or dom@loadedproductions.co.uk

Animated videos: rob@designstore.co.uk

8. General Communications Support

For help or advice in producing or distributing communications across north east London, contact the NEL ICB Comms Team:

Contact: nelondonicb.nelcommunications@nhs.net

The NEL ICB communications team should also be advised regarding any queries from central government, MPs etc (e.g. requests for site visits, response to parliamentary questions).

For any queries not covered above, please contact Rob Lis:

rob@designstore.co.uk

12. Appendices (available on request)

A: Strategy Houses for each core cancer alliance programme

B: Personas research presentation

C: Podcast proposal

D: Reddit Strategy

E: WordPress Business Case

F: Website user journey updates

G: AI key principles document