

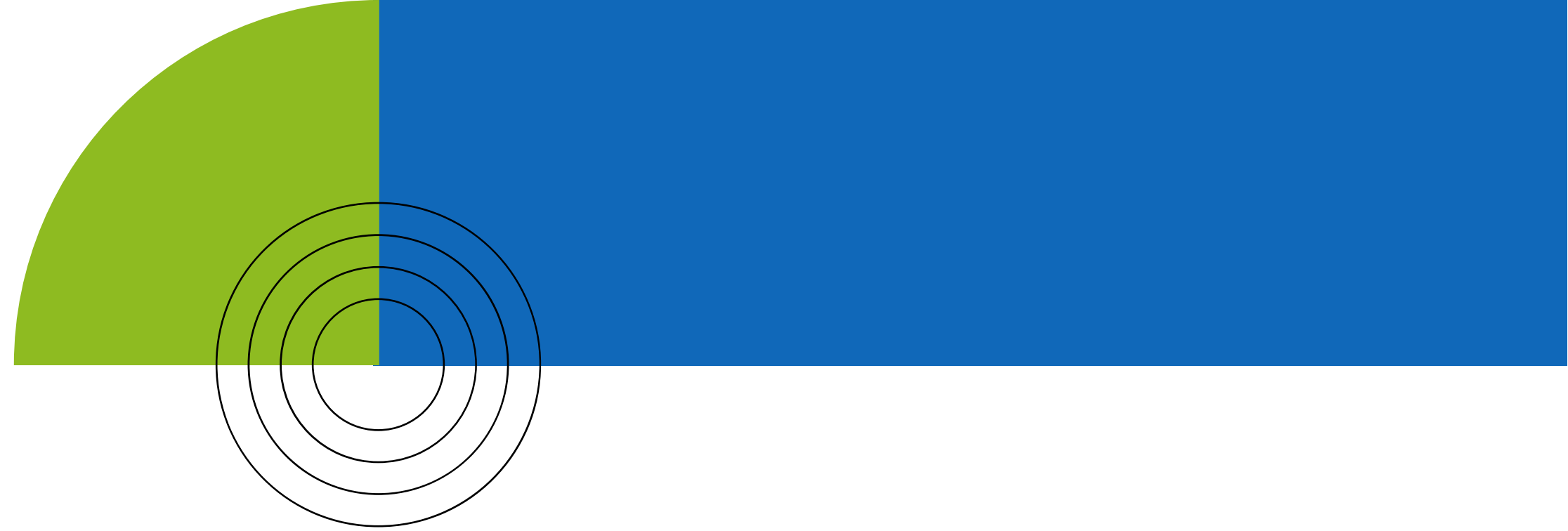


Communication Strategy

2020 - 2024



Introduction



The aim of this strategy is to set out how Carers Northumberland will achieve effective internal and external communication, who the key target audiences are and how successful communications can:

- help us achieve our overall organisational objectives
- engage effectively with stakeholders
- demonstrate the success of our work
- ensure people understand what we do

This strategy is based around our Mission, Vision and Values and supports the current Business and Operational plan.

Good communication is a two-way process which requires everyone to take responsibility to 'talk and listen', i.e. contribute and take on board what they hear/read and use the information available to them to help achieve the organisation's objectives.



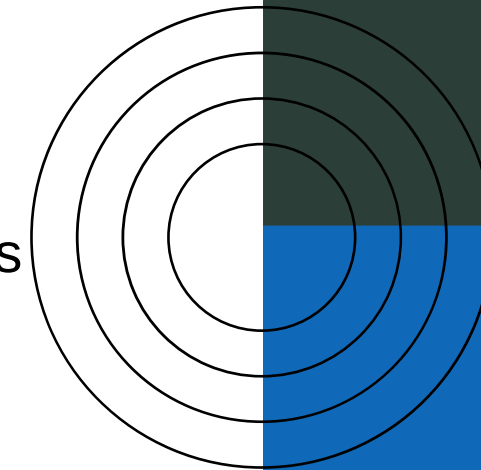
Objectives

In line with our strategic aims outlined in the business plan, our objectives are:

- To raise awareness of the value and role of unpaid carers
- To reach more unpaid carers
- To ensure carers receive the support they need

We aim to achieve:

- Increased campaigning that will achieve positive change for carers
- Statutory and voluntary agencies will be actively engaged in improving the lives of carers
- More carers will be empowered through access to information
- Carers Northumberland will continue to be a responsive, innovating and sustainable organisation
- More carers will be engaged with Carers Northumberland
- Carers are able to access information about their rights, services and support available to them through a range of formats
- Organisations and employers are aware of carer issues and the services of CN
- Funders are able to see the effectiveness of CN; its reach and its impact
- The wider public will assist in the identification of carers
- Identifying trends to communicate information to funders, both statutory and non-statutory



Key Messages

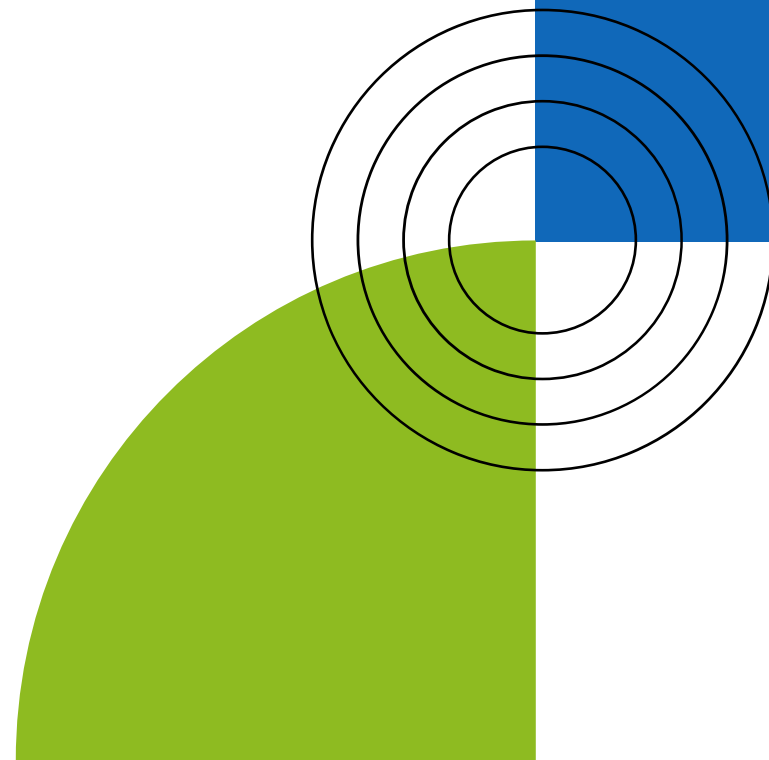
The key messages which will be present in all our communications, stated or implied, are based on the strategic objectives and Carers Northumberland's values which are:



Our values are part of the Carers Northumberland brand; this demonstrates our approach and our common purpose. Our brand reflects how we want to view ourselves and how we want to be viewed by others.

Branding

All written and digital communications sent by CN will be brand identifiable. All documentation, forms and promotional materials will display the CN logo. Digital communications will use CN logo, approved fonts and colours to ensure CN maintains a professional identity, is recognisable and known as a trusted brand. The current brand toolkit(available in the staff handbook) should be adhered to.



Audiences

CN communicates with a range of stakeholders including the general public, voluntary and community, public and private sectors. It is recognised that different methods of communication are effective for different audiences. Our target audience covers a wide spectrum of individuals and organisations,

External communication with users and stakeholders

Effective external communication with users and stakeholders is essential and we must remember that communication is a two-way process and we must listen as well as providing information.

Important factors in achieving successful external communications are accessibility, using appropriate formats, flexibility and listening to feedback.

EXTERNAL AUDIENCES:

CARERS
GENERAL PUBLIC
STATUTORY SECTOR
VOLUNTARY AND
COMMUNITY SECTOR
EMPLOYERS
BUSINESSES
FUNDERS
OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



Audiences cont.

Internal communication within the organisation

Effective internal communication within the organisation can only be achieved if it is clear who the decision-makers are, and who the practitioners are within the organisation. In Carers Northumberland, the board of Trustees are the decision-makers and the staff team are the practitioners, delivering services directly to carers.

The Trustees are responsible and accountable for policymaking and ensuring the organisation meets funders' targets and outcomes. The staff team are responsible and accountable for developing procedures and delivering services on behalf of the organisation in accordance with the policies implemented by the trustee board.

Carers Northumberland strives to be a user-led organisation and to deliver on this principle, carers' views must be collected and communicated to Trustees in order that they can inform policymaking. Therefore, communication between Trustees and staff is crucial to the success of the organisation.

INTERNAL AUDIENCES:

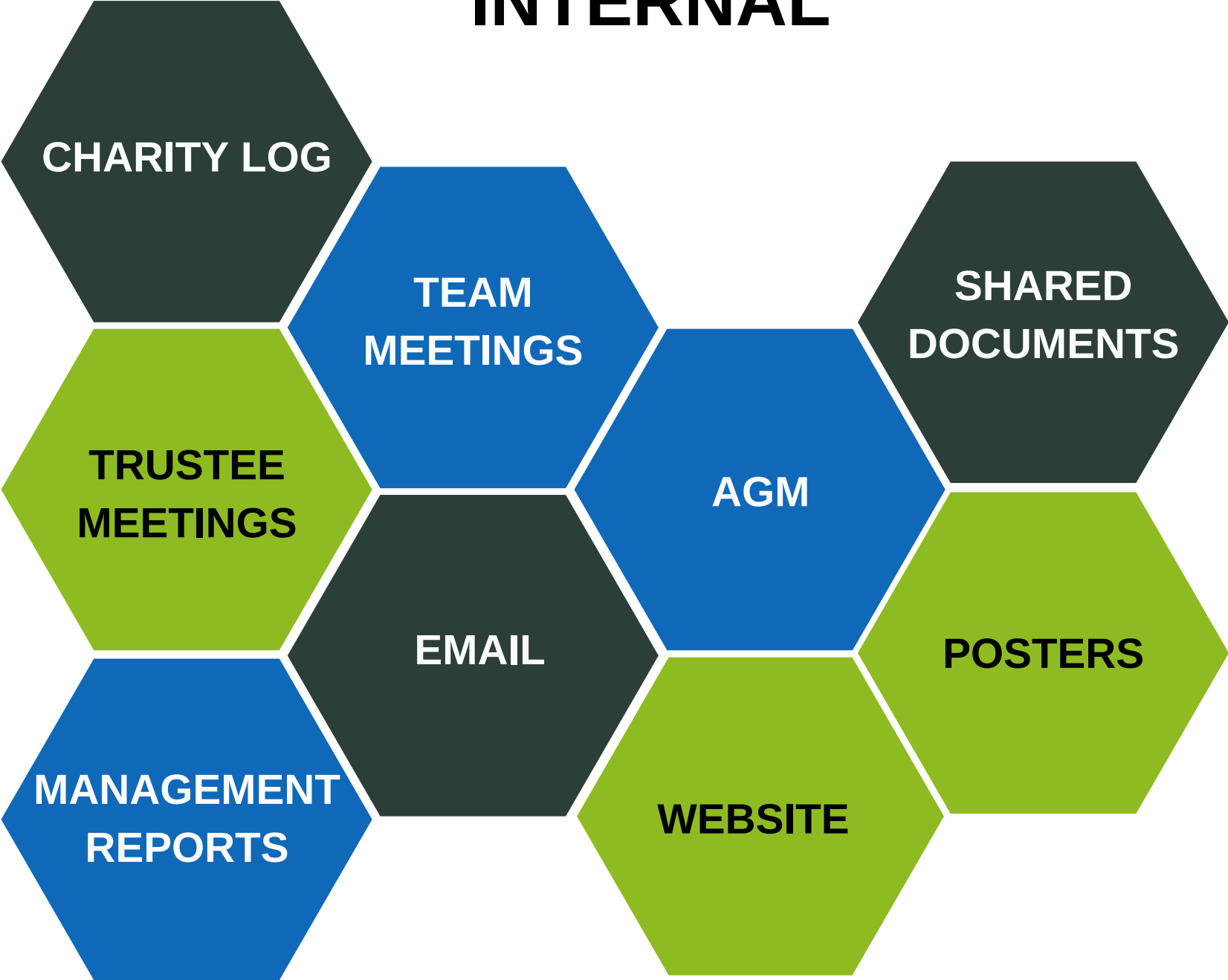
STAFF TEAM
VOLUNTEERS
MANAGEMENT
TRUSTEES



Communication Tools

In order to reach all stakeholders CN will communicate using a range of platforms and share information in different formats, always in accordance with relevant Data Protection Legislation and CN policies:

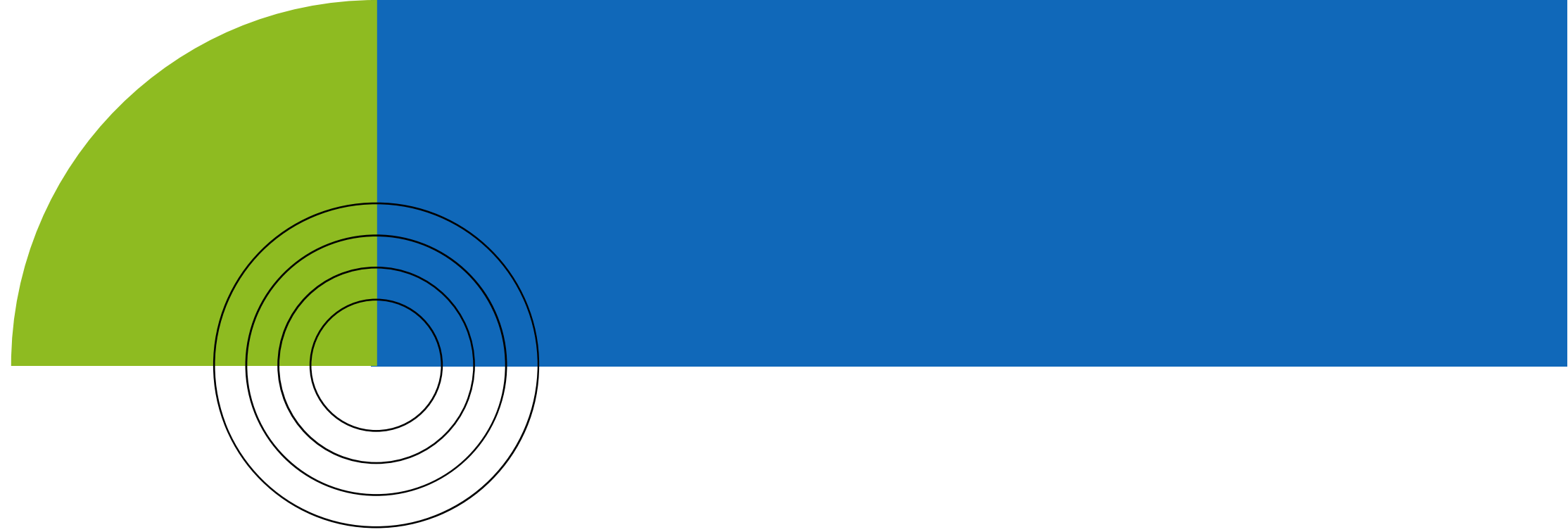
INTERNAL



EXTERNAL



Accessibility



We aim to make our communications as accessible as possible and will ensure stakeholders are given a choice in how they prefer to be communicated with.

- Materials can be provided in hard copy / digitally as requested
- Large print, alternative colouration and plain text variations of documents can be requested as needed.
- Communications can be translated into other languages as requested

We aim to accommodate all needs and will seek support from partner organisations / additional services as required to ensure accessible communication.



Online and Social Media

Social Media:

The development of social media allows CN to reach a new demographic and share information widely at little or no cost.

In developing the use of social media, it is important to remember that access to digital information is not universal and we must remain accessible to all. CN actively encourages digital information sharing and will provide support those service users who wish to get online and will provide alternative formats for those who cannot. Information will be available in hard copy format upon request and be made accessible for those with sensory impairment.

Our current social media presence is based around Facebook and Twitter, with a private Facebook group for carers introduced in late 2019. We will continue to assess our usage of social media and trial the development of new social media platforms as appropriate to continue to engage new audiences.

The use of social media on behalf of Carers Northumberland should always be carried out in accordance with the CN social media guidelines within the staff handbook.

Website

Carers Northumberland's website was redesigned in 2013 and in 2020 we will look at further redevelopment of the site. The objective is to reach a wider audience, enhance the charity's reputation online and provide a valuable information base for carers, professionals, and funders.

Online communications must be kept up to date to retain the interest of audiences. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and maintain CN's online communication activity, to meet the public demand for web-based information.

Evaluation



This strategy will be evaluated as follows:

- Annual survey: Using paper and electronic surveys we will seek to measure satisfaction with external communication methods and assess options for future developments.
- Carer feedback: Feedback from carers will be monitored to ensure that good quality information is provided which is accessible to all.
- Website: Usage of the website will be monitored and analysed. Website analytics will provide a more in-depth analysis of the site and how users navigate their way around it.
- Social media: Twitter and Facebook will be the primary sites for evaluation. Numbers of followers/likes will be monitored as will the reach.
- Informal feedback: We will listen to carers, staff and other stakeholders at all time to ensure our communication is effective.