



Technoleg Iechyd Cymru
Health Technology Wales

Health Technology Wales
Communications Strategic Plan
2023-2025



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Background

In 2018 Health Technology Wales commissioned Pagoda Public Relations to develop a communications strategy based on audience insight with key stakeholder groups.

The aim of the project was to agree key messages, identify appropriate communications channels and develop an implementation plan with agreed evaluation metrics.

These objectives and actions agreed as part of the plan were based on audience insight captured through an online survey, and telephone interviews with stakeholders that included clinicians and representatives of NHS Wales, industry, and government.

Since the first communications strategy was published, Health Technology Wales has significantly expanded the scope of its work and the range of stakeholders that it collaborates with in response to the changing needs of the health and social care sectors in Wales. As the scope of its work has expanded, it has further refined its appraisal process and begun the process of auditing the adoption of its guidance in Wales.

In 2021 HTW published a [Strategic Plan](#) which sets out ambitious plans to increase its evidence appraisal and guidance output.

An independent [five-year progress review](#) published in 2022 identified that HTW is a distinct, trusted and valued part of the innovation landscape in Wales and that stakeholders who work with HTW recognise and value its expertise in the identification, appraisal and adoption of health technologies and see it as a well governed organisation.

Given the expansion in the scope of HTWs work and its collaborative partnerships, this new communications strategy has been created. This strategic plan sets out objectives aimed at supporting HTWs strategic goals across its key pillars of work as set out in the [Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#):

- Identification
- Appraisal
- Adoption
- Engagement

To inform the strategy and evaluate current levels of brand awareness among stakeholders, HTW commissioned Beaufort Research to carry out a survey of HTWs key stakeholders. The survey took place between 23 June and 14 July 2022 and 20% of stakeholders we contacted submitted responses (60 people).



Although the survey had a typically low sample size for surveys of this sort, the responses from our key stakeholders provide valuable insight and intelligence that we have used to inform this revised communications strategy.

Key HTW messages

HTW's vision is to be a world-class HTW organisation that facilitates the identification, appraisal and adoption of innovative health and social care technologies that offer most promise to deliver improved health, well-being and value for the people of Wales.

Its mission is to drive improvements in population health and social care services, by applying the best available evidence to inform decisions on the appropriate use of health and social care technology innovations in Wales.

The core values that underpin the work of HTW are, quality, responsiveness, and collaboration.

Through its communications activities, HTW aims to convey the following key messages about the organisation:

- Authoritative, drawing on the best available evidence and expertise.
- Collaborative, working with partners across health, social care and the technology sectors.
- Responsive to the needs and interests of service users, health and care providers and technology partners across Wales.

Strategic goals

The HTW Strategic Plan 2021-2025 set out the following strategic goals:

Identification: Identify the technologies that are expected to have major impact on health and care services and have the most benefit for the people of Wales

Appraisal: Deliver a step change in the volume of HTW evidence outputs, promoting a co-ordinated national approach to evidence-informed decision making on non-medicine technologies across Wales.

Adoption: Improve the quality of health and social care in Wales, by disseminating evidence-based national guidance that encourages adoption of technologies expected to have a major impact in Wales



Engagement: Promote greater understanding and use of HTWs HTA outputs with key Welsh health and social care stakeholders.

The strategy and actions within this document are designed to support delivery of the priority objectives for 2023-25.

Stakeholders

Key HTW stakeholders fall into the following categories:

- NHS Boards, trusts and social care providers
- Health and social care professionals
- Local and National Government
- Members of the public, service users and carers
- Technology sector
- Patient organisations

Clinical networks, the seven Welsh NHS Local Health Boards and the three Specialist Trusts are central in seeing that HTW recommendations are either ‘adopted or justified’ and are a source of future topics.

Collaboration with partners in social care including Social Care Wales, social care practitioners and members of the HTW stakeholder forum, enable us to target social care innovations for appraisal.

Close engagement with Welsh Government representatives is key to ensuring HTW remains an integral part of the innovation landscape in Wales and plays a key role in achieving the aims of the forthcoming Integrated Innovation Strategy for Wales.

The technology sector - which includes technology manufacturers and innovators - is a major source of topic referrals for HTW and there is potential to significantly increase engagement with the sector. Academia is another important potential source of topic referrals.

Finally, patients, social care service users, carers, the general public and patient organisations are vital for creating an understanding of what HTW does and the impact of its work for health and care service users in Wales.



Audience insight

Introduction

HTW commissioned Beaufort Research to undertake a survey of its stakeholders to gauge stakeholders' awareness and understanding of its role and work. An online survey was designed by Beaufort in consultation with HTW and shared with 300 stakeholders via email.

Almost half (47%) the sample of stakeholders completing the survey were healthcare professionals, whilst a further one in eight were either health care commissioners / decision makers (13%) or Health board representatives (12%). Only a very small number of stakeholders who took part in the survey were from the other categories.

Survey objectives

Survey questions aimed to find out the following:

- Stakeholders' understanding of HTWs role and work.
- Awareness and understanding of the Health Technology Assessment process.
- Perceived benefits and barriers to submitting a topic to HTW for appraisal.
- How stakeholders would like to hear from HTW.

Summary results of the survey are available on request.

Priority communication and engagement objectives

The following have been identified as priority objectives for this strategic plan:

- Raise HTWs profile amongst stakeholders and clarify its role and remit.
- Improve understanding of the HTW appraisal process.
- Increase awareness of the benefits of submitting topics for HTW appraisal and how to submit a topic.
- Raise awareness of the 'adopt or justify' status of HTWs guidance for health boards, specialist trusts, the social care sector and other organisations.



- Create more opportunities to interact directly with stakeholders through face-to-face presentations, meetings and events.
- Develop a programme of communications activity to support staff recruitment.
- Prioritise the creation of a crisis communications plan in light of the ongoing COVID-19 Inquiry setting out how HTW will respond to any potential negative publicity or enquires from the media regarding the value, integrity or accuracy of its work on COVID-19 and in general.
- Refresh the content, design and useability of the HTW website and ensure that it meets Welsh Government accessibility requirements.

Communications strategic plan objectives

Pillar 1: Identification

Objective	Action	Outcome
Increase understanding of the benefits of submitting a topic for appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the benefits of submitting a topic for appraisal on the 'Suggest a Topic' section of the HTW website. Outline key benefits and provide stakeholder feedback quotes as evidence. • Look for opportunities to attend industry and public sector events to build HTWs profile among existing and potential new stakeholders. • Organise an event for industry representatives in partnership with MediWales and HTWs Industry User Group to raise awareness of HTWs work and benefits of submitting a topic. • Increase engagement with academia and organisations representing industry by submitting articles to be disseminated via their news channels e.g., newsletters and attending relevant events. • Work with specialist news websites to increase awareness of HTW and the benefits of submitting topics for appraisal. • Submit content to be shared via partner organisations' comms channels about the benefits of submitting topics for appraisal. • Produce and disseminate video case studies of guidance featuring interviews with the topic referrer about the benefits of having submitted a topic. 	<p>An increase in high quality topic referrals</p> <p>An increase in topic conversion rates</p>
Ensure that topics submitted address priority health and social care needs in Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure support from senior executives within health and care sectors to encourage topic referrals. • Run quarterly themed topic calls targeting topics that meet health and social care priority needs identified through engagement with Welsh Government, health boards, NHSW Collaborative Networks and members of the HTW Stakeholder Forum. • Communicate regularly re topic call themes with potential sources of new topics e.g. clinical networks, academia, Welsh Government and social care partners. 	HTW guidance is targeted to have maximum impact on health and care outcomes



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director and Chair secure regular presentation slots at strategic meetings (e.g. NHS Wales CEOs and the Directors of Social Care). 	
Ensure topics submitted meet the criteria for appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce and disseminate an animation video explaining how topics are identified for appraisal and the criteria for submitting a topic. • Create literature that can be shared at industry events explaining HTWs topic selection and prioritisation criteria. • Provide training and guidance for HTW staff to support conversations with potential topic proposers. • Ensure all information on criteria forms part of communications content to support themed topic calls. • Compile a Top 10 'Tips for a successful topic referral' based on retrospective analysis of submissions detailing hurdles experienced, what to avoid, how to proceed, what worked well and what did not. 	Increased efficiencies – less HTW staff time spent on unsuitable topics
Raise awareness of the process of submitting a topic for appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly disseminate 'Suggest a Topic' animation video via HTW communications channels. • Seek out opportunities to present at relevant meetings and events. 	An increase in high quality topic referrals

Pillar 2: Appraisal

Objective	Action	Outcome
Increase understanding of the HTW appraisal process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate public consultation on draft HTW online Appraisal Process Guide and disseminate appropriately once finalised. • All external HTW communications to use 'plain language' to explain complex processes. • Produce and disseminate animation video explaining the topic appraisal process. • Using 'plain language' principles, create printed material to be distributed at relevant events explaining the HTW appraisal process through appropriate graphics and FAQ's. • Organise bi-annual online surgery sessions inviting potential topic proposers to meet one to one with a researcher to talk through appraisal process. • Create HTA (incl HE) training materials (presentations, videos & documents) and disseminate at appropriate events and meetings. • Produce communication and dissemination plans for each piece of HTW Guidance published with details of relevant stakeholders and communications channels. 	Maintain increased HTW evidence appraisal and guidance output.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a frequently asked questions section on the HTW website covering the appraisal process, criteria for submitting a topic, the status of HTW national guidance and the relationship/difference between HTW and NICE 	
Raise awareness of the benefits of taking part in the appraisal process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce and disseminate impact case study videos featuring interviews with topic proposers about their experience of taking part in appraisal process. • Exhibit and present at industry and public sector events where there are opportunities to raise awareness of the benefits of the appraisal process. • Produce blogs and editorial features for relevant specialist media publications and external comms channels describing the benefits of taking part in the appraisal process. • Produce content for organisations representing technology developers for dissemination via their channels. • Produce an annual impact statement and annual report focussed on accessible outcomes which demonstrate the impact of HTWs national guidance. 	An increase in high quality topic referrals which meet health and care system needs
Improve understanding of HTW's role within the wider health and social care landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish case studies of HTW guidance in the Annual Report, HTW website and externally, emphasising how the guidance addresses specific health and care needs in Wales. 	Support time-critical health and social care policy decision making

Pillar 3: Adoption

Objective	Action	Outcome
Raise awareness of the 'adopt or justify' status of HTW guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create communications and dissemination plans for each piece of HTW Guidance and ensure communications content emphasises the status of the guidance. • Regularly promote on social media, the message that HTW guidance has 'adopt or justify status'. Organise bi-annual online surgery sessions inviting potential topic proposers to meet one to one with a researcher to talk through appraisal process. • Create HTA (incl HE) training materials (presentations, videos & documents) and disseminate at appropriate events and meetings. • Produce communication and dissemination plans for each piece of HTW Guidance published with details of relevant stakeholders and communications channels. • Create a frequently asked questions section on the HTW website covering the appraisal process, criteria for submitting a topic, the status of HTW national guidance and the relationship/difference between HTW and NICE 	Increased adoption of HTW guidance



Increase awareness of the HTW adoption audit process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create communication plans for dissemination of annual HTW Adoption Audit Report and ensure this is sent to relevant stakeholders. 	Increase awareness of the HTW adoption audit process
Create opportunities to profile guidance that has been adopted in Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and disseminate video and written case studies that can be shared via HTW website, social media and external communications channels. 	Create opportunities to profile guidance that has been adopted in Wales

Pillar 4: Engagement

Objective	Action	Outcome
Build the profile of HTW among stakeholders and the wider public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh HTW website so that it is more user-friendly, accessible, visually appealing and easier to navigate. Commission an accessibility audit of the HTW website. Ensure that language used on HTW website and in social media posts is accessible and can be understood by a diverse audience. Produce all online content, social media posts and HTW publications bilingually so that it is accessible to Welsh speakers and meets Welsh Language Standards. Increase social media engagement including by planning social media campaigns to coincide with national 'awareness days', supporting communications activity by partner organisations and posting more visual and interactive content. Increase HTWs Twitter and LinkedIn followers by creating engaging and relevant social media posts using graphic and written content. Raise the profile of HTW on LinkedIn, with the aim of attracting more followers, particularly potential topic submitters from the technology sector. Build the profile of the HTW Director and Chair as commentators on health technology assessment through blogs and opinion pieces on the HTW website and in specialist media publications. Increase opportunities to share HTW news with partner organisations' communications channels (e.g., Welsh Government innovation newsletter, health board newsletters and Social Care Wales news updates). HTW Communications Manager to participate in weekly Welsh Government 'Head of Communications' meetings to update on HTW work. Sponsor relevant events and awards to increase visibility of HTW branding, if budgets permit (e.g. MediWales Connects and MediWales Awards). 	An increase in high quality topic referrals which meet health and care system needs



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share communications content with UK and international HTA bodies (e.g. SHTG, NICE, HIQA, INAHTA, HTAI) • Refresh the structure and format of the HTW Annual Report to ensure it remains modern and accessible whilst effectively describing HTWs activities and impact. • Promote HTW involvement in developing the Welsh Integrated Innovation Strategy and delivery of the Health and Care Innovation Action Plan. • Seek opportunities to engage with Welsh medical schools to raise awareness of HTWs work among clinicians before they qualify through HTA101 training sessions and by providing news content to communications channels. 	
Improve perceptions of HTW and dispel the notion that it is 'distant or ambiguous'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for opportunities for face-to-face interaction with new and potential stakeholders at industry events, face to face meetings and workshops. • Develop the HTW quarterly newsletter content and seek opportunities to increase subscription. 	Deeper and more meaningful collaboration with partners and stakeholders.
Ensure HTW contact lists are current, stakeholder are managed effectively and all contact with stakeholders complies with the GDPR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Twitter and LinkedIn analytics to monitor engagement with social media posts and use this information to plan future campaigns. • Monitor traffic and engagement with the HTW website using Google Analytics. • Use MailChimp analytics tools to track subscriber interest in newsletter articles and guidance alerts. • Conduct quarterly reviews of analytics data to determine future use of communication channels. 	Improved efficiency and effectiveness of stakeholder management and communications
Monitor the effectiveness of HTW communications channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Twitter and LinkedIn analytics to monitor engagement with social media posts and use this information to plan future campaigns. • Monitor traffic and engagement with the HTW website using Google Analytics. • Use MailChimp analytics tools to track subscriber interest in newsletter articles and guidance alerts. • Conduct quarterly reviews of analytics data to determine future use of communication channels. 	Continuous improvement of HTW communication campaigns to ensure maximum impact.
Promote HTW as an excellent organisation to work for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend university job fairs. • Supply content about HTW to university careers department's websites and publications. • Engage with universities via social media. • Seek opportunities for HTW content to be published on recruitment news websites. 	Attract and retain talented, high quality staff



Internal communication channels

HTW will disseminate news, guidance alerts and information via the following external and internal communications channels and monitor key metrics:

Social media

HTW has 2,045 followers on Twitter and 417 on LinkedIn as per January 2023.

There is also an HTW YouTube channel where video case studies and animations are posted. This has had 1,985 views as per January 2023.

HTW Quarterly newsletter

The HTW quarterly newsletter has 549 subscribers as of January 2023. Each newsletter features HTW news, a section on forthcoming news and events and links to Topic Exploration Reports (TERs) published within the previous quarter. It is sent to subscribers via MailChimp.

HTW website

HTW has commissioned an external web developer to refresh the current HTW website to improve accessibility and to make it more user friendly, easier to navigate and visually appealing. A key feature that will be improved on the refreshed website will be the search function, giving users the ability to search for reports and guidance according to areas of speciality and to search for content on any topic via the homepage search bar. There will also be the opportunity for users to register interest in particular topics and find out about ways to get involved in HTW's work including attendance at public meetings.

HTW is committed to ensuring that its website meets Welsh Government accessibility standards and has commissioned an accessibility audit of its refreshed website. This will take into account both whether the website reaches AA accessibility standards and whether it is accessible to a diverse range of users.



HTW Annual Report

The HTW annual report will describe the work in the previous year to improve health and social care for the people of Wales. It will feature sections on guidance impact, identification, appraisal, adoption and engagement, budget delivery, future direction and the HTW team. We will create an interactive digital Annual Report that is more engaging for readers. Once published, an appropriate dissemination plan will ensure the report is sent to HTW's network of stakeholders.

HTW Guidance alerts

Guidance alerts are sent via MailChimp to 360 subscribers as of January 2023.

They feature information on the guidance published, a link to the full guidance and the ability to share the information with contacts via email.

Quarterly Bulletin

A Quarterly Bulletin will continue to be produced in partnership with the Scottish Health Technologies Group and feature HTW reports and guidance that have been published during that quarter, as well as recent health technology assessments undertaken by agencies across the UK, Ireland and Europe. To alert readers that it has been published, a link to the report will be published in a news story on the HTW website and in a social media post.

External communication channels

Print and online media

HTW will continue to send press releases regarding news, topic calls and guidance to specialist media outlets. To date these have been published by the following:

- Western Mail
- Business News Wales
- HealthTechWorld
- Health Tech News
- MedTech Innovation News



- Caring Times
- Assistive Technology Today
- HomeCare Insight
- THISS (news for mobility and access professionals)

We will extend this to more general news websites, as well as specialist publications covering innovation in health technology.

Exhibitions and industry events

HTW is a member of the MediWales network and attends events aimed at tech manufacturers, innovators, clinicians, and other health and care sector representatives. It has also sponsored a category of the MediWales annual awards and will continue to seek opportunities to maximise benefits from our membership.

Partner organisation communications channels

HTW will continue to send press releases and communications toolkits for dissemination by external partners including:

- Life Sciences Hub Wales
- MediWales
- Local Health Boards
- Welsh Government Innovation newsletter
- Social Care Wales

Communication resources

HTW employs a full time Communications Manager and a Business Support and Communications Assistant.

It also receives support from Velindre Health Trust, primarily for Welsh language translation but also some communications advice.



We will consider creating a Communications Standing Group (as recommended in the previous HTW communications strategy review) to facilitate efficient delivery of this communications strategy. Group membership could include members from key HTW groups e.g., the Appraisal Panel and Patient and Public Involvement Standing Group. These roles may be rotated among group members. This group would be chaired and led by a senior member of HTW and include at least one HTW researcher/health economist. Its role will be to prioritise communications activity in line with strategic objectives, create a timeline for actions and track and report progress against the strategy and plan.