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## Communication Guidelines | Version 2.1

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# Who this guide is for?

This guide is to help organisations which are funded by the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (North East MSA) or working in collaboration with us on specific projects, plan their communications work.

If you have any questions, please contact [communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk)

## 1. Planning your work

The Mayoral Strategic Authority's communications team is here to help you create content that is accessible, has impact and is relevant to our shared audiences.

We follow PESO principles, using integrated communications to maximise reach and engagement. This includes co-ordinating with partners to increase capacity and amplify our story.

This document takes you through the full range of communications: Web and social media content, advertising and direct formats including events, handouts, on-street hoardings and signage, plus press notices and enquiries.

**Please contact the team at:**

[communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk) at the earliest opportunity to inform us about your plans, discuss collaboration and alert us when you are dealing with reactive communications.

## 2. Timescales and sign off

We require sign-off on any communications related to projects and programmes we have funded, including media engagement and both physical and digital assets.

We recognise that social media is fastmoving and we will agree with partners on general message and tone where appropriate, rather than insisting on approval for every comment and conversation. Please discuss this with our team before making any assumptions.

**Our minimum guaranteed response and approval times are as follows. Please contact us with as much notice as possible:**

<b>Reactive statements to media enquiry:</b>	<b>4 hours</b>
<b>Planned press notice, including approved quote where applicable:</b>	<b>4 days</b>
<b>Printed or digital assets including brochures, pamphlets, web pages, social media graphics and on-street hoardings and banners:</b>	<b>2 weeks</b>
<b>Film/animation (please contact us pre-production to discuss, rather than sending us a draft or final work)</b>	<b>2 weeks:</b>
<b>Invitation to Mayor/Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Contact us at least three months in advance to discuss opportunities and format.</b>

We recognise at times there will be a need for more immediate turnaround. Where this is unavoidable, we will make best endeavours to agree a solution.

### 3. Telling the story

Our key communications principle is that we shall be 'FAIR' at all times. We shall follow these key principles in all our content creation:

- **Focused content** and engagement around the Missions of our Mayor and Cabinet; we will take an integrated approach to communications using a blend of channels and tactics to target different audiences with relevant messages. You can read about the five Missions of the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority on our [website](#).
- **Accessibility:** The way we engage and communicate will make stakeholders feel included in the processes and decisions of the North East MSA; communications is a two-way process so must encompass research, listening and feedback opportunities, and create opportunities for conversation.
- **Impact through delivery:** People will recognise the North East MSA's actions in their communities; our targets will be set according to the impact a project is aimed at having, alongside the communications outcomes which support this.
- **Relevance:** People will see how the North East MSA touches their lives for the better; targeted communications will reach different audiences in a fractured media environment.

We want to see content which places the beneficiary of your project at the heart of the story, using a mix of media to achieve reach and impact and supported by evidence and data.

#### 3.1 Who we are and how you describe us

The elected Mayor leads the North East MSA and will be associated by most audiences with the work we do. Press notices, headlines and body text should therefore highlight association with the Mayor first and the strategic authority alongside this.

The Mayor should be described as '**North East Mayor Xxx Xxxx**'. The current mayor (until elections due in 2028) is Kim McGuinness (note spelling) and should be referred to as '**North East Mayor Kim McGuinness**' at first mention and '**Mayor Kim**' thereafter.

Where a cabinet member is introduced in the context of their role with the North East CA, their portfolio should be described first, followed by their elected position at a local authority, for example: **Cllr Tracey Dixon, the North East MSA Cabinet Member for the Home of Real Opportunity, and leader of South Tyneside Council**. Where a cabinet member is quoted or appears in the context of their local authority position (for example where the local authority is receiving funding from the North East MSA) their cabinet role should not be mentioned.

The first time our organisation is mentioned in any communications it should be with our name in full as '**The North East Mayoral Strategic Authority**'. After the first mention, you can abbreviate this to '**The North East MSA**' or in direct quotes and conversation '**the Mayoral Strategic Authority**' or '**MSA**' where there is no risk we would be confused with another strategic authority.

Our name should not be shortened any other way, and the acronym **NEMSA** should **NEVER** be used.

The following 'boiler plate' descriptor should be used in press notices, relevant print document and digital assets:

North East Mayor Kim McGuinness heads the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (North East MSA) serving an area of 2.2 million people including County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. For more information visit [www.northeast-ca.gov.uk](http://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk)

### 3.2 Describing our relationship with you and your project

We have produced a set of brand guidelines for the use of logos and associated identity symbols. You can find this [here](#).

When describing your relationship with our organisation in text we must always be referred to in full. For example:

**This project is funded by North East Mayor Kim McGuinness and The North East Mayoral Strategic Authority**

Or shortened to:

**Funded by The North East Mayoral Strategic Authority**

Where you use the above text you should also use, where appropriate and space permits, the boiler plate description as a footnote or 'notes to editors' elsewhere on the page, article or publication.

### 3.3 Displaying our logos in digital communications

In digital communications our logo should appear prominently on websites, or as the final frames of film and animated material. On websites of organisations which derive all or most of their core funding from the North East MSA this should be on the home page. Where a project you deliver is funded by the North East MSA our logo should appear on the first or landing page devoted to that project, including for example a page within a Local Authority website where residents can use an online form to apply for funding or to take part in an event.

### 3.4 Ensuring communications are accessible

We expect all funded projects to follow best practice guidance for accessibility in the creation of all documents and content. We have a legal requirement to ensure that our communications are accessible, this includes social media. All videos must be subtitled (and in any case more than 80% of consumers watch video without sound) and all images must have Alt text descriptions.

**The Government Communications Service provides good resources around accessible content [here](#) which you may find helpful.**

## 4. Using social media

Social media will provide a significant part of reach for any content as well as opportunities to engage. Effective collaboration between project partners is a powerful means to extend reach and amplify message.

Posts by people, and collaborating with people including directors and officers of the North East CA, cabinet members and the Mayor, are likely to generate more engagement and so greater reach.

We can discuss this with you specific communications plans, but we also have the following corporate identities, which you should use to acknowledge our funding and support in minimal space:

Facebook	North East Mayoral Strategic Authority
Instagram	@ne-mayoralstrategicauthority
LinkedIn	@the-north-east-mayoral-strategic-authority
TikTok	@NorthEastMSA
X	@NorthEast_MSA
Youtube	@NorthEast_MSA

### 4.1 Using #Hashtags

There may be specific #Hashtags associated with the subject matter of the posts that should be used, although these should be used sparingly, as it is no longer 2011.

Please make sure all #Hashtags use #CamelCase, which is #Capitalising the first letters of words in multiple word hashtags. This allows screen reader technology to distinguish words in a hashtag making the post more accessible.

Accessibility guidelines recommend a maximum of #2Hashtags per post and recommend using numbers and limited use of emojis. Starting a post with an emoji can be confusing to people using assisted technology.

The Hashtag or acronym #NEMSA should **never** be used in social media because it can refer to more than one organisation globally. The #NorthEastMSA is unique.

## 5. Information on specific modes and channels

### 5.1 Press notices

If you are about to start writing a press notice please contact us first and we'll be happy to discuss your narrative and message and how it fits alongside ours. The North East MSA is a partnership organisation and we want to support and add capacity to the work you do through collaboration.

All press notices which refer to the North East MSA should be approved by us and you should always use [communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk) to request approval rather than writing to individual officers.

We normally expect the role of the North East Mayor and North East Mayoral Strategic Authority to be first mentioned within the first three paragraphs of press notice, and within the first paragraph where the notice is announcing initial funding for a project.

We can provide photographs where appropriate of the North East Mayor and cabinet members to support your release.

### 5.2 Broadcast media including radio, TV, and podcasts

Please let us know immediately and in advance of recording if a project we fund is to be featured in broadcast media. About any broadcast media work you have planned, as soon as practically possible. You should reference being funded by the North East Mayor and or North East MSA at least once in any interviews.

### 5.3 Your own filmed content

Please contact us in advance of filming to discuss and agree how your project appears, with scripts and storyboards where possible. We may insist on significant editorial changes which are time-consuming and expensive if we are asked to approve completed film projects.

### 5.4 Newsletters, e-newsletters and website articles

Please reference North East MSA within any newsletters and website articles you publish and always include a link to our website. Where your organisation is core funded by the North East MSA every newsletter should reference this with use of our logos. Where a project funded by the North East MSA has its own newsletter it must always reference our funding through use of our logos.

### 5.5 Hoardings, signboards and other content opportunities

On-street hoardings, vehicles and other assets which form part of everyday life are an important route to demonstrating the work of the North East MSA.

It is a requirement of our funding that you demonstrate quarterly through project returns that these semi-permanent assets include our logos in acknowledgement of funding. Please contact us through [communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk) to share designs for such assets and gain approval. These physical assets vary enormously but our brand guidelines provide a starting point on how our logos should be placed.

## 5.6 Events

Please do invite us to speak or otherwise take part in events you organise. We want to join the conversations you have. The North East Mayor receives many more invitations than she can accept, and where she is unable to attend we will discuss with you attendance by a cabinet member or one of our senior officers.

Invitations to the North East Mayor and/or cabinet members should be sent at least three months in advance. Invitations for our officers can be sent at shorter notice but be realistic about the diaries of our senior team. If you are planning to invite the North East Mayor please read this page for more information on what to do next.

Organisations which are core funded by the North East MSA should acknowledge this throughout publicity including advanced publicity, booking portals such as Eventbrite, reminder emails and at-location banners, pull-ups and welcome and presentation slides. Events for projects which are funded by the North East MSA should also follow these rules.

## 5.7 Training materials, handouts, letter templates, certificates etc

The North East Mayoral Strategic Authority plays a huge role in funding training and skills programmes. Funding should be acknowledged through the use of our logos on presentations in PowerPoint, CANVA or similar, normally on the introductory slide. Course handouts, letters and emails of invitation and completion certificates should wherever possible include reference to the North East MSA as funding body. This would normally be within a footer to the page concerned.

## 5.8 SHINE

In this section you will find further details on specific guidance that relates to Shine, remember Sections 1 to 4 apply here too.

Please contact the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority communications team before you start your initial communications work, social media activity or use of our branding related to your Shine affiliation. We want to maximise the impact of your comms and we want to work with you to do that.

It is a condition of accreditation that the North East MSA is appropriately acknowledged with correct statements and logo use outlined in this guidance.

### Telling the story

We find real people who are benefitting from the Shine are the best people to talk about it. They are more likely to resonate with our audiences and more people are likely to see, hear, and remember your business as a result. Giving opportunities to members of your team to tell their story is the most successful approach to Shine comms and the approach we recommend.

### Describing our relationship with you

When describing your relationship with our organisation we must always be referred to in full. You have a choice of:

[Insert business name] has been awarded the Shine [Foundation/Intermediate/Advanced] Award by the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority.

[Insert business name] is working towards the Shine [Foundation/Intermediate/Advanced] Award by the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority.

This descriptor must be used on your website, print documents and press releases.

The North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (North East MSA) was formed on 7 May 2024. It is led by Elected Mayor Kim McGuinness and the Cabinet and covers the seven local authority areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

## When and how to use our logos



The Shine logo size can be changed but the height/width ratio should not be. The logo should never be squashed.

We expect the logo will be included on your website and any print or digital media associated with your business.

The Shine logo is available from your members area of the Shine website.

## Using social media

We know that there isn't much space for text on social media, particularly on X (formerly Twitter). We do not need a formal sentence in every post, but we do need some acknowledgement of our role in funding the project or programme in the post itself, simply tagging us is not enough.

There are a selection of infographic designs available for use on social media, these are available by emailing [Shine@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Shine@northeast-ca.gov.uk).

Shine also has its own LinkedIn tag @SHINE-NORTH-EAST so please tag us in any of your Shine social media activity if you would like us to share your posts.

Hashtag format: #NorthEastEngland #Shine

## Other media

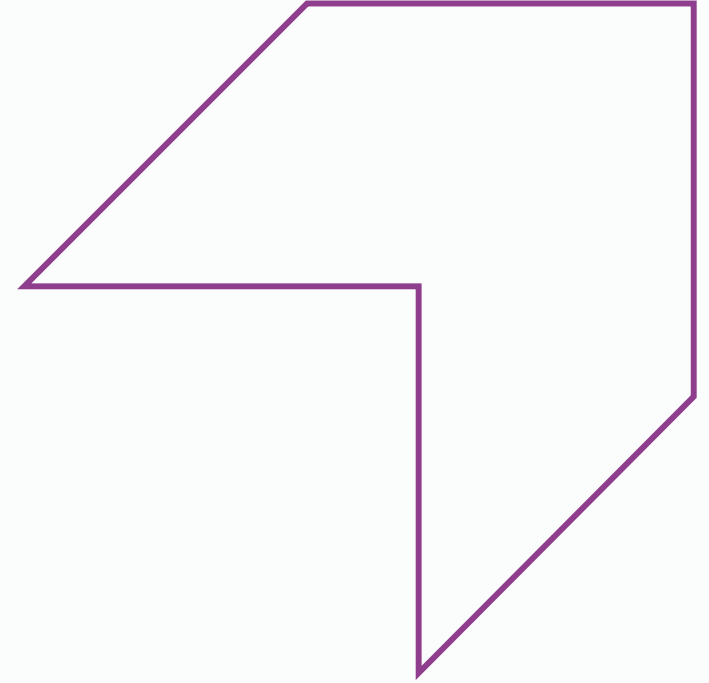
You should reference North East MSA within the first three paragraphs of a press release, newsletter piece or website article. Please use the standard descriptors outlined above.

You should reference North East MSA at least once in any interviews given by your spokespeople about Shine.



**North East  
Mayoral**  
Strategic Authority

**Kim McGuinness**  
North East  
Mayor



## For help and guidance

Contact [communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northeast-ca.gov.uk)