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Title:	Communication Plan 2017 - 2021		
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Policy Replacement:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Title (inc Date/ Version):	
Target Audience:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Managers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guardians <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Employed Guardians		
Date Approved by SMT:			
Consultation Dates with Staff:		Date Approved by JCC:	
Date Screening sent to Equality Unit:		Date PPI Screening:	
Date Approved by Board or Sub-Committee:	<input type="checkbox"/> Board <input type="checkbox"/> Audit Committee <input type="checkbox"/> H&S Committee <input type="checkbox"/> IG Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Committee <input type="checkbox"/> SCG Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Remuneration Committee <input type="checkbox"/> SMT		
Operational Date:		Review Date:	
Related Policies/ Procedures	Business Continuity Plan		

**To be completed by the Communication & HR Officer**

Date Issued to Target Audience:		If applicable, policy replaced removed from staff website:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date added to Staff Website:		Date Policy schedule Updated:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes  Date:
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## Executive Summary: Communication Plan 2017 – 2021

NIGALA's Communication Plan 2017 – 2021 has been developed to support the delivery of NIGALA's Corporate and Business Plan 2017 – 2021. The Corporate and Business Plan sets out our strategic vision and values, identifying the outcomes which the Agency strives to achieve over the course of the Corporate and Business Plan. To inform the content of the Corporate and Business Plan, a number of engagement sessions were held which were attended by members of NIGALA's Board, the Senior Management Team and staff.

This Communication Plan comprises of two parts. Part 1 outlines the overarching strategy regarding communication, including:

- Purpose & Aims;
- Communication Commitment;
- Strategic Context and the Importance of Good Communication;
- NIGALA's Service Users and Stakeholders;
- NIGALA's Strategic Map;
- Methods of Communication; and
- Objectives to be achieved in the Corporate & Business Plan.

Part 2 of this document is a 'live' Communication Plan which sets out the communication projects associated with the objectives from the Corporate and Business Plan 2017 – 2021. This will be reviewed by NIGALA's Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis to set the priorities, update the actions and monitor progress. By framing the Communication Plan in such a way, the Agency can be agile in its communication planning, responding to internal and external drivers as appropriate, and thereby ensuring this Plan supports the Agency in achieving its objectives for 2017/18 and beyond.

Please ensure you take the time to familiarise yourself with the Communication Plan which is available under the Policies (Corporate & HR Policies) section of the Intranet.

## Table of Contents

<b>PART 1: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction.....	2
Structure .....	2
Purpose & Aims .....	3
Communication Commitment .....	4
Strategic Context and the Importance of Good Communication .....	4
Service Users and Stakeholders .....	5
NIGALA’s Strategic Map.....	7
Communication Streams .....	8
Corporate & Business Plan Objectives 2017/18 and beyond .....	9
<b>PART 2: COMMUNICATION PLAN 2017/18 .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Communication Plan Index List .....	15

# **PART 1: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

## Introduction

The Northern Ireland Guardian ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) provides a service for children and young people where there are concerns regarding abuse and neglect and whose futures are being decided by the courts in the arenas of Public Law and Adoption. These children and young people represent some of the most vulnerable in our society and Guardians ad Litem endeavour to ensure that their needs remain the focus of court proceedings and that the best that can be achieved, is achieved.

NIGALA's core purpose is to represent the wishes and feelings of children and young people in the family courts in Northern Ireland in Public Law and Adoption proceedings, with the overarching goal being to deliver a high quality service to these children and young people.

This Communication Plan has been developed to support the delivery of the NIGALA's Corporate and Business Plan 2017 – 2021. The Corporate and Business Plan sets out our strategic vision and values, and identifies the outcomes which the Agency strives to achieve over the course of the Corporate Plan period. To inform the content of the Corporate and Business Plan, a number of engagement sessions were held which were attended by members of NIGALA's Board, the Senior Management Team and staff.

## Structure

Part 1 of this Plan sets out the strategic overview of the Communication Plan, including:

- Purposes & Aims;
- Communication Commitment;
- Strategic Context and the Importance of Good Communication;

- NIGALA's Service Users and Stakeholders;
- NIGALA's Strategic Map;
- Methods of Communication; and
- Objectives to be achieved in the Corporate and Business Plan.

Part 2 of this document is a 'live' Communication Plan which sets out the communication projects associated with the objectives from the Corporate and Business Plan 2017 - 2021. This will be reviewed by NIGALA's Senior Management Team (SMT) on a quarterly basis to set the priorities, update the actions and monitor progress. By framing the Communication Plan in such a way, the Agency can be agile in its communication planning, responding appropriately to internal and external drivers, and thereby ensuring this Plan supports the Agency in achieving its objectives for 2017/18 and beyond.

## **Purpose & Aims**

This Plan aims to:

- Ensure there are appropriate mechanisms in place to support good internal and external communications with our service users and key stakeholders;
- Develop two-way communication channels recognising that key stakeholder groups can provide feedback which will enable NIGALA to improve services; and
- Continually improving the way we communicate with employees and Self-Employed Guardians, thus assisting in the co-production of ideas on how to take strategic and operational initiatives forward.

## Communication Commitment

NIGALA is committed to following clear communication principles for employees, service users and other stakeholders. All communications activity should be:

- Be open and honest;
- Be relevant, accurate, sensitive and timely;
- Recognise the importance and value of engaging with service users, employees and stakeholders;
- Be accessible in line with Our Value: Promoting Diversity and Equality; and
- Reflect the principles of confidentiality, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and other relevant legislation.

## Strategic Context and the Importance of Good Communication

Maintaining and developing good internal and external communications is of the utmost importance to NIGALA, particularly during a period of change for the arenas of Health and Social Care and the Justice System in which NIGALA operates. There are a number of drivers shaping the external context in which NIGALA functions, including:

- Northern Ireland Assembly *Programme for Government*;
- Department of Health's *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*;
- Developments in the Family Courts, including the Programme for Government key indicator to improve the effectiveness of the Justice System and a number of judicial reviews aimed at achieving better outcomes for court users and creating a more responsive system which improves access to justice;
- Department of Health's *Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing: A Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland*;

- Financial austerity;
- Increasing demands for the service of Guardians ad Litem; and
- The changing demographic of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

Given the dynamic and changing environment in which NIGALA operates, good communication is an integral part of an agile and responsive organisation. Communication should:

- Provide service users and stakeholders with timely information regarding matters of interest and/ or concern;
- Ensure employees, Self-Employed Guardians and other stakeholders understand the vision, purpose, objectives and developments driving the Agency and the decisions taken by the SMT and Board;
- Inform employees, Self-Employed Guardians and relevant stakeholders of the PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) factors affecting the performance of the Agency;
- Raise awareness of the Agency and its achievements;
- Promote and enhance the reputation of NIGALA; and
- Enhance the commitment of all employees to NIGALA's performance.

## **Service Users and Stakeholders**

The service users of the Guardian ad Litem service are the children and young people subject to Public Law and Adoption proceedings who are represented by our Guardian ad Litem workforce and the courts who appoint Guardians. The diagram on the following page details NIGALA's main stakeholders and those with whom we want to develop and strengthen our communication links. Appropriate communication methods will be used to communicate effectively with our service users and stakeholders, including interpreting and translation, accessible formats and easy to understand versions.



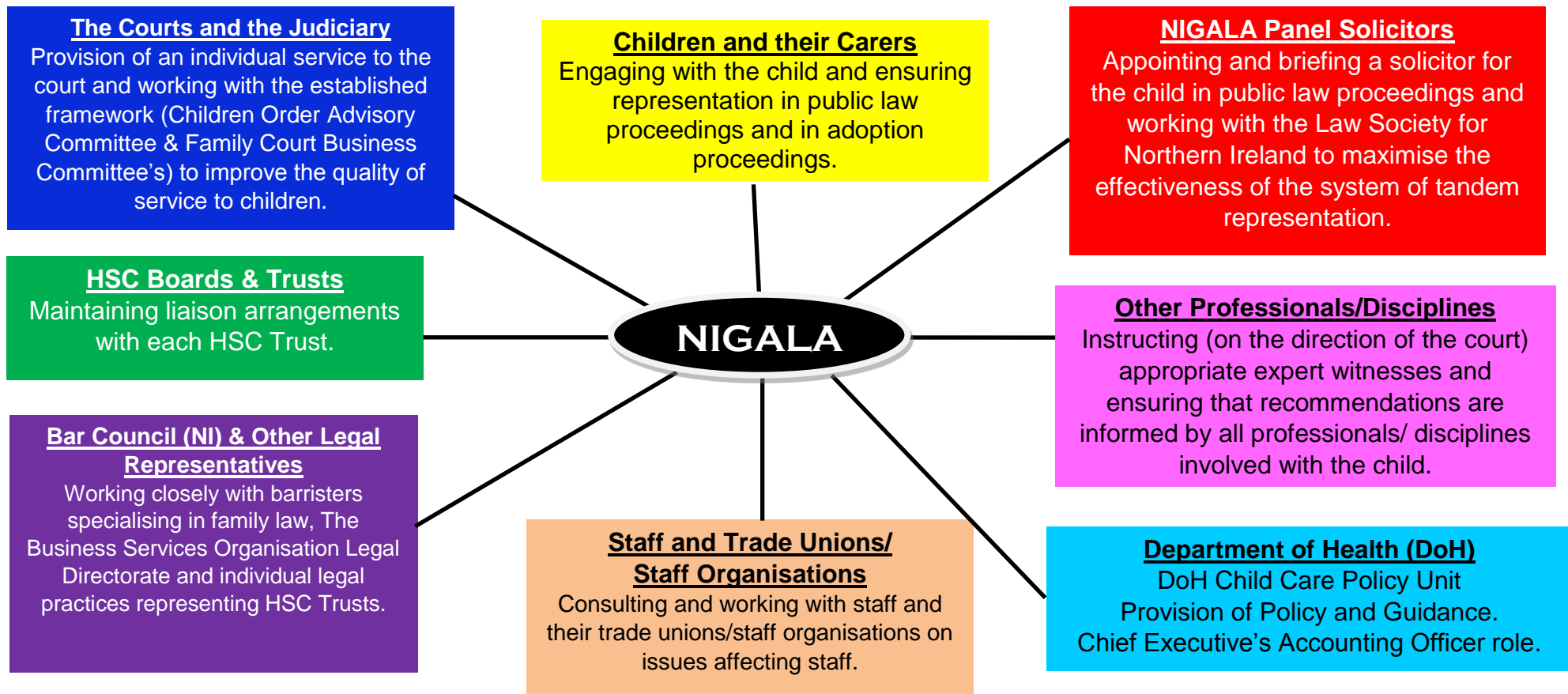


Diagram 1: NIGALA's Key Internal and External Stakeholders

The Communication Plan in Part 2 will ensure that the method(s) of communication utilised are appropriate and relevant to the particular stakeholder group identified as being involved.

## NIGALA's Strategic Map

NIGALA's strategic map below connects our vision, values and purpose to the strategic themes which have been identified as the drivers for our Corporate and Business Plan 2017 – 2021. This Communication Plan endeavours to support the delivery of our strategic themes through communication which is underpinned by our values to further the vision and purpose of the Agency.

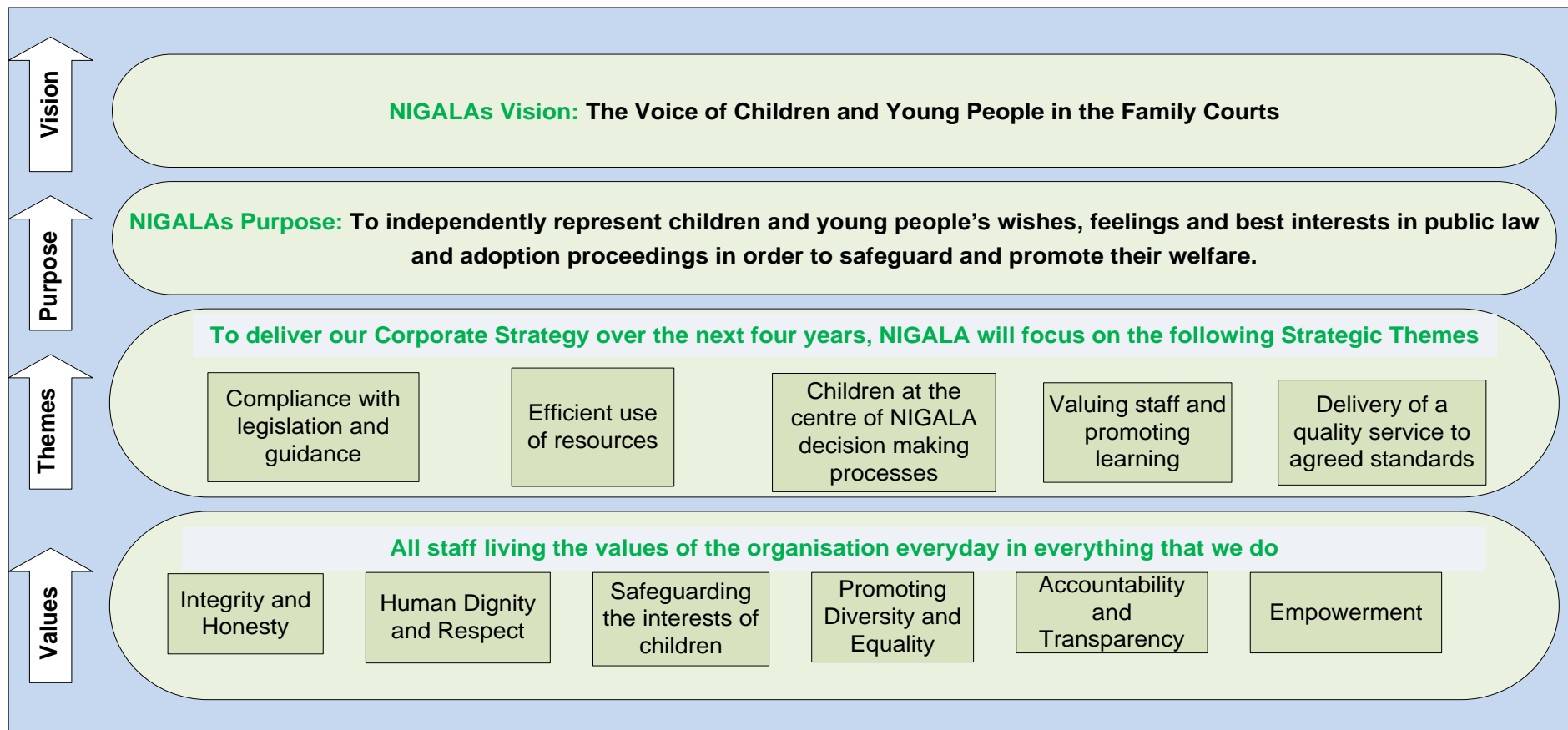


Diagram 2: NIGALA's Strategic Map 2017 - 2021

## Communication Streams

NIGALA utilises a range of communication streams for both internal and external stakeholders which are set out below. It is important to note these are not mutually exclusive and some streams used to communicate with external stakeholders may be appropriate for internal and vice versa.

### Internal Stakeholders

Staff Meetings
Intranet
Digital Signage
Bi-annual Newsletter
CEO Briefings
Staff Innovation Forum
Social Media - Facebook & Twitter
Joint Consultative Committee
Professional Development Groups
Sharing Skills Sessions
Appraisal & Supervision
Staff Survey
Training Event / Awareness Session

### External Stakeholders

Website
Social Media - Facebook & Twitter
Bi-annual Newsletter
Joint Consultative Committee
Publications
Meetings with key interest groups and stakeholders
Conferences / Seminars
Postal Distribution
General Correspondence
Printed Material

Diagram 3: NIGALA's Key Communication Streams with Internal and External Stakeholders

## Corporate & Business Plan Objectives 2017/18 and beyond

This section will set out the objectives from the Corporate and Business Plan 2017 – 2021, specifically those targeted for 2017/18 and the overall longer term objective. The Communication Plan in Part 2 will set out the communication initiatives which are then linked back to, and support the delivery of, the below objectives.

<b>Strategic Theme: Children at the Centre of NIGALA's Decision Making Processes</b>		
<b>2017/18 Objectives &amp; Associated Communication ID</b>		
1	Promote the use of co-designed practitioner resources for engagement with children and young people in the work of Guardians.	C1 Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.
2	Develop practice models/ frameworks/ tools and materials to strengthen the effectiveness and the impact of the Guardians in promoting a stronger voice for children and young people in the Family Courts.	C1 Error! Reference source not found.
3	Review the mechanisms for children's feedback and participation – in line with delivering a service where children and young people feel they have been treated with respect, listened to and supported.	Error! Reference source not found.
4	Design a Pilot project with children and young people to develop a Children and Young Person's Forum as a means of involving children and young people in NIGALA decision-making.	Error! Reference source not found.
<b>Longer Term Objectives &amp; Associated Communication ID</b>		

1	Develop an innovative and interactive online application based means of feedback.	
2	Engage with local and regional services and stakeholders in order to co-produce and co-design improved services for and with children and young people who are service users.	<b>Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.</b>

**Strategic Theme: Efficient Use of Resources**

**2017/18 Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	Complete the work into a review of the NIGALA workforce to provide an efficient and fit for purpose structure to deliver the service.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>
2	Integration of the less paper working strategy supported by information management skills development, digital development, training and support.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>

**Longer Term Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	Implementation of the workforce plan in line with the mission and values of the organisation to ensure a sustainable Guardian service working to maintain a relevant and flexible organisation responding to the needs of looked after children.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>
2	To have NIGALA recognised as a key source of regional information in Children's services within Family Court processes which would inform long-term policy and strategy.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>
3	NIGALA staff appropriately skilled to interface with the e-courts strategy and HSC Trust ICT developments	

**Strategic Theme: Valuing Staff and Promoting Learning**

**2017/18 Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	Develop and strengthen our management and leadership capacity, promoting trust and stability throughout the organisation through the delivery of the Culture & Climate Survey and Investors in People Action Plan.	<b>Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.</b>
2	Develop out internal communication and engagement systems and processes between the Board, Management and Staff so there is clear understanding of the respective roles; communication and engagement in achievement of the NIGALA priorities.	<b>Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.</b>
3	Deliver a comprehensive training programme which disseminates the learning from our activities and research which informs our continuous professional development framework leading to better outcomes for children.	<b>C1 Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.</b>
4	Establish a regional Legal Issues Forum to ensure mechanisms for knowledge exchange.	<b>Error! Reference</b>

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<b>Longer Term Objectives &amp; Associated Communication ID</b>		
1	Develop a competency framework for the organisation which links behaviours directly to individual roles.	
2	Delivery of a professional training programme aligned to the competencies within the Guardian ad Litem role.	



**Strategic Theme: Delivery of a Quality Service to Agreed Standards**

**2017/18 Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	Strengthen our links and develop opportunities for co-production with HSC organisations, Court Services, Judiciary, Solicitors and the voluntary sector via COAC, Solicitors, strategy for Looked After Children to include the provision of capacity for measuring regional performance and outcomes.	<b>Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.</b>
2	Ensure the delivery of all actions to support the annual quality review process in conjunction with other relevant HSC organisations specifically directed to the representation of Children in the Family Court.	
3	Develop staff skills in group supervision, risk sharing, peer review, reflective practice, critical challenge and professional support.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>
4	Develop awareness and engagement with the Social Work Strategy for all Guardian staff.	
5	Devise a schedule of professional audits in line with the revised Quality Assurance Plan.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>

**Longer Term Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	Regional recognition for innovation and achievement by NIGALA.	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>
2	Continue to carry out the professional audits in line with the 4 year audit plan.	<b>Error! Reference</b>

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**Strategic Theme: Compliance with Legislation and Guidance**

**2017/18 Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	Engage collaboratively with key stakeholders in legislative and strategic consultation exercises and service development initiatives.	Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.
2	Promote staff involvement in relevant consultations and co-design awareness raising sessions/ dissemination of information.	Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.

**Longer Term Objectives & Associated Communication ID**

1	NIGALA is actively involved in regional fora related to practice developments, guidance and legislation within child and family care.	<b>Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.</b>
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## **PART 2: COMMUNICATION PLAN 2017/18**

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ID	Action	Progress	Comm Streams	Due Date	Person(s) Responsible	RAG Status
C1						