

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust

Corporate Communications Strategy for 2013/14 to 2015/16

www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk



1. Executive summary

Effective corporate communications will build the reputation of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust through trusted, timely, high quality information to the public, patients, partners, voluntary groups and stakeholders.

The primary function of the Corporate Communications Team over the next two years will be to provide a full marketing communications service to the Trust covering media relations, engagement, service and corporate marketing, design, internal communications and stakeholder (informal/formal) consultation.

The strategy is supported by detailed strategies and action plans for media relations, internal communications, marketing, and social media. It also aligns to a number of other strategies, including membership, fundraising and patient experience strategies in particular.

The key outputs for the Corporate Communications Team in 2013-14 are listed in the attached work plan (Appendix A).

2. Purpose

Every member of staff is responsible for high quality communications with the public, patients and their colleagues and stakeholders. The corporate communications strategy aims to improve how well-informed people feel, both by delivering high quality communications, and by providing professional advice/support to ensure everyone has the tools they need to deliver excellent communications.

The strategy aims to:

- Define our approach to corporate communications
- Identify existing areas of weakness to be improved upon
- Define a work plan to continuously improve corporate communications

Media relations will improve how **well-informed** people feel, raising the Trust's profile and **reputation** by increasing understanding of the organisation's **priorities**, and providing information about services.

Marketing campaigns and activities, including **social media**, will support corporate and service communications and performance objectives, and will improve how well informed people feel, build **brand recognition** and reputation through consistent use of **corporate identity** and promotion of the Trust's **priorities**. Actions will stimulate two-way communications and engagement.

Engagement will form the central foundation of our communications approach. The views and experiences of staff, patients, carers and stakeholders of our services will be captured via a methodology which will ensure that service changes and redesign have full cognisance of the views of many.

Design services will build **brand recognition** and reputation through engaging, **creative** and **innovative, high-quality** marketing materials and Trust publications which ensure consistent use of the Trust's **corporate identity**.

Internal communications will engage with staff and increase understanding of the Trust's **corporate priorities**, so staff feel **well-informed, valued** and **motivated**, and act as **ambassadors** for the organisation.

3. The vision

The vision for the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust relies upon excellent communications.

The Trust's corporate objectives for 2013-14 sets objectives for improvement in a number of key priorities. Many of these priorities specifically target improved communication with stakeholders and staff.

Actions in progress to achieve this objective are:

- Develop new branding and communication strategies
- Continue to improve the focus of Pulse magazine and the frequency of other Trust communications, such as GP briefings and patient safety campaigns
- Review of all online communication platforms to ensure Bob, the public internet and our social media sites encourage two-way communication and easy access to information.

This strategy embraces the corporate vision and is ambitious and challenging in its aims to make a real and measurable difference to the Trust's corporate communications.

4. Background

The last communications strategy was published in 2008 and sought to address weaknesses in corporate communications. Since 2010 our primary focus has been on:

- Appropriate internal communications
- Effective media relations
- Foundation Trust consultation, engagement and communication (with members)
- Stakeholder engagement

This strategy builds on these successful foundations and seeks to further develop the core service offering of the corporate communications team.

Through the NHS Foundation Trust application, the Trust has received feedback that some areas of corporate communications needed to be tackled. These are:

- **Confidence and style** – the Trust has a consistent track record in performance and quality of service, yet frequently is the last to promote its achievements.
- The Trust needs to do more to **celebrate its successes** and to promote itself positively. A good organisation is not afraid to say 'we've done this well'.
- **Stakeholder relations** – improving our relations and engagement with stakeholders will enable better relations and may combat negative perceptions and myths that have been allowed to propagate.
- Rationale – the Trust needs to continually **reinforce the messages** of quality: sustainable patient safety, experience and clinical effectiveness, to ensure that our audiences understand the motivation for decisions.
- Understanding – the Trust does not have a quantitative view of the **perceptions of staff, patients and stakeholders**.

Our approach to engagement could be improved by better planning, enabling a more proactive approach. We also must focus our efforts on ensuring that we engage the population fully cognisant of our obligations under the equality and diversity legislation.

- The Trust could improve the **management of its reputation**. Doing so would allow it to quantify and qualify perceptions held by people or organisations worked with.

- Balance - effort in generating **balanced and reflective content** would improve the quality of our publications.
- Planning – the Trust’s communications team frequently turns around campaigns within short timescales, whereas adopting a **planned approach** over a longer timescale would generate more publicity and maximise opportunities for promotion.
- **Alternatives to media** – the Trust would benefit from exploring alternative platforms for communicating its message. This would exploit a full range of digital media such as social media, networking and communication ‘apps’ as well as traditional platforms such as speaker opportunities, stakeholder forums and patient groups. Good progress has been made with TV screens in NDDH waiting areas, but this needs expanding across the whole Trust to capitalise on this content generation.

NB: The advantage of digital media is that it is easy to measure, and therefore assess performance using KPIs.

- Branding – the Trust’s **brand is currently confused**, with the name relating to only half of the Trust. Staff, patients and stakeholder in eastern Devon find it difficult to relate to ‘Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust’. Inconsistent patient information leaflets, welcome facilities in foyers and other Trust materials feed this confusion and will not support enhanced relationships.

The pan-Devon specialist community services and those services adopting more commercial marketing techniques through Any Qualified Provider, do not find it easy to sit underneath the current brand. The nature of these services – dispersed, rural – and their vital clinical role as referral signposts to other services, is lost within the current brand. The Trust needs to consider a

brand family where all services are given individual identities within an overall branding strategy.

These recommendations form the focus of the work plan for 2013-14.

5. Target audiences

The corporate communications function exists to serve groups of people that come into contact with the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, as the body responsible for the provision of NHS services in northern and eastern Devon.

Internal

NHS staff are trusted sources of information from the public about local NHS services. Staff need information about their organisation, over and above their service/department, which supports them to actively contribute to the vision and objectives of the Trust.

Fundraisers (or those volunteers actively raising funds on our behalf) require clear and consistent messages about the work of the Trust and how fundraising will help deliver the vision of and improvements to local services.

External

Patients require information that support them when accessing NHS services.

Patients (and visitors) to the area require information about their local urgent care NHS services and how to navigate unfamiliar health provision to obtain the best outcome.

The public wish to be kept updated on Trust activities and to see an explanation of the Trust’s actions.

Local communities rely on a two-way process of informing then listening, consulting and taking action on the feedback received. Connecting with communities requires more than just ‘telling’.

Foundation Trust members wish to be kept informed, but also to be welcomed to get involved in improving local services through engagement activities. More detail on membership engagement and governance is contained within the membership strategy.

Volunteers wish to be kept informed of general Trust news but also how their input is specifically helping to improve local NHS services.

Stakeholders and partners have influential views about our services and facilities and can act as ambassadors or assassins to the Trust’s reputation within the community.

The national Government and regulators expect delivery of a range of chosen priorities from a Trust which demonstrates an excellent track record in performance and high quality service provision.

The Corporate Communications team therefore provides key communication and public information that explains services and defines expectations, and which also explains policy/strategy decisions and manages the Trust’s reputation and brand.

The Trust also has a statutory duty to publish certain information, including the Annual Report and Accounts, Quality Account, Freedom of Information responses and monthly performance data.

6. Objectives

The objectives of the corporate communications function are:

- **Effective and efficient public relations service through strategic direction** – through consultation, operational planning, engagement and maintaining a strong and consistent corporate brand.
- **Marketing (communications)** – professional public relations and marketing support to those services operating in competitive markets, ensuring services incorporate and respond to patient and staff feedback
- **Positive media coverage** – through delivering smart, creative and targeted media coverage that builds reputation, supports advocacy and ensures effective partnership working.
- **Improved patient communication** – through accessible information in relevant formats, distribution to target messages and clinically accurate
- **Engagement** - Our approach to engagement will use the marketing techniques of stakeholder segmentation, positioning, planning and the identification of target markets. This will ensure that we hold appropriate and relevant dialogues with stakeholders in a way that improves their experience, allows us to improve our service to them and provides evidence to support service growth and/or development. See appendix B for more information on the engagement approach.
- **Further develop and deliver effective internal communications** – through targeted staff communication, publications and networks to better support staff in their interactions with patients, families, colleagues and regulators. Also, to inspire staff to be ambassadors of their Trust thereby aiding patient satisfaction and organisation reputation.
- **Return on investment** – through continuous improvement in services, Advertising Equivalent Value, optimising search engine, income generation or cost avoidance through advertising revenue and cost savings made through efficient communications methods and the in-house web and design services.

7. Action, implementing and monitoring

Action

To ensure an effective corporate communications function, a work plan supports this strategy to provide a framework of activity against a realistic timescale.

The work plan also sets measures by which progress can be monitored, how effectively the function is working corporately and the extent to which the organisation's achievement of its objectives is being supported.

Implementation

The remit of the corporate communications team is:

- **Providing communications advice** to departments, services and executive directors around media relations, communications strategies and publications.
- **Marketing** campaigns and activities, including **social media**, to support corporate and service communications and performance objectives, and to improve how well informed people feel.
- **Brand management** – ensuring that corporate and NHS style guidelines are followed. Build brand recognition and reputation through consistent use of corporate identity and promotion of the Trust's priorities. Providing consultancy advice and delivery for corporate publications, safeguarding against inappropriate materials that will fail to represent the Trust to its best advantage.
- **Campaign management** – providing expertise to support major or Trust-wide campaigns
- **Proactive media relations** – by setting the news agenda, not waiting to react. Communities and staff value hearing things

directly from us first, as opposed to the media. Ensuring that the on-call directors and managers have adequate training in media relations to provide an out of hours service.

- **Media monitoring and evaluation** – media output is monitored through the use of an online media monitoring service. Undertake and circulate a weekly analysis as to the media perception of the Trust.
- **Graphic design and print advice** from the in-house graphic design function to teams on how best to inform patients/stakeholders about their service whilst remaining within NHS style guidelines. Act as the custodian of the NDHT brand templates and ensures all materials fall within the corporate brand umbrella. In-house service that provides value for money and directs teams to trusted partners when outsourcing is required.
- **Production of core corporate publications** including Chief Executive bulletin (weekly), Pulse (bi-monthly), Annual Report and Accounts, Fundraising Annual Report, Quality Account and corporate strategy and long term documents. Also undertakes some correspondence to stakeholders on behalf of the executive team.
- **Improvement in digital communication and the Trust's websites** . There are substantial savings to be made by increasing access to information through electronic publishing, saving on print and postage costs. Increasing use of social media to encourage two-way digital communication is a key part of this objective. An online strategy building upon customer services, communications, dynamic content and web infrastructure will be a primary project over the next two years.
- **Management of internal communications** and delivering key information to staff across the Trust through internal communication channels, Bulletin, Pulse and the intranet (Bob).
- **Promoting self-service**. All Trust staff have a responsibility to communicate effectively with patients, colleagues and stakeholders. A self-service toolkit to support staff by providing

templates for patient information leaflets, pulse articles, award submissions, press release, facts and figures about the Trust and so on, will support consistent communications across and outside of the organisation.

Monitoring

Measurement of the corporate communication team’s performance is linked to the activities outlined in the annual work plan.

Evaluation is a key component of the work process and aims to identify the impact of communication outputs, by click through rates, website stats, audits and feedback routes.

The performance indicators outlined in appendix 1 provide transparent performance analysis.

8. Themes and outputs for 2013-14

The following communication plan shows how the objectives will be implemented and indicates the desired outcomes of each activity. The overall outcome is to ensure effective internal and external communications combined with successful marketing communications and brand management.

The evaluation of each action will support a progress report at 12- and 24-months

Ensure an effective and efficient public relations service through strategic direction					
Main outputs 2013-14	Purpose	Evidence to date	Priority actions	Timescale	Evaluation
Strategy (1)	Framework for effective corporate communications to build the reputation of the Trust through trusted, timely, high quality information to the public, patients, partners, voluntary groups and stakeholders.	Vision, values and corporate objectives launched in 2012. FT consultation	Approval of communications strategy, key outputs and annual work plan Support a Trust staff awards programme with categories aligned to corporate objectives and values	September- Dec 2013	Indicators and outputs contained in Appendix 1, will be monitored through..... External reputation audit.
Strategy (2)	Ensure that corporate communications function is aligned with each area of priority.		Develop annual plan and templates to ensure bespoke communications is planned and aligned to needs of audiences.	September- Dec 2013	Internal communications satisfaction audit.

Strategy (3)	Reputation audit – to evaluate stakeholder perceptions of the Trust		Commission external agency to conduct reputation audit (use results to feed (re)branding and engagement plan)	September- Dec 2013	
Leadership	Leaders of the organisation which are seen to embody the vision, values and strategy of the organisation	Staff survey results..... Chat to Jac IBP roadshow	Regular (q'ly) consultation with staff and stakeholders on quality and performance information	2013/14	You said, we did. Analysis of feedback, improving trend. Staff survey results relating to communication.
Communications	People value the Trust services far more than the brand “Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust” and are unlikely to connect the two concepts.		Ensure contact details are clearly displayed and accessible Maintain the A-Z and signposting to NHS services Manage the media effectively Continue to develop external briefings to inform stakeholders. Step up internal communications so staff become advocates.	Dec 2013	Media analysis Web stats Thank you letters
Brand	The corporate identity embodies the Trust’s character, vision and identity – and is something people form an emotional relationship with.	Rebranding consultation in 2010.	Rebrand Trust to ensure our brand has relevance and connection with the populations served – commission external agency Adopt a highly visible branding exercise, using all physical and communication opportunities to link the service with the Trust.	Spring 2014	Rebranding exercise, possibly trust name change Design templates Style guide Self-service comms.

Marketing communications

Main outputs 2013-14	Purpose	Evidence to date	Priority actions	Timescale	Evaluation
PR and marketing support to individual services	Professional public relations and marketing support to those services operating in competitive markets, ensuring services incorporate and respond to patient and staff feedback.	Adhoc service support to audiology, HPD etc	Establish a suite of templates and frameworks to support service leaders develop and evolve their offering to patients and commissioners. Collate into a 'self-service area' to develop marketing confidence in service leaders across Trust.	Ongoing	Referral income KPIs in individual service plans

Positive media coverage

Main outputs 2013-14	Purpose	Evidence to date	Priority actions	Timescale	Evaluation
----------------------	---------	------------------	------------------	-----------	------------



Manage media relations effectively	Deliver smart, creative and targeted media coverage that builds reputation, supports advocacy and ensures effective partnership working	Weekly evaluation of coverage circulated to Board	<p>Ensure all written work and verbal briefings contain key strategic messages.</p> <p>Increase the number of proactive media hits with local and trade press.</p> <p>Rebut 50% of negative and damaging material published about the Trust through letters, quotes, alternative broadcasts and press interviews.</p> <p>Achieve 85% positive or neutral media, as assessed through the weekly report.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Performance indicators</p> <p>Performance indicators</p> <p>Performance indicators</p>	Reactive media responses are reduced and the public feel better informed by coverage in local, regional and national press.
Acute comms network	Ensure effective partner networks to improve communication networks across health economies	Continue to host and arrange bi-annual meetings and invite speakers of interest.	<p>Continue existing activities.</p> <p>Network with NTDA.</p>	Ongoing	Increased consistency between NHS Trusts in communication of key, strategic messages.
Maintain emergency or out of hours media service	Duty managers and directors on call have sufficient support to respond to OOH media calls.	Media training of new duty rota arranged in 2011.	Refresh training once at least 5 new members on rota.	Ongoing	<p>Skilled up execs and HODs</p> <p>Consistency of message from office to OOHours.</p>
Media briefings with local media	Ensure that proactive media opportunities are created and that local media are well informed about issues, projects and campaigns.	Regular meetings and discussions with local media to ensure our service meets their needs.	-	Performance indicators	<p>Agree KPIs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media always receive a response within deadline - Record of stories that did not get media coverage

Improved (patient) communication

Main outputs 2013-14	Purpose	Evidence to date	Priority actions	Timescale	Evaluation
To manage and lead on the continuous development of the corporate website	Provide accessible information in relevant formats, distribution to target messages and clinically accurate	<p>Since transition to wordpress and expert comms support, the front page has been decluttered.</p> <p>Information still needs to be improved for the four audiences of staff, patients, stakeholders and regulators</p>	<p>Review of website from perspective of each audience</p> <p>Website strategy to support services' online presence within branding guidelines. Consolidate websites 'owned' by NDHT</p> <p>Site stats presented at monthly comms team meeting.</p> <p>More design and comms input into web pages in terms of content and style.</p> <p>Front-end of Covalent so data is automatically updated</p> <p>Publication scheme and FOI</p> <p>Patient experience data reported</p> <p>Further develop specific areas: Fundraising, GP and FT membership</p>	<p>12 months</p> <p>August 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2013 / ongoing</p> <p>July 2013</p> <p>With IM&T</p> <p>July 2013</p> <p>2013-14</p>	<p>Reduce number of sites from 6 to 3. As Trust brand becomes more popular, fewer services will seek to stand out from their umbrella brand and instead champion the corporate.</p>



Stakeholder communications	Generate a well-produced and efficiently distributed regular Trust magazine as a cost effective way of getting key messages across to public, staff and stakeholders.	Dramatic improvement following new team member. Consistently positive feedback from staff and no trouble sourcing content.	Explore sponsorship to offset postage – balanced against distraction of cold calls and invoicing Continue using volunteers to stuff envelopes Develop online GP area, supported by briefings on key quality issues		Conduct a reader's poll for feedback.
Quality briefings	Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the achievements of the Trust and are able to engage with us to redesign services	Perception that there are misperceptions about NDHT historic funding, motivations for decisions and myths which need to be addressed	Rebuttal service for stakeholder myths. Regular GP briefings Glen's interview PPT Myth-busters Awareness campaign on AQP	2013-14	



Patient information	<p>Ensure that patient information is accessible, professionally produced, used at the right point in care and value for money.</p> <p>Pursue the aim of ensuring patient's expectations are set and they are ready for our service/treatment.</p>	<p>DVDs produced for high-volume services</p> <p>Governance process for patient information leaflets well running and well established.</p>	<p>Explore alternative funding models for patient information leaflets – to accept advertising.</p> <p>Support single print-provider tender through procurement</p> <p>Divert resources to digital forms of patient information so clinicians can print on demand or patients can watch from home</p> <p>Launch a project to review all patient letters – reduce templates from 2600 to 1000 ahead of EHR and digital dictation.</p>	2013-14	
---------------------	--	---	--	---------	--

Develop and deliver effective internal communications

Main outputs 2013-14	Purpose	Evidence to date	Priority actions	Timescale	Evaluation
Consolidate good internal communications with a toolkit for staff.	<p>Targeted staff communication, publications and networks to better support staff in their interactions with patients, families, colleagues and regulators.</p> <p>Also, to inspire staff to be ambassadors of their Trust thereby aiding patient satisfaction and organisation reputation.</p>	<p>Good progress and CEBulletin, Staff Express and Pulse being well-read.</p> <p>Managers are still not forthcoming in the promotion of their service, or key achievements.</p>	<p>Ensure obligatory attendance at HODs (comms to attend).</p> <p>Toolkit launched on Bob – article templates, communications campaign template etc</p>	2013-14	Staff survey

To manage and lead the continuous development of the staff intranet, Bob	To drive and implement a robust internal comms strategy	Staff survey feedback on Q11 and key finding 21	Draft internal communications strategy (– jointly with HR?) Secure (remote) access to Bob Train more staff to load their own content Refresh Bob layout and consult staff / key users. Engage exec team (to address individual concerns) Explore making Bob the first page after log-in (True content management system). Site stats to inform layout	monthly	
--	---	---	--	---------	--

Return on investment

Main outputs 2013-14	Purpose	Evidence to date	Priority actions	Timescale	Evaluation
Savings to corporate expenditure through effective graphic design	Through continuous improvement in services, Advertising Equivalent Value, optimising search engine, income generation or cost avoidance through advertising revenue and cost savings made through efficient communications methods and the in-house web and design services.		Extend indesign licenses to whole comms team Audio-visual training for team to do inhouse filming and editing		

Cross-skilled comms team	Develop the skills of the team to ensure that the team are early adopters of innovative communication techniques, using a variety of multi-channel communication methods and are ambassadors for effective communications	Appraisal objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website administration - App development - Assessing the usefulness of new and emerging technologies such as Yammer, Vimeo and well as traditional channels such as twitter and social media. 	Annual	KPIs
--------------------------	---	----------------------	---	--------	------



9. Appendix One: Performance indicators for communications activity

There are 25 performance indicators which help the corporate communications team to measure performance month on month, and year on year. Some of these indicators feed directly into the corporate objectives.

Performance indicator			
Media		How often measured	Target set
1	Number of media enquiries received	weekly	5
2	Speed of response to general enquiries (including FB, twitter and email)	monthly	8 working hours
3	% of media responses within deadline	monthly	100%
4	Number of news releases written and published	weekly	2
5	Number of broadcasts arranged/initiated by comms team	monthly	1
6	Number of proactive articles published in trade press	annually	5
7	% of news releases that are covered in the local media	monthly	90%
8	% of coverage with a positive tone	monthly	60% positive
9	% of coverage with a neutral tone	monthly	25% neutral
10	% of coverage with a negative tone	monthly	15% negative
11	Correcting factually inaccurate reporting with rebuttals	monthly	80%
12	Speed of reply to complaints about the communications service provided	monthly	3 working days
Digital comms		How often measured	Target set
13	Facebook friends of NDHT page	monthly	
14	Twitter followers	annually	1500
15	Google search page 1 – all positive	monthly	100% of page 1

16	Internet page hits	Monthly	+100 each month
17	Bob page hits	monthly	+100 each month
18	Bob site reorg according to site hits	Bi- annually	
19	Users trained to upload their team's content onto Bob (50 currently)	annually	+10 annually
General		How often measured	Target set
20	Design turnaround times – commission to 1 st draft = 3 days	monthly	
21	Pulse published on deadline	Bi-monthly	6 per year
22	Annual report published on time to auditor's approval	Annually	1 per year
Internal		How often measured	Target set
23	Chief Executive Bulletin published every Monday	weekly	90%
24	Staff survey improvement in communications questions	annually	10% improvement
25	Use of comms proforma	monthly	60% +

