

Communications Strategy Summary and Action Plan 2016/18



Changing Times: Communications Strategy Summary and Action Plan

The James Paget University Hospital is entering a new phase of operational, financial and organisational challenges.

It is facing increasing demand caused by an ageing population with complex health needs, a squeeze on finances and the need to collaborate and change quickly, working closely with healthcare and other partners.

Communication must play its part in meeting these challenges, to ensure that our staff, patients, the public and other stakeholders are kept informed about how our organisation is evolving to meet these challenges - while reassuring them that quality healthcare will not be compromised.

This document is designed to summarise the communications strategy by giving a snapshot of context, an outline of the objectives and the rationale behind them, and the action plan we will be working on in the next two years.

Communications strategies should have a purpose that positively impacts on the organisation by helping deliver strategic objectives.

This strategy directly supports the delivery of the Trust's objectives, which support the delivery of the Trust's Vision.

It is a given that communications will always focus on promoting the Trust and its work, to enhance its reputation, foster understanding and keep people informed.

However, events of the past few months suggest that there needs to be a greater emphasis and focus on both internal and external communications, which support the Trust in its efforts to:

- **work through a challenging financial situation which currently sees the Trust in deficit for the first time.**
- **prepare and deal with local peaks in demand for hospital services.**
- **engage on transformational 'change' projects, whether they involve a single department, a Trust-wide initiative or a collaborative partnership.**

These are the areas where the public and staff will judge the organisation – and will have an input on its reputation as a provider of quality patient care.

Progress can be achieved through an integrated communications plan, targeting relevant audiences.

The three areas are very much in line with the Trust's vision of being a well-led organisation delivering safe and compassionate care through a well-informed workforce.

The vision is supported by a set of values and behaviours which describe the organisation's culture and the way in which it conducts its business:

Courtesy and respect

So people feel **welcome**

Attentively kind and helpful

So people feel **cared for**

Responsive communication

So people feel **in control**

Effective and professional

So people feel **safe**



The strategy includes an internal focus, so that staff buy into the vision, support the values and behaviours and become ambassadors, promoting the JPUH as a great place to work while offering a quality customer service to patients, their relatives and carers.

It is also influenced by the healthcare environment in which the Trust is operating:

- **Political:** government is committed to “ring fencing” NHS funding for the duration of the next Parliament but there is a drive to increase operational effectiveness through the introduction of seven day services.
- **Economic:** despite the ‘ring fencing’, a high percentage of NHS Trusts are facing financial deficits including the JPUH. There will be a greater demand on health organisations working together to improve services for patients.
- **Social:** demand is increasing significantly due to a growing population – and an ageing population, with people living longer, often with complex health needs.
- **Technological:** making best use of technological advances in medical and business fields to improve efficiency and transform services.
- **Environmental:** as with other organisations, the NHS needs to demonstrate to the public that it considers the environment in all aspects of its work by, for example, harnessing the power of solar/wind energy and recycling products. The hospital needs to also consider its own “environment” and make maximum use of its estate to meet future challenges and potentially generate income.
- **Regulatory:** NHS regulators have already tightened rules on using agency staff, which may have an impact on future staffing levels. Regulators will also demand action from trusts who are operating a deficit. There are nine areas of action for all trusts, set out in NHS planning guidance. There is also the legal duty under section 242 of the NHS Act 2006 for trusts to involve stakeholders in healthcare developments. The Trust will need to ensure it responds effectively to its recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, which rated the hospital as ‘good’, to address areas of improvement.

Our communications principles

All are based on good practice:

- All communications will be open and transparent, in line with our values and NHS principles
- All messages will be clear, focused, simple, coherent and consistent (written in plain English with no jargon)
- Information will be timely, accurate and useful
- Communications will be two-way, through a number of channels including face-to-face and digital
- Activity will be well planned, proactive and targeted
- The NHS identity guidelines and the Trust’s style guide will be developed and followed to ensure consistency across all channels
- Communications will be well-researched and based on individual and group needs
- Communications should be in line with the NHS’s Accessible Information Standard
- Staff will be informed of plans/issues in advance of external stakeholders, where at all possible
- Communications and the Trust’s reputation is the responsibility of all staff, not just the corporate communications team
- Diversity will be considered in all that we do to ensure our messages are reasonable and understandable for all groups.



Objectives

The need to balance internal focus with external environment should influence the setting of the objectives within the strategy.

As such, the five communications objectives for 2016/18 are as follows:

- Support a healthy culture, with shared values throughout the organisation, enhancing the health and wellbeing of staff.
- Involve and inform staff in the vision and the direction of the organisation, inspiring them to contribute their expertise to the transformation effort, while working closely with NHS partners to promote the rationale and objectives behind collaborative projects.
- Develop and improve the Trust's digital channels to improve engagement with all stakeholders, to assist with operational objectives and the Patient Engagement strategy.
- Work closely with NHS organisations to provide joined up communications, in line with national campaigns, which empower local people to make informed health choices with the aim of reducing demand.
- Protect and enhance the Trust's reputation as a leader in innovation, education and research to help attract staff, particularly in areas where recruitment is difficult.

Actions

Sitting beneath the strategy is the action plan, which should be the focus for the communications team over the next two years 2016/18.

Currently, the Trust measures its communications output via a monthly report to the Board, which includes basic information about numbers of social media followers and media releases.

The action plan proposes developing more sophisticated web analytics. Qualitative feedback through surveys, for example, will be just as important in measuring how well-informed our staff and patients feel about changes to our organisation.

The action plan will be prioritised to ensure that key elements can be delivered, bearing in mind available resource.

Delivery of the strategy is dependent on the team's ability to refine what the organisation has previously required of it and to work differently within the resource available.

The plan does not take into account reactive communications such as daily media enquiries, or the breadth of existing projects which are driven by the communications team, such as preparing the annual report and organising the Remarkable People staff awards.

For transformation and partnership working,

the communications requirements remain unclear at this stage and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with the action plan priorities being refined as required.

Accepting that there is no further funding, a review of how our communications effort is deployed will be a pre-requisite to the effective implementation of the action plan.

This should involve devolving responsibility for communication to departments and units across the Trust by, for example, training staff to update their own web pages and creating a suite of communications templates for posters, communications plans and 'how to' guides.

It should also include reviewing areas of work which have traditionally fallen to communications, to see whether these may be better suited elsewhere in the organisation, or that we no longer do them.

And, in line with all other areas of the Trust, this review will involve reconsidering the current structure and staffing mix to ensure that the right skills exist within the team to deliver the action plan connected to the strategy.



Communications Strategy Action Plan 2016/18

Dated: February 2016

Version: 1

Aim: The aim of this action plan is to ensure delivery of the Trust's communications strategy, which aims to engage, inform and educate a range of audiences about the organisation's work and plans for transformation in the years ahead.

Content: The plan captures all of the actions agreed by the Board of Directors at its meeting on 26 February 2016.

Responsibility for delivery: Head of Communications & Corporate Affairs.

Monitoring: Delivery of this action plan will be monitored by the Board, through monthly reporting.

Priority actions are in **bold** type.

Key for RAGBW rating of Actions:

(W)hite = Not yet started	(G)reen = Completed	(A)mber = In progress	(R)ed = Due but not complete	(B)lue = Ongoing monitoring to be assured of continued achievement
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Objective	Actions	Outcomes	
1. Support a healthy culture, with shared values throughout the organisation enhancing the health and wellbeing of staff.	a. Continue to promote values and behaviours, refreshing materials as required, working closely with the Trust's Organisational Development team. This should include ensuring that they are highly visible throughout the hospital.	01.1 Improved staff survey results.	W
	b. Develop the Trust's quarterly news magazine Making Waves to involve staff and widen its focus on individuals who make up the JPUH team through development of new features and regular items. This should include regular features on staff who go 'the extra mile' to make the hospital a special place to work.	01.2 Increased input to Making Waves, with a wider range of staff making contributions to the publication.	
	c. Refresh the photographic bank, to ensure pictures are up-to-date featuring staff who still work for the Trust, wearing correct corporate uniform.		
	d. Review and refresh web content, including videos. Expand the number of people able to edit content on the website, giving them responsibility for keeping information on their particular area up-to-date.		
	e. Create a video which tells the JPUH story and celebrates staff success, that can be used for a variety of different communications objectives.		
	f. Devise innovative ways of promoting Trust-wide initiatives connected with staff health and wellbeing, with the aim of making it easy for staff to adopt healthy lifestyle practices.		
	g. Review and enhance both internal and external promotion of the Annual Trust Awards.	01.3 Increased entries for annual Trust awards, with a target of 10 per category.	
	h. Create a suite of communications guidance materials and training, such as a "how to..." guide and e-learning package, working with Organisational Development, to empower supervisors to take greater responsibility and be more proactive with their own communications, both internally and externally. It should outline clearly those occasions when staff should refer communications issues to the communications team.		
	i. Review the need to provide media training for executive officers/senior officers, to increase availability of those able to speak on behalf of the Trust.		

Objective	Actions	Outcomes	
2. Involve, inform and engage with staff over the vision and the direction of the organisation, inspiring them to contribute their expertise to the transformation effort while working closely with NHS partners to promote the rationale and objectives behind collaborative projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct a staff survey looking specifically at communications issues, including frequency of engagement and channels and asking what improvements staff would like to see. b. Hold monthly meetings with the Director of Performance and Planning and/or Head of Transformation to discuss communications priorities. c. Create special editions of Making Waves, to update staff on the latest developments in transformation, encouraging staff participation and highlighting those involved in projects. d. Introduce additional Transformation award to Trust Awards. e. Highlight collaborative work, to demonstrate that the JPUH is a key player in the move towards more integrated health services. f. Develop and improve leadership briefing so that it involves and engages more people by showcasing best practice, particularly involving transformational projects. 	<p>02.1 Increased understanding among staff about transformational work, measured through surveys and focus groups.</p> <p>02.2 Increased nominations for annual Trust staff awards (see 01.3).</p>	W
3. Increase engagement with all stakeholders through improved digital channels, assisting with the achievement of corporate operational objectives and the Patient Engagement Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review staffing to ensure sufficient technical expertise exists within the team. This should be conducted alongside a benchmarking exercise, looking at other NHS acute trusts to review communications resources, team set up and responsibilities. b. Support clinical leads in their engagement with primary care colleagues, by creating appropriate communications channels. c. Work with the web provider to gain maximum functionality. Review web content and structure and Introduce new web pages to target specific audiences, such as volunteers – and ensure that regular patient stories, both positive and negative, are placed on the website to highlight learning the Trust has taken in response to patients' feedback. d. Create a social media strategy to complement the communications strategy. This will include the roll out of monitoring to involve staff other than the communications team, and the further development of social media channels and the web to provide information that is of interest, shareable – and could help reduce demand on the more traditional communications pressure points such as the telephone switchboard. e. Develop the Freedom of Information section of the Trust website, so that more information is made available to a greater audience, to help inform people of our work while reducing repeat requests for information. f. Develop a suite of analytical tools to monitor performance, both in terms of web hits and social media engagement, which can be used to enhance the monthly communications update to the Board of Directors. 	<p>03.1 Increase in technical expertise within the team.</p> <p>03.2 Increased web hits and followers on social media, with the aim of increasing both by 25% within first year.</p> <p>03.3 Enhanced engagement with key stakeholders, measured through comments and feedback.</p>	W

Objective	Actions	Outcomes	
4. Work closely with other local NHS organisations to provide joined up communications, in line with national campaigns, which empower local people to make informed health choices, with the aim of reducing demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure attendance at national and local NHS professional communicators' meetings, to ensure that messages are joined up from top to bottom. b. Develop a calendar of health promotion campaigns and, where appropriate, adapt national materials for use locally and disseminate via appropriate communications methods, with an emphasis on digital channels. c. Identify appropriate spokesmen to support campaigns, to ensure that the JPUH is identified locally as the organisation with expertise on national health issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 04.1 Better targeting of health campaigns, with all local NHS organisations amplifying national messages, to the benefit of the local population. 04.2 Greater staff awareness of health campaigns, potentially helping reduce sickness levels. 04.3 Relevant, useful and fresh material posted to JPUH website more regularly, leading to increased number of web hits. 04.4 Potential to reduce demand, particularly when messaging focuses on methods of healthcare other than acute hospitals, measured through attendance and admission rates. 04.5 Increased focus on the Trust at a regional/national level 	W
5. Protect and enhance the Trust's reputation as a leader in innovation, education and research to help attract staff, particularly in areas where recruitment is difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Publicise innovative techniques/research programmes on a regular basis. b. Conduct an audit of relevant professional publications, compile contacts and then proactively target them with crafted communications, to raise profile to niche audiences. Also research award schemes available which highlight best practice. c. Working closely with HR, produce tailored materials to aid recruitment efforts, particularly for those roles where attracting new staff is difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 05.1 Continued publicity for innovative schemes, resulting in greater investment from companies in research programmes at JPUH. 05.2 Raised profile for JPUH to niche audiences. 05.3 Better targeted recruitment materials, improving chances of increasing applications. 	W