



Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals



NHS Trust



Communications
& Engagement
Strategy 2015-18

Introduction

The opportunities and challenges facing Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals are considerable. An effective and ambitious central communication function is no longer and extravagant luxury for any health service provider. Good and bad communication and/or the decision to communicate or not can impact on public confidence, staff morale and organisational reputation, and result in lasting benefit or harm. Communicating well is vital to success, perceived and actual, and the importance of engaging with our staff, patients and stakeholders and finding ways to communicate with them which are clear, consistent, relevant and timely is vital to the provision of safe, efficient and high quality services.

This strategy describes how we will plan and prioritise our efforts and resources in communicating and engaging with patients, staff, stakeholders and the local population. Our aim is to continue to do the basics well whilst continuing to extend our scope and ambition to better support the delivery of our strategic goals and our Annual Plan for 2015-16 and beyond.



Background and context

We are committed to keep improving communication and engagement. Through effective communication we can manage, motivate, influence, explain and create conditions for change. The need to communicate and engage effectively with our staff, patients, the public, our partners and key stakeholders is central to the ongoing reputation management of BSUH and the delivery of our five strategic objectives:

- **Excellent Outcomes**

Driving up quality, reducing avoidable harm, developing the workforce and creating a learning culture.

- **Great Experience**

Meeting core access standards, learning from and improving patient experience and staff experience of giving care.

- **Empowered, Skilled Staff**

Actions to recruit, retain and develop the Trust's workforce and to engage them in the values and behaviours.

- **High Productivity**

Delivering a financial plan that secures sustainability and supports effective investment in delivery of the strategy.

- **Deliver the Clinical Strategy**

The programme of clinical service improvements and developments that deliver the clinical strategy which support these. This Communication Strategy is also central to the delivery of the major programme of engagement and organisational development we are undertaking to make improvements to the culture of the organisation by sharing and embedding our newly developed Values and Behaviours blueprint and supporting directorates and teams in identifying and addressing their particular challenges.

Our values are:

- **Communication** that is respectful, personal, honest and helpful
- **Kindness and Understanding** so that we feel supported and enabled to do our jobs
- **Fairness and Transparency** in our decisions and actions
- **Working Together** to get the best outcomes for patients
- **Excellence** by always striving to be the best we can be

Each of these is underpinned by a set of behavioural “do’s and don’ts” which were developed following an intensive period of consultation in which over 700 members of staff participated.

Through effective communication we can manage, motivate, influence, explain and create conditions for change.



Purpose and Objectives

The overarching purpose of this Communication and Engagement Strategy is:

- To build and sustain our reputation and the confidence of our patients and their families that they are receiving the highest standards of care; to be open and honest when they are not; and clear and constructive about why.
- To gain widespread understanding of and engagement with our strategic goals and key impact programmes amongst both our internal and external target audiences.
- To ensure our internal and external target audiences feel able and have the opportunity to influence and help shape our strategic goals and operational priorities.

The principle objectives of this Communication and Engagement Strategy are:

- To ensure our vision, values and future plans are communicated clearly to everyone.
- To ensure our catchment populations have access to accurate, up-to-date and timely information about BSUH.

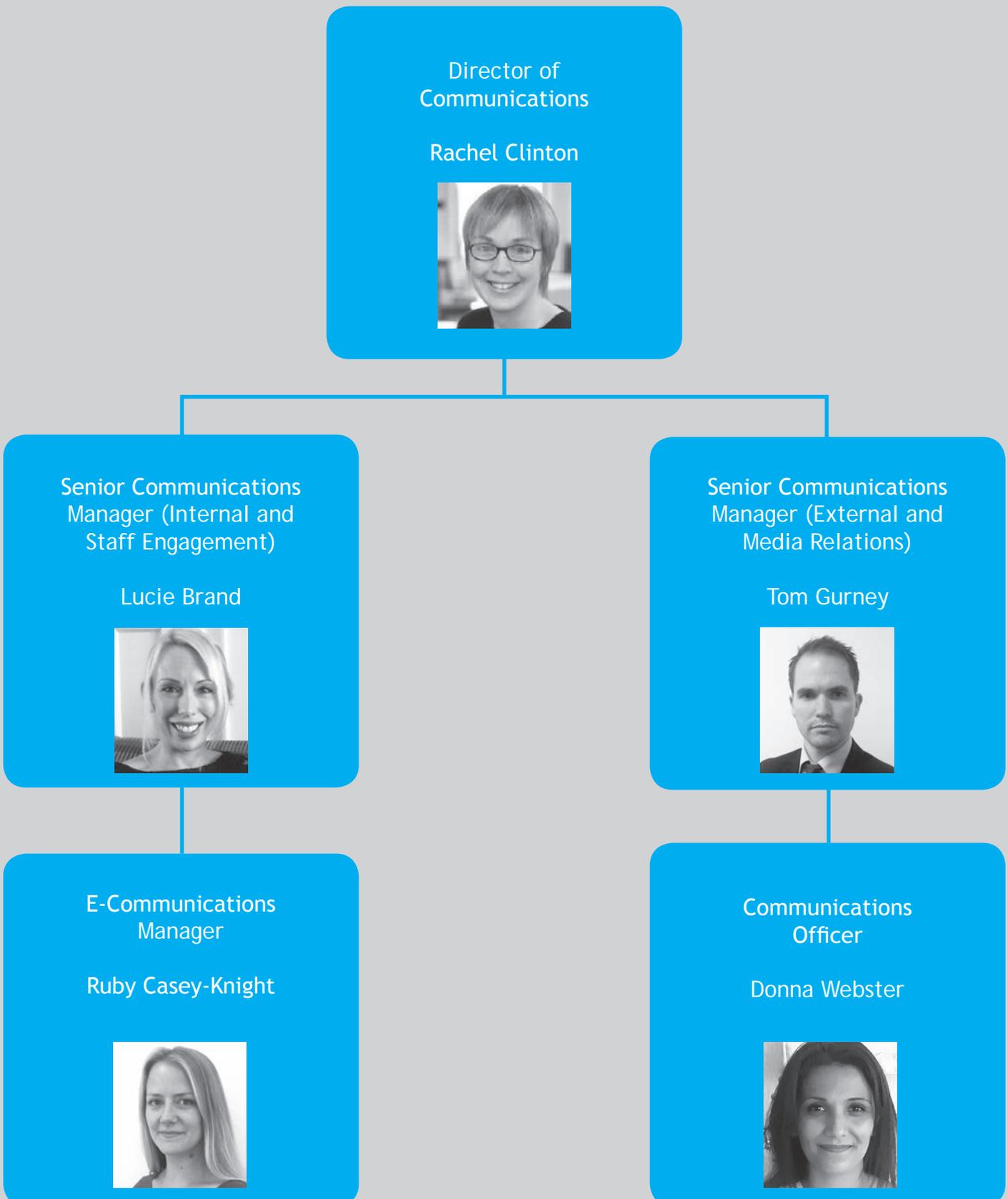
- To support delivery of our strategic goals.
- To ensure our patients have access to the information they need when they need it.
- To help make BSUH a good place to work by informing, listening to and motivating our staff and ensuring they feel their contribution is recognised and valued.
- To keep our staff well-informed and support everyone in the delivery of clear and effective communication to patients, their families and other key audiences.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our programme of communication methodologies on a regular basis and make adjustments as appropriate;
- To ensure GPs, Clinical Commissioning Groups, partners organisations, other commissioners and regulators are kept informed about the services delivered by BSUH and our plans for the future; and ensure our staff are aware of the priorities and requirements of those who purchase or regulate the services we provide.



We want to build and sustain our reputation and the confidence of our patients and their families that they are receiving the highest standards of care; to be open and honest when they are not; and clear and constructive about why

The Corporate Communications Team - Who we are

There are five people in the corporate communications team, whose roles are as follows:



Our Audiences

We will communicate clearly and to professional standards, using different models and methods as appropriate, internally and externally. Our audiences include:

- Staff across all our hospitals and satellite sites
- Patients, their relatives and visitors
- The populations of Brighton and Hove City, Mid Sussex and our catchment populations in other parts of Sussex.
- MPs, MEPs and Local Authorities
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- GPs and our neighbouring and partner providers of health and social care
- Patient interest groups and representative
- Trade Unions and Staff Side representatives
- Our local media
- Our fundraisers, charity supporters and associated charities
- The Brighton and Sussex Medical School, the Universities of Brighton and Sussex and our research partners
- The Care Quality Commission, Trust Development Authority, NHS England and other national and regulatory bodies as appropriate

Communication Tools

The communications tools we currently use include:

External communications

- Website
- Media coverage
- Your Trust Magazine
- Twitter, Facebook and other social media
- Corporate literature - Annual Report, Quality Account, Annual Plan etc.
- Carer and Patient information
- Open days, roadshows and display materials in public areas of the hospital

Internal communications

- Info-net
- All Staff Info-Mail / Works in Progress
- Talkback Monthly
- Chief Executive's weekly message / Nursing and Midwifery Matters
- Team Brief
- Staff/Board Briefings
- Values and Behaviours updates and staff drop-in sessions
- Hospital Star Awards

It should be noted that the Communication Team cannot produce all communication materials for the Trust. The team will deliver communication, PR, engagement and event management for Trust-wide initiatives and corporate activities and objectives and will support and advise colleagues in producing their own departmental materials to professional standards.

The strategic objectives for each element of the Communications Strategy, listed in this document, remain constant for the three years covered by the Strategy. The Action Plans for each element are for the current financial year (2015-16) and will be refreshed and shared with the Board and the wider organisation at the beginning of each new financial year.



1. Staff engagement and internal communications

Strong staff engagement is key to the success of any organisation. In NHS organisations it has been shown that high levels of staff engagement lead to better patient outcomes and satisfaction, and better use of resources. Engaged staff are more likely to go the extra mile for an organisation, have job satisfaction, contribute to innovation and transformation and support their colleagues.

Strategic Objectives

- To raise awareness of and promote our Values and Behaviours
- To give all our staff the opportunity to have their say, feed into organisation-wide decisions and raise concerns
- To create an environment which welcomes and encourages employee involvement and opportunities to innovate, share ideas and give feedback
- To promote a happy, healthy work environment
- To recognise and reward staff achievement and celebrate success
- To encourage and facilitate good inter and cross team-working
- To support leaders across the organisation to communicate with their teams
- To create high visibility of and accessibility to Executive Team
- To provide clear and honest communication from senior managers
- To support partnership working and stakeholder relations

Action plan for 2015/16

New work programmes/activities	When?
<p>V&B Champions (activities for)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job description, online sign up process and recognition for staff involved. • Aim to get 5% members (350 staff) signed up next 12 months across all grades and sites. • List of all champions on info-net, by area. • Run regular Champions Engagement Days and regular targeted campaigns with Champions. <p>V&B Champions (activities by)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and V&B initiatives within their own team, use V&B email signature. • To provide V&B local induction training to new joiners in their area. • To provide feedback to the V&B workstreams, pilots and new ideas. • To participate in V&B pilot schemes prior to wider rollout/implementation. • To ensure V&B materials available and visible within their department. • To be on hand to answer (or forward) any V&B based questions. • To train up/brief other or new V&B Champions. • To bring any matters of concern to the attention of their line manager and/or local manager of the area and/or V&B project team. • To attend V&B events (V&B day, V&B Champion events, staff sessions). 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>

New work programmes/activities	When?
<p>Team Brief / monthly face to face team meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce up-to-date map of managers who are responsible for delivering a regular Team Brief within Corporate and Clinical Directorates. • Re-launch Brief plus feedback mechanism. • Senior Communications Manager (Staff Engagement) and Change Coach to offer and provide support for managers delivering Team Brief on request. • Tie in launch with ‘meet the exec team’ type event (more below). • Summary of questions and feedback received from staff will be circulated with following month’s Team Brief and archived on info-net. • Pilot in selected areas/directorates before staged roll out. 	<p>Re-launch September 2105 with roll out complete by end 15/16</p>
<p>Employee of the Month Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie-in with promotion of the Values and Behaviours Blueprint. • All staff who get the monthly award get an automatic invite to next year’s Star Awards. • An archive of all winners and online nomination form in V&B area of info-net (link from homepage). • Employee of the month photo (in frame) on the info-net homepage. • Trophy to be passed around winners with certificate/voucher to keep. • Award delivered by member of exec team who then spends some time with department. 	<p>Launch at Hospital Star Awards in Nov 2015</p>
<p>Communications Charter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The production and dissemination of a simple crib sheet which summarizes what “good” communication - both written and verbal - looks and feels like to support staff in delivering the ‘communication’ domain of the Behavioural Blueprint. • Promote via V&B Champions and other internal communications channels. • Promote via communication session on V&B day and the Leading the Way Too (leadership development course). 	<p>Oct 2015</p>
<p>Meet the execs staff events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expand and diversify the communications channels used by senior managers we will develop a series of regular forums/drop-in sessions/surgeries with supporting materials as appropriate. • Some of these events will be used to tie in with and support the roll-out of team brief and/or communications charter and will be complimented by attendance of Execs at staff V&B open sessions, new staff open forums, and “back to the floor” visit programme which is already well underway. • We will also explore the option of online events - including live web chats, twitter chats or Q&A. 	<p>January 2016</p>
<p>Directorate branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the identity/brand of the individual clinical directorates in their own rights and as part of the BSUH whole clinical/frontline workforce/team we will work with them to develop individual logos/themes for each division which work as stand-alone branding but also gives them a collective identity. 	<p>Jan/Feb 2016</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use this new branding to refresh the info-net clinical section and give each Directorate their own distinct area. • Using the new branding we will support the Directorates to produce clear, accessible information about their services, staff and leadership teams. • We will support the Directorates to produce their own regular communication materials to share information, promote opportunity and celebrate success. 	
<p>Internal social network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore alternatives to the ‘yoursay’ online staff discussion forum e.g. Yammer and Tibbr and (subject to funding) introduce this as part of or alongside our staff infonet. • We will work with colleagues to realise the full benefits of whichever alternative forum we introduce which can include, for example, knowledge sharing and course delivery. • The new forum will be another tool to encourage and enable discussion and two-way communication amongst staff. • It can also be used as an alternative and more accessible way of communicating corporate news and information through the introduction of threads, groups and conversations. • System will integrate with active directory so staff are automatically logged in with their PC login - anonymity will not be an option. 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>
<p>New staff publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will review all current publications, identify any gaps and develop new materials to fill those or reach audiences who do not see our existing suite of internal communication materials e.g. new Soft FM workforce. • We are currently exploring the idea of a new staff graphic based email that includes content provided by staff (that currently does not belong in Talkback or gets a brief mention in all staff info mail) e.g. events, achievements, promotion of staff fundraising pages. • Possibility of producing site-specific ones or specials editions e.g. Brighton Marathon. • We are also exploring the possibility of an annual publication which would bring together all the non-pay benefits of the NHS and BSUH and make staff feel more positive about working here. This could include offers, discounts including local offers from staff (the notice boards on info-net get a very high number of web hits), support services, pension, travel offers, cycle scheme, yoga, meditation, ways to get involved and clubs. • This will be mirrored with similar gateway page on info-net to link to all of the above. 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>
<p>Team coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our interim V&B Change Coach is receiving universally positive feedback about the work she is doing with teams across the Trust. • As part of the V&B internal communication and engagement we have established a cadre of part-time coaches, using existing staff with required skills, so that we can offer the opportunity of team coaching to more staff. • These coaches will use the ‘Bringing the behaviours to life’ toolkit to help teams improve and work through issues. 	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Department open days / walk the floor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will undertake to support Departments across the Trust to run open days/hours to give colleagues and stakeholders an insight into how the department/ward works and what it does. We will ask departments that want to raise awareness about what they do to volunteer and then support them in the logistics and the delivery but this will be owned and run by the department itself not by comms. After events, photos and feedback to be shared using existing channels. 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>
<p>Staff noticeboards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place approx. ten noticeboards (quantity TBC) around the Trust in key areas that are visible to lots of staff to support various engagement projects. 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>
<p>Communications team roadshows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the Communications team to get out about across the trust to talk to staff and listen to their ideas. Also, to use 'little things, big difference' feedback boxes to gather general feedback from staff who do not have access to IT. 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>
<p>Tea and talk with the senior team (to replace V&B open sessions where attendance is dropping)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face cup of tea and chat with Matthew Kershaw (or another member of the senior team) where he would be located somewhere for an hour and staff could book five minutes slots to have a one to one discussion about whatever they like. The venues are already booked until next April and this would mean staff taking less time away from their day jobs. Feedback could be recorded, fed into action log and fed back to staff periodically. This would attract staff who are not comfortable in a large discussion. 	<p>By end 2015/16</p>

Existing internal communication and staff engagement activities and channels to continue and enhance

- All-staff info-mails (twice a week)
- Work in progress emails (once a week)
- Chief Executive's message (once a week)
- Nursing and midwifery matters (once a week)
- Trust board briefings (monthly following the board)
- Staff briefings (ad-hoc as required)
- Talkback monthly including year planner and poster pull-out
- Info-net (see digital and online action plan)
- Monthly V&B staff open sessions
- Hospital Star Awards annual recognition and reward ceremony
- Comms support for Safety and Quality initiatives e.g. Patients 1st and Staff Stories
- Comms support for Leadership Event/Conference (October 2015) and Leading the Way Too (second phase) leadership development programme.
- Comms support for dissemination and roll-out of new People Strategy



2. External communications and media relations

Strategic Objectives

The overall aim of this element of our Communications and Engagement Strategy is to positively promote the work of the Trust, to proactively manage our reputation and to actively inform and engage with our key stakeholders.

With the growing development and use of web-based, social and mass media, and a lower emphasis on traditional external communication platforms (e.g. newspapers) there is a need for the Trust to keep adapting the way we communicate with our external audiences. Expectations around how people receive information have changed and we therefore need to look at new ways to provide information which is relevant, timely and accessible whilst not dismissing or reinventing the traditional tools which elements of our audience still prefer and therefore still achieve our external communication strategic objectives which are:

- Ensure patients and other stakeholders receive timely, relevant and accurate information about the Trust.
- Listen to stakeholders, respond to their views and adapt our communication methods to suit their needs.
- Raise the profile of the Trust and positively promote its work and reputation.
- Maintain public confidence in the Trust's services.
- Maintain good relations with the media and provide robust media handling advice and support to the Chief Executive, senior managers and staff across the Trust.
- Provide patients and visitors with the information they need to help make their experience of our services as positive and easy as it can be.

Action plan for 2015/16

New work programmes/activities	When?
<p>Media Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of positive stories being sourced and provided to the media in order to gain increased public understanding and engagement of Trust services. • Develop a wider and targeted media distribution list. • Increase the radio presence of the Trust by introducing MP3 recorded soundbites as part of the press release package. • Bring out-of-hours media handling in-house and develop a 24/7 on-call rota. • Provide more media training to a greater number of staff, allowing a wider range of staff groups to act as media spokespeople. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Aug 2015</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sept 2015</p> <p>Jan 2016</p>

New work programmes/activities	When?
<p>Patient Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a quarterly magazine for our patients and visitors highlighting good news stories, which will be distributed throughout the hospitals. The particular focus will be waiting rooms, where there is a 'captive audience' of many thousands of patients, carers and visitors. The Communications Team will take ownership of the Carer and Patient Information production process and become the lead for the review of leaflets, with the aim of making the process more efficient and improving the quality and clarity of the content. Carry out an audit of all the existing leaflets to ensure information being displayed and given out is up-to-date and in a consistent format. Work with staff to review leaflets currently being used on wards/departments to ensure they are up-to-date, clear and accurate. Make patient leaflets more accessible on the Trust website by improving the search facility and catalogue system. Produce new and up-to-date versions of existing generic carer and patient information including the "Welcome To" booklet and Visitor's Code. Make leaflets more accessible for foreign patients and those who have difficulty understanding standard text by improving the visual presentation of information, with the use of infographics and pictures. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Aug 2015</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>From March 2016</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>March 2016</p> <p>By end 2015/16</p>
<p>Corporate Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new corporate image/brand that is consistent and can be used in all corporate communication including PowerPoint presentations used by staff. Produce a comprehensive style user-guide to support and promote a consistent look for all our corporate communication. This will work alongside the individual brand being developed for the Clinical Directorates. We will produce and distribute a new monthly briefing for local stakeholder individuals and organisations including MPs, Local Authorities and HelathWatch to ensure they are sighted on relevant developments, decisions and media attention that the hospital has or is expected to receive. 	<p>Jan 2016</p> <p>Feb 2016</p> <p>Jan 2016</p>
<p>Website and social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the layout and content of the public website with a view to making it more user-friendly and accessible. Update the website more frequently, with the aim of it becoming a more useful tool for disseminating information. 	<p>Jan 2016</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

New work programmes/activities	When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the public website more accessible for foreign patients and those who have difficulty understanding standard text by improving the visual presentation of information, with the use of infographics and pictures. • Create a 'media zone' on the public website with a greater focus on promotional information including videos and podcasts. • Explore introducing video virtual tours on our websites that allow patients to navigate and look around our hospitals. • Increase the number of messages sent out over social media, including situation reports and other information, as well as good news stories. • Change the tone of messages sent over social media from corporate to more conversational to engage in stakeholders more effectively. • Increase the monitoring of social media to improve the timeliness of responses and increase its use as a two-way communication tool. • Explore other social media outlets to see how they can benefit the Trust's communication function further. 	<p>By end 2015/16 and ongoing</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>By end 2015/16</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Way-finding Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the small, hand-held maps of the hospital sites for patients and visitors and produce a 'London Underground' style map, similar to that introduced at the PRH, at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. • Develop wayfinding leaflets for the hospitals' reception areas to be handed to patients and visitors on arrival. • Explore the development of videos illustrating how to get to various places within the hospitals. • Produce corporate templates for staff to use for any signs they may need to put up in their departments. 	<p>Aug 2015</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>By end 2015/16</p> <p>Jan 2016</p>



3. Online and digital

Strategic Objectives

During 2014/15 the public website received around 50,000 unique visitors a month. Our website is the primary channel that the public use to proactively seek information about BSUH. In addition the staff info-net receives around 30,000 unique visitors a month and has become the central source of information and news for a large proportion, if not all, of our staff. A well-presented and managed website has a multitude of benefits and the way the hospital uses online and digital communication channels is constantly changing as new methods and technologies are developed.

Our overall aim is to utilise online and digital media to communicate widely and effectively with our many and varied target audiences in a timely and appropriate way and to deliver the following strategic objectives:

- To help manage and enhance the Trust's reputation.
- To facilitate timely and effective internal and external communication.
- To encourage and provide easy and accessible ways for patients, visitors and other stakeholders to provide us with feedback.
- To provide clear information, which is convenient to access and easy to find, to our staff and those who use our public website.
- To provide our staff, patients and other audiences with immediate and dynamic information on a situation which may be urgent or constantly changing.

Action plan for 2015/16

New work programmes/activities	When?
<p>Info-net and website audit and redesign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide an editorial and publishing function for teams across the Trust, giving support and advice where needed. • Refresh the structure and layout of the homepages to ensure they meet user requirements and reflect the Trust's strategic priorities. • Review info-net and website to: identify content which is not up-to-date, clear, relevant and accessible; assess whether the structure and content reflects user requirements, using intelligence from Google Analytics and user focus groups; identify content ownership arrangements. • Create a content management plan to make necessary changes following the review of the sites and to schedule on-going review by content owners. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By end 2015/16</p> <p>By end 2015/16</p> <p>By end 2015/16</p>

New work programmes/activities	When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a short guide to info-net and the website for staff, to raise awareness of their purpose and of the content management processes. 	Dec 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an editorial policy for news items on the sites, so that items of strategic importance are given prominence. 	Jan 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh and promote the digital style guide to ensure consistency. 	Feb 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a strategic review of 'Your Say' online staff discussion forum on the extranet to clarify its intended purpose, the extent to which it is meeting that purpose then involve key stakeholders, including senior leadership and HR, in the selection and introduction of a more suitable alternative. 	By end 2015/16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make improvements to the existing GPnewsNET section of the public website to ensure this is fully utilised and contains information that is up-to-date, relevant and targeted. 	Nov 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the Senior Communications Manager (External and Media Relations), continue to develop the Trust's presence on social media and networking sites and draw more traffic to the Trust's website. 	Ongoing



4. Evaluation

This strategy and the delivery and effectiveness of the detailed action plans for each financial year it covers, will be evaluated as follows:

- **Media coverage:** Using analysis of media coverage in 2014/15 as a benchmark, the number of positive, neutral and negative media stories will be measured and tracked as an indicator of success.
- Alongside the year on year monitoring of the National NHS Staff Survey results we will undertake our own annual staff survey to ascertain staff awareness of and benefit from of our internal communication and engagement activities.
- Alongside the national inpatient survey we will also undertake our own survey of patients and visitors which will focus on the new actions or initiatives undertaken in that financial year, to gauge their reach and effectiveness and help us plan how to take these initiatives forward.
- We will work with complaints to collate all **complaints and plaudits** which make reference to any elements of the Communication and Engagement Strategy, and use this to inform our future plans.
- We will continue to produce a detailed monthly breakdown of the use of our staff info-net and public website and our presence on social media.
- We will produce a **quarterly summary** of these evaluation methods plus any additional quantitative or qualitative feedback or information which is relevant to the effective delivery of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

5. Conclusion

The Communication and Engagement Strategy sets out to build on the improvements made to our communication infrastructure and activities in the last five years with the aim of ensuring that we continue to do the basics consistently well whilst extending our scope and ambition to better support the delivery of our goals and priorities for each financial year up to and including 2017/18.

As a Communications Team we will work together and vary our focus according to need so that we sustain and progress all our communication channels; provide support to assist with the delivery of specific projects,

programmes of work or events; and pursue new ideas including those with the potential for generating our own income.

Communication is though ultimately so much more than an exchange of information and engagement cannot be achieved by the execution of an engagement strategy in isolation. Both are about the attitude and behaviour of individuals, their willingness to participate readily and enthusiastically and to share their experience and learning with colleagues. In other words, the successful implementation of our Communications and Engagement Strategy has to involve everyone.

Communications and Engagement Strategy 2015-2018
Rachel Clinton
Director of Communications
August 2015