Northampton General Hospital



NHS Trust

BOARD SUMMARY SHEET		
Title	Communications Update	
Submitted by	Sally-Anne Watts, Head of Communications	
Date of meeting	28 th April 2010	
Corporate objectives addressed	Maintain and enhance position as the local provider of choice	

SUMMARY OF CRITICAL POINTS

This report reviews communications activity since the communications strategy was approved by the Board in June 2009 and is the first of what will now be regular communications updates. Progress against the key themes is summarised.

PATIENT IMPACT

High. Patients are more aware of the services provided by the Trust, and more likely to make NGH their hospital of choice.

STAFF IMPACT

High. Staff are more informed about key issues affecting the Trust and are actively engaged in Trust developments. They receive recognition for the work they do and are able to speak confidently about their hospital.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding for the website and intranet development has been identified and included within budgets. Overall costs have been managed to come in under budget.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT

Applicable to all.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Failure to communicate effectively with staff, patients and the wider community would present a serious risk in relation to reputation management and patient choice.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to note the content of this report.

Northampton General Hospital

NHS Trust

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE – APRIL 2010

1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2009 the Trust's communications strategy was approved by Hospital Management Group and the Trust Board. The key themes of the strategy were:
- Engaging with the workforce
- Building communications capability and capacity
- Promoting the NGH brand and managing reputation

This report reviews communications activity since that time and is the first of what will be regular communications updates. Progress against the key themes is summarised below and set out in the attached action plan update.

2. Engaging with the workforce

2.1 The issue

Staff engagement is an important factor in achieving Trust objectives. However, a large, complex organisation such as NGH typically finds staff engagement difficult to achieve. Achieving a sustained and beneficial impact will require continued consistent effort on the part of the communications team and managers.

We use a number of mechanisms to communicate with staff, from face to face communication to paper and print, through to the intranet. However, it is clear that for many members of staff, face to face is the most effective method of communication as they do not have regular access to email and web-based communication. Face to face communication also provides invaluable opportunities for staff to discuss issues direct with their line manager, and for managers to obtain feedback from their teams.

We have addressed the issue of engaging with the workforce using a combination of face to face, print and on-line communication tools to ensure a broad spread of communication across the Trust. Greater emphasis has been placed on face to face communication as it is the most effective method of disseminating messages, allowing opportunities for dialogue and discussion.

2.2 How we are addressing the issue with face to face communication

(i) Senior managers' meetings

Senior managers' meetings are held by the Chief Executive at the end of each month and provide an opportunity for senior managers and heads of department to discuss with the Chief Executive topics covered in the monthly core brief. The aim is to ensure they are fully aware of issues and able to transmit the core brief back to their supervisors and teams.

(ii) Executive team attendance at staff meetings

In response to feedback received on workshops that focused on the 2008/09 staff survey results, the exec team attended more than 20 different team meetings in departments across the Trust during July – November 2009. The aim was to introduce the concept of the core brief, which is now produced at the end of each month and disseminated to clinical directors, directorate managers, directorate head nurses and heads of department via email for those managers to use when briefing their teams.

More work is needed to formalise the team briefing cascade mechanism through the Trust, including a review of the monthly senior managers' meeting, and ensure there are opportunities for staff to provide upward feedback. We will be seeking to address these issues going forward.

(iii) Lunch with the Chief Executive

April 2010 saw the launch of a series of monthly informal lunchtime meetings with the Chief Executive.

Staff at all levels are invited to book themselves onto any of the monthly lunches, which have been scheduled throughout the year.

Feedback from the first informal lunch was that staff who attended welcomed the opportunity to talk direct with the Chief Executive, raise any concerns they may have and hear at first hand the issues he considers important for NGH.

(iv) Board to ward

Members of the executive team regularly visit ward areas to talk to staff about issues that concern them, identify areas of good practice and issues that require further attention.

The Chairman has volunteered to 'put himself in someone else's shoes' and has undertaken roles as diverse as cleaning, portering and medical records.

We are now in the process of linking our shadow governors to directorates to enable them to have a greater understanding of how the Trust works and the issues directorates face, as well as providing invaluable external insight.

2.3 How we are addressing the issue with print communication

(i) Core brief

A core brief covering the following four key topic areas is produced each month:

- Our Place
- Our Patients
- Our People
- Our Performance

It is disseminated to staff via senior managers' meetings (see below), email to all consultants, clinical directors, directorate managers, directorate head

nurses, ward managers and heads of department, and is also published in The Point.

(ii) Insight

Insight is the NGH magazine. Published bi-monthly, it features stories about staff and patients.

Staff are encouraged and supported by the communications team to identify and submit stories for publication in Insight. Much of the content is now generated directly by our staff, who are keen to ensure their colleagues, patients, visitors and the wider community are informed of what is happening at NGH

Insight is widely distributed throughout the hospital, and copies are freely available in public areas of the Trust.

(iii) Posters

The communications team produce a range of posters to help raise awareness of a wide range of issues, campaigns and events. Examples include:





2.4 How we are addressing the issue with on line communication

- (i) The
- The Point Your monthly staff e-zine

Point

In August 2008 we introduced a monthly e-zine, The Point, which was developed from our earlier PowerPoint version.

Reader 'page hits' of The Point have grown from 7,400 for the first issue to a peak of more than 15,500 for the November 2009 issue and an average of around 12,000.

(ii) Communications @ngh email account

The generic <u>communications@ngh.nhs.uk</u> account has been set up to allow the communications team to disseminate key messages quickly around the Trust. The account has been used to support delivery of the core brief and key messages around topics as diverse as:

- Car parking
- Seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccine
- NHS Constitution
- Lunch with the chief executive
- Workshops for the NGH transformation programme
- Open day and AGM
- Infection prevention and control

Recipients of communications via this email account are encouraged to share the information with their colleagues by either forwarding the email or printing off a copy for colleagues who do not have an email account.

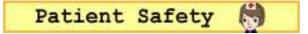
(iii) Ask Paul email

askPaul@ngh.nhs.uk

A dedicated email address has been set up for staff to email any questions direct to the Chief Executive and receive a personal response. The aim is to aid understanding, help dispel any rumours and avoid conflicting messages.

(iv) NGH Intranet (NIGHT)

The communications team have also helped develop a patient safety area of the intranet to support the various patient safety initiatives being undertaken across the Trust, identify and share good practice, publish reports and outcomes, and raise awareness.



We have also developed separate pages to support the work of the NGH transformation programme going forward.

NGH Transformation Programme

The video of the Chief Executive's presentation, as well as a hard copy and supporting information is now available on the intranet.

The re-development of the Trust's intranet site is now underway with a target launch of June 2010. The aim is to eliminate duplication with information that is available on the external website, and develop the intranet so that it is more of a business tool and networking space for Trust staff to facilitate multidisciplinary and cross-department project working and strengthen and support working relationships.

2.5 We have also engaged with the workforce using our internal communication channels to share knowledge and celebrate success. The communications team has been actively involved in arranging and/or raising awareness and publicising a number of events and initiatives, some of which are described below:

(i) Sharing and celebrating success

During the year we have held a number of events that have celebrated our achievements and provided platforms for sharing learning and good practice. These have included:

- STAR awards
- Celebration of nursing and midwifery
- Service improvement summit
- Open day
- Annual General Meeting



Following an extensive internal communications campaign the 2010 STAR Awards attracted 129 entries – a record number and more than double the number received the previous year. More than 140 people attended the AGM in June 2009, a record number and the majority went on to our Open Day,

which was attended by more than 500 people.

The Open Day provided an invaluable opportunity for our staff to showcase their services to our local community and the feedback received from those taking part and those who attended was extremely positive. Another open day is now being planned for September 2010.

(ii) Supporting local regional and national campaigns

The communications team has actively supported a number of local, regional and national campaigns covering topics as diverse as:

- NGH transformation programme
- ICAN!
- Infection prevention and control
- Security awareness
- Equality and diversity
- Information governance
- Seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccine

- Same sex accommodation
- NHS Constitution

Examples of the work undertaken are given below:

NGH transformation programme

In February 2010 NGH launched the transformation programme and in order to ensure as many staff as possible were briefed and away of the importance of the programme a number of staff workshops were held, led by the Chief Executive. More than 700 staff attended the briefings, which took place in nine briefings over 2 days.

Following the workshops many staff have put themselves forward to join one of the workstreams that will be developed as part of the transformation projects.

A communications strategy is now being developed to support the transformation programme and ensure maximum staff commitment, involvement and engagement in the process.

ICAN!



The communications team has supported the Trust's ICAN! (Improving Care At NGH) initiative by providing design support and helping to raise awareness of the campaign. The brand design has been incorporated into the Transformation Programme to ensure consistency of approach.

Same sex accommodation

We have provided consistent support to the regional same sex accommodation campaign, with modern matrons helping to raise awareness by being available to talk to visitors about what the Trust has been doing to improve privacy and dignity at NGH.

In response to an appeal from the communications team one of our modern matrons put herself forward and was selected as a 'face' of the NHS East Midlands regional campaign. We also gave a presentation on 'The Pod



Squad' at the SHA same sex summit and submitted a poster presentation.

Seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccine

Uptake of the season flu vaccine has increased by more than 300% during 2009 largely due to a consistent and sustained internal communications campaign to raise awareness and encourage vaccine take-up.

3. Building communications capability and capacity

- 3.1 Resource within the communications team itself is a significant constraint on our ability to make and/or facilitate the changes necessary for improving communications within the Trust. In order to address this, the aim is to build capability and capacity within senior, middle and front line managers. The factors that will make the difference between communication that works and is effective are confidence, capability, consistency, commitment and resource.
- 3.2 We have already started our work on building capability and capacity by recruiting web co-ordinators from within directorates. A communications toolkit, which will include guidance on branding, style, report writing, grammar and language is being drafted for consultation during May 2010 prior to launch in June 2010.



- 3.3 Anecdotal evidence is that front line staff, including clinicians and middle/front line managers are groups not fully supported by our existing communications initiatives. It is essential, therefore, that these people, as well as those who manage these groups of staff are skilled in communication techniques, including team briefing.
- 3.4 Further discussion is planned with HR/Training to define the outputs of any communications development programme and identify potential and funding for training modules to be developed and offered. Without this investment communications will continue to lack impact and remain sporadic and patchy across the Trust, with pockets of good practice and several black holes.
- 3.5 The Trust has in place many of the basic elements of a good internal communications framework. There are no hidden solutions to the problem, we need to energise the channels where they are failing and equip managers with the skills they need to communicate well.

4. Promoting the NGH brand and managing reputation

- 4.1 Having a consistent and co-ordinated approach to internal communications is essential to promoting the NGH brand and managing our reputation. Without staff commitment and engagement the rhetoric of our printed communication will not match the reality of the patient experience or the perception of staff and patients. It is for these reasons that we emphasise the importance on having robust and effective internal communication mechanisms in place. We now have a firm platform from which to promote the NGH brand and manage our reputation.
- 4.2 The impact of Patient Choice makes it essential that we do all we can to manage and monitor NGH's reputation, including monitoring on-line commentary about our services that appears on websites, blogs and social networking sites. Patients make choices about where to receive their treatment based on information they receive from others, whether that is obtained directly (i.e. face to face) or indirectly via the media and websites.

4.3 Managing NGH's reputation

The communications team deals with a range of media enquiries on a daily basis. These can range from condition checks to complex media enquiries that require a considered response.

The communications team issues a weekly round-up of media coverage that is rated positive, negative or neutral. The local press carries anything between three and fourteen articles regarding NGH each week; this includes double page features, articles, letters and editorial comment. More than 80% of our media coverage is positive or neutral. NGH Media Update is circulated to all NGH board members, senior clinicians and managers, and governors.

Our plans for 2010/2011 include issuing a minimum of ten positive media releases each month, in addition to providing feature opportunities to the local media.

We are also planning to do more to improve our external communications with GPs and a communications strategy has been developed to support this work. An element of this strategy is the re-launch of our e-zine, GPNews, based on feedback received from GPs on the content they wish to see.

4.4 Website development

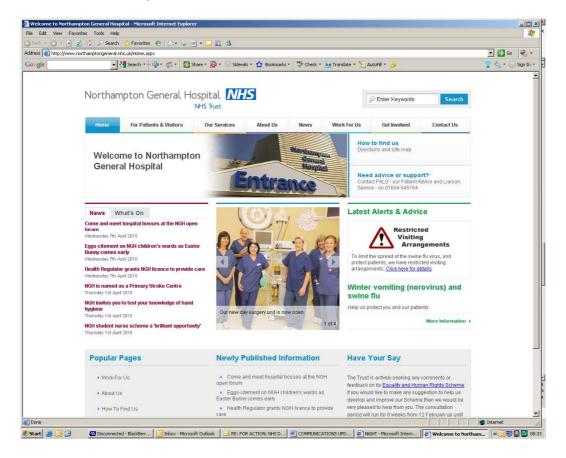
The latest web user statistics from Google show the Trust website was visited more than 12,000 times during February 2010 by more than 9,000 visitors. There were 5,000 new visitors to the site and people spent just over 2 minutes on average on the site.

A major feature of the communications strategy has been the complete redesign and redevelopment of the NGH external website and intranet. The contract for web technical support was awarded in December 2009 to Genetics Ltd, a company with a strong track record in helping NHS Trusts build and develop award-winning websites. The contract has come in under budget.

The structure and content of the site was based on feedback obtained from members and staff via an on-line questionnaire, and a paper-based questionnaire distributed at the open day.

To encourage ownership of information on the website and intranet we have recruited web co-ordinators from within directorates who are responsible for updating and managing web content for their directorates and departments. We currently have fourteen web co-ordinators and the number is expected to grow as departments understand the benefits of having the ability to upload and update information without delay. Training in the new content management system has now been completed and, with the support of IT, we have now developed our own training course to support this work going forward.

The new website went live on 30th March 2010 with new and updated content provided by the web co-ordinators. In line with feedback from our members, we are including more information for patients and visitors, including consultant profiles.



4.5 Promoting the NGH brand

During 2009/10 we refreshed the look of Insight, the hospital magazine. Insight is produced bi-monthly and sent all GP practices, governors, local libraries and local health and social care organisations. Copies are also sent to wards and departments for distribution and are freely available at various locations around the Trust.



Insight is also available on our website and intranet.

In June 2009 we held a successful open day that was linked to our AGM, which had a record attendance. The communications team also arranged the visit of HRH the Duchess of Gloucester in September 2009 to open the new bereavement suite, and the visit of Professor Roger Boyle in October 2009 to open the Northampton Heart Centre.

The Trust has also supported national and regional campaigns around swine flu, same sex accommodation and infection control, all of which have achieved positive print and broadcast media coverage for the Trust.



Sample of NGH media news showing coverage for our infection prevention campaign and STAR Awards

4.6 Raising awareness of the services we provide and Supporting NGH as the provider of choice

The communications team works with departments and directorates to identify features that will interest the local media and highlight the services we provide.



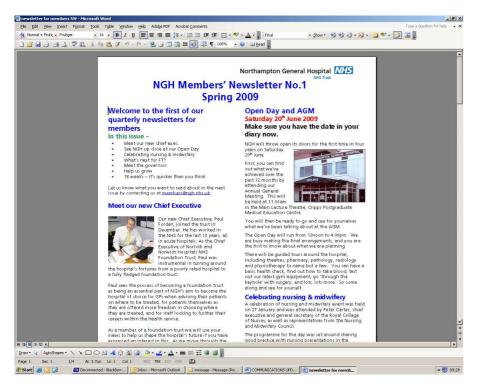
Features in the Northampton Chronicle & Echo cover a range of services, including:

- Stroke service
- New day surgery unit
- Christmas working
- Heart centre
- Radio Nene Valley (NGH hospital radio)
- Gossett Ward

We also run regular features in Insight, with a particular focus on patient stories to help promote our services and patient choice.



In 2009 we introduced a newsletter for our 3,500 members which also has features on services and developments at NGH. Content for the members' newsletter is developed in collaboration with our governors' membership & communications committee.



Our plans for 2010 include refreshing the member newsletter and supporting the consultation process.

4.7 Perception audit and evaluation

The communications team monitors local media coverage and it is intended to provide quarterly updates to HMG on media and web activity in future. Web user statistics are monitored, and patient perception recorded on NHS Choices is also monitored. The communications team receives regional

media evaluation undertaken by the SHA and this information will be incorporated into the updates.

Currently there is insufficient resource available within the communications team to undertake more detailed perception audit and evaluation. However, we are planning to do more in 2010/11 around monitoring in-house communications activity including:

- Web content development by directorates
- Number of staff receiving team briefing
- Directorate 'good news' stories
- Insight reader survey
- Member newsletter survey

5. Summary

This report highlights some of the work of the communications team during 2009/10. In addition to the above, the team is also responsible for producing the Trust Annual Report, and provides advice and guidance to those responsible for producing the Service Improvement Annual Review and, for 2010/2011 the Annual Quality Account, to ensure consistency and compliance with the NGH Brand.

We have made good progress during the year with developing our internal communications and strengthening our links with the local media. Going forward to 2010/11 our focus must be on:

- Maintaining and building on the internal communications momentum
- Developing links with local NHS and partner organisations
- Continuing to promoting NGH as the provider of choice
- Developing the intranet as an effective business tool
- Identifying effective ways to engage with GPs and commissioners
- Strengthening member communications

6. Recommendation

The Board is asked to note progress with implementing the communications strategy.

Northampton General Hospital

NHS Trust

COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN – UPDATE – APRIL 2010

OBJECTIVE/ACTIVITY	STATUS	TIMESCALE		
ENGAGE WITH THE WORKFORCE				
Identify and share good practice, recognise achievement and celebrate success				
Star Awards	Planning for event in 2010 now underway. Event to follow same outline as 2009. Nominations being sought. Reminder to be issued in November core brief and Point.	Event March 2010		
Nursing & Midwifery celebration	Event due to take place in Spring 2010. Planning underway. Posters, certificates and invitations designed.	Spring 2010		
Photography competition	Launched November 2009 with request for entries. Initial poor response led to broadening competition to Trust members. More than 100 entries received. Judging panel convened in March and finalists notified.	March 2010		
Service improvement annual report and summit	Posters designed for 2010 summit in July 2009. Posters designed for SHA conference in October and PCT event in November. Summit will take place in May 2010. Planning for annual review underway.	May 2010		
Annual plan for events to ensure good spread and maximise PR opportunities	Events planned so they do not clash and there is a spread across the year.	Ongoing		
Identify opportunities to enter regional and national awards and provide support	Ongoing support offered by comms team for awards submissions.	Ongoing		
Provide opportunities for key stakeholders to attend events	MPs, shadow governors and key stakeholders from partner organisations invited to attend events	Ongoing		
Raise awareness of events	Events publicised in core brief, The Point, Insight, member newsletter and in the local print and broadcast media	Ongoing		
Build on workshops held in response to staff survey to develop and implement full team brief system				
<u>AskPaul@ngh.nhs.uk</u> launch	Launched as part of work on NGH transformation programme.	February 2010		
ET attendance at team meetings	Meetings set up and attended by members of exec team	July-November 2009		

OBJECTIVE/ACTIVITY	STATUS	TIMESCALE
Implement team brief system	Core brief now produced at end of each month. Planning for Trust wide implementation of team brief delayed due to impact of swine flu and SSA comms activity. Need to review in light of communications activity required to support NGH transformation programme	September 2010
Launch monthly 'Talk to Paul' events	Launched as part of work on NGH transformation programme.	From April 2010
Raise awareness and recognition	of Trust's strategic aims, objectives and values	
Campaign on Trust vision and objectives	Aim to undertake activity in April/May 2010 to support 2010/11 objectives	April/May 2010
Refine and improve the Trust intranet so that it is an active resource for staff		
Identify and procure IT support needed	Tender let early December 2009. Work has focused on developing design and templates. Existing Trust intranet continues to be updated in the meantime.	December 2009
Identify web co-ordinators and collect content	Paper to HMG August 2008. Support received and subsequently web co-ordinators identified. Web co-ordinators to be actively involved in intranet testing and development.	March – May 2010
Develop templates and guidance for users of content management system (CMS)	Templates developed as part of CMS. Web co-ordinators have now undergone training. Content management strategy for intranet and website being developed.	May 2010
Populate site and roll out CMS testing	Web co-ordinators have completed training. Now need to develop content of intranet.	April-June 2010
User testing and go live	Pending content development.	June 2010
BUILD COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Develop communication skills of managers, providing training where needed		
Identify number of managers to be trained in team brief technique and comms skills and develop programme	Needs detailed discussion with HR/Training. Need to define outputs of any comms development programme and identify potential and funding for training modules to be developed and offered.	April-May 2010

OBJECTIVE/ACTIVITY	STATUS	TIMESCALE
Develop Trust communications toolkit, to include guidance on branding, style, report writing, grammar and language	Toolkit being drafted ready for consultation May 2010 and launch June 2010.	June 2010
	PROMOTE THE NGH BRAND AND MANAGE REPUTATION	
Ensure compliance with the Trust's corporate identity	Formal guidance for brand usage to be included within communications toolkit. Templates to be available on the intranet. House style to be applied to all Trust publications.	June 2010
Raise awareness of and confidence in the services provided by NGH	Open Day in June 2009 a success and to be repeated in 2010. Planning underway. Royal visit in Sept 2009 and heart centre opening Oct 2009. AGM June 2009 had record attendance. Insight produced bi-monthly. Regular features in C&E.	Ongoing
Identify opportunities for engaging with Trust members	Open Day and AGM 2009 well attended. Members' newsletter produced quarterly. Two member events held and another planned for April 2010.	Ongoing
Support HR & Training activity by publicising events and training achievements in Insight, The Point and local media	NGH stand and banners designed and produced for use in recruitment fairs and other Trust events. Media releases re training achievements and articles in Insight and The Point.	Ongoing
Refine and improve the Trust website so that it is an active resource for people to obtain up to date, relevant and accurate information about NGH		
Identify and procure IT support needed	Contract let in December 2009 after detailed tender process.	December 2009
Identify web co-ordinators and collect content	Paper to HMG August 2008. Support received and subsequently web co-ordinators identified. Content collection underway. Aim is to have content ready for January 2010	January 2010
Develop templates and guidance for users of content management system (CMS)	Templates developed as part of CMS. Web co-ordinators have now undergone training. Content management strategy for intranet and website being developed.	May 2010
Populate site and roll out CMS testing	New website now populated with updated content and ready to go live March 2010.	March 2010

OBJECTIVE/ACTIVITY	STATUS	TIMESCALE	
OTHER COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY			
Perception audit and evaluation	Media monitoring takes place, but need to provide quarterly reports to trust board and HMG on communications activity. Web user statistics monitored, and patient perception recorded on NHS Choices also monitored. Regional media evaluation by SHA monitored. Insufficient resource to undertake detailed perception audit and evaluation.	Board and HMG reports from April 2010	
Arts in the hospital	Photography competition held in November/December 2009. Winners announced February 2010. Progress on setting up arts steering group delayed due to day to day operational demands of managing communications. Photography competition held. Steering group being set up and first meeting arranged.	Group to meet in April 2010	
Advertising and sponsorship policy	Policy drafted and out to consultation. Amendments being incorporated prior to submission for approval.	Approval Dec 09	
Noticeboard policy	Policy drafted and out to consultation. Amendments being incorporated prior to submission for approval.	Approval Dec 09	
NHS Constitution	Trust-wide campaign to raise awareness October 2010. Second phase of consultation about to start.	Consultation responses due February 2010	
ICAN! Campaign	Logo designed and in use. Used to support PET communications and NGH transformation programme.	Ongoing	
Ongoing comms support to Trust-wide initiatives	Support provided to initiatives such as seasonal and swine flu vaccination campaigns, same sex accommodation, and equality and diversity	Ongoing	