

BOARD SUMMARY SHEET	
Title	Communications Update
Submitted by	Sally-Anne Watts, Head of Communications
Date of meeting	4 th October 2010
Corporate objectives addressed	Maintain and enhance position as the local provider of choice
SUMMARY OF CRITICAL POINTS	
<p>This report provides an update on communications activity against the communications strategy that was approved by the Board in June 2009. Good progress has been made against the strategic themes of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging with the workforce ▪ Promoting the NGH brand and managing reputation <p>More work is needed against the third key theme of building communications capability and capacity. The plans being developed to address this are outlined in this report.</p>	
PATIENT IMPACT	
High. Patients will be more aware of the services provided by the Trust, able to access information about the services and more likely to make NGH their hospital of choice.	
STAFF IMPACT	
High. Staff will be kept informed about developments, receive recognition for the work they do, and able to speak confidently to their teams and others about NGH.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	
None identified.	
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 achieving objectives, reputation management and patient choice.	
RECOMMENDATION	
The Board is asked to note the content of this report.	

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE – OCTOBER 2010

1. Background

1.1 The Trust's communications strategy was approved by the Board in June 2009 and an update on progress was presented to the Board in April 2010. This paper provides a further update on progress against the key strategic themes of:

- Engaging with the workforce
- Building communications capability and capacity
- Promoting the NGH brand and managing reputation

This paper then considers future priorities. A summary of operational communications activity is set out in Appendix A.

2. Progress against key strategic themes

2.1 Engaging with the workforce

2.1.1 Events

Events and activities such as the DVD celebrating nurses' day, lunch with Paul, senior managers' briefing, the 'It's a knockout' challenge, open day, fundraising activities to support Green Heart Day and 'Faces of NGH' have provided invaluable opportunities to engage with staff and support team-building in a cross-section of events and activities at a more local level.

2.1.2 Transformation programme

A key issue has been to engage the workforce in the transformation programme. Following on from the initial workshops attended by more than 700 staff in February 2010 the Trust has worked with an external communications consultant to develop an outline communications strategy to support the transformation programme. A key output was the publication in June 2010 of a detailed brief and summary for managers and their teams.

We are now looking at ways in which we can effectively engage with staff who are taking part in the independent business reviews (IBRs) and ways in which communications can support delivery. We know there is more work to do around increasing communication relating to the transformation programme. However, this work will not proceed until there is sufficient detail around the key messages as we wish to avoid generating rumour and misunderstanding.

2.1.3 Intranet development

Following a series of workshops with our web co-ordinators to agree design, structure and content, we are now developing our new intranet, which will go live in October 2010. The new intranet will provide further opportunities for online discussion, collaboration and consultation.

2.2 Building communications capability and capacity

2.2.1 Training

More than twenty web co-ordinators have been identified from across the Trust who have now been trained to use the Content Management System for the website and intranet.

The content on our external website is now growing and developing and our web co-ordinators ensure the information is kept up to date. They will also be responsible for managing their department's intranet presence.

2.2.2 Capability and capacity

It is recognised that a key point of contact for all staff is their line manager. We need to energise and equip our front line managers with the knowledge and skills they need to communicate effectively with their teams and there are plans to address this going forward. Line managers will be supported and encouraged to understand the importance of their role in communicating messages from the centre, as well as feeding back from their staff.

We are now planning a series of 2 hour workshops that will take place later in the year for directorate managers, assistant directorate managers, matrons, senior head nurses and heads of departments. The aim of these workshops will be to:

- reinforce the Trust objectives, with particular emphasis around the transformation programme and the challenges we face going forward
- introduce managers to the why and how of effective communications
- launch the NGH communications toolkit.

2.3 Promoting the NGH brand and managing reputation

2.3.1 Media management

Promoting the brand and managing reputation is an ongoing activity. We recognise that, whilst a great deal of effort is put into building positive relationships with the local media, there are occasions when the Trust has to respond rapidly to negative media coverage both externally and internally.

In response to recent negative media coverage the Trust issued an immediate response to staff, reminding them of the importance of ensuring our patients' experience is the best possible. We subsequently engaged with the local media to promote a series of positive features on our services, including food tasting, which was covered by local and regional print and broadcast media, and our new day surgery unit.

2.3.2 Publications

During the year we have continued to adopt a more co-ordinated approach to ensuring the publications produced by the Trust are produced to a high standard and are consistent with the NGH brand. The communications toolkit that will be launched later in the year will include guidance on corporate communications, branding, house style and language for all staff.

We introduced a monthly update on patient experience priorities and performance in June 2010. Since August 2010 we have displayed posters, branded with the Trust's ICAN! logo, along the main Hospital Street describing actions taken to improve the patient experience and what is being achieved.

2.3.3 Engaging with stakeholders

We know there is more to do to engage with local GPs and the communications team is working with the recently appointed GP liaison manager to identify the most effective ways of doing this. This work will include a review of our quarterly e-zine, GP News.

In August 2010 we launched the consultation around our FT application. Every effort has been made to keep costs to a minimum. The initial publication design was done in-house, and wherever possible we have used email and web-based communication

tools. The Open Day provided an invaluable opportunity not only raise awareness of the services provided by the Trust, but also to involve the local community in the consultation.

3. Future priorities

3.1 Ensuring best use of resources

The number of publications processed through the communications team has increased. This year saw us producing our first annual quality account, as well as a full annual report and accounts. We have also produced a service improvement review of the year and supported production of the consultation documents.

A priority for next year will be to identify key reports for publication and develop a scheduled programme so that report publications are timed to link in with associated events where possible. There is also work to do to ensure we achieve improved quality, consistency and value for money across all our printed materials and investigate options for implementing a consistent approach to charging for publications activity.

3.2 Review the communications strategy

The communications strategy will be reviewed and updated, to reflect progress and incorporate the use of social media in our overall communications mix as a timely, effective and efficient way of communicating with the local and wider community, including staff, members, patients and supporters.

4. Recommendation

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

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2010

Strategic Aim	ACTIVITY	COMMENT
EVENTS		
Star Awards		
	Nursing & Midwifery celebration	Planning for event in 2011 now underway. Launch October 2010.
	Service improvement annual report and summit	DVD produced to support 2010 event involving a cross-section of staff from wards and departments across the Trust.
	NGH Open Day & AGM	Service improvement annual review produced to reflect brand identity. Publicity for event and winners through the Point, core brief, Insight and local media Greater number of departments involved this year than 2009. Record attendance at AGM. Consideration to be given to finding alternative venue for 2011 AGM.
FACE TO FACE		
	Lunch with Paul	Monthly lunchtime meeting for up to 12 members of staff with chief executive. Well attended by a broad cross-section of staff and a variety of topics raised.
	Senior managers' brief	Monthly briefing when core brief is discussed with senior managers
	Understand staff perception of annual staff survey results	Focus groups led by HR in the summer of 2010 with a cross-section of departments and directorates and action plans developed
	Communication workshops for senior managers	Series of workshops for senior managers, heads of department, head nurses and senior ward staff to update them on Trust strategy and objectives, the transformation programme and to launch the NGH communications toolkit. To take place late 2010/early 2011
WRITTEN/PRINTED COMMUNICATION		
	Core brief	Monthly brief summarising key issues under the topics of our patients, our people, our place and our performance
	Insight	Bi-monthly magazine to be refreshed Spring 2011
	Issue-specific bulletins	Detailed and summary briefings prepared to support NGH transformation programme

Patient experience newsletter	Monthly newsletter launched in July 2010 highlighting areas of good practice and performance and reinforcing key messages around improving the patient experience
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION	
The Point	Appearance of the Point refreshed in April/May 2010 to reflect brand identity
NIGHT	NGH intranet. New design and content structure discussed and agreed with web co-ordinators. To go live October 2010. Web writing guidance to be included within NGH communications toolkit. Content management strategy being developed.
AskPaul@ngh.nhs.uk	Dedicated email for staff to use to raise concerns direct with the chief executive.
CONSULTATIONS	
FT Consultation	Awareness-raising events planned for staff in the cybercafé during September/October 2010. Will also feature in Open Day.
NHS White Paper consultation briefing pack	Briefing pack prepared summarising key themes and questions arising from the four separate government consultations on the NHS White Paper. Staff encouraged to take part in consultation and feed back directly.
OTHER ACTIVITY	
History of NGH	Series of panels developed to depict the history of NGH now on display on North Street.
Faces of NGH	New initiative to have 'Faces of NGH' to brighten up hospital corridors. Volunteers sought from all staff groups. Images to be in place October 2010.
Internal communications survey	Internal communications survey to take place end September/early October to measure level of awareness and engagement and inform future internal communications activity.

Strategic Aim	ACTIVITY	COMMENT
BUILD COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY	Identify and train web co-ordinators	<p>More than 20 staff have attended training to use the content management system and act as web co-ordinators for their department. Now actively using our CMS to update the website.</p>
	InDesign Training	<p>Two members of the communications team have undertaken Adobe Indesign training to enable some posters/publications to be produced in-house.</p>
	Communication workshops	<p>Series of workshops for senior managers/heads of department/directorate head nurses/modern matrons/ward managers being planned for later in the year</p>
	NGH communications toolkit	<p>To be launched at workshops (see above). Templates and guides to be available on new intranet</p>
	Social media	<p>Plans being developed to extend reach of communications by utilising social media platforms to engage with a wider audience</p>
PROMOTE THE NGH BRAND AND MANAGE THE NGH REPUTATION		
	Horizon scanning	<p>Daily 'real-time' monitoring and surveillance of external communications - combining local media cuttings with ongoing monitoring of broadcast and print media and intelligence coming in from web feeds and communications networks.</p>
	NGH Annual Report and Quality Account	<p>Annual report and full set of accounts produced. First annual quality account produced. All Trust publications use NGH brand, which complies with wider NHS brand guidelines.</p>
	GP News	<p>GP News relaunched. Now reviewing how information is presented to GPs to ensure it is relevant, timely and easily accessed.</p>
	Members' newsletter	<p>Refreshed members' newsletter launched Spring 2010. Content agreed with communications and membership sub-committee of Governors' Council.</p>
	Awards entries	<p>Support entry submissions for national awards and raise awareness of Trust achievements.</p>
	Conferences and events	<p>Presence at Nene Commissioning conference. NGH service improvement summit, nursing conference, open day and AGM. Invitation to attend NHS Employers conference in November 2010 for staff engagement session.</p>
	Media releases	<p>Regular programme of media releases and features regarding Trust activity and service developments.</p>

