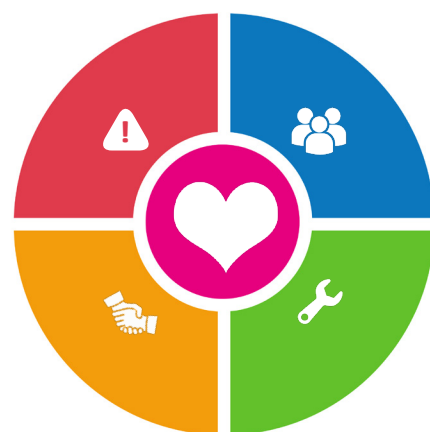


Communications & Engagement Strategy

2017-2022



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Executive summary

The Communications & Engagement Strategy is one of the ten key strategies underpinning the delivery of the Trust's Strategic Direction 2017 – 2022 and is interlinked with the other nine.

It recognises the value that good communications and engagement can add by enabling an organisation to achieve its objectives and to continuously improve its performance.

The Trust is a very different place from a few years ago and, like the rest of the NHS, is operating in a very different world. This strategy reflects the commitment that the Board places on communicating and engaging in an open, honest, transparent and meaningful way with staff, stakeholders and partners in the delivery of our strategic direction, so that the people who need, use and work in the health and care service delivered by DBTH feel informed and involved in their provision, now and in the future.

Background

As a Trust, we are extremely proud of the excellent improvements in the quality of care we continue to provide for our patients, an achievement we have sustained for the fourth year in a row. As part of this achievement, we have seen further reductions in severe avoidable pressure ulcers, falls and infections and our mortality rate has also reduced in comparison to last year and well within the expected range. Maintaining quality of care is fundamental to our future plans and lies at the heart of all we do.

In January 2017, we were awarded teaching hospital status, becoming Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (DBTH). We gained this accreditation due to our long-standing commitment to improving education and growing research, as well as ensuring that we are an integral partner in the training of clinical and medical staff in the region. Becoming a teaching hospital is of huge benefit to both our patients and staff, with further improvements to be made in innovative and quality health care, delivered by our professional team that is actively teaching and involved in research initiatives.

Following financial challenges which became apparent in autumn 2015, we have also made great progress in our cost saving and efficiency efforts and these will continue into the future. The progress we have made has been due to a number of factors, but can be mostly attributed to the 'can-do' attitude and enthusiasm of our staff, who have been working in

different and innovative ways. Throughout this process it has been our goal to ensure that the patient remains our focus and we believe that, despite increased demands and challenges, we have achieved this.

Thanks to our identified savings, and a one-off support payment from NHS Improvement for our strong performance against our financial plan, we have started this planning period in a better position than expected. Like many other NHS organisations we will continue to face significant changes and challenges, and in order to meet these, we have developed our strategic direction in anticipation to ensure we work effectively both internally and with partners to develop solutions.

Over recent years we have strengthened our links with health and care partners in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw, working as part of the Working Together Vanguard to develop new care models. We are also an integral partner of the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) which has now become a first wave Accountable Care System (ACS).

This is thanks to established strong relationships with neighbouring trusts and clinical commissioning groups, and is built on the foundations of a proven history of working together to improve health and care for our population.

The role of Communications & Engagement

The importance of a communicating organisation

Organisations in all sectors now recognise that listening to, involving and learning from staff and consumers improves performance and the quality of the services or products being provided. We live in a 24/7 multi-channel world where news can reach millions in an instant and people are constantly plugged into both social and traditional media. Word of mouth is more influential than ever (good or bad) and everyone's word counts with people increasingly less inclined to establish 'real' from 'fake' news.

The NHS has recognised the importance of communications and engagement. Ipsos MORI research found better-performing NHS trusts committed more resources to communication and were more likely to have communications teams that were influential in decision-making. The landmark NHS policy paper, 'The Communicating Organisation' (17 Dec 2009), encouraged all trusts to place importance on communicating and engagement with 'stakeholders' (i.e. people and groups with an interest in the trust and what it does).

The NHS Constitution states that staff and patients have a right to be kept informed and to be engaged with the NHS. As set out in the Patient Experience and Engagement strategy, patients tell us that clinical effectiveness and safety is important, but their experience of care matters to them just as much. In order to make informed decisions and choices about their care they need to receive the right information and feel listened to and supported. They want to receive efficient person centred care that meets their personal needs and expectations, which can only be done through effective communications and engagement.

The argument for communications and staff engagement

Ruck & Welch (2012) suggest that the psychological state that links employees to their organisation are influenced by organisational level internal communication therefore engagement and internal communications cannot work in silos. Effective internal communication is described by Sedej and

Justinek (2013) as creating an environment in which all employees contribute towards achieving the organisation's vision and not just about producing and disseminating information to employees.

As many of our employees are members of the local community, they themselves, their families and friends are the consumers of the services we provide. It is therefore arguably more important than ever that our staff are recognised as the trusted source of news, and feel empowered to dispel myths and 'fake news'. Staff therefore have to feel informed, engaged and empowered as ambassadors for the organisation they work for.

There are many definitions of engagement however employee engagement essentially describes what happens when people act and think in a positive way about the work they do, the people they work with and the organisation they work in. From the health service perspective the following definition is most relatable:

"Employee engagement describes the involvement of people at all levels in positive two-way dialogue and action to deliver the highest quality patient care and create great places to work – where people find their work meaningful and are willing to work together for patients, their colleagues and the future success of their organisation"

(Huggett et al, 2008)

In addition to the reputational benefits brought about by employee engagement there is compelling evidence that employee engagement in healthcare has significant benefits for organisations, staff and patients, notably:

- It improves patient care outcomes and experiences West and Dawson (2012) put forward compelling evidence that organisations with a strong culture of employee engagement report lower patient mortality rates and lower infection rates, as well as higher patient satisfaction scores and suggest it is when organisations care for their staff, staff can fulfil their roles of caring for their patients.

- It helps to deliver continued improvements and programmes of change – The King's Fund Report (2012) proposes that engaged staff are likely to exert more influence over the use of standard processes, teamwork and the degree to which there is a culture of improvement.
- It helps connect clinicians with the organisation as well as the professional agenda and take on leadership roles.
- It can improve sickness absence. Gallup's 2006 study found that engagement levels can be predictors for sickness absences with more highly engaged employees taking 3.8 days sickness less per year when compared to disengaged employees.

Staff engagement cannot be achieved through internal communications alone. There are a range of influential factors including reward, recognition and leadership contributing to staff engagement levels, all of which are set out in the People and Organisational Development (POD) strategy. This strategy compliments and supports the POD strategy in its delivery of improved staff engagement.



Where we are now

factors shaping the strategy

Background and recent developments

There have been major advances in the way the Trust communicates and engages over the past 18 months. The changes began in October 2015 as the changing financial picture was communicated and a period of Turnaround followed. New channels of communications and engagement were introduced to ensure that as an organisation we were communicating in an open, transparent and honest way, engaging inclusively with all stakeholders. The addition channels included:

- Setting up a staff recovery team – A staff forum/ council for the organisation with representation from different sites and disciplines. This group provided a forum of new ideas, experiences and opinions to contribute to financial turnaround. The group also acted as a ‘sounding board’ for some of the work stream projects to understand the wider impact on a variety of staff groups. The informal meetings took place on a quarterly basis.
- Introducing corporate closed social media groups for staff – Whilst some closed staff groups were already established the all DBTH staff closed group was initially introduced as an extension to the recovery team. Now more than 1,500 members of staff are signed up to the group, enabling us to reach staff groups traditionally less accessible by traditional e-communications.
- Dedicated columns in local press – Columns spaces were negotiated with local press in order to provide regular updates on the financial position. This has now enabled regular, Trust led content on a regular basis.
- Introduced content specific newsletters - Including *turnaround news*, monthly *in the news* updates and the newly established *Risky business*.

A list of all communications and channels is provided in **Appendix A**.

Continuous improvements have also been made over this time period with established communications channels including:

- An increase in followers/ fans and levels of engagement with audiences through our social media channels, often reaching more people than the circulation of local newspapers.
- The ‘Buzz’ weekly bulletin design has been refreshed. Now available via the trust website in order for staff to access it more easily. We know from metrics that approximately 4,000 members of staff read the bulletin on a weekly basis.
- More than 700 members of Trust staff engaged with the strategic direction offering their feedback and suggestions on the vision and objectives, as well as their bugbears and bright ideas, through an integrated range of communications and engagement channels, including email, social media, face-to-face meetings and postcards, delivered to frontline areas to be completed and returned through internal post.

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- ✓ Good news to share – continuing quality and patient safety improvements
- ✓ Achievements of staff and services
- ✓ CQC – good in caring and well-led
- ✓ Strong Board support for a communicating organisation with a focus on internal and external engagement, with a willingness to listen
- ✓ Well established communications tools and techniques*
- ✓ A developed and established communications team with a wide range of skills to implement a variety of techniques
- ✓ The team delivers regional wide communications and engagement within the community for NHS England screening programmes, helping to strengthen community relationships
- ✓ Strong relationships with communications and engagement colleagues on a 'place' and ACS level
- ✓ A new website and intranet to communicate and engage externally and internally

Weaknesses

- ✗ Communication from senior leaders is seen as poor (2016 Staff survey)
- ✗ Staff motivation is low (2016 Staff survey)
- ✗ Low rates of staff who feel able to contribute their ideas, or who feel involved in decision making (2016 Staff survey)
- ✗ No established forums specifically for staff engagement
- ✗ Increasing service challenges – requiring a focus on reactive/ crisis media with limited specialist resources
- ✗ Lack of understanding in the organisation about getting communications/ engagement right at the start often resulting in a reactive responses (more resource intensive)
- ✗ Lack of employee confidence in communications and engagement abilities, often leaving to corporate messaging

Opportunities

- ✓ The clear new strategic vision enables us to tell the story of the future and increased opportunities to highlight research and development on the back of the recent achievement of Teaching Hospital status
- ✓ Social media channel developments – If progress continues we will be increasingly our own content creators, relying less on traditional media
- ✓ To link communications and engagement more closely with delivery, providing communications tools to enable behavior change
- ✓ To work with partner communication teams to strengthen place based health and care messaging
- ✓ Emerging Patient Experience strategy and Qii strategy will enable development of culture of co-creation with patients and carers
- ✓ Emerging People and Organisation Development strategy presents leadership opportunities emphasizing the importance of staff engagement

Threats

- ✗ Confusing picture for people to understand future health and care with individual providers, place plans and Accountable Care System communications
- ✗ The public perception of any health reforms
- ✗ Technology advancing quicker than current resources can respond
- ✗ Possible impact on communications and engagement resources as demand for communications and engagement becomes increasingly real-time due to technological advances

Strategy aims

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's strategic vision is:

As a sustainable Acute Teaching Hospitals Trust we will transform services so **DBTH can maintain and improve high quality integrated care** as a crucial, leading partner in health and social care across South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw

The five key objectives to deliver the vision are:



The vision and objectives address the local and national health and care reforms and the challenges currently faced by the NHS including increasing public demand and expectation, limited skilled staff and limited financial resources.

The transformation needed in order to achieve the vision is significant and will require increased levels of engagement from our patients, staff and stakeholders; communications and engagement has never been more important in the delivery of everything we do. As such communications and engagement form integral parts of all of the supporting strategies and are explicitly included in the following three supporting strategies:

1. Patient Experience and Engagement strategy

The strategy describes how patient feedback should inform service change and shape improvements and highlights opportunities for patients to become more involved in service development through co-creation.

2. People and Organisational Development strategy

The strategy describes how to develop staff reliance and engagement through leadership, talent management, learning and development, recognition and reward.

3. Quality Improvement and Innovation strategy

The strategy describes how in order to deliver transformation we need to develop a culture of quality improvement and innovation, giving frontline teams the autonomy to experiment, discover and apply new and improved ways of delivering care.

Set against this context the vision of the communications and engagement strategy is:

We will engage with our patients, staff, partners and the public to communicate DBTH's strategic direction, **embedding an inclusive, open and honest approach** to supporting the delivery of the vision and objectives.

This will be achieved through the following communication objectives, developed in line with the overall organisational objectives:

Patients

Proactively manage our excellent reputation in delivering high quality care to patients and local communities, providing assurance about any drivers for change at a Trust.

What this involves:

- Providing clarity and reassurance to our communities and stakeholders about the future of services and health care provision, promoting the new strategic direction.
 - ✓ Launching a new, high quality website.
 - ✓ Promoting positive news stories through our own media channels, local, regional and national media.
 - ✓ Promoting Teaching Hospital developments and research opportunities for patients.
 - ✓ Delivering high quality community news channels including Foundations for Health, DBTH what's in the news, partnership bulletin and governor bulletin.
 - ✓ Delivering interactive social media channels increasing engagement and reach and responding to feedback.

People

We will create a culture of involving people

What this involves:

- Working with services and external partners (such as Healthwatch) to gather feedback and

information from our patients and visitors to learn from what we are being told, implementing changes to aid continuous service improvements.

- ✓ Working with colleagues in patient experience to evaluate, maintain and develop methods of collating and responding to feedback.
- ✓ Increase the use of social media as a tool for engagement and feedback, including open forums for public, patients and others to provide feedback.
- ✓ Raising the profile of how involving people is instrumental in making improvements to services, with a focus on a 'you said, we did' approach.
- Providing opportunities for good communications throughout the organisation providing all employees with the opportunity to have their voice heard to influence decisions supporting improvements.
 - ✓ Evaluating and developing current opportunities for staff to have their voice heard, including Chief Executive listening events, Ask the boss and social media platforms. There will be a focus on improving the Staff Brief process to understand and monitor the flow of information both down and up the organisation.
 - ✓ Developing and expanding on new opportunities including the staff experience group and the Closed staff Facebook groups
 - ✓ Supporting POD colleagues to ensure staff survey results are understood at a local level, supporting engagement and the implementation of action plans to address the issues raised in the survey
 - ✓ Promoting the new Quality Improvement and Innovation team, making QII accessible and something for all staff to be involved with.

Performance

We will support effective communications and engagement by all within the Trust in order to support performance delivery.

What this involves:

- Embedding communications and engagement as a fundamental aspect of any service development,

quality improvement, transformation and change programme.

- ✓ Communicating openly and honestly about performance delivery and drivers for change
- ✓ Deliver internal/ external media training to key spokespeople for the Trust where identified
- ✓ Ensure adherence to policies including the media policy and the social media policy embracing staff as ambassadors in place of trying to control communications.
- Support the POD strategy to retain staff and attract new staff to the organisation to support performance delivery.
 - ✓ Develop new intranet to support staff to access benefits information.
 - ✓ Develop new website to promote recruitment opportunities.
 - ✓ Create a suite of recruitment materials and collateral to support.
 - ✓ Promoting DBTH's USP including new Teaching Hospital status, development opportunities and health and wellbeing support.
- Creating a culture of managers who are engaging and involve their staff by supporting them to help their employees to make sense of their role, identifying new opportunities for growth and development.
 - ✓ Develop a new intranet as a better resource for employees and managers.
 - ✓ Provide line managers with guidelines and examples of best practice leadership, engagement and team working.
 - ✓ Provide line managers with the necessary guidelines and documents in order to 'make it more simple' to be a line manager.

Partners

We will work with local and regional colleagues to support place and ACS communications and engagement.

What this involves:

- Working with ACS and place communications and engagement colleagues to inform, challenge and support communications and engagement plans.
 - ✓ Attending ACS and place communications and engagement meetings, ensuring DBTH has a representative voice.

- ✓ Ensuring staff and communities have a voice in any proposed developments by promoting engagement opportunities.
- ✓ Ensure messages are communicated across Doncaster and Bassetlaw.
- ✓ Support the development and delivery of new communication and engagement opportunities including workshops aimed at specific target audiences.

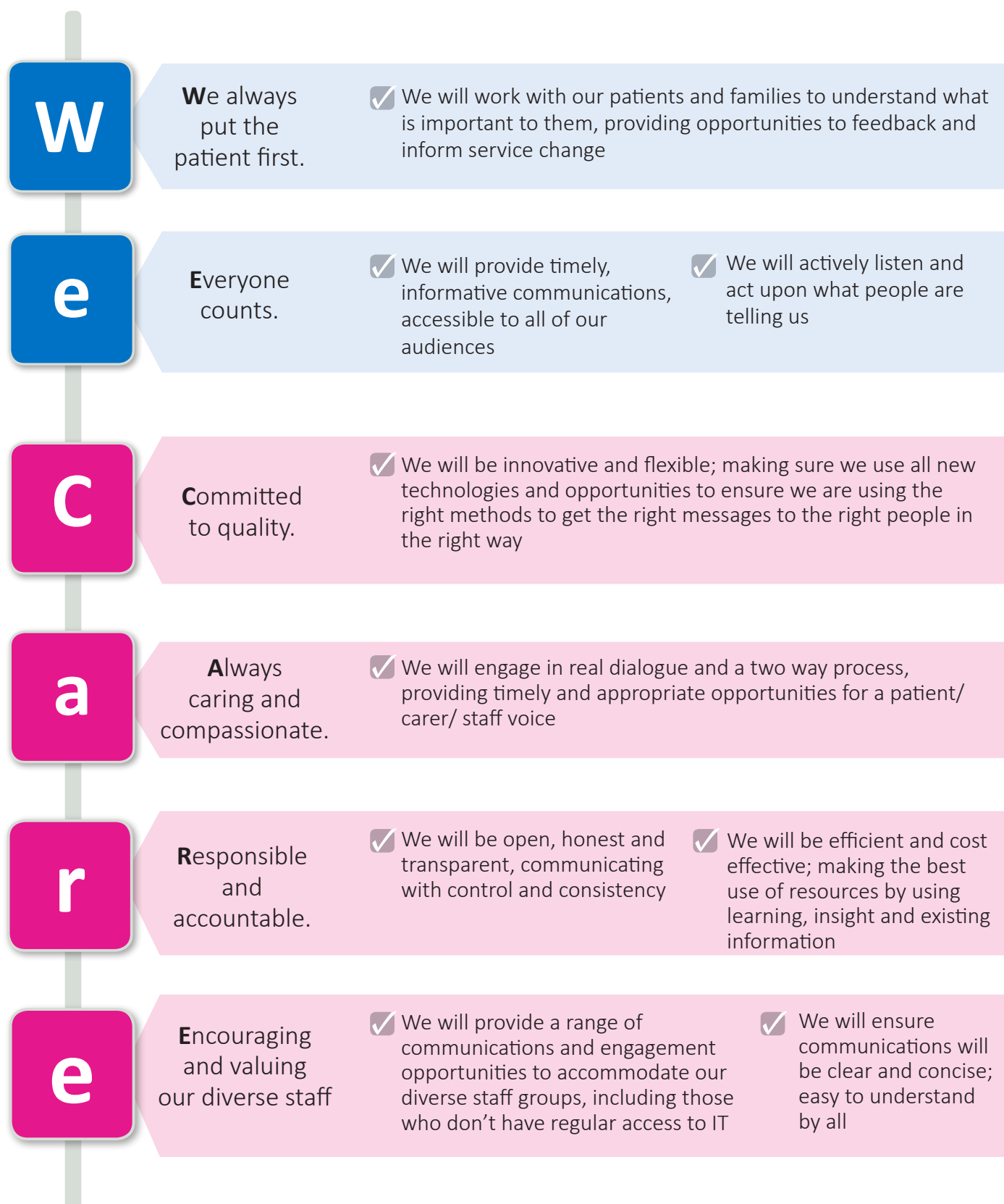
Prevention

We will inspire others to take care of their own health and wellbeing

What this involves:

- Working with internal colleagues in Health and Wellbeing to support the delivery of staff health and wellbeing agenda.
 - ✓ Develop and deliver a communications and engagement strategy for the health and wellbeing CQUIN and a communications and engagement plan for the flu campaign.
 - ✓ Use engagement channels for insight to help establish a valuable health and wellbeing offering from the trust.
- Provide the public and patients with high quality, accessible resources to help them maintain their own health and wellbeing.
 - ✓ Launch the newly developed Trust website as a resource for patients and public.
 - ✓ Promote key public health messages with staff and communities in Doncaster and Bassetlaw to positively impact on their health and wellbeing.
 - ✓ Delivering Screening communications and awareness campaigns for NHS England in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw.
 - ✓ Developing and improving the process for creating, storing and printing high quality patient information.

How we will demonstrate our **values and behaviours** to **improving communications and engagement**



Accountability & Timescales

Objectives	Actions	Outcomes
Provide clear, accessible information about our services, now and in the future through a range of communication channels	Launch a new, high quality, sustainable website through an Open Source product (2017/18)	Increased patient/ visitor engagement with an increase in website visits from 30k per week to 35k (2017/18) to 40k (2018/19)
	Continuously develop the site to provide key information about services including, contact details, how to get there, expectations of treatment and aftercare (2018/19)	Changes and developments on the site completed at no cost
	<p>Improve 'traditional' media coverage in local, regional and national news titles</p> <p>Develop relationships with local journalists (2017/18)</p>	<p>Increase coverage from 20 pieces to 24 per month (2017/18) to 28 (2018/19)</p> <p>Improve positive: negative coverage ratio to 4:1</p> <p>Increased number of journalist interviews and meetings</p>
Improve opportunities for good internal communications throughout the organisation providing all employees with the opportunity to have their voice heard	<p>Develop and improve our presence on social media channels, providing our own, reliable, news content.</p> <p>Set up presence on emerging social media platforms and develop our voice.</p> <p>Increase our number of followers in order to increase the reach of our news stories to more than the local traditional newspapers.</p> <p>Create 'people' news stories, providing staff and patient success stories.</p>	<p>Increase Facebook fans from 3,797 to 4,000 (2017/18) to 4,500 (2018/19).</p> <p>Increase Twitter followers from 2,961 to 3,200 (2017/18) to 3,500 (2018/19).</p> <p>Increase in positive engagement (comments and posts)</p>
	<p>Review current existing channels (2017/18)</p> <p>Develop the current staff brief process to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More people attend Information is disseminated to teams Questions and/or issues are raised back up the channels <p>Improve the use of social media as an internal communications channel</p>	<p>Attendance at staff briefs increase by 50% (2017/18)</p> <p>A mechanism is in place to monitor staff brief dissemination</p> <p>50% of the organisation acknowledge receiving staff brief (2018/19)</p> <p>Increase closed staff group Facebook followers from 1554 to 1850 (2017/18) to 2000 (2018/19)</p>

Objectives

Create systems to support effective communications and engagement by all within the Trust in order to support performance.

Create and deliver inspiring campaigns for others to take care of their own health and wellbeing

Work with local and regional colleagues to support place and ACS communications and engagement

Actions

Launch a new, high quality intranet, developed by staff, providing a platform for engagement and support [\(2017/18\)](#)

Work with teams to develop current, relevant, supportive content.

Use analytics to understand engagement with content and develop content further accordingly [\(2018/19\)](#).

Deliver innovative campaigns to raise the awareness of screening across South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw in line with the NHS England contracts. Focus on cervical and breast screening in 2017/18

Deliver monthly staff and public facing health and wellbeing campaigns through a range of communications channels

Ensuring staff and communities have a voice in any proposed developments by promoting engagement opportunities

Ensure messages are communicated across Doncaster and Bassetlaw

Outcomes

Engagement workshops to capture staff views delivered (approx. 200 views).

Intranet delivered.

Positive evaluation of new intranet.

Four pieces of positive coverage per month

Attendance at 4 community events to raise the profile

Increased uptake of screening and self-referrals (evaluated per campaign area at specific times)

12 health and wellbeing campaigns delivered

Presence of Doncaster and Bassetlaw voice - staff and communities in development of plans and engagement opportunities

Evaluation & Monitoring

Evaluation will play an important part in our communications and engagement activity, evidencing whether we have successfully achieved our objectives. Monitoring of performance and compliance will be undertaken by the Quality and Effectiveness Committee (QEC).

We will constantly monitor the following activity to ensure we are reaching our audiences effectively:

- How we are perceived by our patients, community, staff and wider stakeholders. We will do this through:
 - Patient surveys.
 - Followers, feedback and engagement via social media channels.
 - Measure of media coverage, positive and negative.
- How we engage with stakeholders and our communities delivering our strategic direction.

We will do this through:

- Feedback from stakeholders via corporate communication channels.
- Website statistics.
- How we engage and involve our staff. We will do this through:
 - Staff Survey result.
 - Feedback from staff via internal communication channels, including closed social media groups and the staff experience group.
- How we deliver and evaluate our communications and engagement activity
 - Communications audits.
 - Anecdotal feedback from stakeholders via a range of channels.

References & Bibliography

Ipsos Mori Research The Communicating Organisation (2009)

Ruck & Welch (2012)

Sedej and Justinek (2013)

Huggett et al (2008)

The King's Fund Report (2012)

Appendices

Internal communication channels

Staff brief- Delivered by the Chief executive the Thursday following the Board meetings held each month on the Tuesday. All staff brief should have a staff brief delivered to them by their line manager (all documentation is also available on the intranet).

DBH Buzz weekly staff bulletin (email).

Urgent emails to all staff.

The intranet.

Hospital notice boards and desktop displays in communal areas.

Information screens across the hospital.

Closed staff Facebook group.

The Staff Experience group.

Monthly and annual STAR awards.

External communications channels

Local, regional and national media.

MP brief (monthly brief to MPs based on the core content from the staff brief).

Governor brief (monthly brief to Governors based on the core content from the staff brief).

Partner brief (monthly brief to partners based on the core content from the staff brief).

GP e-bulletin (contribute to the joint NHS Doncaster regular email updates to local GPs).

DBTH in the news e bulletin.

Foundations for Health for staff, members and the public (magazine)



www.facebook.com/DBHNHS



[@DBH_NHSFT](https://twitter.com/DBH_NHSFT)



www.dbth.nhs.uk



www.youtube.com/user/DBHHospitalsNHS



DBTH Instagram account



DBTH Snapchat account

NHS choices

Patient Opinion and NHS Choices