

**Trust Board**

**TB2008.39**

From: Ms Helen Peggs, Director of Communications

Date: May 2008

Subject: **ORH Communications Strategy**

For: **Decision**

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**Synopsis**

In March 2007, the Trust agreed a Communications Strategy for 07/08. While the Strategy was agreed for a twelve month period, in support of the business plan, its aims and objectives reflected the longer term goals of the Trust and the fact that it is now operating in a competitive marketplace, requiring marketing as well as communication skills in order to support business development. Two streams of work have become particularly important over the past year - marketing communications to support business development, and communications to support the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals as a Foundation Trust.

This Strategy builds on the achievements of the past year and looks forward to the future of the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals as a successful and market-leading Foundation Trust. The Strategy should be considered in conjunction with the Patient Information Strategy, agreed last year and due to be updated through the Governance Committee, and the Membership Strategy for the Foundation Trust.

The Strategy provides assurance for the Board that the communications and information requirements of the 'Value for Money' section of the Auditors' Local Evaluation (ALE), and the Healthcare Commission Standards have been met during the year and that plans are in place to ensure that they continue to be met.

**Financial, legal and risk impact**

The resource implications of implementing the Communication Strategy have been reflected in the Trust's finance plan for 2008/9 by recognising costs for:

- Recruiting members to support FT status, establishing a membership support function, and setting up and running a members' communications programme
- Patient information leaflets and some other marketing materials
- ORH News - charitable funding ceases on 1 April, but the cost of £20K can be funded from within the overall NHS Trust budget.

## ORH Communications Strategy 2008/09

### Introduction and context

1. This report reviews the implementation of the Trust Communications Strategy over the past twelve months and sets out plans for 08/09. During the year, a number of work streams which developed from the Strategy had specific communications plans in place, which were individually monitored. In addition, the Communications Business Plan arising from this Strategy was subject to an internal accountability review.
2. The Strategy for 08/09 reflects the work of the Strategic Review, the Foundation Trust application process, business developments in the marketing field and the business plan for the Trust. The environment in which the ORH is now operating is one of choice for patients, commissioners and referrers, resulting in increased competition among providers of healthcare services. For the ORH, this means competing with other acute Trusts and working more closely with district general hospitals, and PCT and GP commissioners, in order to encourage referrals. Through the Strategic Review and the Foundation Trust Integrated Business Plan, the Trust has established its market approach and is currently developing its businesses in several key areas, including cancer, cardiac and private patients, all of which require marketing communications support.
3. The Trust is developing a strengthened relationship with the University of Oxford which may result in a rebranding exercise, in order to build on the reputation of the organisation as a leading academic health sciences centre. The work of the Comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre provides an opportunity to promote the national and international profile of the Trust as a base for leading edge clinical services and research.
4. Governance arrangements within the NHS require organisations to have a co-ordinated approach to a number of communications and information issues. ALE requires NHS organisations to have an agreed Communications Strategy to support the implantation of business objectives. *Standards for Better Health* sets out requirements for the way in which patient information should be managed and produced by Trusts, and the way in which patients must be informed about how their information will be used. The Foundation Trust process requires a new communications programme, which will include public consultation, membership recruitment, communications and engagement, support for elections and staff communications and engagement.
5. The challenge for the next year will be to co-ordinate and control in a timely manner the wide range of communications and marketing initiatives which are being developed, in order to ensure a consistent and high quality approach which is worthy of the ORH 'brand'.

### Performance over past year

6. The Trust has in place robust channels of communication both internally and externally, to ensure that the reputation of the organisation is managed, positive developments are publicised, and possible threats are dealt with in a timely manner.
7. Last year, the Communications Strategy set the following goals:
  - 7.1 **To develop the national and international image and reputation of the Trust as a pre-eminent academic medical centre, focusing on its Biomedical Research Centre status.**

A member of the communications team has been seconded to the Biomedical Research Centre team, in order to manage communication channels for it internally and externally. A dedicated micro-website has been set up and several high profile national media stories achieved, focusing on research themes. Links have been developed with the University of Oxford communications team and with the National Science and Media Centre. Several media stories during the year achieved international and national publicity for the Trust's specialist and research expertise. Professor Alastair Buchan's work on stroke is being featured in the Department of Health film produced to support Lord Darzi's work on the NHS.

- 7.2 **To manage the local reputation of the Trust, internally and externally, so that patient and staff confidence is maintained and developed.**

#### **Information for patients and the public**

During the year, a library of information leaflets has been developed for patients and the public. In order to ensure that the information is accessible to a range of patient groups, these can be provided in a range of languages, and produced in large print. The choice of languages offered is regularly reviewed, and is based on use of the translation service, and demographic information. Leaflets are produced with the assistance of patients and are piloted before they are printed.

#### **Website**

The external website has continued to be developed as a marketing and information tool for patients, the public and referring clinicians. An online patient information library has been launched and will be continuously updated. The website can be viewed in large print, and provides information on obtaining information in other languages.

#### **Media**

Local and national media are used to promote the work of the Trust and increase patient, public and staff confidence in the quality of its services. Media coverage over the past year has been predominantly positive (see Appendix A). The media are also used to increase public awareness about specific issues - these articles and features are recorded in the monitoring as 'neutral/information'. Over the past year these issues have included infection control, alcohol misuse, car parking and transport issues, and the smoking ban on hospital sites. Ensuring accurate media

reporting of proposals to change services at the Horton General Hospital has been challenging and time-consuming.

**7.3 To support the Trust's application for Foundation Status, through proactive communications and stakeholder management.**

Work to support the Trust's FT application has been a priority throughout the year, and will remain a key focus of the Strategy for 08/09.

**7.4 To strengthen relationships with local stakeholders, including patient and voluntary groups, MPs and NHS and local government colleagues.**

The Trust has continued to have active relationships with colleagues in stakeholder organisations and plans to build on these in the current year, to support Foundation Trust status. Trust representatives have spoken at a wide range of stakeholder meetings, and have continued to work closely with the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the ORH Patients' Forum and the ORH Patients' Panel. Members of both patient groups are involved in advising on Trust information, including the publications being prepared for the Foundation Trust process.

In addition to the general work with patient groups, the Trust has implemented initiatives aimed at specific groups of patients and the public. A particularly successful example was 'children's takeover day' during which children and young people got involved in a wide range of meetings and events within the children's hospital, and contributed ideas and comments, which were then published in ORH News and in the local media.

The Trust continued to work actively with local stakeholders while the proposals to change services at the Horton General Hospital were being developed. These relationships remain important to the Trust, and they will need to be maintained and developed, taking into account the recommendations of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel. Because of the continued discussions about the Horton General Hospital, it was not felt appropriate to carry out a stakeholder survey during the past year. Regular reputational audits with stakeholders will form part of the ongoing communications programme to support the ORH as a Foundation Trust.

**7.5 To further develop communications and engagement throughout the Trust, to support internal change management, performance improvement and other initiatives.**

The Trust has continued to produce ORH News, Team Brief, and Now@ORH, the intranet news site, and to organise 'meet the people' sessions with senior managers, to ensure that staff are kept informed about corporate developments. An internal communications survey carried out during the year highlighted the popularity of ORH News and Team Brief, but also difficulties in accessing information via the current intranet sites. A Trust handbook has been produced for staff, which is available in print, and online, where it is continuously updated. In addition to communications support for performance improvement initiatives

and the 18 week programme, which has continued through the year, the Trust has embarked on an internal programme of communications, in readiness for Foundation Trust status.

**7.6 To use communications and marketing plans to support the development of the ORH business, including service developments and fundraising campaigns.**

7.7 Marketing communications programmes are being developed to support the growth of cancer services and the private patients' service, in advance of the opening of the Cancer Centre in the autumn of 2008. The communications programme to support the growth of cancer services brings together marketing initiatives aimed at fundraising and recruitment, as well as service development, into one co-ordinated strategy, in order to create one multimedia campaign, with consistency of message. The Trust has continued to use proactive media relations to support fundraising campaigns for the Children's Hospital, the Cancer Centre, the Transplant Centre and the Brodey Centre at the Horton.

**7.8 To support the development of a customer-focused patient care strategy, including the implementation of the patient information strategy.**

As described above, during the year, the Trust has produced new patient information leaflets for all in and out patients, and developed over 50 new condition specific leaflets for patients. All of these have been produced within a consistent house style, and a style book for staff has been published on the intranet. A patient information library has been developed on the website. Leaflets and web information can be provided in a range of languages. Following the successful implementation of the patient information strategy, a project 'patient contact' project has been established, under the auspices of the 'customer care' project led by the Director of Nursing. This aims to improve the quality of communications with patients when booking appointments.

**7.9 To review the communications function and agree a development plan for it, to ensure that it has the skills and resources to support the challenges and opportunities facing the Trust over the next three years.**

The role of the communications function within the Trust is to support the business priorities of the organisation. This role will, therefore, change year on year, to reflect the concerns of the business and the function should be subject to ongoing review and redevelopment. A concept is emerging of a multifunctional and flexible team, with broad marketing and communication skills, which provides support to internal clients, according either to business priorities or to available resources. For example, current business priorities include support for cancer marketing, promotion of the private patients' service and the development of Foundation Trust communications. Work programmes which are funded by clients rather than the central Trust budget, include Estates and Facilities, Performance Improvement, CRS and the Biomedical Research Centre.

**7.10 To use a variety of appropriate communications channels to support other priority internal and external projects, as defined by the Trust business plan or**

**in response to the requirements of the Healthcare Commission or other appropriate body.**

The communications function has supported a wide range of projects over the year, including the implementation of the Care Records Service, which has a dedicated Communications Officer. In addition to the wide variety of short term projects which have needed communications support, priority has been given to the updating and development of the external website, as this has been identified as a key marketing tool for the Trust.

**7.11 To develop performance monitoring and evaluating tools, in order to assess the effective implementation of this Strategy.**

The effectiveness of the Trust's communications is measured in several different ways. Specific projects (cancer marketing, cardiac expansion, patient information, Foundation Trust application) have their own action plans which are monitored and updated regularly. The Trust measures positive and media coverage, in the context of how the news was generated (Appendix 1). It also measures web use (Appendix 2). In addition to these measures, an internal communications survey was carried out to establish the effectiveness of communication channels within the Trust (Appendix 3).

**Strategy for coming year - aim**

8. The aim of the Communications Strategy over the coming year is to use proactive communications, stakeholder relations and marketing techniques to support the business objectives of the Trust, as set out in the Foundation Trust Integrated Business Plan and the Annual Business Plan for 08/09. The Strategy builds on the work of the current year, with particular emphasis on three areas: marketing communications to support business development; the establishment of effective communications (including positive stakeholder relations) to support the ORH as a Foundation Trust; the redevelopment of the Trust intranet site and its establishment as an essential toolkit for staff. The relationship with the University of Oxford may also lead the Trust to launch a rebranding exercise, in order to reflect its status as a major health sciences centre, but the timescale of this is not known at this point.

**Objectives**

9. The objectives of the Communications Strategy for 08/09 are:
- 9.1 To continue to develop the national and international image and reputation of the Trust as a pre-eminent academic medical centre, and Comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre, in partnership with the University of Oxford.
  - 9.2 To manage the local reputation of the Trust, internally and externally, so that patient and staff confidence is maintained and developed. In particular, the Trust will work to ensure that stakeholder relations are maintained and developed, following the Independent Reconfiguration Panel report on the proposals to change services at the Horton General Hospital.

- 9.3 To support the Trust's application for Foundation Status through active stakeholder engagement, consultation and membership recruitment, and establish proactive membership communications.
- 9.4 To further develop communications and engagement throughout the organisation as it moves forward as a Foundation Trust.
- 9.5 To work across the organisation to redevelop the intranet and establish its function as an essential toolkit for ORH staff.
- 9.6 To use communications and marketing plans to support the development of the ORH business, including service developments and fundraising campaigns. Particular emphasis will be given initially to marketing support for cancer services.
- 9.7 To develop a plan to ensure that GPs in Oxfordshire and in other commissioning PCT areas have better communications channels with the Trust, and an opportunity to become more engaged in its activities.
- 9.8 To support the development of a customer focused patient care strategy. Priority will be given to the 'patient contact' project and to the continued implementation of the patient information strategy.
- 9.9 To use a variety of appropriate communications channels to support other priority internal and external projects, as defined by the Trust business plan or in response to the requirements of the Healthcare Commission or other appropriate body.

### **Priorities for 08/09**

10. The following areas of work will be priorities for the Trust for the coming year. These priorities will form the basis of the business plan for the Trust communications team. Good quality communications and active stakeholder engagement are, however, organisational rather than functional responsibilities, and the implementation of the Strategy will involve a number of teams within the ORH.

### **Foundation Trust**

11. Details of the communication plan to support the ORH as it becomes a Foundation Trust are set out in the Membership Strategy. The plan includes:
  - 11.1 A three month public consultation on the governance arrangements.
  - 11.2 A recruitment programme, in order to create the membership scheme. This aims to ensure that the membership fairly reflects the patient and public constituencies served by the Trust and will seek to involve those groups who might not normally be involved because they are more difficult to identify and reach.
  - 11.3 The creation of a database of members, which includes socio-demographic details, and which can be used to help target recruitment and support the membership programme and member communications.
  - 11.4 An internal communications programme, to raise awareness about the FT process among staff, in preparation for the application assessment. This includes

establishing regular team briefings sessions for managers on each hospital site, which will cover policy developments and performance issues, as well as topics directly relevant to the FT process. Managers will be expected to attend these sessions and to cascade information to their teams.

11.5 An election, in order to elect representatives to the new Members' Council.

11.6 The establishment of a membership office, to continue membership recruitment, develop a membership programme and oversee regular communications and engagement with members.

### **Marketing**

12. The Strategic Review established the importance of proactive marketing, if the Trust is to maintain and expand its businesses, and remain a leader in its field. Successful marketing is based on an organisational approach rather than the activities of a single function within an organisation.

13. Over the past year, a multidisciplinary business planning group has been established, to support cancer services marketing, in association with the opening of the new Cancer Centre. This has brought together representatives from Divisional Management, Finance, Commissioning, Strategy and Communications, with clinical representatives, in order to plan business expansion. A marketing communications plan has been agreed to support this initiative. This takes a co-ordinated approach to communications to support business development, fundraising, recruitment, the private patient service and the transfer to the new facilities, and sets out a proactive programme of media and public relations initiatives, visits, events and other activities. This includes initiatives to encourage GP interest in the new Centre from beyond Oxfordshire. The plan is monitored through weekly business meetings. The project is seen as a pilot, developing a marketing communications approach which can be applied to other business developments in due course.

14. Over the coming year, work will continue in conjunction with the University of Oxford to promote the role of the Biomedical Research Centre, and the profile of the Trust as a major health sciences centre. A separate communications plan is being drawn up and agreed to support this work. This will be monitored through the Biomedical Research Centre governance structures.

15. Work is also being developed to look at how relationships and communications with GPs in relevant commissioning PCTs can be developed. Initial plans include a regular GP newsletter and a GP forum.

### **Intranet**

16. The ORH intranet is currently maintained by Oxfordshire Health Informatics. It uses outdated software, which is inflexible and difficult to change or update. Individual services update their own sections, which differ in quality. There is no overall Trust approach to the role of the intranet, to its contents or its quality standards.

17. Over the past year, a review of the intranet has been carried out, to determine how widely it is used, what its current users want from it, and its potential for development

to meet the needs of current and new users. This has included reviewing the intranet systems of other Trusts and organisations.

18. Over the coming year, an intranet project will take this work forward. The aim is to create an accessible, web-based toolkit which includes finance, administration, HR, policy, governance, clinical, performance, and other information, and which is updated regularly. This is a complex project, which will involve colleagues from a range of functions within the ORH, but which could reap considerable efficiency benefits for the Trust.

### **Other new media developments**

19. The Trust website, which was redeveloped in 2006, fulfils many functions, including providing information for patients and referring clinicians, and advertising for recruitment. As the 'shop window' for the Trust, it is also a powerful marketing tool, internationally as well as within the UK.
20. Over the next year, the website will be developed in a number of ways, in order to support the business plans of the Trust:
  - 20.1 The patient and public information section of the website will continue to be expanded. The interactivity of the site will be developed, so that it can be used for on-line patient and public surveys and consultation responses.
  - 20.2 The cancer section of the website is being redeveloped, in order to promote the new Cancer Centre and encourage referrals. Consideration will then be given to the development of the cardiac website.
  - 20.3 The private patients' website is being redeveloped, because of its importance in supporting marketing from abroad.
  - 20.4 A section of the website is being designed to support the Foundation Trust membership scheme. The views of patients and the public will be sought on the accessibility of the site.
  - 20.5 A micro-site has been established for the Biomedical Research Centre. This will continue to be expanded.
  - 20.6 New technologies will continue to be explored. For example, video-streaming is being used to support the Biomedical Research Centre micro-site. New technology on the main sight means that documents can read in a book-like fashion. Online forms are being developed, so that the website can be used as a consultation tool.
  - 20.7 The main website now includes a strap-line offering the translation of information into a range of languages, which is provided through the Language Line contract. Over the year, the range of languages which are offered will be reviewed, to ensure that it is appropriate to the patients and the communities served by the Trust.
21. The implementation of the new Care Records System is due to begin in the coming year. A dedicated communications officer overseeing a proactive programme of

communications will ensure that staff and stakeholders are kept informed and engaged, and that media and external interest is handled in a positive and timely manner.

### Customer care

22. Last year, the Executive Board of the Trust agreed a new patient information strategy aimed at establishing systems and processes to ensure that patients receive consistently high quality corporate and clinical information. The strategy is monitored through a patient information group. An update on this strategy will be reviewed by the Trust's Governance Committee in March 08.
23. During the coming year, a new project is being set up to review the way in which patients are contacted regarding outpatient and elective appointments. The aim of the project is to ensure that patients receive high quality and timely information, which can also be provided in other languages and large print format. Patient involvement will be built into the project. The project will be monitored on a regular basis by the patient information group and report to the Governance Committee on an annual basis.

### Stakeholder relations

24. Whilst the Trust has worked to strengthen its stakeholder relations, and to develop patient and public involvement, the coming year will present new challenges. Plans to develop a membership scheme to support the FT process are described above. Other priorities will include establishing relationships with the Local Involvement Network, which will replace the Patients' Forums, and reaffirming relationships with some key stakeholders, following the recommendations of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel.
25. Over the coming year, the Trust will:
  - 25.1 Develop a plan to ensure that relationships with key stakeholders with an interest in the Horton General are maintained and developed, as the Trust works with the PCT to consider the future development of services based at the Hospital.
  - 25.2 Establish good working relationships with the new Local Involvement Network, and raise awareness within the Trust of its role and responsibilities.
  - 25.3 Work with managers within the Trust, to increase awareness of the importance of stakeholder relationships and develop knowledge of the legislative requirements to engage and consult.
  - 25.4 Continue to work with Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that they are kept informed of developments within the Trust, and involved and consulted appropriately.
  - 25.5 Establish an annual reputation audit among key stakeholders, to determine where communications need improving. This will be aligned to Foundation Trust status in future years.

### **Implementing and monitoring the Strategy**

26. A business plan will be drawn up, to support this Strategy, and this will form part of the Trust's organisational business plan for the year. If the Trust were devoting resources to traditional marketing or PR campaigns, it would be appropriate to monitor effectiveness by measuring coverage by its equivalence in advertising spend. As the Strategy is more complex, and involves a range of activities which are harder to cost, implementation will be monitored through:

- the Trust's business planning process
- individual work-streams, which will monitor relevant communications plans
- regular monitoring of media coverage and web usage, which will be reported weekly to senior managers through the weekly media roundup.
- the Governance Committee, which will review the patient information strategy on an annual basis
- the reputation audit, which will measure stakeholder views on an annual basis.
- an annual report to the Trust Board.

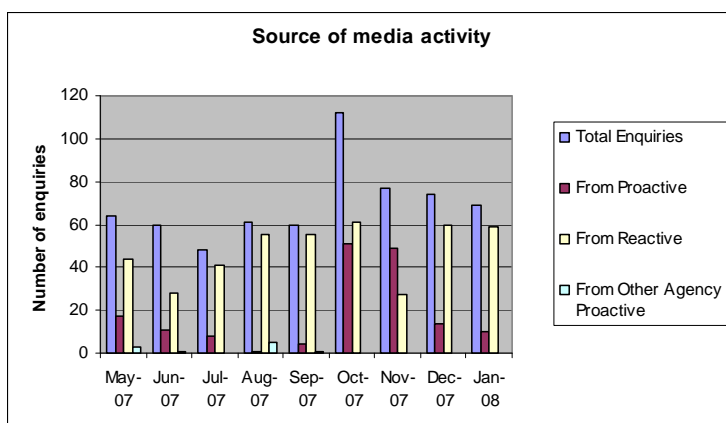
### **Recommendation**

27. It is recommended that the Trust Board agrees the Communications Strategy and that a report monitoring performance against plans is considered following the end of the 08/09 financial year.

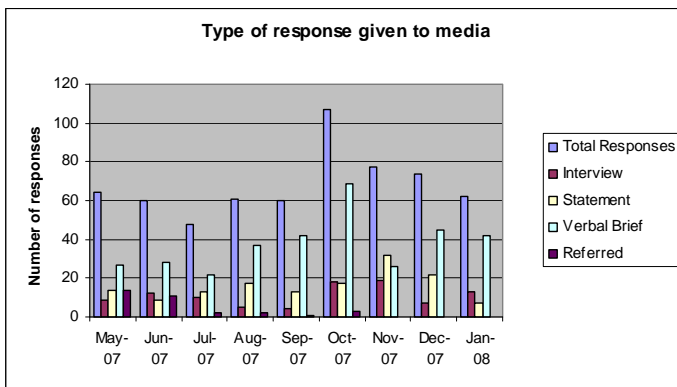
## Media Coverage 2007 – 2008

The information below records positive, negative and neutral (information) media coverage for the period May 2007 to the end of January 2008. The statistics list the origins of the news story, and the way in which it was handled by the communications team.

1. Source of media activity				
May 07 to Jan 08	Total Enquiries	From Proactive	From Reactive	From Other Agency Proactive
<b>May</b>	64	17	44	3
<b>Jun</b>	60	11	28	1
<b>July</b>	48	8	41	0
<b>Aug</b>	61	1	55	5
<b>Sep</b>	60	4	55	1
<b>Oct</b>	112	51	61	0
<b>Nov</b>	77	49	27	0
<b>Dec</b>	74	14	60	0
<b>Jan</b>	69	10	59	0

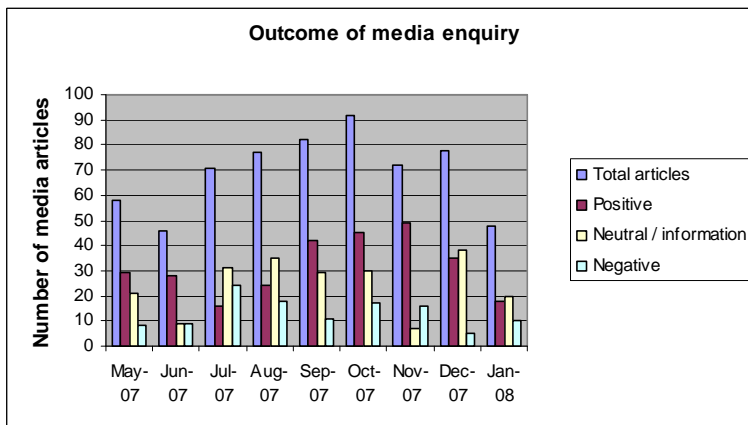


2. Type of Response given					
May 07 to Jan 08	Total Responses	Interview	Statement	Verbal Brief	Referred
<b>May</b>	64	9	14	27	14
<b>June</b>	60	12	9	28	11
<b>Jul</b>	48	10	13	22	2
<b>Aug</b>	61	5	17	37	2
<b>Sep</b>	60	4	13	42	1
<b>Oct</b>	107	18	17	69	3
<b>Nov</b>	77	19	32	26	0
<b>Dec</b>	74	7	22	45	0
<b>Jan</b>	62	13	7	42	0



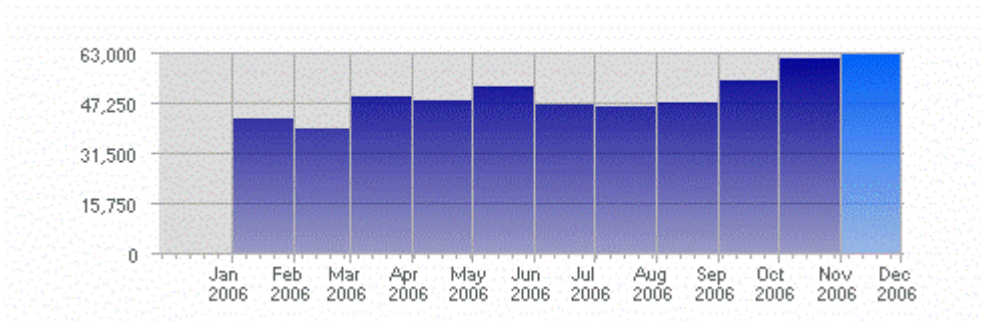
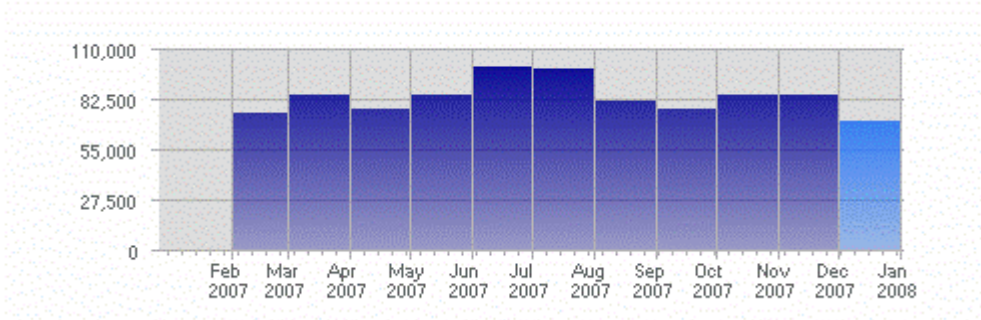
**3. Outcome**

May 07 to Jan 08	Total articles	Positive	Neutral / information	Negative
<b>May</b>	58	29	21	8
<b>Jun</b>	46	28	9	9
<b>Jul</b>	71	16	31	24
<b>Aug</b>	77	24	35	18
<b>Sep</b>	82	42	29	11
<b>Oct</b>	92	45	30	17
<b>Nov</b>	72	49	7	16
<b>Dec</b>	78	35	38	5
<b>Jan</b>	48	18	20	10



**Internet use 2007 to 2008**

The tables below show internet use for 2006 and 2007, measured by ‘hits’ on the website. These now average between 70,000 and 80,000 each month. There appears to be a close correlation between high profile media stories about the ORH, and web usage. This is likely to become more pronounced in the future, as the internet site is increasingly used as a resource for journalists to download video clips and photographs to support news stories.

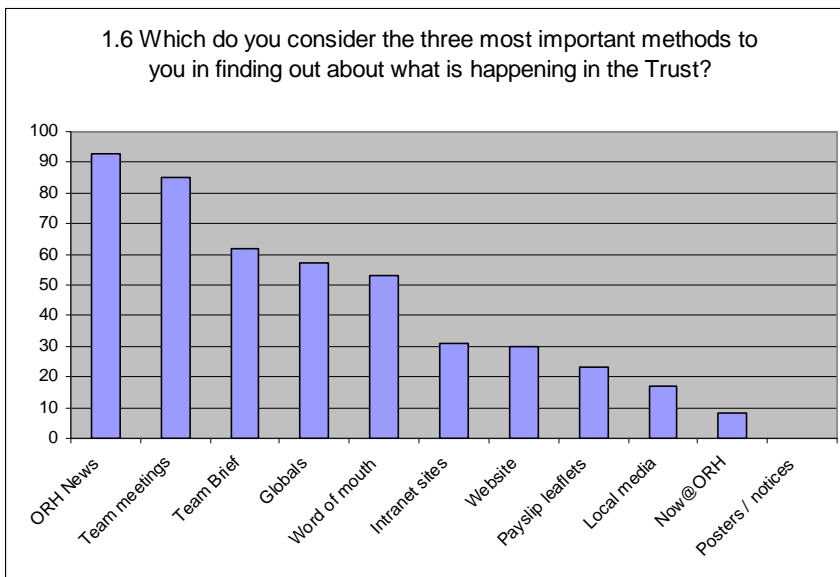


**Survey on internal communication methods**

In 2007, a staff questionnaire sought views on the corporate communication methods used within the Trust. 163 staff responded. The following summarises the results:

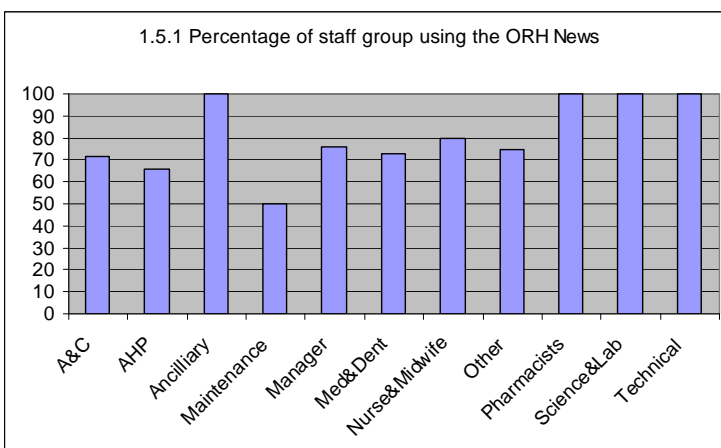
**1. Method of communications**

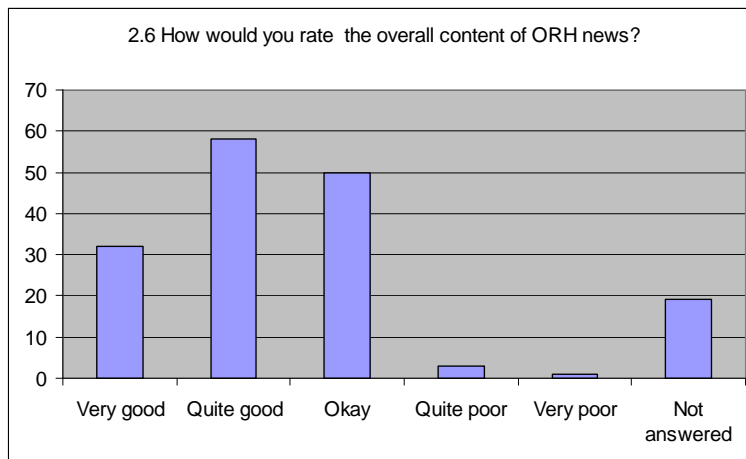
ORH News remains the most popular form of communication within the Trust. Team Brief is more popular than expected, and better regarded than the intranet sites. Staff do not rate payroll attachments as an effective method of communication.



**2. ORH News**

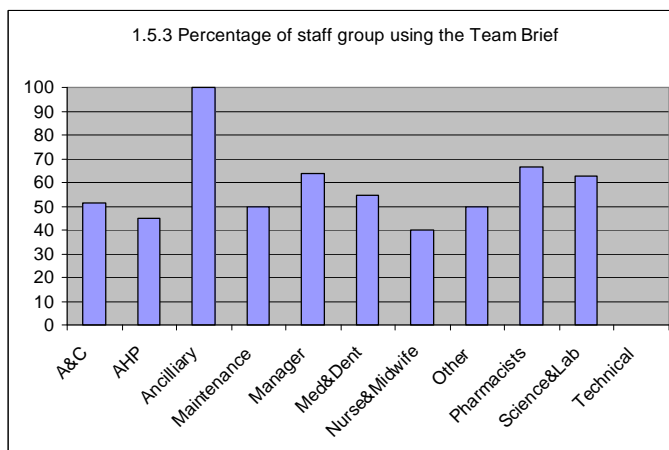
ORH News is read by a wide variety of professional groups. The majority of staff found the quality of the information very good or quite good.





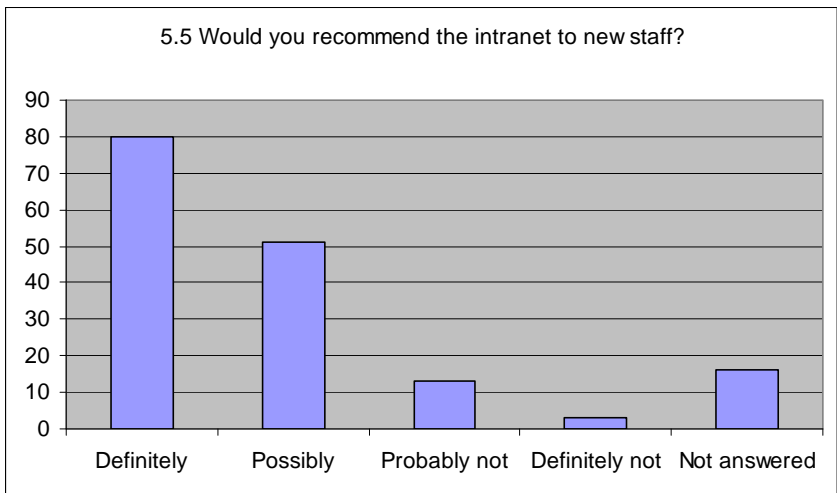
**3. Team Brief**

Team Brief is the 3rd most highly rated method of communication, and is read by a wide range of staff groups. 53% of respondents said that they used Team Brief to find information about the Trust. Respondents commented that Team Brief is not cascaded properly through the organisation and not distributed according a regular schedule.



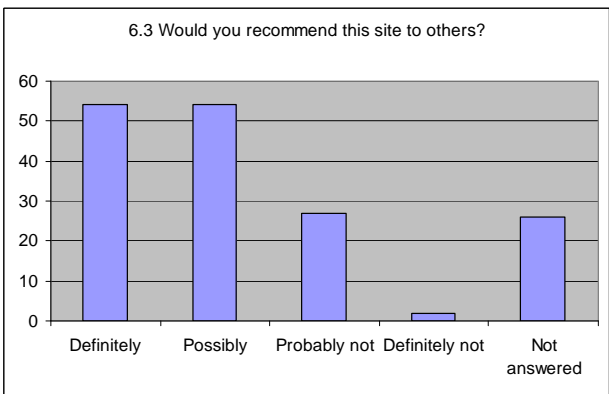
**4. Intranet**

Nearly all respondents in the survey had regular internet access and most used the intranet on a weekly basis at least. Most respondents visit the intranet either for practical tasks or to get access to individual site areas. Respondents commented that it could be difficult to find the information they needed, and that it could be out of date. However, the majority of respondents would recommend the intranet to a new member of staff.



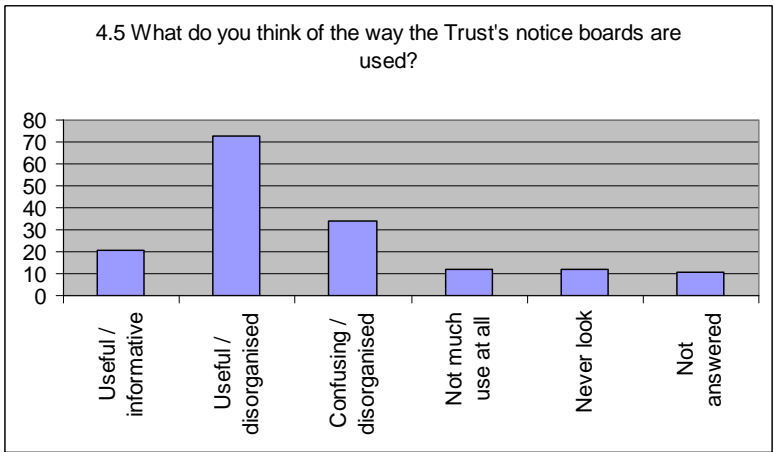
**5. Website**

55% of the respondents found the external website to be a useful way of finding out information about the Trust and the majority (66%) would recommend the website to others.



**6. Notice-boards**

The majority of staff commented that Trust notice-boards are disorganised. Some found them useful; others did not.



### 7. Policy dissemination

Staff identified the dissemination of policies as the most important issue on which they needed information.

