

Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday 21 May 2009

BD2009.38

Subject	Communications Strategy
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Purpose of paper	To set out a Communications Strategy for the Trust in support of the aims and objectives of the 2009/10 Business Plan
Board Lead	Mr Andrew Stevens, Director of Planning
Background papers	None

Action/decision required	To approve the Communications Strategy			
Key purpose	Strategy	Assurance	Policy	Performance
Strategic Goal	SG1: To be hospitals of choice SG2: To be a world-leading teaching hospital and Academic Health Science Centre SG3: To achieve financial sustainability and long term growth SG4: To be an excellent employer			

Strategic Objectives	SO1: To consolidate and advance the international status of the Trust's defining services SO2: To provide high-quality, efficient and innovative core services that meet the needs of local patients and the challenges of the local community SO3: To continue to strengthen the Trust's portfolio of specialist services SO4: To identify, evaluate, prioritise and nurture emerging services SO6: To develop the Trust's role as an Academic Health Science Centre of international standing working in partnership with the University of Oxford, the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre and other partner organisations SO8: To improve the overall patient experience by offering excellent customer care SO9: To maximise the Trust's contribution to the health and wellbeing of the local community. SO10: To become a strategic, high performing and agile
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	organisation supported by efficient and patient-focused clinical processes, modern systems and business processes
Links to: Board Assurance Framework/ Trust Key Risks/Annual Health Check element(s)	HCC Core Standard C7b, C7d, C7e, C13b, C16 C22 a & c, C24 ALE 5.2
Also considered by	Director of HR and Organisational Development Director of Planning, Directors of Operations

Resource and financial impact	<p>The general communications team, which has responsibility for managing internal and external communications channels, media &amp; PR, stakeholder relations, events, publications and patient information, marketing communications, and the internet and intranet, currently comprises 3 wte managerial posts and 1.6 administrative posts. The FT membership office, responsible for membership recruitment, communications and events, has 1 full time manager and 25 hours a week administrative support. There is a small non-pay budget for FT communications and patient information. Some additional specialist support is provided for and funded by particular areas within the organisation, including the BRC.</p> <p>The total communications budget this year is reduced by 20%, in response to the cost reduction programme.</p>
Consideration of legal/equality/diversity/engagement issues	The Strategy includes plans to ensure that the Trust sets out to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, and that it offers communication and information in a range of formats.
Acronyms and abbreviations used	<p>AHSC: Academic Health Science Centre</p> <p>BHP: Better Healthcare Programme</p> <p>BRC: Comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre</p> <p>FT: Foundation Trust</p> <p>IRP: Independent Reconfiguration Panel</p> <p>ORH: Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals</p>
Author	Helen Peggs, Director of Communications

## ORH Communications Strategy

### Introduction and content

1. Each year, the Board of Directors agrees a Communications Strategy to support the implementation of the Trust's strategic goals and its annual Business Plan. This report reviews the implementation of the Strategy for 2008/09 and sets out plans for 2009/10.
2. The remit of the Communications Strategy is broad and covers communications with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, patients, patient groups, Foundation Trust members, members of the public, Members of Parliament, local government bodies, academic institutions and other NHS organisations (this is not an exhaustive list). It also includes marketing communications to support business development. The Strategy integrates with other Trust strategies and plans, namely:
  - the Marketing Strategy
  - the Patient and Public Involvement Strategy
  - the Customer Care Strategy
  - the Patient Information workplan
  - the Foundation Trust Membership Strategy.
3. Emphasis during the year will be put on strengthening general internal and external communication channels, and on providing specific support to assist with the delivery of the Trust's strategic aims and objectives, as set out in the 2009/10 Business Plan.

### Performance over the past year

4. The past twelve months have seen the successful achievement of a number of significant communications projects, such as the development of the new intranet site, recruitment to the Foundation Trust membership scheme and support for the opening and move to the Cancer Centre. During the year, a number of work streams which developed from the Strategy had specific communication plans in place, which were individually monitored. Appendix 1 sets out the achievements over the year, against the objectives set in the 2008/09 Communications Strategy. Appendix 2 summarises web usage over this period. Appendix 3 reflects the outcome of media activity, following the introduction of a new monitoring system in June 08.

### Strategy for the coming year - priorities

5. The context within which the Strategy is set for the coming year is one of considerable financial challenge, both within the organisation and externally. A key focus of the year will be work to strengthen underpinning internal and external communications channels. Other priorities will reflect the strategic objectives of the Business Plan, including support for cancer, cardiac and private patient marketing, for the Foundation Trust application process, and for the continued development of the Academic Health Science Centre.

### Objectives

6. Specific objectives are as follows, set in the context of the Trust's four strategic aims, and in support of the strategic and business aims set out in the 2009/10 Business Plan.

**To be the hospitals of choice for patients, by providing an outstanding environment for clinical services with customer-focused patient care that will be valued by our partners and the communities we serve**

*(Strategic Objectives SO2, SO8, SO9; Business Objectives 6, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38)*

- 6.1 To strengthen regular external communications channels, in order to improve relationships with key stakeholders. This will include producing ORH News, the Trust magazine, on a bi-monthly basis, producing ORH News for FT members three times a year, issuing a bi-monthly GP e-bulletin, and issuing a general stakeholder e-bulletin following public Board of Directors meetings.
- 6.2 To continue to strengthen partnerships with other organisations. During the year, we will undertake a specific project with the support of the Audit Commission aimed at establishing a system for identifying key partnerships, risk-assessing and setting objectives for them and monitoring against these objectives. Actions will include the development of a stakeholder database, to assist with relationship management, and a specific project to consider ways in which to improve ORH relationships with organizations and individuals in north Oxfordshire, in the aftermath of the IRP rejection of proposals to change some services at the Horton Hospital and in the context of the Better Healthcare Programme.
- 6.3 To work with healthcare partners to co-ordinate internal and external communications in support of NHS South Central's programme to eliminate mixed sex accommodation, in order to raise staff awareness and increase patient confidence in privacy and dignity issues.
- 6.4 To continue to work with local and regional media, including media websites, so that coverage is predominantly positive, developments are reported regularly and possible negative coverage is contained.
- 6.5 To review usage of the internet site and to redevelop it to ensure that it promotes the reputation of the ORH on a national and international basis and that it meets the needs of key users, including
  - patients, carers and interested members of the public
  - referring clinicians
  - potential new commissioners
  - potential staff and students
  - colleagues in other organisations
  - the media.

Actions will include working with internal and external focus groups to review the content and usage of the internet and devising a plan for its redevelopment.

- 6.6 To use cost-efficient and targeted communications to ensure that the FT membership is representative of the communities served by the ORH, that recruitment targets are met, that FT members are informed about and engaged appropriately in the activities of the Trust and that the election process is supported.

- 6.7 To continue to use communications and stakeholder engagement to support the Better Healthcare Programme for Banbury and surrounding areas. This will include working closely with key partners on media management, public engagement events, the BHP newsletter and website and other methods of communication, and ensuring that staff within the ORH are kept informed of developments.
- 6.8 To work with clinical and other colleagues to continue to improve patients' access to clinical and other information. This will include continuing to develop the online patients' information library and other web-based materials.
- 6.9 To continue to provide communications advice and support for serious untoward incidents, inquests, legal cases and any other issues which could have an impact on the reputation of the organisation.
- 6.10 To continue to ensure that there are robust internal and external communication channels in place, in partnership with other organisations, to respond to a major incident or other emergency situation. This will include ensuring that the communications plan to support emergency planning is reviewed and updated, that links are maintained with communications and planning leads in NHS and other organisations, and that there is active participation, as required, in exercises to test the system.
- 6.11 To provide communications advice and support for senior colleagues on any other significant initiatives or issues of importance which could affect staff morale, patient confidence or the general reputation of the Trust.

**To be a world-leading teaching hospital and an Academic Health Science Centre (in partnership with the University of Oxford), with an international reputation for advancements in medicine and biomedical research, able to offer specialist expertise and outstanding teaching and treatment facilities**

*(Strategic Objectives SO1, SO3, SO4, SO6, SO10; Business Objectives 1, 2, 15, 17, 27, 29, 51, 52)*

- 6.12 To co-ordinate internal and external communications across the healthcare system and with key partners, in support of the further development of proposals for an Academic Health Science Centre. This will include building on work to strengthen relationships with GPs, commissioners and referring district general hospitals.
- 6.13 To develop innovative and exciting new media channels as a low-cost high-quality mechanism for communicating with a range of stakeholders, including staff, FT members, patients and carers, commissioners and referrers. The ORH benefits from a number of individuals who are experienced in web development and the use of new multi-media techniques. The organisation already makes use of e-bulletins and video streaming through the internet, and was the first NHS Trust in the UK to develop a 'Twitter' site so that people can be alerted to new developments. We will continue to develop new media as a low-cost method of communications with some key groups.

- 6.14 To use marketing communications to increase the ORH market share in some key business areas, with a particular focus on cancer, cardiac services and private patient services. This will include managing advertising campaigns, PR events and internet development, in co-operation with the relevant services.
- 6.15 To use the local, regional and national media in order to promote the ORH as a world-leading teaching hospital and Academic Health Science Centre.
- 6.16 To continue to provide dedicated communications and engagement advice and support for the Comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre, in order to build its profile internally and externally. This will include continuing to generate positive media coverage for the work of the BRC, supporting the development of the website, organising PR and other events and assisting with the development of the patient engagement programme.
- 6.17 To provide communications advice and guidance to support the redevelopment of perenatal services. This will include working with the project group to ensure that accurate and timely information is circulated internally and externally, and assisting with fundraising communications in due course.

**To achieve financial sustainability and long-term growth by intelligent redesign of our hospital services, based on improved leadership, productivity and efficiency.**

*(Strategic Objectives 2, 9, 10; Business Objectives 5, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 52)*

- 6.18 To develop and manage an internal and external communications plan to support the implementation of the performance improvement and cost reduction programme.
- 6.19 To strengthen regular internal communications' channels, so that they are robust, appropriate and timely, and so that communications with staff are improved. This will include organizing bi-monthly Leaders' Briefing sessions, producing a bi-monthly Team Brief and developing better mechanisms for communicating with clinicians at every level, including junior doctors.

**To be an excellent employer with flexible and workable policies that will encourage the recruitment and retention of quality staff**

*(Strategic Objectives SO10; Business Objectives 44, 45, 4, 47, 52)*

- 6.20 To complete implementation of the intranet and to promote its use to all staff. This will include working with teams across the organisation to expand the content, and promoting the use of the intranet as an essential tool for staff.
- 6.21 To work with colleagues on the development of 'ORH Excellence', a staff scheme aimed at recognizing excellence in all areas of practice, publicising areas of good practice, and encouraging participation in national, regional and internal awards schemes, honours' nominations or through other appropriate vehicles.
- 6.22 To work with HR and other colleagues to support the implementation of ORHXChange and any other staff benefit project.

**Monitoring**

7. The Communications Strategy will be agreed by the Board of Directors. It is supported by a communications business plan with key milestones and accountabilities. This will be monitored through the Care Quality Board, which will consider communications on a quarterly basis within its agenda. The Board of Directors will consider the implementation of the Strategy in 2010.

## **Performance against last year's objectives**

### **Introduction**

1. This appendix sets out achievements against the objectives agreed in last year's Communications Strategy. While any year in the communications calendar will feature unanticipated and time-consuming events, the past year has seen a significant number, including the education programme for Iraqi doctors, the AHSC application process and visits by Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, by Health Minister Lord Darzi and NHS Chief Executive David Nicholson and most recently by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.
2. Despite these unanticipated events, the Strategy set out last year has been implemented in full, providing a good platform for the ORH as we move forward into the coming year's challenging context. Set out below are the objectives agreed for 2008/09, with a brief summary of how these were achieved.

### **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**

3. This has been achieved in a number of ways.
  - A member of the communications team has provided dedicated support to the BRC over the past year, on a part time basis. In addition to providing internal communications support, she has generated a number of positive media stories focusing on innovation and the benefits of research, managed events, produced DVD materials and developed the BRC website.
  - A strengthened relationship with the University of Oxford communications team has resulted in several high profile media stories of benefit to the ORH and to the University.
  - The visit of Lord Darzi and David Nicholson was used as an opportunity to demonstrate Oxford's achievements in translational result, and the benefits for patients.
  - The visit of Her Majesty The Queen and tTe Duke of Edinburgh was organized in partnership with the University of Oxford and constructed so as to demonstrate the excellence of patient care, teaching and research.
  - The AHSC application process, notwithstanding the failure to achieve designation at this point in time, brought together NHS and University communications teams and was used as an opportunity to generate positive media coverage and to gain stakeholder interest in the excellence of patient care, teaching and research in Oxford. The fact that the Oxford Times continues to take a positive interest in the prospect of an AHSC in Oxford, and that the Oxfordshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has expressed its continued support, are both testimony to the success of these efforts.

**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 proposals to change services at the Horton Hospital**

4. The Trust has continued to develop positive relationships with the local media, with the result that positive and informative media coverage far outweighs the negative. A Stakeholder Bulletin has been launched, which is circulated following each public meeting of the Board of Directors to local government and NHS organisations, Members of Parliament and others with an interest in the organisation. The Trust has also continued to expand internal communications channels in order to ensure effective dialogue with staff. Leaders' Briefings for senior managers now take place every two months, supported by a Team Brief for cascade to all staff. Reinforcing these communication channels is one of the priorities for the coming year.
5. Following the IRP rejection of proposals to change some services at the Horton Hospital, the Trust has worked with the Primary Care Trust under the auspices of the Better Healthcare Programme to involve local stakeholders in developing a safe and sustainable service model for the future. While this work is demanding of time, the improved relationships with key individuals and groups is already paying dividends, with a greater shared understanding of the problems facing some of the hospital services and much improved co-operation in joint working towards solution.

**To support the Trust's application for Foundation Status through active stakeholder engagement, consultation and membership recruitment, and establish proactive membership communications**

6. Last year, the Trust conducted a three month public consultation on its future strategy and proposals for how it wished to develop arrangements as a Foundation Trust. Staff gave presentations to a wide range of local government, voluntary and other bodies. The response from these bodies was largely positive, with some constructive suggestions on ways in which to strengthen governance arrangements.
7. During the year, much effort was also put in to attracting Foundation Trust members, using a wide variety of methods, including the internet, direct mail, shopping centre recruitment and use of existing networks, such as charitable supporters. To date, there are approximately 5,000 members. Recruitment targets have been exceeded and an analysis of membership shows that it fairly represents communities across Oxfordshire.
8. Effort has also been put into ensuring a regular flow of communications with members, 40% of whom are contacted by email. Members are sent copies of the Annual Review summary and ORH News, and are invited to events, including workshops for prospective representatives for the Members' Council.

**To further develop communications and engagement throughout the organisation as it moves forward as a Foundation Trust**

9. Efforts to engage staff in the FT process have continued, using vehicles such as ORH News, the intranet, Leaders' Briefings and all staff 'meet the people' sessions. More emphasis will be put on this during the coming year, as the Trust prepares for elections for the Members' Council.

**To work across the organisation to redevelop the intranet and establish its function as an essential toolkit for ORH staff**

10. The new intranet was launched in mid March. The intention is that it will provide an essential toolkit for all ORH staff, and a resource for colleagues in the University of Oxford and other NHS organisations. While it will take time to generate all of the content required, it is already proving popular with staff and has received much positive feedback. The concept, which was developed by the communications team but with considerable input from OHIS, has now been adopted by Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. The intranet can only be edited by ORH staff but is accessible to anyone within the NHS or with a University of Oxford email address.

**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**

11. Marketing activities to support cancer services during the year included the production of eight short films about cancer services, for use on the website, the development of a new cancer website, the production of a brochure about Oxford cancer services, and several stakeholder events based in the new Cancer Centre. The opening of the new Centre was used to generate considerable regional publicity in the press and on television. This included a number of in-depth articles in the local press, and television features which were broadcast across the south of England.

**To develop a plan to ensure that GPs in Oxfordshire and in other commissioning PCT areas have better communication channels with the Trust and an opportunity to become more engaged in its activities.**

12. A GP e-newsletter was launched this year and has been well received. Plans for a GP education programme have been explored but not yet come to fruition. Other activities organised by the commissioning teams, and within the remit of the Better Healthcare Programme, have begun to build stronger relationships with some GPs. More work in this area will be a priority for the coming year.

**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.**

13. This included the management of several high-profile events, including visits by Her Majesty The Queen, the Prime Minister, and Health Minister Lord Darzi. Significant support for the opening of the Cancer Centre, including internal and patient communications.

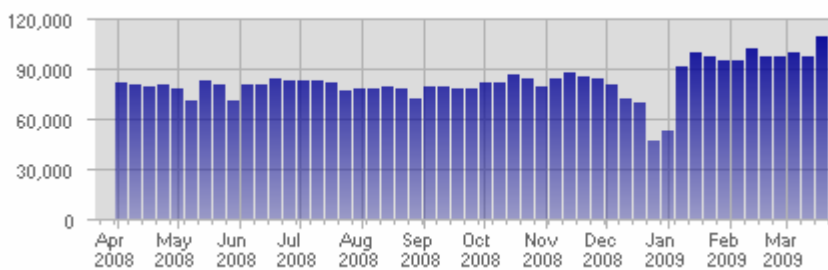
**Website use 2008 to 2009**

There are a variety of ways in which web site usage can be monitored. Below are graphs showing both page views and website visits.

**Page views**

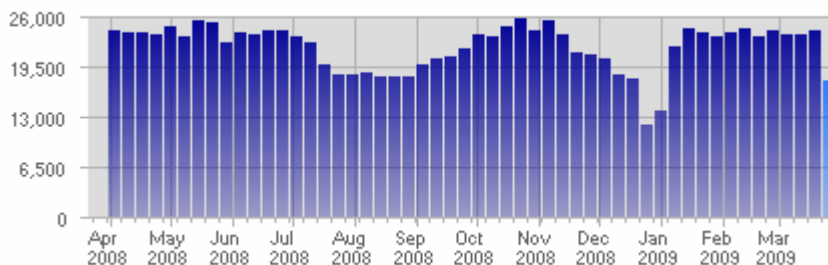
A page view is a request to load a single page of an Internet site. A page request would result from a web surfer clicking on a link on another page pointing to the page in question.

**Website Page Views Historical**



**Website Visits**

A visit is defined as a sequence of requests from a uniquely identified client that expired after a certain amount of inactivity, usually 30 minutes.

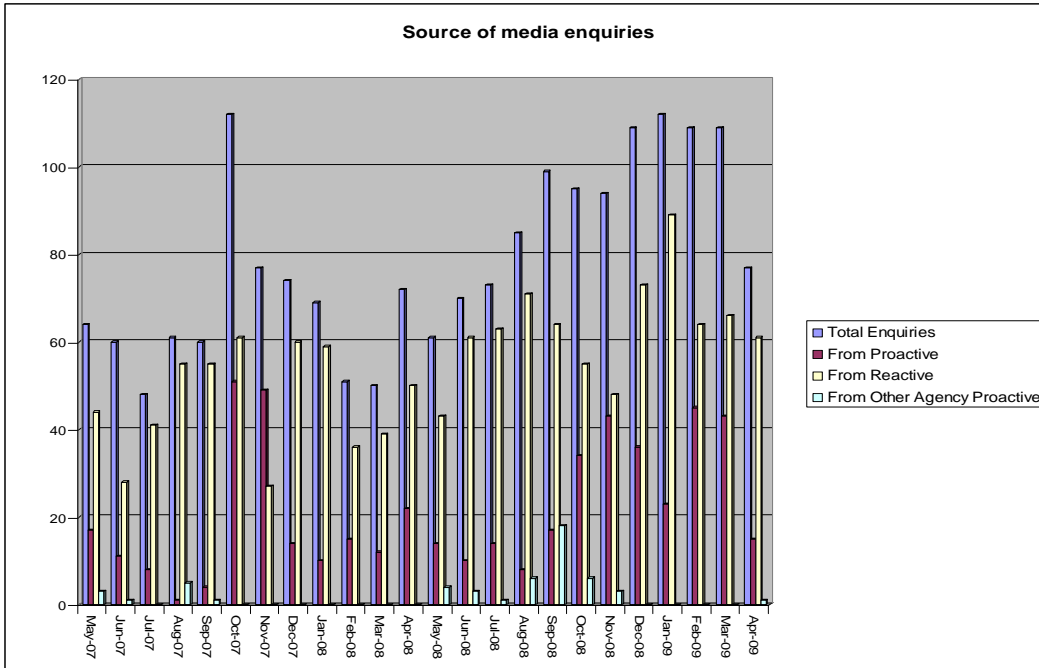


Activity breakdown through a week gives this picture, which shows peaks and troughs with weekends and weekdays.

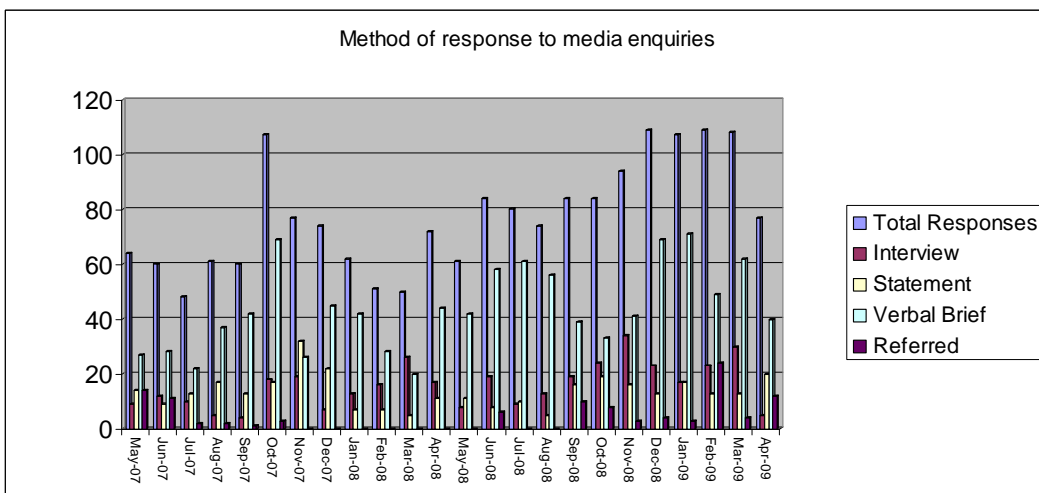
**Media analysis May 2008 to March 2009**

The following graphs show the levels of media enquiries, and proactive media initiatives, and the outcomes, from May 2008, when a new monitoring system was introduced.

**Source of media enquiries**



**Method of response**



**Outcomes**

