



Communications and Engagement Strategy 2022-25

Delivering Outstanding Communications

March 2022



Outstanding
Communications



Contents

Executive summary	3
Strategic overview	4
About NWAngliaFT	4
Our Trust vision, values and strategic goals	4
Developing our Communications and Engagement Strategy	5
Approach to communications and engagement	5
Why good quality communications matters	5
Principles for communications and engagement	6
Our communications vision and priorities	6
How we will deliver our priorities	7
Our audiences	8
Our challenges	9
Delivering communications and engagement services	9
Internal communications and engagement	9
External communications and engagement	10
Digital communications and engagement	11
Emergency planning and crisis communications	11
Branding and identity	12
Reputation management	12
When things go wrong	12
Budget and resources	13
Evaluation	13



Executive Summary

This communications and engagement strategy for North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust sets out the strategic direction for communications and engagement activities undertaken by the Trust over the next three years. It explains what our patients, staff, visitors, volunteers and healthcare partners can expect from us.

This strategy has been developed to support the delivery of North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust's Strategy 'Local Care for Local People' and the following enabling strategies:

- People and Culture Strategy
- Quality and Safety Strategy
- Finance Strategy
- Estates Strategy
- Digital, Data and Technology Strategy
- Clinical Service Strategies
- Green Plan

The Trust's communications function plays a vital role in the way these strategies are brought to life in our organisation. Communications is not only required to promote each strategy's vision and objectives, it is fundamental to each strategy delivery plan by connecting with audiences and encouraging two-way engagement while creating all this under a brand that is recognisable as North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust.

Timely and effective communications is fundamental to how we engage with all stakeholders and, in particular, plays a vital role in improving both patient and staff experience. Similarly, communications that do not meet the needs of the audience, can have a detrimental impact on staff morale, public confidence and organisational reputation.

We are committed to improving how we communicate and engage with all stakeholders and understand the importance of clear, timely, responsive, engaging and relevant communications and meaningful engagement.

This strategy is being published at a pivotal moment for our organisation. Like our health and care partners locally and nationally, we are working hard to recover services that have been adversely impacted by the need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years. Our patients, and the diverse communities we serve, have been impacted in various ways as a result of disruption to our services during the pandemic. Our staff have experienced challenges like no other in their careers and are 'battle weary'. Our internal focus to support them to fulfil their roles, and develop further in our Trust, is greater than ever before, but there is always more we can do. In addition, we are moving to a new way of working, as we become part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System in July 2022 which will bring changes to the way we work in collaboration with our health and care partners in the local system.

These two factors will have an influence upon our communications approach for the coming three years as we transition to a new era in the delivery of health and care services.

This strategy describes our objectives in communicating and engaging with our stakeholders, the people we work with, or care for, every day as we provide safe, quality care and a great experience in our hospitals.

Alongside this strategy, we are developing a dynamic implementation plan that will be regularly reviewed to demonstrate the Trust's ongoing commitment to effective communications and engagement with its stakeholders.



In setting the context, it is also important to recognise the communities we serve so that we are able to tailor our communications service to their needs. We are cognisant of the diversity of the communities we serve and the unique needs this presents. We are also aware of the need to tackle health inequalities in the north of Cambridgeshire; the main area we serve.

Strategic overview

About North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust (NWAngliaFT)

NWAngliaFT runs three acute hospital sites – Peterborough City Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and Stamford and Rutland Hospital. In addition, we deliver outpatient and radiology services at Doddington Hospital in March and the Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely plus radiology services at North Cambridgeshire Hospital in Wisbech and the City Care Centre in Peterborough.

The Trust serves a growing catchment of approximately 850,000 residents living in Cambridgeshire and South Lincolnshire, plus the neighbouring counties of East Leicestershire and Rutland, Norfolk and Bedfordshire.

The Trust employs 6,971 staff across its sites. Our staff are fortunate to also be supported by a growing band of 400 volunteers who work across many service areas, from the Emergency Department and Pharmacy to Cancer Services and Patient Experience.

Our Trust Vision, Values and Strategic Goals

As set out in the NWAngliaFT Trust Strategy 2022-2025 ‘Local Care For Local People’, our vision is ‘*working together to provide outstanding care for our local communities*’. This is supported by five strategic goals which will guide the key campaigns to be supported by our communications and engagement services:

- Delivering outstanding patient care and experience
- Recruiting, developing and retaining our workforce
- An anchor in our community
- Working together with local health and social care providers
- Delivering long-term sustainability

As we work to deliver our vision, we are guided by our Trust values that were chosen by our staff and apply to every interaction across the organisation and every decision and action taken. All staff are expected to adhere to our values:

- We put patients first
- We are caring and compassionate
- We work positively together
- We are actively respectful
- We seek to improve and develop

All staff have a role to play in supporting the Trust’s vision, values and strategic goals. Helping staff identify how they can do this is a key part of the communications and engagement strategy.



Developing our Communications and Engagement Strategy

In May 2021, the Trust appointed BakerBaird Communications to conduct an independent review of our communications and engagement function. A core part of that review was to look at the effectiveness of our internal communications function and identifying areas for further improvement.

The purpose was to ensure our communications service is fully aligned to meet the needs of our organisation as it enters a new era for local healthcare.

In July 2022 the Trust will become part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS), which will see greater partnership working across the health system. This will see the communications teams in each healthcare organisation working even more closely, while at the same time ensuring their stakeholders understand how the changes can impact positively on their health and care experience.

The review was also timed to seek assurance that our communications service was set up to fully support the Trusts' emergence from the pandemic – by providing the communications and engagement support needed to aid the recovery of services and the campaign to improve the health and wellbeing of staff.

The scope of the review was far reaching – gathering feedback on the current service from both internal and external stakeholders. This included:

- A staff survey (681 respondents)
- 46 hours of stakeholder interviews
- 65 interviews conducted
- Board workshops
- 2 Communications Team vision days
- Benchmarking against other organisations, including other NHS Trust communications teams

Using this feedback, the independent review made a number of recommendations on internal communications, media relations, stakeholder engagement and digital communications and gave guidance on the development of this strategy. See appendix 1 at page 14.

Approach to communications and engagement

Why good quality communications matters

Good quality and effective communications can be defined as:

- Clear, timely, accurate and accountable
- Two-way
- Targetted and relevant to the audience's needs
- Planned, consistent and professional
- Shared via channels and using methods that are appropriate to the audience



“Communication is a powerful force for good in public service, when practised effectively it can help save, improve and enhance lives.”
Government Communication Service



Effective communications is fundamental to the successful running of every activity in our Trust and involves everyone. The role of the communications team is to champion best practice communications standards to ensure patients, visitors and partners know what they can expect from us, and for our staff and volunteers to know how the Trust expects them to communicate as they fulfil their roles.

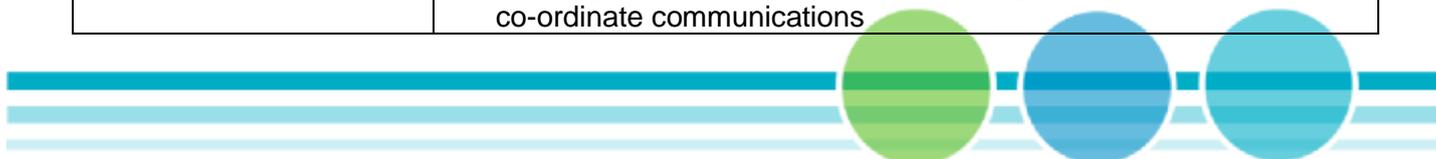
Many of our challenges can come as the result of poor communications. Whether that is a conversation with a patient that lacks vital information, or a message to staff that does not explain the rationale for a particular decision, we know these examples can cause unnecessary anxiety, uncertainty and impact negatively upon the reputation of our organisation. For our staff, we know that the effectiveness of our communications has significant impact on their experience. It is an area that we know, from staff feedback, that we will need to continue to strengthen.

The aim of this strategy is to continue to build confidence in our organisation as a place to receive care and as a place to work. By keeping all stakeholders informed, and encouraging their feedback or involvement in the development or delivery of our services, we can move closer to this aim. We recognise that there is work to do in collaboration with our Organisational Development Team to further develop a shift towards delivering outstanding communications with patients and their relatives, which has emerged as a key theme of some of our complaints. This is also a theme in the Quality and Safety Strategy which will be supported by the communications function.

Principles for communications and engagement

Every communication contributes to our reputation – so should be, at all times, consistent with our organisational values. The following principles that underpin the day-to-day work of the communications team are:

<p>Clear, timely, accurate and accountable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using clear language (avoiding jargon and acronyms) and explaining the reasons for what we do • Responding to requests for information promptly and fully • Checking our facts and using credible sources • Making sure we share messages in a timely way to suit the needs of our stakeholders • Having a clear corporate brand that is easily recognisable • Providing internal communications that support our staff to engage effectively with our patients, partners and the public • Building credibility and trust in our services and care through the sharing of staff achievements and organisational successes • Engaging with local and national media in a collaborative and facilitative way
<p>Two-way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging feedback across all services and demonstrating the changes made as a result • Promoting our desire to be a listening and learning organisation • Using channels that make it easier for our audiences to engage with us
<p>Targetted and relevant to the needs of the audience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure we reach the right audiences • Ensuring our communications are accessible to our intended recipients • Always being mindful of the diversity within our communities
<p>Planned, consistent and professional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our work supports the Trust's strategic objectives • Working with partner health and care organisations to plan and co-ordinate communications



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the Communications Team has the appropriate resource, skills and expertise to deliver • Adhering to Trust style in the use of language and templates etc
Using channels and methods that are appropriate to the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly reviewing use of our channels to determine effectiveness • Increasing the use of newer, digital forms of engagement, such as short videos, vlogs, blogs etc for certain audiences as appropriate • Innovating and adapting new technologies as they emerge to strengthen our communications and engagement

Our communications vision and priorities

The vision and priorities for our Communications and Engagement Strategy were developed by our Communications Team in response to both the recommendations of the independent review of the communication service and the overall Trust Strategy. The vision and priorities have been socialised with, and supported by, key groups of Trust staff including senior leaders:

Vision

To champion North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust, through accessible and exciting communications, which enable our patients, communities and staff to be engaged, inspired and to have confidence in our Trust as a place to receive care, learn and work

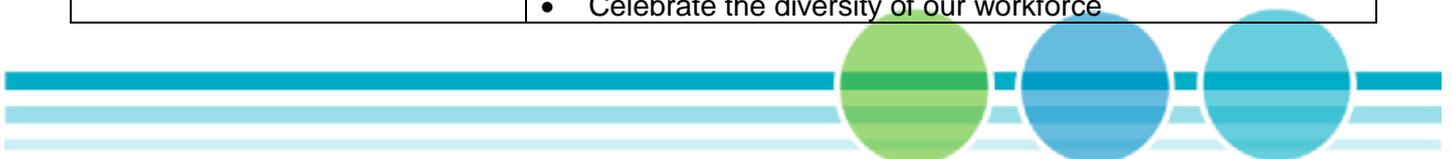
Priorities

The three priorities to guide our communications work are:

- **Involving and informing our patients, partners and communities**
- **Championing our staff and volunteers**
- **Supporting the Trust's goals as a key partner in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System**

How we will deliver our priorities

Involving and informing our patients, partners and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage regular engagement opportunities on subjects of interest to patients, members, fundraisers and the public • Share regular news stories regarding innovation, successes, new services etc • Ensure our website and other public-facing channels represent our Trust and are up to date • Gather feedback from patient groups to inform our public-facing communications • Stage other public events (open days, recruitment events etc) • Encourage public involvement in our staff awards nominations
Championing our staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate staff successes via our internal and public channels • Shine a light on staff in specific roles and/or their particular achievements • Work more closely with our recruitment team to promote the Trust as a great place to work • Celebrate the diversity of our workforce



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and share a sense of pride to be part of NWAngliaFT • Dedicate greater communications resource to the Good To Outstanding programme (the Trust's staff engagement programme) to work with the Organisational Development Team
Supporting the Trust's goals as a key partner in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote our redevelopment programmes as creatively and widely as possible • Support innovation programmes with creative and engaging communications • Highlight our successes across key stakeholder audiences within the wider ICS • Work with communications teams across the region and NHSE to share messaging and keep up to date on key information • Review our public-facing channels as part of the Digital Strategy – website, info screens, social media etc • Work with our Governors, Members and patient groups to gather feedback on our communications, as well as Trust services

Our audiences

We have a large and varied number of stakeholders and so it is vital that we listen, engage and respond to have the greatest impact and deliver our Trust vision.

Our key stakeholder audiences are:

Internal	External
Staff Service provider partner staff Volunteers Trade union representatives Non-Executive Directors Governors Partner organisation staff who work in our buildings Friends of our hospitals	Patients and their loved ones/carers Members Local communities NHS partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GPs ○ Neighbouring acute, community and mental health trusts ○ Clinical Commissioning groups ○ NHS England and NHS Improvement Local authorities Care Quality Commission Universities Local MPs Health overview and scrutiny committees Health and wellbeing boards Patient representative groups Voluntary sector Media Health Education England Our charity supporters/donors



Our challenges

We recognise that the implementation and delivery of this strategy must be responsive to the changes in the NHS landscape and any impact this may have on our Trust. The changing and pressured environment in which all NHS staff are working could present challenges in being able to engage effectively with all audiences. Being aware of possible challenges will enable us to take extra steps, where we can, to reach our intended audiences. Examples of our known challenges include:

Organisation-wide

- Waiting lists lengthening due to ongoing capacity issues
- Recruitment gaps in key service areas
- Staff sickness levels impacting on day-to-day service delivery
- Negative media coverage and/or social media activity/comments
- Information overload – too much messaging
- Reduced motivation of staff and stakeholders to respond/engage with us

Communications Team

- Team resilience/capacity
- Lack of time to respond to opportunities
- Supporting staff to be ambassadors for our Trust and managing the impact when this does not go well
- Supporting leaders to communicate with their teams when they don't feel adequately equipped to do so
- Not being able to invest enough time in long-term strategic planning

Delivering communications and engagement services

The following section describes the plans for delivering our communications and engagement services across six key areas of activity. These six areas form the main elements of the day-to-day work of our communications team.

Internal communications and engagement

Good quality, strong communications and engagement with our staff is key to the successful running of our Trust. The proportion of time spent on preparing and sharing communications on our internal channels outweighs all other communications activities of the team.

Our internal channels are well used, but we have identified some specific areas for improvement to be delivered within the next two years to help us engage staff more effectively. This includes:

- **We will redevelop our intranet to better meet the needs of users.**
- **We will identify any possible additional technological solutions to help us communicate with all our staff**, especially those whose roles may not include regular access to desktop computers.



- **We will widen our staff engagement to involve more clinical staff.** We have made some headway in the past two years, thanks to the launch of our closed Facebook group for staff members in April 2020, which has approx 50% of Trust staff as members. However, there are specific groups, such as junior doctors, staff in our satellite sites and community-based staff, with whom we need to engage more effectively. Our work to support the pillars of the People and Culture Strategy will be a key driver for increasing staff engagement. In addition, by widening clinical staff engagement we can better support our Quality Improvement Team to achieve its objectives.
- **We will continue to base all Trust staff engagement activities around the five workstreams of the Good To Outstanding programme,** which encourages staff to take actions to ensure every day in our hospitals is an outstanding one – whether you are a patient, staff member, visitor or volunteer. In doing this, we will forge even closer working arrangements with the Organisational Development team in order to deliver planned and appropriately-targeted communications to staff to encourage greater participation in the Good To Outstanding programme.
- **We will continually use staff feedback from all mechanisms available to us** (most notably the National Staff Survey and our quarterly in-house surveys), plus the feedback gained from the independent review of our communications function by BakerBaird Communications, to inform our communications activities.
- **We will review our modes of engagement** to ensure they continue to be appropriate for our internal audiences as we emerge from the pandemic and consider the balance between face to face and MS Teams meetings/sessions.



External communications and engagement

Our external communications activities can often influence the first impression many people have of our organisation. Therefore it is important that we can ensure the right messages are being presented to the right people at the right time. We need to protect and enhance our reputation as a safe and trusted place to receive care among all our external stakeholders. Our patients need to feel informed and involved in their care.

The demographic breakdown of the communities we serve, and in particular the health inequalities within our local population, needs to be taken into account when supporting our patient communications.

We have identified some specific areas for improvement to be delivered within the next two years to help us engage more effectively with all external audiences. This includes:

- **We will work with the Trust’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team to be more inclusive** in our communications and engagement activities.
- **We will work with our health and care system colleagues to effectively guide all members of the public** on how and when they should access our services for care and treatment.
- **We will work with our clinical service teams to help our patients feel informed and involved** in their care and our communities informed and interested in their local hospitals.



- **We will work with our local and regional media contacts to continue to develop the good relationships we have benefitted from over many years.** We will work closely with the media to fulfil two of our three priorities – to inform and engage patients and champion our staff and volunteers.
- **We will conduct a staff, patient and volunteer review of our website** to ensure it represents our organisation in the most effective way possible.
- **We will continue to produce high quality Trust publications,** such as our Annual Report and Accounts and our quarterly members' magazine The Pulse, to help us to champion our staff and to reinforce the Trust's positive reputation. We will review the mode of delivery of these publications to ensure cost-effectiveness alongside optimum engagement.
- **We will ensure all key stakeholders receive timely and regular briefings on Trust matters.** This will enable us to provide a clear picture of our successes and challenges in delivering good care and experience for our patients and staff.

Our communications function also encompasses the Freedom of Information (FOI) team. All enquiries made under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) are dealt with in an open and honest manner in accordance with the requirements of the act and with regard to Caldicott and Data Protection principles. The communications team supports the work of our FOI team by raising awareness within our organisation of the statutory requirements to comply with the FOI Act.

Digital communications and engagement

Our use of digital platforms continue to evolve, but there is clear evidence that connecting digitally with our audiences is central to the future delivery of our communications service.

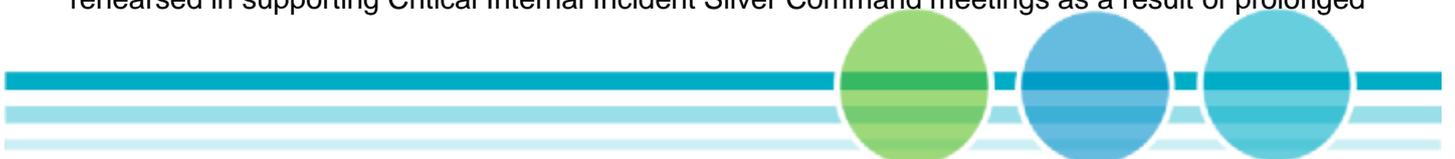
In the past two years, we have broadened our use of social media channels to include more content on Instagram and LinkedIn alongside Facebook and Twitter. We also provide advice and guidance to those colleagues within our Trust that run corporate team accounts – particularly our wards. A guidance document has been developed alongside our Social Media Policy which was reviewed and updated in December 2021.

Specific areas for focus on digital development, to be delivered within the next two years, include:

- **We will actively grow the numbers of followers and subscribers across all our social media platforms.**
- **We will create a suite of branded templates and styles tailored for specific use on each social platform** to ensure we are using each platform to its fullest and maximise interest in our posts.
- **We will encourage use of the #TeamNWAngliaFT hashtag** to extend the recognition and acknowledgement of positive conversations about our organisation on social media.
- **We will conduct a staff, patient and volunteer review of our website** to ensure it represents our organisation in the most effective way possible.
- **We will redevelop our intranet to better meet the needs of users.**
- **We will increase our use of in-house produced video to support our messaging,** and ensure communications team members have the skills and software they need to fulfil this.
- **We will explore solutions to provide digital health screens across our sites** that will enable us to deliver tailored content to specific areas of our hospitals.

Emergency planning and crisis communications

The role of the communications team in a crisis situation is vital to ensure the public and our staff can be fully informed so that they can respond appropriately. The communications team is well-rehearsed in supporting Critical Internal Incident Silver Command meetings as a result of prolonged



capacity pressures and the pandemic impacting upon the running of our hospitals. In addition, The communications team provides a 24/7 service to the Trust via out-of-hours on call facility which is fulfilled by senior members of the team on a rota basis.

Other areas for focus in the next two years are:

- **All communications team members will participate in major incident training** via the HMIMMS course to help them to fulfil the communications role within a Silver Command and Control structure.
- **We will review our crisis communications methods** and use staff and public feedback to determine the effectiveness of our crisis communications.

Branding and identity

A branding review is currently underway in our Trust as part of our move towards working in the wider Integrated Care System. The aim of our review will be to develop our identity and increase our presence using new, eye-catching visible elements, including logos, colours, design and typefaces, that will become easily recognisable as North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust. The North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust name continues to be embedded since the creation of the Trust in April 2017 following the merger of Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust. This continues to take time and may not be fully resolved as a result of patients and staff preferring to focus attention on their local hospital rather than the Trust that runs it.

When producing any materials for branding we will use the NHS Brand Guidelines and accessibility standards to ensure our information is accessible to all users.

Once our branding review is complete, and a new set of materials created, we will ensure it is consistently replicated across all platforms and public materials used, taking every opportunity to maximise exposure in the most appropriate settings.

Reputation management

Our Trust's reputation is built upon the experience of our patients, visitors, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. This experience can come in many forms – from being an inpatient or member of staff to having face to face conversations and reading media coverage. How our Trust is perceived by service users, potential service users and staff is an important barometer by which to measure our reputational performance.

This strategy will help to develop a positive reputation for North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust, built on good relationships, strong values and demonstration that we are a safe place to provide local care for local people. This will be especially important as we enter the new era for healthcare locally, when there is likely to be extra scrutiny from local authorities, the media and our communities about the care we provide.

When things go wrong

Managing issues that may have a negative impact on our reputation requires foresight and planning. For example, we will, wherever possible, prepare statements, briefings or any other resources that are required in advance of any adverse publicity that could harm our Trust's reputation as a place to work or receive care.

Our approach in responding to any adverse publicity will be prompt, clear and open to ensure we represent our Trust in keeping with our values. It is important we can demonstrate learning from situations where things do not go well and share these in forums that are accessible to members and members of the public, such as the Trust Board of Directors meetings. We will focus on



stakeholder management in such situations to ensure we identify those stakeholders who will require full briefings or additional engagement and keep them updated accordingly.

Budget and resources

The North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust Communications Team has responsibility for delivering this Communications and Engagement Strategy with the support and approval of the Trust Board of Directors and Hospital Management Committee.

As a member of the Corporate Division, the communications team delivers communications activities, advice and guidance across the whole organisation. The effective implementation of this strategy will be delivered within the communications team's existing annual budget, however opportunities to fund additional resource for major project communications support will be required.

Sponsorship will be sought to deliver specific projects – for example, the Annual Outstanding Achievement Awards.

Opportunities to strengthen the establishment of the team will be sought where feasible, particularly around the development of a communications apprenticeship role.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the effectiveness of this strategy will be carried out via the following methods:

- We will develop annual implementation plans for each year of the strategy that will include SMART metrics for measuring progress. This will include monthly reporting of the performance across the channels we use to gauge reach and engagement.
- We will work with the Strategy and Transformation Team to agree an approach for reporting to our Trust Hospital Management Committee and Trust Board of Directors on the implementation progress, which is in line with all other supporting strategies.

