

Internal Communication Policy

Reference: GN34

Effective date: 22 January 2015

Page no: 1 of 4

Approved: 7 June 2022

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Background

Communication is fundamental to the success of the organisation. It is key to achieving our aim to 'support, develop and value high quality staff' and in engaging them in the strategic direction of the organisation. This policy outlines the responsibilities of all staff in maintaining good communication practice, the main communication channels available to staff and how and when they might be used to be effective.

Principles

The aims of this policy are:

- ◆ To ensure staff are fully informed of relevant activity
- ◆ To enable them to be as effective as possible in their role and to support the strategic direction of the organisation
- ◆ To ensure all staff are aware of their responsibility for maintaining good communication practice
- ◆ To provide easy access to essential, useful and engaging information for staff
- ◆ To provide effective methods of communicating during a serious incident.

Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of all staff.

Senior management (CEO and department heads)

- ◆ Ensure information is made available to all staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels.
- ◆ Ensure managers have the relevant information available to communicate with staff effectively.
- ◆ Maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback from all staff.

Managers (senior managers, line managers and room leaders)

- ◆ Communicate regularly with their teams, preferably face-to-face
- ◆ Ensure information is available and understood within the context of the department and working environment.
- ◆ Ensure they and their staff are maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- ◆ Maintain open channels of two-way communication, listen to feedback and keep senior managers informed.

All staff

- ◆ Ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support the strategic direction of the organisation.
- ◆ Ensure they are maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- ◆ Use open channels of two-way communication to keep line managers and colleagues informed.
- ◆ Communicate with colleagues across the organisation where necessary.
- ◆ Ensure minutes of meetings are made available online in a timely manner and are advertised via the all-staff email. Hard copies can be obtained via your line manager or central services.

Central Services team

- ◆ Maintain this policy.
- ◆ Disseminate information to staff via all appropriate channels.
- ◆ Offer guidance in maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- ◆ Support the organisation in realising the principles of this policy.

Internal Communication Policy

Reference: GN34

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Page no: 2 of 4

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Categories of information

Different pieces of information will require different channels of communication and will be the responsibility of different people to disseminate. Message within the organisation can be categorised as follows:

Management and strategic direction

This includes information from the trustees or senior management regarding the overall management of the organisation and its strategic direction. This may be updates on regular activities or board decisions or it may be new information and activities that need to be communicated to staff. This may involve communication of important information via management cascade, as detailed below.

Day-to-day work related information

This is the information staff members require to carry out their work day-to-day. It is the responsibility of individuals and their colleagues and line managers to communicate this information effectively.

Organisation-wide notices

This is information that all staff or large groups of staff will benefit from and can be generated by any function within the organisation. Such information may be news items, forthcoming events, useful advice or more formal notices and is the responsibility of the CEO, senior management team, line managers and room leaders to disseminate to all staff.

Serious incidents

Please refer to GN36 Incidents and Emergencies policy ([L:\Human Resources\Public\Policies\General](#)) for details as to what constitutes a serious incident. For Children and Family Services please refer to the protocol to support “risky” situations.

Communication channels

Face-to-face communication

Communicating in person with colleagues is an effective method of ensuring information and knowledge are shared. The conversational nature allows for greater understanding of the context of the message and encourages questioning and feedback. Here are some instances of face-to-face communication within the organisation:

- ◆ Prescribed communication
 - Some policies and processes where face-to-face communication is required, examples include the Induction Policy and Performance Management procedures.
- ◆ Strategic communication
 - In some circumstances, senior management will require information to be disseminated through the organisation via managers as quickly as possible and, as far as possible, via face-to-face meetings where understanding of the information can be assured and feedback can be gathered and discussed. It is vital that all staff receive this information within a given timescale and that all staff understand the intent and the outcomes of the information and are given an opportunity to discuss, comment and provide feedback.
- ◆ Meetings
 - Staff are encouraged to meet with colleagues or use the telephone to discuss issues verbally, rather than relying on email or printed material. Well-managed meetings or discussions are an effective and efficient way of sharing knowledge, solving problems and ensuring common understanding of issues.

Research suggests that face-to-face communication generates greater trust and understanding than other communication methods. It is important therefore, that staff have opportunities for one-to-one and group meetings with colleagues and their line managers on a regular basis and that dialogue in those meetings is two-way.

Internal Communication Policy

Reference: GN34

Effective date: 22 January 2015

Page no: 3 of 4

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Email

General email communications are the subject of policy GN12 Internet, Email and IT, which provides details of appropriate use, email management, security and confidentiality.

If using the 'all staff' email, remember that in fact it does not include all staff as many do not have regular access to a computer as part of their role. Managers are responsible for ensuring that messages sent through the 'all staff' email channel are disseminated to those staff by another appropriate means in a timely manner.

Staff Bulletin and Payroll Letter

The CEO produces the staff bulletin every 6 weeks to coincide with board meetings. It gives a general update on issues affecting the whole organisation. It is circulated to staff via the 'all staff' email and to staff offsite (eg on maternity leave) by the Office Manager.

The Office Manager produces a monthly information bulletin that is circulated with staff payslips. It focuses on staff changes, issues affecting the policies and procedures in the organisation and issues relating to remuneration.

Notice boards

There are notice boards in the staff rooms and in the administration office displaying information for staff. Staff with responsibility for the maintenance of notice boards in their department should ensure that information is advertised in a timely manner and is removed when out of date.

Printed material – eg posters, flyers, booklets

Some departments and services need to produce printed material for use by staff. Should you wish to produce any printed material, please discuss your requirement with the Marketing Manager to ensure the branding is correct.

Social media and external websites

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp or Instagram are not the preferred channels with which to communicate with staff. Where use of social media is undertaken on behalf of the organisation it is subject to the organisations policies and procedures. Note that when staff make reference to colleagues or the organisation within their personal communications (by whatever means) they are still subject to the organisations policies, in particular regarding confidentiality (of company or client information) and respect and dignity. Sanctions may be brought against staff contravening these policies on social media channels.

The organisation has an official Facebook page and a Twitter account for all audiences which is managed by the Events and Marketing Manager. These channels are not relied upon to reach staff.

Professionalism in communication

In all communications staff should serve the interests of the organisation and ensure appropriate content. Staff should ensure appropriate response times are adhered to when communicating, particularly via email. During absence or when staff will not be able to respond in a reasonable time, staff should provide an autoreply to their emails with details of an alternative contact.

Related policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- ◆ GN01 Introduction to Employee Handbook
- ◆ GN12 Internet, email & IT guidance policy
- ◆ GN06 Equality & Diversity policy

Internal Communication Policy

Reference: GN34

Effective date: 22 January 2015

Page no: 4 of 4

Approved: 7 June 2022

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- ◆ GN29 Respect & personal dignity policy
- ◆ GN36 Incident and Emergency Guidance

All these policies are available at L:/HR/Public/policies. There are hard copies available in staff areas for reference.

Further information

The following are circulated to all staff.

- ◆ Organisation strategy, developed every 3 years.
- ◆ Staff bulletin, produced every 6 weeks.
- ◆ Payroll information sheet, produced monthly, focuses on HR matters and information from the Office Manager.

The following are regular meetings.

- ◆ Staff meetings – various depending on department but a minimum of once a month.
- ◆ General staff meeting – held every 6 months for all staff.
- ◆ Staff training day – once a year and is for all staff.