



# Communications Strategy

>>2022-2025

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**As with all trusts across the country, Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (LHCH) is operating within an environment of operational, financial and organisational challenges.**

LHCH faces increasing demand caused by health inequalities, an ageing population with complex health needs, a squeeze on finances, the need to collaborate and adapt patient pathways appropriately, working closely with healthcare and other partners.

However, effective and high quality communications can play a pivotal role in supporting the Trust to meet these challenges.

Communicating the **right message** at the **right time**, to the **right audience** using the **right channels**, will ensure that our staff, patients, public and other stakeholders are informed, engaged, reassured, enthused and supported.

In summary, communications is an essential part of supporting our vision:

***‘to be the best – leading and delivering outstanding heart and chest care and research’.***

Therefore this strategy has been developed, taking into account examples of best practice from inside and outside the NHS.

The key aim is...

***...to deliver the very best internal and external communications every day, which align with, and actively support LHCH’s vision and strategic objectives.***

This document provides:

- an overview of the communications approach
- a snapshot of the context in which the Communications Team operates
- an outline of the objectives and the rationale behind them
- and the action plan we will be working on.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This strategy sets out our vision for the development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of a cohesive, proactive and high quality programme of planned and reactive communications activities.**

These activities will be aligned to, and supportive of, the aims and objectives of other key Trust strategies which are currently being delivered or in development.

At the heart of our strategy and plans is a simple question: “Does this communications activity or output help us to achieve our vision of being ‘the best – leading and delivering outstanding heart and chest care and research’, as well as our mission to ‘provide excellent, compassionate and safe care for our patients and populations every day.’?”

If the answer to that question is “yes” then we can be confident that we are doing the right thing, for the right reasons and having the right conversations about our services and our Trust, with the right people, at the right time, in the right way.

We know people care about the specialist services we provide here at LHCH. We also know their views and suggestions can help us further improve the services we deliver, and meet the challenges presented to us in the years ahead.

Effective two-way communication can make a huge contribution and help in many ways:

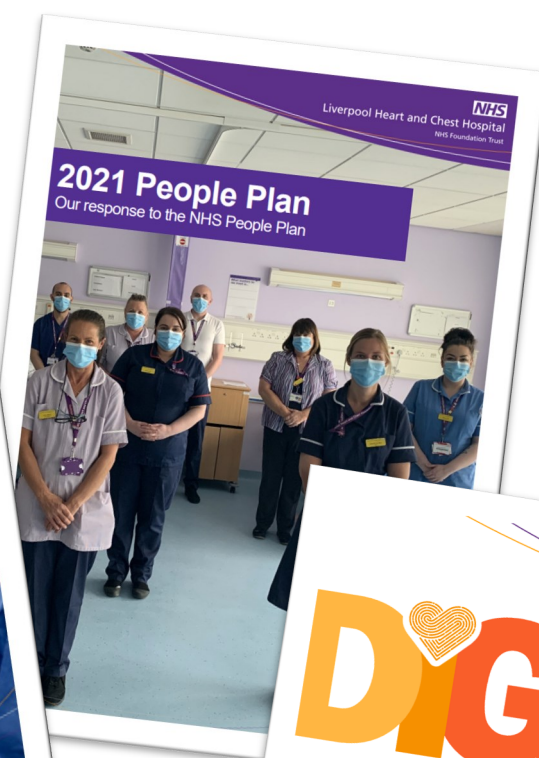
- Improved staff morale and engagement, making it easier for us to attract, and retain, colleagues with the skills and approach that we need to deliver our five year strategic approach to Patients, Partnerships and Populations.
- Stronger clinical leadership to deliver improved patient care, as staff support and drive forward the delivery of the Trust’s vision and strategic objectives.
- Productive conversations about how we can further enhance our world class services to meet the needs of all our patients and families.
- Enabling patients and families to have a voice in the services that are being provided for them so that they are actively involved in their care, and can make positive and healthy lifestyle choices.
- A clear and compelling story for our regulators, including NHS Improvement/NHS England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) that sets out our plans for delivering long term, sustainable, collaborative, world class care.
- Demonstrate a world class reputation for specialist cardiothoracic services, that is an attractive destination for world class clinicians
- Continually enhanced reputation and a growing national/international profile for delivering outstanding services

# COMMUNICATIONS LINKS

As part of our annual and ongoing communications planning, we take into account the priorities set out in many other key enabling Trust documents. The impact of our Communications Strategy will be measured, in part, by the way it supports their delivery and implementation.

## Connected Strategies

- Patients, Partnerships, Populations
- Digital Excellence
- People Plan
- Recruitment Strategy
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Quality Strategy
- Fundraising Strategy
- Membership Strategy



# OUR 6CS PRINCIPLES

6Cs are used as guiding principles to shape and evaluate all our work, and provide a clear checklist for planning, delivery and evaluation. They shape what we do and how we do it.



CONSISTENCY	CAPABILITY	CHANNELS
<p>The story we tell externally and internally must always be consistent.</p> <p>The Trust's reputation could be damaged, where this does not happen.</p> <p>Honesty, openness and transparency will be central to all communications.</p>	<p>We will focus on priority issues.</p> <p>We will always ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this fit our objectives?</li> <li>• Do we have the capacity?</li> <li>• What resources do we need?</li> <li>• What are our training / development requirements and how might these change in future?</li> </ul> <p>We will work with divisions to communicate messages to their teams effectively, timely and appropriately, where possible with the help of comms champions.</p> <p>By focussing on core projects and issues, all requests for comms support will be prioritised.</p>	<p>Whether face to face, digital or via other channels, we will always consider the best method of reaching audiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website, intranet, social and other digital channels</li> <li>• Members Matters</li> <li>• Corporate publications</li> <li>• Proactive media</li> <li>• Patient / public feedback</li> <li>• Recruitment advertising or other promoted social posts</li> </ul> <p>It is vital to use all our channels to facilitate productive, two-way conversations with audiences.</p> <p>We will always respond timely.</p>
CONTENT	CALLS TO ACTION	COUNTING
<p>Many of the messages shared can be challenging, complex or politically sensitive.</p> <p>Therefore we will always aim to deliver engaging, accessible content in a variety of formats, at the right times, to achieve optimal results.</p>	<p>Calls to action for patients, public or staff will be varied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassurance about care</li> <li>• Highlighting service quality</li> <li>• Join LHCH as a place to work</li> <li>• Follow policy and procedures</li> <li>• Support plans for change</li> <li>• Support LHCH Charity</li> <li>• Act on a health campaign</li> </ul>	<p>Providing effective evaluation of communications is vital. Therefore we will measure and analyse our content via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach and engagement of social media</li> <li>• Media coverage</li> <li>• Website analytics</li> <li>• Engagement with calls to action (eg expressions of interest, event attendance, online feedback etc)</li> <li>• Responses to staff surveys, attendance at meetings/ events.</li> </ul> <p>We will reflect on these metrics to evolve and adapt accordingly.</p>

# OUR CHALLENGES

To enable our strategy to be successfully delivered, we need to consider and respond to the internal and external communication challenges faced.

## DIGITAL

Rapidly increasing demand for digital comms with limited digital resource.

## RESOURCE

Maximising skills of the team and the budgets available to meet Trust objectives.

## AWARENESS

Limited LHCH brand awareness regionally and nationally.

## SUPPORT

Small internal team, meaning that collaboration is key.

## PROCESS

Better use of technology needed to target audiences in the most appropriate and effective way.

## VISION

A rapidly evolving profession requiring strategic and operational leadership.

# ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGES



## Understand LHCH's digital needs

- Do we have 'the best' fit-for-purpose website, staff intranet and mobile app that meets the current and future needs of our patients, public, staff and clinicians?
- Can we work in partnership with Digital Systems to enhance the digital communication tools available to us?
- Are there other digital tools we can use to communicate effectively with our audiences?



## Enhance the LHCH brand

- What is it that sets LHCH apart?
- Do we communicate the LHCH brand internally and externally as clearly and consistently as possible?
- How can we share the LHCH story more effectively and more widely?
- Are we maximising our reach on social media?
- What other opportunities or partnerships would help to build the LHCH brand?



## Maximise all the available resources, both internal and external.

- Can we use all our communications resources even more effectively?
- Can other staff support us in delivering more targeted communications?
- Can we collaborate with partners to provide additional expertise, cover or support eg in a crisis?
- How do we focus our limited time better?



## Focus on the future and more efficient processes

- Are there new technologies, systems or processes that would deliver more targeted communications to our audiences?
- Do we have an eye on communication innovations and how LHCH can adopt?
- Are we listening and acting on feedback about our communications?
- Are we measuring communication effectiveness?

# OUR AMBITIONS

Our communications ambitions align with the Trust's six strategic objectives, as follows:

Ambition	We will...	We'll know it's right when...
<b>Support the delivery of world class care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote LHCH as a world class centre for cardiothoracic care and treatment via existing and new online, digital, print, media channels etc</li> <li>- Maximise existing communications channels and work with Digital Systems to explore the development of new world class communications channels (website, intranet, staff app etc)</li> <li>- Establish in the minds of staff that LHCH is a world class research centre.</li> <li>- Promote LHCH's key messages, vision, values, priorities and plans to inspire commitment and support of Trust priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone at LHCH understands the importance of sharing successes</li> <li>- We are proactive in promoting world class achievements</li> <li>- We gain national and international recognition for our achievements</li> <li>- We have a clear and consistent story of LHCH's world class care</li> <li>- Staff are equipped to articulate LHCH's story of world class care</li> </ul>
<b>Work to advance quality and outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raise awareness of safety culture, FTSU and other appropriate campaigns (eg HALT, sepsis awareness, speak out safely, pressure ulcer prevention etc)</li> <li>- Inspire confidence in LHCH and its services and drive improvements in the Trust's reputation. We will actively engage in difficult issues, always taking an open, honest and caring approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a clear annual calendar or awareness days and campaigns with clearly assigned ownership and responsibility for promotion</li> <li>- We have a proactive approach to marking quality and outcomes</li> <li>- We have a collaborative and coordinated approach, between clinical teams and communications.</li> <li>- Everyone at LHCH is aware of safety campaigns and health days</li> </ul>
<b>Increase value</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate the effectiveness of all internal communications via staff engagement, ensuring recommendations are implemented where feasible and where necessary.</li> <li>- Ensure the delivery of all communications is as cost effective as possible</li> <li>- Lead effective PR and communications to support the Trust's fundraising strategy, and major campaigns, ensuring increasing levels of engagement and the realisation of new investment in hospital services/facilities.</li> <li>- Explore opportunities for generating additional income and/or Charitable donation through use of LHCH's web and social media channels</li> <li>- Communicate environmentally sustainable services and plans to drive greater efficiency and behaviour change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have a strategic and value based approach to undertaking all communication activities</li> <li>- All communications output is costed, including communications team time, budgeted and appropriately evaluated</li> <li>- There is greater brand recognition of LHCH Charity, leading to increased donations</li> </ul>

# OUR AMBITIONS

Ambition	We will...	We'll know it's right when...
<b>Demonstrate the development of people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore entry into national awards for best practice and highlight national awards and survey successes</li> <li>- Support the ongoing promotion of LHCH as the best place to work – 'why work anywhere else'</li> <li>- Deliver effective communications to support the work of divisions enabling them to fulfill their respective business plans, and helping to achieve Trust's vision of 'being the best'.</li> <li>- Create brand/comms ambassadors, internally and externally, who will contribute to delivering all of the objectives and widen our reach/reputation</li> <li>- Influence behaviour, helping to embed the Trust's values, policies and initiatives and support the embedding of the trust's People Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have a proactive and consistent approach to celebrating staff / team success both internally and externally</li> <li>- Staff stories are routinely created and shared across the Trust</li> <li>- We have a proactive approach to entry into national awards</li> <li>- Colleagues across the Trust become active partners in communicating achievements / successes.</li> </ul>
<b>Promote leadership through collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the delivery of the Trust's '3Ps' strategy by delivering effective comms championing the successes of strategic partnerships and collaborations.</li> <li>- Use effective comms to highlight the achievements of the Cheshire and Merseyside CVD Board, and the leadership role of LHCH</li> <li>- Use effective comms to highlight the achievements of all collaborative partnerships involving LHCH leadership, eg Targeted Lung Health Checks</li> <li>- Strengthen and enhance communication of LHCH brand to support the development of future collaboration</li> <li>- Develop closer communication links with ICS partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have a consistent approach to communicating collaboration successes, both internally and with external partners</li> <li>- We have strong two-way engaging communications with stakeholders and enhanced relationships</li> <li>- LHCH brand recognition is enhanced</li> <li>- LHCH's website and social media channels actively champion collaboration</li> </ul>
<b>Support the improvement of population health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage people to make better, more appropriate choices about the way they access or use LHCH services</li> <li>- Actively support collaborative community health initiatives and campaigns with high quality communications and events</li> <li>- Develop and deliver a rolling programme of clear, consistent, timely, engaging and targeted health messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We understand exactly what, where, when and why health messages need to be shared</li> <li>- A clearly articulated calendar of events is developed</li> <li>- We have a proactive approach to issuing communications to targeted populations</li> <li>- Success stories and experiences are routinely shared</li> </ul>

