

REWARD COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

How to effectively communicate your reward offer



CONTENTS

03

Introduction

04

Benefits of working together

05

Planning your communications

07

Communicating reward

10

Evaluating reward

11

Total Reward Engagement Network

12

Communications checklist

13

Communications plan

INTRODUCTION

Evidence tells us that many NHS employees are not aware of the range of rewards and benefits offered by their employer. It's therefore more important than ever to make the most of what you're offering and how you are communicating it.

This guide is designed to help you to effectively communicate your organisation's reward offer.

This guide includes top tips, a checklist and a template communications plan.

Recruitment and retention are the biggest challenges employers in the NHS are facing. By having an effective communications approach for reward, it will help you to meet these challenges by:

- **Maximising the impact of your reward offer to successfully achieve your strategic goals.**
- **Demonstrating your commitment and investment in your staff.**
- **Helping staff to fully appreciate and understand the value of working for your organisation.**
- **Reinforcing your organisational values and unique employer brand.**



Resource

Signpost

Access our suite of tools and resources to help you support your organisation's approach to reward and staff benefits.



BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER

It is important to involve key stakeholders when planning your reward communications.

Other teams and departments could offer assistance to promote a wider understanding of the campaign and provide extra support. Establishing positive working relationships from the start will help you gain ongoing support.

KEY STAKE HOLDERS:

- communications team
- staff side
- line managers
- senior management team

Involving other departments such as health and wellbeing, occupational health, diversity and inclusion and recruitment, in the planning stages can identify other communication channels you could use.

Staff side colleagues can help shape your reward communications plan and share key messages through their communication channels to reinforce your messages.

Line managers can also help to communicate the key messages during briefings at team meetings. They understand what motivates their staff and can influence their experience at work.

Communications colleagues can provide feedback and suggestions on:

- creating a communications plan
- target audience
- key messages
- style and tone
- timescales
- social media
- other resources you may need (such as a photographer or designer).

Resource

Signpost

Take a look at the guidance in our reward strategy toolkit – phase 3 implementation and communication to help you.



PLANNING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

Planning your reward communications will help you focus messages to your target audience. Use the following key stages to develop a successful communications plan.

- 1 What are you trying to achieve?
- 2 Who is your target audience?
- 3 What are your key messages?
- 4 When is the best time to communicate your messages?
- 5 What communication channels are appropriate?
- 6 How to measure the impact of your reward communications?

Key messages

Be clear about what you want to communicate. Use simple language and avoid using jargon and abbreviations. Using images on social media is a great way to get your message across.

Remember to edit your content and tone appropriately for each of the communication channels you use. Your communications team can help you with this if you are unsure.

Timescales

It is important to communicate the messages at the right time. Think about other activities that are taking place within the organisation and ascertain whether you take the opportunity to communicate your messages alongside. Think about national campaigns that you could use to reinforce your messages.

Keeping your employees engaged throughout the year will ensure they understand the full range of benefits available and help appreciate the benefits package offered by your organisation.

Resource

Signpost

At the end of this guide you will find a checklist and a comms plan template to help you plan your communications messages and strategy.



PLANNING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

Branding

Help staff recognise your reward offer by developing an identity for the reward package, this will make it stand out and help to increase engagement. Think about how it fits with your organisation's existing branding.

Bring all your benefits together in one place to make it really accessible for staff.

Your target audience

It is important to know your workforce and how they like to be communicated with. Communicating reward through your workforce's preferred channels will increase their awareness and engagement with what you offer.

Budgets

You will need to work out if any of your activities have costs associated with them which may affect some of your plans. Most of the communication channels listed in this guide are available to use free of charge. There will be costs associated with printing i.e. leaflets, posters etc.

You could generate income from some of the reward activities by running sponsored events.

Consider the time and resources you have available for your proposed reward activities and who is best placed to carry them out.

Inclusive communication

Use easy read formats to ensure your written information is simple and easy to understand for all including any staff with learning disabilities. You can make your communication easy ready by:

- using simple words and including images to support the text
- making it large print
- using plain fonts
- keeping sentences short.

Resource

Signpost

Use our benefit template to create your own unique leaflet to promote your reward offer.

Read how Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust used reward to improve staff retention and reduce spending on temporary and agency staff.

Use our website page template as a guide on what content could be included on a reward hub web page.

Resource

Signpost

Access a suite of inclusive resources.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Use a variety of communication channels to ensure your messages are received by all staff.

It can be a challenge for those organisations which are spread across a large geographical area and over a number of sites.

Rewards and benefits can be communicated by employers through a variety of channels.

Think about how your staff can access the information you provide, not all workers will have access to a computer at work.

Download our [handy infographic](#) to see the different ways you can communicate your total reward offer to all members of staff. Using different platforms will ensure as many employees as possible know what is available to them.



COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Total Reward Statements (TRS)

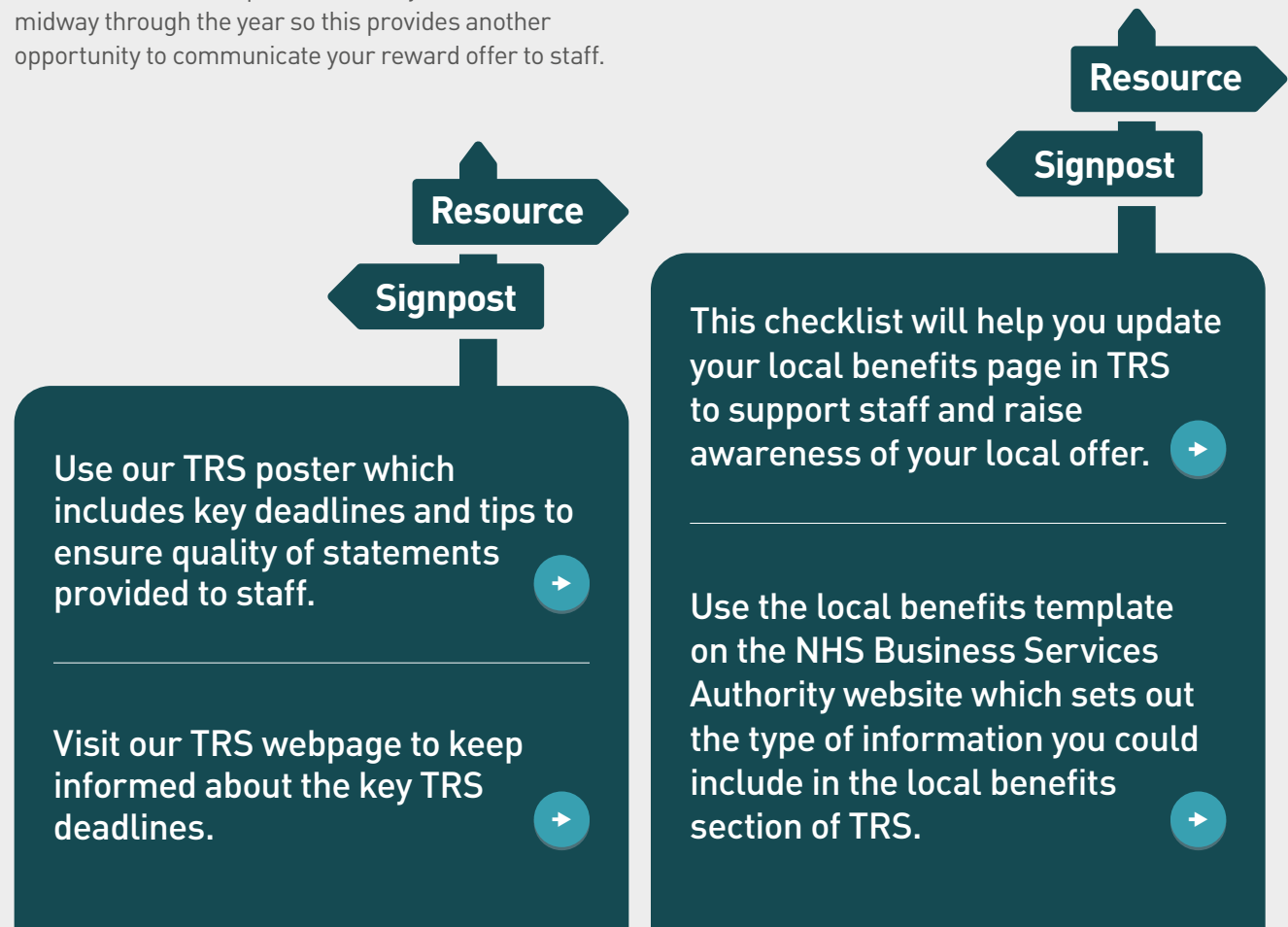
Encourage staff to access their TRS.

TRS gives a personalised summary of a reward package including basic pay, allowances and pension benefits (for NHS Pension Scheme members). It will help them understand their overall benefits package and highlight the value of their employer and NHS pension benefits.

The statements are updated annually and refreshed midway through the year so this provides another opportunity to communicate your reward offer to staff.

Local benefits

We encourage employers using Electronic Staff Record (ESR) to keep their local benefits page up to date to promote the full range of rewards on offer. This can help staff understand and value their overall reward package for working for your organisation.



Use our TRS poster which includes key deadlines and tips to ensure quality of statements provided to staff. →

Visit our TRS webpage to keep informed about the key TRS deadlines. →

This checklist will help you update your local benefits page in TRS to support staff and raise awareness of your local offer. →

Use the local benefits template on the NHS Business Services Authority website which sets out the type of information you could include in the local benefits section of TRS. →

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Top tips on how you can use social media to communicate your messages:

Tone of voice

Think about the tone of the voice and if you have more than one person using your social media account, it's important to be consistent.

Keep your tweets brief

280 characters is a maximum not a goal.

Don't just retweet

Keep retweeting to a minimum as too many retweets could devalue your timeline.

Use images

Use images with your tweets and posts. Social media posts with images receive higher levels of engagement with audiences than text alone.

Use hashtags

Use hashtags to broaden the reach of an account but keeping maximum of two per post.

Use conversational language

Share open ended questions and reply to people that engage with you.

Respond to complex queries via other channels

Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries. Complex queries should be handled via the most appropriate channel such as email or telephone.



Read how Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS FT communicated the value of the NHS Pension Scheme and raised awareness of its options for flexible retirement. [→](#)

Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust also shares how they recruited benefit champions, to communicate information about rewards and staff benefits across the trust. [→](#)



Use our social media toolkit to help you follow the six-stage process to formulate a practical and effective social media policy for your organisation. [→](#)

EVALUATING REWARD

Evaluating and reviewing your overall reward package provides the opportunity to analyse the offer and how you communicate it.

A robust evaluation will ensure your reward offer is right as well as highlighting any new benefits staff might like to see introduced.

Evaluating your reward approach will:

- help you understand and demonstrate the impact of your reward activities.
- help you measure your return on investment.
- make sure you are offering what your staff want and value.

There are lots of ways to collect the information you will need to evaluate your reward activities:

- Gather feedback from staff, manager and local trade union representatives.
- Look at data from your benefit platform to assess the levels of take up.
- Analyse your existing benefits to understand which are being accessed.

Use our evaluating reward guide to help you think about your objectives, audience, activities, the evidence you will collect, the risks and constraints you envisage, any performance measures and how you plan to use your findings.

Resource

Signpost

Use our step by step guide to evaluating reward to help you understand and demonstrate the impact of your reward approach.



TREN

Total Reward Engagement Network

Join our Total Reward Engagement Network (TREN) sessions to engage with colleagues from across the NHS to develop and share your reward knowledge and experiences.

Sessions include a mix of expert opinion and Q&A sessions, employer case studies, networking and interactive workshops. The network will inform the ongoing development of our reward work programme.

The network provides an opportunity for HR managers, business partners and reward professionals from across the NHS to come together in a relaxed, open environment to share experiences and hear what other organisations are doing in this area.

“Great network to meet colleagues across the region and share good practice.”

“Very informative, it has given me the appetite to improve at my trust”.

“TREN is a fantastic network offering innovative ideas and sharing good practice to all Healthcare organisations.”

Further information and the dates for our upcoming sessions can be found on our dedicated [TREN page](#).

You can also email reward@nhsemployers.org confirming your name, job title, contact details and which location you would like to attend.

“I really found the sessions useful to discuss COVID-19 solutions from other trusts which we could adopt at my own Trust.”


“Along with all the useful tools NHS Employers have to offer, these sessions offer much more in ways of support, sharing ideas and guidance.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR REWARD WEB PAGES

Tell us what you think about our products and resources, email reward@nhsemployers.org

Published October 2020. © NHS Confederation 2020.



Access the Reward in the NHS report which shares how organisations are changing their approach to reward. 

REWARD COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

Use our checklist to help you plan your reward communications

Task	Timescales & Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your communications team and identify clear objectives, target audience and consider opportunities for evaluation.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider involving senior management, line managers, staff side colleagues or any other key stakeholders.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on key messages you want to communicate.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the most appropriate communication channels that you are going to use, based on your audience.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider when you want to communicate. Think about any other communication activities and events taking place at the same time.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider any budget or resources requirements and allocate them for your communications.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use our benefit leaflet template to create your own unique leaflet to promote your reward offer.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Produce a reward communications plan using our template.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disseminate your communication internally and externally where possible.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Engage with your staff throughout the year to help them fully understand and appreciate the value of working for your organisation.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the effectiveness of your reward communications using our step by step guide to help you measure results.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek continuous feedback from staff on your reward offer.	

REWARD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Use this communications plan to develop your strategy and messages.

Task	Details
<p>1 Background information What do you want to communicate?</p>	
<p>2 Aims and objectives What is the aim of the communication? What is the rationale and evidence or change?</p>	
<p>3 Key messages Key messages explaining your project</p>	

REWARD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Use this communications plan to develop your strategy and messages.

Task	Details
<p>4 Target audiences Who do you want to receive your messages? Who do we need to consult and engage with?</p>	
<p>5 Communication channels Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet • Newsletters • Staff handbook • Benefit leaflets • Posters • Social Media • Total Reward Statements 	
<p>6 Timeline Are there any specific deadlines that we need to hit? Consultation dates, externally influenced dates? When does the project have to be completed?</p>	

REWARD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Use this communications plan to develop your strategy and messages.

Task	Details
<p>7 Evaluation How will we know the plan is effective?</p>	
<p>8 Risk assessments What are the risks to the organisation? How might we mitigate them?</p>	
<p>9 Any further information What you may already have done? Information on similar projects completed?</p>	