

**Your channels**

When starting a new campaign or initiative, you will need to think about which communications channels to use. The key consideration is what will be the most effective way to reach your target audience.

Using existing channels will save you time and effort, but may not always be appropriate or may need something in addition. So you may need to have a mix of existing and new channels, depending on available resources. It's also important to have one place where all the information is held, this could be on an intranet or internet site.

It might be helpful to ask staff how they prefer to be communicated with. Do they have access and time to read emails? Would they prefer more traditional forms of communication such as posters? You can use this information to provide targeted communications to staff.

Things to think about when choosing your communication channels:

- How many staff are you targeting with the campaign or initiative? Where are they based, at one or many sites?
- Does your target audience work remotely? Can they regularly check emails or access the intranet?
- Could you collect quotes and testimonials from your staff which is a good way of allowing your audience to see how the initiative/campaign has impacted on other people. It is often the personal stories that help people to understand the benefits of a programme.
- Find people in your organisation to be the face of your campaign/initiative and tell their story as a great way to engage your audience. Could they write a blog to keep people informed of how the campaign or initiative is going.
- Would posters or payslip leaflets be a good way of reaching your audience? We've got some poster templates to get you started but remember to consider the ease of updating printed documents as opposed to digital ones, and any costs associated.
- Would sending a letter be a better way of communicating?

- How can staff communicate with you and provide you with feedback?
- Could you set up an inbox for enquiries?
- Can you use line managers to communicate key messages, for example, give them a briefing to use at team meetings?

**Top tip** - Always remember to present your messaging in a positive way and use a call to action, such as 'download', 'read', 'take part' or 'watch'.

### **Good practice examples:**

- Read how Yorkshire Ambulance Trust adapted its communication strategy to reach a wider audience.
- The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust use a number of ways to promote health and wellbeing communications. They developed a Health and Wellbeing Roadmap that can be put on notice boards, walls or on the back of toilet doors. It includes a variety of QR codes to give staff easy access to health and wellbeing information. They also use stands that are taken on site so staff can talk to the health and wellbeing team directly. Other channels include the use of small cards that staff can discreetly put into pockets that contains financial wellbeing advice and links to resources.
- Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust use the full capacity of MS Teams to create their wellbeing channel. This means that everything wellbeing related is easy to access and all in one place. The health and wellbeing team post weekly messages for staff, which can be 'liked' and commented on creating an interactive space. They have also built a website within the MS Teams channel which hosts a variety of information, including how to seek support around financial well-being, family issues, mental and physical health. The messaging is updated according to current staff needs.
- Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has four main hospital sites so they use a range of channels to ensure their wellbeing message reaches as many staff as possible. Their communications team send out twice-weekly staff bulletins which the wellbeing team uses to share key wellbeing events and initiatives. The messages are also shared on social media as well as on digital displays and physical posters across sites. A monthly all-staff briefing with the chief executive and the executive team also has a regular focus on wellbeing. Weekly wellbeing champion emails give an overview of all key wellbeing activity and the fortnightly forums for them also provide Q&A sessions. As part of their 'Engagement Promise' the wellbeing team run a series of 30-minute wellbeing webinars for staff and leadership teams and provide PowerPoint

slides and PDFs with all the key information, so that information can be cascaded onwards to teams.

- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's health and wellbeing offer is cascaded to staff through a multi-channel approach. Information is shared via the weekly trust communications bulletin and via the staff engagement and wellbeing team monthly newsletter. With the help of over 100 wellbeing champions, they display posters throughout the trust and the champions also share information verbally at team meetings. The trust has a very comprehensive health wellbeing SharePoint site which can be also be accessed by staff from home. They also have their own wellbeing twitter account to share information with staff via social media. More recently the trust established Microsoft teams channels for their carers forum, menopause advocates and long COVID support group and the wellbeing champions use this to promote further sharing of relevant wellbeing information.

**Further resources:**

- Live tweeting from Bolton's emergency department - Read how Bolton NHS Foundation Trust used Twitter to share what was happening in its emergency department.
- Promotion, praise and promise - Find out how West London NHS Trust reduced attrition and improved staff engagement with its new initiative that congratulates staff promotions.
- The Big Thank You at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust - Read how extensive staff engagement formed the basis of an award-winning recruitment campaign.