Communication Strategy

2010 - 2013

January 2010
Do you have difficulty understanding the English language?
If you have a problem reading or understanding the English language, this document is available in a language of your choice. Please ask an English speaking friend or relative to phone, write or email Nigel Firth, Equality and Diversity Manager, NHS Grampian. His contact details are:

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(Polish)
Czy masz trudności w rozumieniu języka angielskiego?
Jeśli masz problemy z czytaniem lub zrozumieniem języka angielskiego, ten dokument jest dostępny w języku, który wybierzesz. Prosimy poprosić angielskojęzycznego kolegę lub krewnego o telefon lub email do Nigel Firth, Equality and Diversity Manager. Jego kontakt to:
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(Russian)
У Вас трудности в понимании английского языка?
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An accessible pictorial version of this strategy is available, on request

Do you have a visual impairment?

This document is also available in large print, and in other formats, upon request
1 Introduction

Good quality, effective communication is central to efficient organisations. Through effective communication organisations manage, motivate, influence, explain and create conditions for change. Good communication is more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need for involvement. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message.

This Communication Strategy updates and embodies the Communication Strategy produced in 2004. That document aimed to make communicating with our stakeholders – internally and externally, integral to the work of NHS Grampian. It set out a series of sound principles and standards of communication and created a framework for a range of supporting documents and plans that would deliver tangible outcomes. It described to staff, external stakeholders and the public how NHS Grampian proposed to communicate. It also described how communication and patient and public involvement support the delivery of the Grampian Health Plan and the organisation’s vision and values.

This updated 2010 strategy revisits, revises and updates those principles and practices. It recognises the challenges of the next five to ten years and aims to put in place an overarching framework for communication that sets high but achievable standards for the organisation. Communication is about getting the right messages to the right audiences through the most appropriate channels at the most appropriate times. It is also a two-way process. As well as informing and sharing, it is essential that we listen and respond to incoming communication. Communication is also everyone’s responsibility and not just the role of one team. Every member of staff in every part of NHS Grampian shares the responsibility for effective communication.

The 2010 strategy has been written by the Director of Corporate Communications, NHS Grampian and is based on discussion from the sources listed in Appendix A.

The benefits of using this Communication Strategy include:

- raising awareness of and explaining NHS Grampian’s decisions, policies and strategies, justifying our actions and responding to feedback
- promoting and publicising NHS Grampian, providing information and highlighting achievements
- promoting and encouraging the involvement of individuals and local communities in decisions affecting health and healthcare services
- informing and involving staff, to ensure that they have access to high quality information in whatever way they find most appropriate, and can therefore influence decision making.

The power of communication cannot be underestimated. Good or bad communication can have a subtle but serious impact on public confidence and staff morale. In 2004 the Communication Strategy challenged NHS Grampian to consider whether the commitment existed to create the culture, live by the
values and adopt the principles or whether we merely claimed to do so. In 2010 it is important to test whether that commitment still exists and to test whether the organisation is able to demonstrate that the principles described in the strategy truly influence and guide the way in which we behave.

2 About NHS Grampian

NHS Grampian provides a wide range of high quality care and services with approximately 17,000 staff and a budget of around £900 million.

NHS Grampian's vision is:

**Proudly working together to deliver the best possible services for a healthier Grampian.**

The purpose of NHS Grampian is to:

- improve the health of people in the North East of Scotland and beyond
- provide high quality services for our patients
- help people choose the best ways to look after their health

NHS Grampian's values are to:

- treat each individual with dignity and respect
- behave with integrity, consistency and compassion
- communicate clearly
- be open, honest and fair
- learn and improve
- lead by example
- be environmentally responsible
- celebrate success
- work in partnership with our staff, patients, carers, communities, the public and private sector organisations
- invest in our people, services and premises
- encourage innovation and build on the record of success in the North East.

NHS Grampian’s five priority areas for the next three years are:

- improving health and reducing health inequalities
- involving patients, carers, the public, staff and partners towards mutuality
- delivering safe, effective and timely care in the right place
- developing the workforce and empowering staff
- getting the best for our resources
3 Purpose of strategy

This strategy sets out how NHS Grampian will communicate important messages and news, and support implementation of service changes and internal organisational changes and also how NHS Grampian will encourage two way communication with these stakeholders. We will do this with patients, the public, staff, Local Authority partners, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders.

This strategy aims to:

- Put patients, public and staff at the very centre of our communications plans.

- Inform, involve and engage patients, public and staff to ensure that they have access to high quality, accurate and timely information in whatever language format they find most appropriate.

- Promote and publicise health and healthcare services, providing information about NHS Grampian and highlighting particular achievements.

- Raise awareness of and explain NHS Grampian’s policies and strategies.

- Promote and encourage the involvement of individuals and communities in decisions affecting health and healthcare services.

- Support the development and implementation of organisational and service change through planned and proactive communications.

- Ensure the routine involvement of local people in planning and decision making processes.

- Foster a culture of good two-way communications with stakeholders.

- Convey and reinforce a positive reputation for the organisation.

- Ensure that stakeholders clearly understand the organisation’s strategic priorities and are kept abreast of progress against them.

- Encourage feedback from patients, service users and other stakeholders to improve the range and quality of services.

- Develop and sustain effective relationships with the media, other agencies and key stakeholders.

- Manage public expectations in relation to finite resources.

- Ensure that staff and other internal stakeholders are well informed.
• Provide the opportunities to encourage staff and other internal stakeholders to contribute, with the expectation that their views will be listened and responded to.

### 4 Principles

NHS Grampian’s communication will be underpinned by the following standards:

**Open**  
The reasons for decisions are available, decision-makers are accessible and willing to discuss why and how the decisions were made, for example, to the media or individual members of the public. When information cannot be made available the reasons for this are given. Questions and requests for information are welcomed and answered promptly.

**Corporate**  
Communication style and messages reflect a consistent view within NHS Grampian and, when required, across the NHS as a whole. Visual branding enables stakeholders to recognise and identify information from NHS Grampian.

**Two-way**  
Systems exist to support communication at all levels of the organisation as well as across teams, departments, services and directorates. Staff and the public are encouraged to contribute ideas and opinions and give and receive feedback. This includes being comfortable with being challenged and challenging others and, as a learning organisation, welcoming feedback and constructive criticism.

**Timely**  
Information is provided at the time it is needed, is relevant and is capable of being interpreted in the correct context, allowing sufficient time for feedback when appropriate.

**Clear**  
Information is in plain English, without jargon and with minimal use of acronyms, which are always explained. Readability and disability guidance is used to analyse our external communications and documents. Published material is developed with the public, patients, staff, partner organisations, carers and voluntary organisations. Written messages are clear and concise, using short sentences and avoiding management language.

**Targeted**  
The right messages reach the right people, in the right format, at the right time. Consideration is given to the individual communication needs of people, including people with disabilities and people who do not use English as their first language.

**Credible**  
Credibility is earned by responsible, open, honest and timely communication, promoting a culture of understanding and
realism. Recipients of information can trust it and can expect to be advised of any change that might cause the information to be incorrect.

Planned Where possible communication is proactive and planned and communication activity is appropriate and timely.

Consistent Messages are delivered in a co-ordinated fashion, without contradictions. Communication issues are anticipated and planned processes are applied to deal with them.

Inclusive NHS Grampian is explicit about, and consistent in, its commitment to involve stakeholders. It promotes equality, both in the services provided and within NHS Grampian.

Efficient The way in which information is delivered is fit for purpose, cost-effective, within budget and delivered on time.

Respectful Communication is sensitive and respectful to local people, for example being aware of body language and how it might be perceived. This includes trying to actively listen and hold eye contact when involved in face-to-face communications, trying to put ourselves in the position of those we are communicating with and treating people in the way we would like to be treated ourselves, through both face-to-face and written communications.

Cost effective Fit for purpose, professional communications will be produced that represent an effective use of public funds.

Sustainable Information and messages are communicated, in a variety of ways, to maximise their effectiveness, recognising that people do not always absorb all information on first hearing, giving people the opportunity to ask questions at the time or at a later date, if they need to.

Integrated Internal and external communication is consistent and mutually supportive.

Evaluated Communication activity is internally and externally evaluated to ensure that it adheres to the principles and values of this strategy.

Accessible Information is available in different languages, large print, Braille, audio tape or another format of choice.

5. Objectives

NHS Grampian recognises the important role of communication and will develop and support a culture of good, corporate communication at all levels
and with all internal and external stakeholders. This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Every plan, strategy, service change and continuous service improvement activity will include consideration of communication and involvement issues. All major projects and reviews will be supported by proactive communication and will have an internal and external communication plan that identifies the target audiences, methods to be used and the success criteria for the plan. Absence of such consideration will limit the progress of the plan.

- Major Continuous Service Improvement (CSI) projects such as the Foresterhill masterplan and Intermediate Care will be proactively promoted to ensure that staff, patients and public are fully aware of the changes and their impact on them and their health services.

- Training needs will be identified and appropriate training made available in priority and specific areas of work such as public involvement and equality and diversity. Training needs will be incorporated into personal development plans and will form part of each member of staff’s Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) outline.

- The need for good communication skills will be promoted and, if necessary, appropriate communication training will be provided to improve both written and verbal skills in advance with this.

- Good practice guidance on communication will be produced and disseminated and staff will be encouraged to develop their communication styles and skills in accordance with this.

- Access to and use of the internal NHS Grampian intranet will be improved.

- The NHS Grampian website will be further developed and enhanced.

- On request NHS Grampian will make information available in other formats and languages. We will further develop recognised publicised “portals” into NHS Grampian (e.g. consultations, Feedback service, single enquiry email address, Health Plan).

- 5,000 copies of UpFront – the NHS Grampian staff newspaper, will continue to be produced every month. Upfront will be evaluated as part of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) audit of internal communication from January to March 2010.

- Individual newsletters will be produced on specific areas and issues, for example intermediate care, infection control, and Aberdeen Community Health and Care Village.

- The content, effectiveness and penetration of Team Brief across the organisation will be evaluated as part of the PWC audit of internal communication to be undertaken between January and March 2010. In
• Face2Face sessions with staff will be used to engage in two way dialogue, to ensure greater visibility of senior managers. All Face2Face sessions will be evaluated. It is recognised that it is difficult for some groups of staff to leave the workplace, so more opportunities will be sought to meet staff in their frontline role, including those on night shift.

• Existing links with key opinion formers will be fostered and new ones created. This will include MPs, MSPs, MEPs, Local Authorities, voluntary organisations and Community Councils.

• Greater openness and honesty will be fostered with staff and the public about the challenges facing NHS Grampian, the need to change and the financial context the organisation is facing in the years ahead.

• The achievements and successes of NHS Grampian will be promoted and celebrated, locally and nationally, presenting a balanced picture of the achievements of staff and the quality of services.

6 Internal Communication

6.1 Background

NHS Grampian is a large and complex organisation covering a diverse geographical area and employing around 17,000 staff. Communicating effectively with staff who work in more than 200 roles the length and breadth of Grampian is challenging but essential. Internal communication occurs in constant, dynamic and multifaceted ways across the organisation. Research suggests that high performing organisations are more active in internal communication than low performers, suggesting a link between good corporate performance and good internal communication.

Internal communication affects employees. It keeps them connected to and engaged with the business of the organisation, ensuring they know what is expected of them and that they feel valued for what they do. Good internal communication has particular relevance at times of change, when staff may feel uncertain about the direction of the organisation and about their own place and future.

All members of staff communicate to some extent with our wider communities (the local population, patients and carers, statutory and voluntary sector partners, suppliers etc). Effective internal communications can help them communicate more effectively with these external contacts.

The Staff Governance Standard states that staff are entitled to be:

• well informed;
• appropriately trained;
involved in decisions which affect them
- treated fairly and consistently
- provided with an improved and safe working environment

6.2 Principles of internal communication

The following principles of good internal communications practice are proposed for NHS Grampian:

- It will be face-to-face wherever possible.
- It will be two-way. Feedback will be encouraged, acknowledged and acted upon.
- It will reflect good corporate communications practice generally, requiring the careful identification of message, audience, methods, responsibility, resources, monitoring and audit.
- It will reflect our values of openness and accountability.
- It will be planned, regular and consistent, offering messages that are clear, timely and honest.
- Communication performance and results will be monitored, with regular review/audit of communication effectiveness.
- Internal and external messages will not contradict or conflict. Internal stakeholders will have access to external communication and internal messages will be accessed by external stakeholders, unless there is an explicit requirement for their distribution to be limited.
- Good internal communication will be embedded at every level throughout NHS Grampian
- Good communication practice will be encouraged through training and at induction and will be monitored and appraised via line management processes.

Recent staff survey results have suggested that staff particularly value communication from their line manager. Managers therefore have a particular role to play in relation to internal communication. In order to deliver the communication and engagement objectives, as they relate to internal stakeholders, all managers need to:

- understand the principles of good communication and engagement and be capable of delivering them
- contribute to the communication and engagement planning processes
- encourage a climate of two-way communications at all levels
- meet staff regularly in team meetings to ensure that they are well informed and have the opportunity to contribute
- hold regular one-to-one meetings with directly reporting staff
- ensure staff have time to read internal bulletins, etc.

6.3 Internal communication tools

Information exchanges/Face2Face meetings
Information exchange events and Face2Face briefings across Grampian have been introduced and will be continued. The concept of a face-to-face Management Information Exchange was instigated within Grampian Primary Care Trust and was found to be a valuable way of cascading important
information. The concept has been developed into Face2Face meetings across Grampian with senior managers meeting staff, allowing smaller group discussion, questions and answers and the two way exchange of information. Many of the other communication channels are passive and remote, involving top-down information sent out on paper or e-mail with no opportunity for dialogue and the value of this form of face-to-face dialogue should not be underestimated.

**Directorate/team/service/department meetings**
Each directorate, team, service, department etc., is responsible for holding its own regular meetings.

**Team Brief**
This cascaded two-way briefing system is led by the Chief Executive and coordinated by the Corporate Communications Team. It provides a single page of high level information, for face to face briefing and cascade on the last Tuesday of every month. Content is sought in advance to ensure the Team Brief reflects current issues and news. All comments and questions raised receive a response. An audit of Team Brief will take place in 2010.

**Patient safety walkrounds**
The Patient Safety Walkround Tool was developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) as a means of connecting senior leaders with staff at an operational level. The tool was designed to educate senior leadership about patient safety issues and to signal their commitment to further improving patients’ safety. Patient safety walkrounds were adopted in Grampian in 2008. They involve a high level of commitment on the part of the Executive Team, supported by representatives from the Clinical Governance and Risk Management Unit. Executive Team members have found them to be a valuable way of engaging with frontline staff. Although discussion focuses predominantly on patient safety, other related issues, including communication, are covered.

**Global emails/targeted emails**
Global emails are used for essential information that needs to be issued on receipt or communicated at the earliest opportunity. They can be for system-wide or targeted distribution e.g. hospital specific or site specific. They relate to information of an urgent nature (an immediate or imminent event). Examples are system failures/shutdowns; generator tests; fire notices and security issues. They must have the date and time of shutdown and area affected included in subject box and are flagged "high" priority. Occasionally messages sent out in the Chief Executive’s name will also fit these criteria e.g. legally enforceable standards such as clinical waste. Not all staff have access to email and managers are asked to cascade information to their staff.

**Weekly bulletins-email**
Weekly bulletins are issued once a week on the same day every week. They can be issued with between one and five items on one page if possible. The bulletin relates to important information that staff need to be made aware of, but is non-urgent. Examples are policies/procedures (and any associated briefings), ward/department moves, service changes, and Scottish Government Health Directorate briefings.
**Information updates-email**
Information updates are issued twice weekly. They can be issued with between three and seven items on one page. The update relates to information which may be of interest to staff but is non-urgent. Examples are newsletters, funding opportunities, staff benefits, sports and social events.

**Upfront**
UpFront is the monthly newspaper for staff. It is a four page tabloid newspaper which carries stories on current activities in NHS Grampian, as well as stories of staff achievements and general news. It is written in a user-friendly style and provides an opportunity for more human interest stories than other forms of written and electronic communication. Stories are accompanied by photographs, wherever possible. It is located in dispensers in staff restaurants and reception areas as well as being distributed around wards and office areas, hospitals, health centres, clinics and GP practices.

**Intranet**
The NHS Grampian Intranet is our online internal communications tool that we use to engage with our staff. The intranet provides our staff with access to the latest news and developments that they need to be aware of. The intranet provides staff with access to information resources, policies, guidelines and online tools - such as electronic forms or an online telephone directory - that they need in order to be able to do their job properly.

The intranet offers opportunities for staff to locate and contact colleagues across the organisation using an online telephone directory or through a particular department’s site on the Intranet. As communication is a two way process, the intranet can provide access to online surveys that staff can participate in and share their views on a variety of subjects.

The intranet is only available to staff who have access to a PC that is able to access the NHS Grampian IT network.

The intranet has been in operation since 2004. In that time, the amount of content on it has risen considerably to the point that it requires a redesign and restructuring. There are also a number of known performance issues with the Intranet, such as the search engine. In response, a review of the Intranet is currently in progress to identify its future development. It is anticipated that in the near future the intranet will utilise Microsoft Sharepoint technology that will address existing issues and also present new opportunities for NHS Grampian to further enhance the intranet and engage with its staff through this resource.

**Discussion forums**
General or specialist on-line discussion groups can be set up. This has not been widely used to date but a web based discussion forum was used as part of the consultation process on the development of the 2010 – 2013 Grampian Health Plan.

**Website**
The public website contains a range of corporate and service specific information for the general public. Staff find this a useful source of information and can publish information on it through the Corporate Communications team, who manage the corporate brand and website.
**Information screens**
Six information screens have been located in the following areas:

Accident & Emergency at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI)
Royal Aberdeen Children’s Hospital (RACH)
ARI concourse
G-Med
Dr Gray’s concourse
Dr Gray’s Accident & Emergency

These screens were provided free of charge and were funded by advertising revenue. They included space for NHS Grampian messages. In each area there have been individuals designated to update local information such as waiting times and public announcements. It has been the responsibility of Corporate Communications to produce, maintain and update the core messages that will be appearing on screen. In case of extreme circumstances such as major incidents, ‘flu pandemic etc, the screens can be used (updated daily or more frequently) to provide urgent public health information. The project is being extended to Aberdeenshire, in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council and Grampian Police, funded through Carers Information Strategy funding.

**Notice Boards**
There are more than 80 notice boards across NHS Grampian that can be used for maintaining an up-to-date display of information. Notice boards remain an important place for staff and the public to find out information. Work is required to consider ways of improving the use and management of notice boards.

**Messages on payslips or attached to payslips**
This channel guarantees reaching all Board staff on the payroll. There are capacity issues in doing this and overuse may dilute its impact. It is possible to print a very brief message on all payslips, insert a small leaflet in payslips or attach a letter to all payslips.

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**7 External Communication**

**7.1 Background**

NHS Grampian needs to communicate clearly what it is doing, why it is doing it and what it hopes to achieve in future with the public, patients, carers and stakeholder organisations. We need to generate feedback from the public, patients, carers and stakeholder organisations about local health services, promote achievements and acknowledge setbacks. We need to demonstrate how the views of the public, patients, carers and stakeholder organisations have influenced our decision-making processes, including providing feedback to them. In doing this it must be acknowledged that NHS Grampian is a large, complex organisation covering considerable remote and rural parts of Grampian as well as the City of Aberdeen. Communication – both good and bad - has a subtle but serious impact on public and organisational confidence.
and reputation. The ability of our communication to influence the perception of the population about the organisation and the health service in general should not be underestimated. The individuals and organisations with which NHS Grampian communicates are listed in Appendix B.

7.2 Context

- NHS Boards are required to involve people in designing, developing and delivering the health care services they provide for them. “People” refers to health service users, patients, staff, members of the public, carers, volunteers and the voluntary organisations that represent them. Boards’ responsibilities in this area were initially set out in the document, Patient Focus and Public Involvement (PFPI)(2001). To reflect the importance of this agenda, duties of public involvement and equal opportunities were placed on NHS Boards in the NHS Reform (Scotland) Act 2004.
- The Scottish Health Council was established in April 2005 to support, ensure and monitor the discharge by NHS Boards of their patient focus and public involvement responsibilities.
- Better Health, Better Care: Action Plan (2007) sets out a vision for the NHS, based on a theme of mutuality that sees the Scottish people and the staff of the NHS as partners, or co-owners in the NHS.
- To fulfil their responsibilities for public involvement, NHS Boards are required to routinely communicate with and involve the people and communities they serve to inform them about their plans and performance. Boards should follow the principles and practices endorsed by the Scottish Health Council, including the National Standards for Community Engagement and the forthcoming national guidance regarding informing, engaging and consulting people, and identifying major health service change.

Revised guidance on Informing, Engaging and Consulting People in Developing Health and Community Care Services is due for issue in 2010 and has been developed to assist NHS Boards with their engagement with patients, the public and stakeholders on the delivery of local healthcare services, with a particular focus on the process involved in major service change. This guidance supersedes the Scottish Home and Health Department circular Closure and Change of Use of Health Service Premises (June 1975), the draft interim guidance Consultation and Public Involvement in Service Change issued through HDL (2002) 42, and the draft guidance Informing, Engaging and Consulting the Public in Developing Health and Community Care Policies and Services issued for consultation in 2004.

7.3 Principles of external communication

Effective communication will help establish and maintain the Board’s leadership role and strengthen our engagement with communities and partners. Specifically it will:

- Show how NHS Grampian works to deliver national and local priorities and targets in an efficient and effective way.
- Help build confidence in our work and develop and maintain a strong corporate reputation.
- Support the delivery of NHS Grampian’s vision, corporate objectives and strategic themes.
- Provide patients and the public with information about the range of healthcare services and how to access them.
- Support targeted work that helps address health inequalities.
- Promote lifestyle choices that help people lead healthier lives.
- Help us be accountable to our stakeholders, promoting their engagement and involvement.
- Ensure that our local ethnic communities, people with learning disabilities and disabled people receive the language, communication and other support they require to participate fully in the involvement process.

7.4 External communication tools

**Media releases**

The Corporate Communications Team regularly issue news releases to all local, regional and national media. News releases are also copied to selected stakeholders – MPs, MSPs, Board members and Scottish Government and published on the NHS Grampian website. NHS Grampian needs to be proactive in promoting and protecting its reputation so that local residents have confidence in their local NHS. Good working relationships with media organisations and individual producers, editors and reporters are essential. The media can be instrumental in establishing, maintaining or undermining the reputation of the organisation in the eyes of our stakeholders and help to shape a perception of NHS Grampian as a succeeding or failing organisation. This in turn can influence staff morale and public confidence.

**Corporate publications**

Corporate publications, including the Grampian Health Plan and the Annual Report are publicly available and are available on request in different formats (e.g. for visually impaired and in alternative languages). They will continue to be corporately branded, produced to a high quality standard, but cost effective and increasingly accessed online. The Public Health Report is a key corporate publication and can make an important contribution to stimulating discussion and promoting engagement in improving health and reducing inequalities in Grampian.

**Website**

The NHS Grampian website [www.nhsgrampian.org](http://www.nhsgrampian.org) continues to be developed to ensure the site is interactive, provides up-to-date information and can be easily accessed by all. Further web development is required to make the site more patient/public focused, accessible and interactive. This will be a key component in our efforts to ensure that patients and staff have access to a wide range of up to date information in different formats and different languages. The content and technical support for the website is a partnership between Corporate Communications and eHealth, with local webmasters taking ownership of particular pages/sections.
Board Meetings
We will continue to promote NHS Grampian’s Board meetings and the availability of the Board papers, both to staff and the public, through local papers and the NHS Grampian website to encourage public attendance and promote the role of Board meetings as the public face of the organisation. NHS Grampian is currently one of two Boards in Scotland participating in an alternative pilot to directly elected Boards. This pilot will be independently evaluated alongside the evaluation of the pilot elections.

Consultation processes
The NHS Reform (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on NHS Boards to involve and consult the public when planning and developing services and when there are decisions to be made that significantly affect the operation of these services. NHS Grampian is committed to informing, engaging and consulting patients, the public and key stakeholder organisations when planning, developing or making changes to health services. In delivering on this commitment, NHS Grampian will seek to ensure involvement and consultation activity adheres to national guidance and good practice. Consultation processes and consultation documents are valuable two-way communication tools, providing an opportunity to explain proposed changes but most importantly to seek genuine feedback and to act on the feedback received. Specific involvement and consultation events will be held, tailored to meet the needs of our local ethnic and diversity communities. For example, involvement and consultation events with our local ethnic communities will continue to be staged simultaneously in five different languages. Disability events will continue to be tailored to ensure that all the communication and other needs of both disabled people and carers are met, to allow them to participate fully. The information obtained will be used to directly inform the Equality Schemes and the Annual Action Plans.

Consultation processes use the widest possible range of methods to encourage as many people as possible to have their say. NHS Grampian’s involvement, engagement and consultation practice is assessed annually by the Scottish Health Council.

NHS News
NHS News is NHS Grampian’s public newspaper. It has been produced twice a year since Spring 2007 and is distributed inside regional and local newspapers. This newspaper focuses on current healthcare services and gives practical information to be of assistance to members of the public. Each edition is evaluated through a return slip.

Patient information leaflets
NHS Grampian is committed to making sure that any written information produced for patients, the general public, or any other group, is of the highest quality. The quality of information is also of increasing importance in a legal sense. The Disability Discrimination Act, Racial Equality Act and other recent legal requirements expose the organisation to potential litigation should any of its information not meet the high standards required.

Every member of staff producing information has a responsibility to ensure that what they produce:
• conforms to accepted 'best practice' in terms of quality, accuracy, presentation, readability and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
• is easy for patients and public to get hold of and to understand
• is produced as cost-effectively as possible
• does not duplicate information already available elsewhere.

Specialist expertise is available within Corporate Communications to provide guidance and advice to support this work, as part of the NHS Grampian Information Strategy (for patients and the public) which commits us to continual improvement. Progress is overseen and reported direct to the Grampian NHS Board by the Patient Focus and Public Involvement Committee.

Partner publications
Publications produced by partner organisations are used to promote articles, information, consultation documents or events. These publications include newsletters produced by statutory and voluntary organisations, community groups and Government departments. They allow information to be shared and feedback sought from a wide group of stakeholders.

Public meetings
Public meetings are regarded as a more traditional method of communicating and provide an opportunity for members of the public to engage directly with staff from NHS Grampian. Levels of interest and attendance tend to be low for generic public meetings, but very high if the meeting is focused on a particular topic or issue of local interest. They provide a good opportunity for members of the public who are comfortable speaking in large groups and expressing their views to have their say, but can be intimidating for many people. They can be dominated by minority interests but fulfil a valuable role if well structured and chaired. NHS Grampian has set up and participated in numerous public meetings and will continue to do so.

Community Forum
The Community Forum is a group of patients, carers and the general public who are particularly interested in health services across Grampian. Members of the Forum work in partnership with clinical staff and managers as a large group and sometimes as individuals on working groups and committees.

Much of the Forum's work is associated with issues that impact on the whole of Grampian. The work can involve participating in working groups or discussion sessions, completing questionnaires and other methods that we are using to actively involve the general public, carers and patients in helping develop a local health service. Members of the Community Forum have been involved in various projects and service improvements and redesigns. The Forum meets four times a year.

Public Partnership Forums
In Grampian there are three Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) covering Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. Each Community Health Partnership has a Public Partnership Forum. As Aberdeenshire covers a large geographical area, it has three Public Partnership Forums (PPF) in north, central and south Aberdeenshire.
PPFs are locally based networks of members of the public, patient groups, voluntary organisations and carers who work in partnership with the CHP staff. The aim is to improve access and local health services, help improve the health of the local population and develop new and existing health services in their areas.

PPFs are used to inform people about the range and location of services and to involve local people in the improvement of services. The forums also support wider public involvement in planning and decision making.

**Access Panels**
Access Panels are voluntary organisations which assist and advise in the creation and maintenance of access to buildings for people with disabilities. Access Panels work with NHS Grampian and advise on how improvements can be carried out to NHS buildings.

There are six Access Panels which cover the NHS Grampian area:

- Aberdeenshire North
- Aberdeenshire Central
- Aberdeenshire South
- Aberdeen City
- Moray
- Deeside

**Equality and Diversity Working Groups**
NHS Grampian has in place a number of permanent Equality and Diversity Working Groups/Committees which include a wide range of relevant local organisations in their membership. The groups are the:

- NHS Grampian Racial Equality Working Group
- NHS Grampian Disability Discrimination Act Review Group
- NHS Grampian Diversity Working Group
- NHS Grampian Spiritual Care Committee.

These groups provide valuable input to NHS Grampian from their respective equality and diversity communities. In addition, these groups also arrange the specialist involvement and consultation events, ensuring that the needs of their respective participants are met in full, to ensure effective involvement and consultation.

**Social Marketing Campaigns**
NHS Grampian plans, designs, implements and evaluates evidence-based key messages to patients, public and staff in appropriate formats for the target audience. Social marketing campaigns can range from short-term targeted initiatives to sustained campaigns influencing longer term behaviour change.

**Print Requirements Management Group**
The Print Requirements Management Group (PRMG) provides advice and guidance on all aspects of printed material to ensure that it is fit for purpose, complies with relevant guidance and legislation e.g. readability, colour contrast, font size etc as well as ensuring that printed material is cost effective.
Freedom of Information responses
The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 has given the public unprecedented access to information, files and decision-making processes of public bodies. This includes emails, letters and memos as well as minutes of meetings. The FOI Act required a Publication Scheme to be produced to show what information is available on request. As much information as possible is made available, particularly on the website.

Specific initiatives
The Corporate Communications Team coordinates specific communication initiatives to respond to local events and circumstances. For example, weekly Flu Briefs have been prepared since June 2009 to produce consistent, coordinated information for the NHS and partners on pandemic flu.

8 Accessibility, equality and diversity

The importance of effective and appropriate communications is recognised throughout this strategy and has been central to increasing the accessibility of service and to achieving equity of access for everyone. We recognise that communication is not just about language and literacy. We will work to support and create an inclusive communication environment not only enabling access to services but also providing accessible information in appropriate formats and languages. Creating such an environment through effective communication not only demonstrates respect for individuals but supports and promotes openness and access for everyone.

9 Evaluation

The evaluation of all communication activity – both internal and external – is critical and must be embedded in all practice and initiatives from their inception.

A wide range of informal and formal methods are used to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of communications across NHS Grampian.

A template recording the evaluation of communication activity is attached as Appendix C.

Staff and public communication is monitored and evaluated both informally and formally through the following:

Team Brief
We will continue to review, improve and update the effectiveness of Team Brief with particular emphasis on improving communication and feedback mechanisms. An audit of Team Brief will be included in the audit of internal communication being undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in 2010.
Staff Survey
Formal feedback on a wide range of issues is available through the results of the staff survey. The Staff Communication sub group of the Grampian Area Partnership Forum (GAPF) reviews the results of the staff survey and takes forward particular actions based on the results.

Staff Governance Action Plan
The Communications Strategy is part of the Staff Governance Action Plan and will be monitored through the Board’s Staff Governance Committee. Emergency planning procedures and exercises and internal and external audit reports also provide feedback on a wide range of communications activity.

Media coverage
We monitor media coverage through daily media monitoring and bi-monthly reports to the Performance Governance Committee.

Public information
NHS News, patient information leaflets and booklets, as well as other widely distributed newsletters, all have a name, telephone number and email address for comments and questions from the public, and are evaluated on an ongoing basis.

External evaluation
NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS) visits include announced assessments. Specifically, the Scottish Health Council has a formal assessment role, reporting to the Cabinet Secretary every year on all aspects of NHS Grampian’s involvement and engagement activity. The process of evaluating a number of standards e.g. Clinical Governance and Risk Management standards includes evaluation of NHS Grampian’s internal and external communication. The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission also play a role in external evaluation.

10 Strategy review

The strategy will be reviewed every three years.

11 Conclusion

Effective communication is the responsibility of every member of staff in NHS Grampian. Responsibility is therefore shared and success depends on the creation of a culture where communication is valued, and effective communication is seen as a priority – in practice as well as in principle.

The effectiveness of this strategy will depend on using all possible methods appropriately and seeking to find new and innovative ones to deliver a coherent set of messages about NHS Grampian.
This Communication Strategy is not a stand-alone document. It is not, in itself, an action plan, but sets the principles, values and culture against which all communication activities, throughout the organisation, should be delivered.
Appendix A – Sources of information and feedback, NHS Grampian Communication Strategy

- Members of Staff Communication Sub-Group, Grampian Area Partnership Forum
- Information Exchange events with NHS Grampian staff, January and June 2009
- Face2Face meetings with staff, September – November 2009
- Feedback forms from NHS News, NHS Grampian’s public newspaper
- Feedback from QIS review of Clinical Governance and Risk Management Standards
- Feedback from Healthcare Environment Inspectorate report, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, October 2009
- Ad hoc comments received via NHS Grampian website
- Feedback received from staff and public consultation meetings on Grampian Health Plan 2010 – 2013
- GAPF workshop discussions
- Feedback from Community Forum and Public Partnership Forum meetings.
Appendix B – Who we communicate with

Public, patients, users and advocates
- People living and working in Grampian
- Patients
- Scottish Health Council
- GP practice patient participation groups
- Voluntary organisations
- Carers and carers’ organisations
- Public Partnership Forums
- Local ethnic community organisations and groups
- Disability and age related organisations and groups
- Diversity groups representing the LGBT communities
- Local religious and spiritual care groups

NHS organisations and other care providers
- Grampian emergency services
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Community Planning partners
- Local Authorities
- NHS 24
- Health Protection Scotland
- Information Services Department Scotland (part of NHS National Services Scotland)
- NHS Quality Improvement Scotland and other special health authorities
- NHS Health Scotland
- Suppliers
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
- Health and Safety Executive
- Royal Colleges
- Universities and colleges

Media and politicians
- Local and national print media
- Local and national broadcast media
- MSPs
- MPs
- Councillors
- Community Councils
- Community groups
- Civic Forum

Scottish Government
- Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing
- Health Directorate officials (including Chief Executive, Chief Medical Officer and Press Office)

Other partner groups/organisations
- All NHS Grampian staff
- Non-executive Board members
• Trade Union/Staff Organisations
• Local partnership representatives
• Independent Contractors – General Practitioners, Dentists, Pharmacists, Opticians
• The Grampian Racial Equality Council
• Aberdeen Action on Disability
• Aberdeenshire Disabled Persons Housing Association
## Appendix C – NHS Grampian Communications Evaluation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Governance reporting arrangements</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media monitoring reports – an objective evaluation of all print media activity for NHS Grampian</td>
<td>Presented to Performance Governance Committee every two months. Discussed by committee members on each occasion</td>
<td>Rigorous objective approach to media monitoring, reviewing key issues, handling of high profile media stories, major incidents etc</td>
<td>Every 2 months</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS Grampian Annual Report A revised format for the annual report was introduced for 07/08. The report was more detailed, with more information about services. It was agreed from the outset that the report would be fully evaluated</td>
<td>The production of the annual report has been overseen by the Performance Governance Committee. The evaluation report will be submitted to PGC in summer 2009</td>
<td>Report produced and disseminated. Evaluation form produced. Evaluation report produced. Has been used to influence 08/09 Annual Report</td>
<td>Annual Report available October 2008. Evaluation report available Spring 2009</td>
<td>4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWC audit of Public Involvement</td>
<td>Presented to PFPI Committee</td>
<td>Committee reviewed report August 2008 Evaluation plan produced and accepted by Committee (November 2008)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7, 8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Year(s)</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFPI Committee self evaluation process</td>
<td>PFPI committee followed by all committee evaluation submitted to Performance Governance Committee</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop held 23 January 2008 Report presented to PFPI Committee August 2008 Minute of August 2008 PFPI meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self assessments of PFPI activity – reviewed by Scottish Health Council</td>
<td>Endorsed by PFPI Committee, OMT and Board. Submitted by SHC to Government to form part of Annual Review</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>13, 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance reports from PFPI Committee</td>
<td>Submitted to Performance Governance Committee</td>
<td>Following each PFPI Committee meeting</td>
<td>15, 16,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance reports from PFPI Committee</td>
<td>PGC reviews reports. PGC can ask for additional information in light of risk control report e.g. public involvement capacity for major change programmes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFPI Committee makes an annual report to the Board each year as part of the Chief Executive’s Statement on Internal Control</td>
<td>Reported to the Board Committee reviews membership, role, remit, risk management, reporting etc</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>17, 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Know Who to Turn To</strong></td>
<td>Social marketing campaign – pilot in Grampian on behalf of Scottish Government</td>
<td>Reported to PFPI Committee, Unscheduled Care Group</td>
<td>19, 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-campaign research undertaken, concepts tested, campaign to be fully evaluated as part of pilot</strong></td>
<td>Pre-campaign activity Winter 2008 – Spring 2009. Campaign launch 28/5/09</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation of posters submitted to NHS Scotland event – feedback from 2008 posters has influenced production of abstracts for 2009 event</strong></td>
<td>Posters reflected work undertaken and reported as part of PFPI self assessment</td>
<td>6 posters short listed for display. 1 poster won award in mutuality category, 12 posters accepted for June 2009 event</td>
<td>21, 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project specific evaluations e.g.</strong></td>
<td>1. Staff survey</td>
<td>Staff Governance Committee/Grampian Area Partnership Forum</td>
<td>23, 24, 25, 26</td>
<td></td>
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<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Every 2 years, most recently Autumn 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publicity and awareness campaign Survey developed in partnership Local questions for Grampian report received Findings shared Influenced Staff Governance Action Plan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2. | MRSA screening pilot | MRSA communication and involvement group | PFPI Officer appointed  
Local leaflets developed  
Local poster developed  
Website information produced  
National materials influenced by Grampian public representatives  
Patient interviews undertaken  
Public event held in shopping mall using displays, questionnaires and Opinionmeters | 2008 | 27, 28 |
Evidence Key

1. Print media analysis Mar – Apr 09
2. Print media analysis Jan – Mar 09
3. Print media analysis Nov – Dec 09
5. Feedback form
6. Evaluation of Annual Report 07/08
7. PwC (NHS Grampian Public Involvement – final report)
8. Item 6.4 PwC cover sheet
9. Item 6.6 PwC PI audit progress report
10. Note of workshop
11. Item 3.1 PFPI committee evaluation action points
12. Minute of Aug 2008 PFPI Committee
13. Within Involving You section of website PFPI self assessment report 2008/09 report
14. Within Involving You section of website PFPI self assessment report 2007/08 report
15. Assurance Report to PGC 2008
16. Assurance Report to PGC 2009
17. Statement on Internal Control
18. Statement on Internal Control
19. Know who to turn to booklet
20. Know who to turn to media release
21. NHS Scotland poster submission
22. NHS Scotland poster submission
23. Staff survey letter to 500 managers – Richard Carey & Gordon Stephen
24. GAPF Comm Sub Group Minute 16 Sept 08
25. GAPF Comm Sub Group Minute 13 Feb 09
26. Extract from Staff Governance Action Plan 2009/10
27. MRSA Screening Interviews – Report January
28. MRSA Screening Interviews Summary Report