



Communications Strategy 2015–16

‘Communication leads to community, that is,
to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing’

[Rollo May, 1909–1994, American Psychologist]



Introduction

The WWM CRC is a provider of probation services, privately owned by PeoplePlus.

It is the role of the communications function to support, articulate and progress the vision and future ambitions using a range of traditional and innovative communication channels and methods.

Communications is viewed as an area for improvement across the organisation. It is crucial to provide a forward thinking service that ensures the vision, values, ambitions and challenges are better understood by all stakeholders especially during this period of change.

The Communications Strategy must therefore ensure that all our audiences have a much clearer understanding of the CRCs plans, activities and priorities.



Vision

‘To provide a valuable and necessary, forward thinking service that ensures professional, focused and effective communications is the standard.’

To ensure this vision is achieved, stakeholders, service users, staff and partners need to have a shared understanding and appreciation of where the communications activity fits in with CRCs organisational objectives.

The standard of communications should reflect the overall culture of the CRC and reveal who we are, what we value and the direction we are pursuing. These standards must set the tone for all communications issued by the CRC, both internally and externally.



Goals

To achieve the vision, the following goals have been set:

- Ensure our operational objectives, values, ambitions and challenges are thoroughly understood, both externally and internally
- Incorporate communication activities into the annual service plan ensuring an earlier and more strategic input into key projects
- Enhance the CRCs reputation and public image as an efficient, effective, ethical, reputable, innovative organisation
- Develop and maintain good working relationships with partners and stakeholders embedding confidence in the new organisation
- Encourage staff to embrace a positive cultural change
- Improve internal communications by establishing a more proactive approach to two-way engagement with staff that will help to shape future developments
- Ensure service users have timely, correct and relevant information
- Introduce recognised communications standards
- Develop a social media policy and strategy



Internal communications

'Incorporate communication activities into the annual service plan ensuring an earlier and more strategic input into key projects'

To achieve this goal it is vital that communications will become part of the CRC culture and is included on the agenda for every team/project meeting held across the organisation. Effective communication needs time and planning and should not be an after thought when trying to improve key projects successes. We can maximise the message delivery by forward planning and ensuring key messages do not contradict each other.

'Ensure our operational objectives, values, ambitions and challenges are thoroughly understood, both externally and internally'

The introduction of the annual service plan and the annual staff conference has been instrumental in ensuring staff understand the new objectives and ambitions. These objectives need to be echoed on our website, promoting the key changes to external stakeholders. The 2016 annual service plan will be redesigned to create a more visually engaging document that includes positive imagery and inspirational quotes. This will further promote the new values we want to embed.

'Encourage staff to embrace a positive cultural change'

Internal communications is vital during this transitional period to ensure staff fully understand the cultural change of the organisation. Sharing positive, motivational and engaging messages about the CRC and Peopleplus through the internal newsletter and staff intranet are key to this change. The internal newsletter will be produced on a monthly basis and include stories submitted by staff.

Communications will play a key part in designing all staff conferences and events including the creation of all printed materials, campaigns, awards and post conference surveys.

There will be many changes within the organisation including learning and development opportunities, meeting agendas and . Comms will influence staff engagement in these areas particularly through brochures, promotion of leadership days and obtaining/implementing feedback from staff to develop a sense of staff ownership.

'Improve internal communications by establishing a more proactive approach to two-way engagement with staff that will help to shape future developments'

Detailed employee satisfaction surveys will be introduced on an annual basis and comms will share results openly with staff in a creative and easy to understand format. Further surveys take place around estates moves, ICT skills and staff suggestions to capture the level of future comms or any extra training required.

Staff will have the opportunity to send in any suggestions to a specific email address and comms will ensure these are responded to in a timely manner.

Employee forums will be established to ensure communications flow effectively between staff and senior management.

The introduction of the staff Intranet will become a virtual resource and create a sense of belonging. Its goal is to become a transparent two-way communications tool for all staff to interact with.



External communications

‘Develop and maintain good working relationships with partners and stakeholders embedding confidence in the new organisation’

Partners will be supported by CRC comms through various promotional materials, such as posters, flyers, adverts in internal newsletters and sharing good news stories online through social media. Each activity below fits in with this overall goal of stakeholder engagement.

‘Enhance the CRCs reputation and public image as an efficient, effective, ethical, reputable, innovative organisation’

Build upon our public image by promoting via our website and social media channels new ways of working now the CRC are a privately owned provider of probation services. Continue to promote the benefits of how the changes will affect the surrounding communities including offender comms that ensures they are aware of any changes that take place such as office relocation.

Community payback schemes will ensure we are visible in the community. Good news stories will focus around these activities and PR will be issued to the local media and shared with key partners.

‘Ensure service users have timely, correct and relevant information’

The website is currently under review and all information is being assessed to ensure it is factually correct. Analytics have shown that service users access the community order and tagging and curfews pages most. These are scheduled to be updated first.

Following this initial review, the website will then undergo a complete revamp including a new design. A website user group will be established where feedback

can be obtained on the usability of the new site and testing can take place before launch.

The website will be maintained daily and a review schedule set up ensuring pages are continually kept up to date.

‘Introduce recognised communications standards’

Covering both internal and external communications, the branding and corporate style will be assessed to achieve a high level of design consistency across the organisation. Using specialised software a new corporate style will be created (alongside the MOJ requirements) including the issue of new templates to all staff. These will be available as Word documents and PowerPoint slides.

The corporate style will also stretch across all publications and leaflets forming a ‘suite’ with a common theme running through.

‘Develop a social media policy and strategy’

To recognise the substantial growth in social media the organisation must have a presence on various platforms. This goal will ensure the organisation has strong direction, scheduled updates and will also address the issues of staff usage whilst advising on what is acceptable and what isn’t acceptable.

The strategy will cover what, when and how we promote, and in what way our campaigns will improve the lives of service users and local communities. The policy will cover how we overcome the risks and barriers posed by these online platforms. Both documents will ensure we are ready to deliver timely, responsive and informative communications in a crisis.

Organisational objectives

The following tables show how the golden thread of communication activities fit in with the CRCs 2015–16 Annual Service Plan.

Leadership: Create a successful, high performing and continually improving CRC, delivering to contract		
Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
1.5 Develop any company specific financial reports	To ensure reports are available to key stakeholders to download remotely	Publish reports on external website

People: Develop skilled, confident and motivated staff		
Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
2.1 Develop the CRC organisational structure and update quarterly	To ensure all staff are informed of where to find the structure	Publish organisational structure whereabouts in newsletter and on intranet

Process: Deliver the order of the court, ensuring full compliance with Offender Rehabilitation		
Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
3.1 Launch Through The Gate resettlement service in HMP Hewell and Featherstone	To ensure staff and service users are informed of the new service and that it is successfully promoted to key stakeholders	Create leaflets by developing with key staff members. Publish externally on website and share across social media. Advertise internally via newsletter/intranet and externally via PR releases and good news stories
3.2 Launch Rehabilitation Activity (RAR) ... with revised Interventions Directory	To provide an easy to use tool for staff to find references to service user requirements	Review interventions directory creating a visually engaging publication
3.3 Review and implement a CRC wide Community Payback Service to ensure effective and efficient service delivery	To ensure the review is available for staff to access and to promote good outcomes externally	Include outcomes of the review in newsletter/team briefings and utilise website and social media to promote

Results: Reducing reoffending through engagement, planning and effective interventions and partnerships

Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
4.1 Improve access to ETE services through: Education, Training and Employment RAR	To ensure service users know where and how to access the services	<p>Work with local partners to share relevant material via social media</p> <p>Provide useful signposts on external website for service users</p> <p>Create published materials to distribute</p>
4.2 Develop a range of new programmes for use in custody and on release and pilot effectiveness	To ensure the programmes have sufficient communication and marketing support	Use a mix of marketing channels to promote internally and externally if appropriate

Process: Public Protection through quality risk assessment

Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
5.1 Ensure staff are appropriately trained and informed of public protection issue	Make staff aware they need to direct any media enquiries to the Marketing and Communications Executive	Remind staff using the newsletter and intranet of processes to be followed in the event of any enquiries

Partnerships: Develop strong relationships with prisons, NPS and partners

Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
6.2 Effectively engage with Reducing Reoffending partnerships at PCC and LDU levels with a particular focus on strengthening pathways	To regularly showcase organisational successes in the local media alongside partners and ensure key messages are communicated to staff	Create positive, engaging and topical press releases ensuring they are sent to relevant organisations and shared on various online platforms. Include any key changes on team briefing



Resources: Efficiency, maximise on value for money		
Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
7.3 Pilot models of extended opening hours including early, late and weekend working at key sites	Ensure staff are informed of new opening hours and have the opportunity to feedback	Promote via newsletter the ability to ask questions and share the agreed email address to send questions into. Work with Peopleplus staff to ensure a smooth implementation

Equality and diversity		
Annual Service plan objectives	Communication objectives	Communication channels
8.2 Ensure compliance with legislation, publish an Equalities report and set annual objectives	<p>To ensure all materials adhere to the policy ensuring any diversity issues are addressed</p> <p>To ensure staff and stakeholders have access to key documents</p>	<p>When producing publications choose appropriate imagery</p> <p>Publish documents on website and intranet</p>



Evaluation

‘Are we providing the right communication materials to the right people through the right channel at the right time?’

There will be various methods used to evaluate all communication activities. These include:

- Google analytic reports will be produced for the website and visually engaging results published internally
- Although social media analytics are difficult to track, any interaction will be monitored and reported on
- Feedback from all internal events will be collated and published openly
- Key stakeholders will be approached for their input into various publications where appropriate
- PR enquiries and reactions from stakeholders will be measured
- Research and comparisons into other CRC organisations will ensure we stay leaders of the sector

By analysing these topics, we will be able to determine what is or isn't working, where the blocks and barriers are occurring and what measures we put in place to overcome them.



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