NHS

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Communications matrix

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Communications matrix

What is it?

A communications matrix will help you proactively plan communications on a project. Keeping colleagues and patients on board with your proposed changes requires regular, effective communication. This tool helps you take a comprehensive approach and will be a worthwhile investment of time.

When to use it

After doing your **stakeholder analysis**, the communications matrix can help you engage people and carry out preplanning with a project group.

How to use it

1. Populate the matrix

List all the groups and individuals you will need to communicate with (taken from the stakeholder analysis) along the top (see overleaf). Down the side, list all the topics or information to be communicated. Complete the intersecting cells to outline expectations.

2. Share the matrix

Send the matrix to all participants (with any politically sensitive items removed) so that people know what to expect – and their contribution. Give people the opportunity to feed back any changes or suggestions to improve your plan.

Example

This example details a project introducing a new PC system at a dental surgery, along with the trialling of new software.

Figure 1: Communications matrix

	Mrs Reid (Dentist)	Dental manager	Principal Executive Committee Dental Representative	Alison, dental nurse	Vicky, practice manager	Karen, IT adviser	Patients
Definition of project aim	Member of project group	Advise on policy issues	Speak with colleagues about concerns, report to project group	Member of project group	Member of project group	Attend project group meetings	
Disruption to surgery	Agreed at project group meeting			Agreed at project group meeting	Agreed at project group meeting	Agreed at project group meeting	Leaflet drafted by Vicky. Posters
Sharing the plan	Chris to brief individually	Send copy of plan	Send copy of plan	Chris to brief individually	Chris to brief individually	Chris to brief individually	
Progress reporting	Informed by Vicky of all variance in plans	Informed re changes to resource use or timetable	Informed re major departures from plan	Told by Vicky re changes affecting her	Monitors activity against project plan	Informed by Vicky re all variance in plans	
Times of training	Email from Vicky			Email from Vicky			
Outcome of software evaluation	Copy of evaluation report. Presents findings at clinical governance meeting	Copy of evaluation report	Copy of evaluation report. Attends clinical governance meeting		Data collected sent to Chris	Writes report on evaluation	
Etc							

What next?

Consider using a form of **project management**.

Responsibility charting helps clarify who is doing what, preventing issues slipping through the net.

Action planning ensures you have addressed everything you need to deliver a successful change.

Having a **benefits realisation** plan at the start of your change will help improve delivery of intended benefits so you are able to demonstrate the impact.

Additional resources

A search engine (eg Google) can reveal lots of similar approaches and tables/charts you can use.