

NHSBT Board
January 28 2016

Communications Directorate Functional Review

1. Status – Public

2. Executive Summary

This paper provides a functional review of the activities of the Communications Directorate. A presentation will be made at the Board meeting to highlight the function's support of NHSBT's strategy.

3. Action Requested

The NHSBT Board is asked to:

To review the report, and supporting presentation, and consider the need for any further assurance, or action required, in respect of the function's capability to support NHSBT's strategy.

4. Purpose of the paper

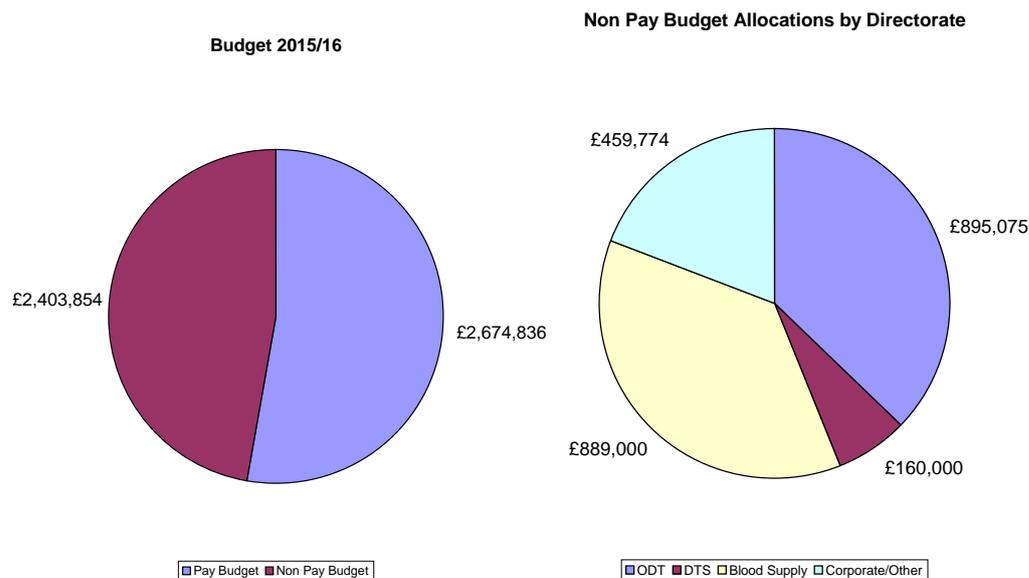
The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of the Communications Directorate and to provide assurance regarding the capability and capacity of the Directorate in support of NHSBT's strategy.

5. Background

5.1 The Directorate is formed of two main specialist areas of activity:

- Corporate Communications manages internal and external engagement, including our Customer Services function, focusing on maintaining and protecting our reputation. The teams support effective delivery of the organisation's strategies and objectives by ensuring strong engagement with employees, stakeholders and media and by building awareness and confidence with our donors, donor families, hospital customers and partners
- Marketing and Digital is responsible for brand communications, our campaign and partnership activity and engagement through a variety of online and offline channels. Marketing directly supports the effective delivery of operational KPIs such as donor, customer and registrant acquisition, loyalty and experience. Digital supports the organisation in creating great user experiences through a variety of channels.

- 5.2 All of the activity is directly linked to one or more of the organisation's strategic objectives and is set out in NHSBT's Communications Strategy; the Directorate's business plan; a performance framework for the year agreed with each of the three operational directorates; a prioritised list of activity tiered into gold, silver and bronze; and a balanced scorecard supported by performance dashboards tracking delivery against objectives.
- 5.3 All activity is carefully planned based on audience insight and ranges in scale depending on the desired results. It includes activities reaching UK wide audiences of 60m; to partnerships with commercial organisations; and engagement with discrete groups of potential donors, donor families, politicians and stakeholders.
- 5.4 The Communications Directorate's budget for 2015/16 is £5,084,347. The cost of the function is 1.17% of NHSBT's total costs. The budget headcount is 65.13 WTEs. Half of the Directorate's staff time is directly attributable to activity for one of the three operational directorates.



5.5 There are limited opportunities for benchmarking as there are few similar organisations to ourselves. We have participated in the Group Services benchmarking exercise in 2013 and again currently underway with CIPFA. We are also preparing a benchmarking survey with international services.

6. Priorities

6.1 The first Communications Directorate functional review was in May 2014. It set out five main priorities:

- Delivering behaviour change in relation to organ donation: the implementation plan was agreed by the Board in May 2015 and the new approach was launched in September with Transplant Week, initial analysis shows increased sign ups to the Organ Donor Register and the highest level of conversation in three years. More detail is included in a separate Board paper
- Ongoing effective engagement with the blood change programme: we have developed a suite of materials which ensure blood session changes are communicated sensitively and effectively to donors, employees and other stakeholders including at times local councils and MPs. We have supported ongoing culture change activity helping to embed the desired behaviour, plus delivered a number of subject specific masterclasses around change engagement and effectively handling complaints and queries
- Increasing sales for specialist products: we have migrated the Hospitals and Science website to the Content Management System delivering a 18% uplift in page views and increased engagement (on average 15 extra seconds spent on site); we launched the R&D strategy promoting innovation; supported the sales team with a suite of 112 promotional materials; secured media coverage to promote products such as dCell dermis and promoted new TAS openings
- Digital First: we are half way through a programme of migrating all websites to a modern Content Management System and have been working in Agile for the last 12 months delivering an improved user experience, particularly from mobile. Digital take up and community engagement is in line with best in sector rates including acquisition conversion rate increases in the last year from 10% to 19% for blood and from 33% to 45% for organ donation. 453,000 people per month are actively engaged in our content on social media, with an average monthly reach via those channels at 37.5m. Marketing campaigns are now digital first. We have also developed clear digital standards to guide, audit and support all development bringing us in line with Cabinet Office best practice. We have reduced duplication of content with NHS Choices through working across the Health and Care system
- Continuing to improve our capability delivering excellent marketing and communications: we are part of the Government Communications Service and participate in the centrally managed professional development programme and also work with eConsultancy to develop digital capability. We regularly discuss talent and succession planning and encourage secondments, internal moves and promotion where possible.

6.2 Other major achievements since the last review include:

- Award winning work on the #missingtype campaign and the Your Voice employee survey
- Increased media profile linked to personal stories specifically handling the sensitive promotion of organ donor family stories, such as our work with Teddy Houlston's parents, a solid organ donor who died 100 minutes after birth. The story generated significant media

coverage and conversations, seeing a 50% increase in ODR sign ups for the five days after the story appeared

- Recognition for our work on embedding our brand and values in the Government Communications Service Effectiveness report and strong results in the Your Voice survey for living the values
- Launch of the new brand narrative and brand identity guidelines including revised internal temporary signage and relaunch of the corporate template. We have introduced new session screens and a new Donor Recognition Scheme for Blood Donation
- Increased Parliamentary engagement in donation with Ministerial support for the launch of the Blood 2020 strategy and MP sponsored blood and organ donation events in the Houses of Parliament
- Dramatic increase in partnership activity taking us closer to our audiences. For organs we have created 709,000 sign ups from Jan-Dec from partnerships (excluding driving license applications) leading to 213,000 new registrations. For blood donation, new to national strategic partnership activity this year, we have created 36,000 session enquiries and 9,000 new blood donor registrations. We have deepened relationships with existing partners across Government and with Boots who are now supporting blood as well as organ donation. We have developed new partnerships with driving schools, Barclays, HSBC, British Gas, Festivals and Rugby World Cup
- Significant efforts to reach harder to engage audiences such as African Caribbean outreach pilots in London and Birmingham and work with peer educators and scholars in the Muslim community
- Good use of innovation with a significant increase in the creation of video; using online behaviour to re-target; introduction of new channels such as Tinder; and a pick up and activate organ donation card distributed in the Daily Mail
- New education materials for organ donation developed with teachers
- Consistently above average public confidence in our work, the services we provide and perceived value to society tracked through a Government wide Reputation Tracker (2013/14 - Q4 87.7%, 2014/15 - Q2 90.4% and Q4 86.8%).

7. Challenges

- 7.1. Alongside delivering excellent marketing and communications we also need to increase efficiency. We are reducing our reliance on expensive agency support where we can best develop our in house expertise saving money and improving our flexibility and responsiveness, primarily in digital. We are actively exploring synergies across the Communications and Blood Donation Directorates and more widely across the Department of Health Arm's Length Bodies.
- 7.2. Our location strategy had been to bring people together on one site in Watford to improve the effectiveness of our communications. In light of the reduction of our footprint in Watford we are now reviewing this strategy. We need to consider how best to manage a function which needs quick and easy access to stakeholders in London, is in areas

where skills are relatively easy to recruit given a turnover of around 13% and that shortens, as far as possible, communications chains between teams and the rest of the organisation.

- 7.3. In the Net Promoter Survey carried out on each of the Group Services Directorates in the autumn Comms scored -31% with an average of 6.48 out of 10. This was within a range of 24% to -68% for all the Group Services Directorates. In the Your Voice check up survey Comms achieved a 3.92 engagement score, higher than the NHSBT average. Directorate employees felt they could influence decisions and were supported. Yet motivation declined and there were variations across the functions within the Directorate. Work is underway to address the feedback from both surveys and improve the scores in future surveys.
- 7.4. The Government announced as part of the Spending Review 2015 a new single Government communications campaign budget operational from 2016/17 to be managed by the Government Communications Service team based in the Cabinet Office. A cross-Government working group is currently identifying the baseline and addressing issues of governance and accountability. NHSBT's planned spend which could be affected is £6.2m. We are working closely with DH and the Cabinet Office to help introduce a workable solution. Alongside this is the issue of sustainable funding for organ donation behaviour change activity which is subject to a separate Board paper.

8. Future Plans

- 8.1. The priorities going forward are to:
 - Continue to develop innovative communications and marketing strategies based on evidence and insight, drawing on lessons in other sectors
 - Maintain operational support for Blood Donation and Manufacturing and Logistics and continue to promote sales and innovation
 - Deliver the organ donation behaviour change strategy subject to available funding
 - Complete the transition of our websites to the new content management system improving performance and user satisfaction and set up an online content distribution hub to support advocacy
 - Continue to develop our partnership programme and explore opportunities to sponsor activity such as session venues
 - Continue to develop the professionalism and capability of our marketing and communications employees to be the best.

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