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THIRLWALL INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GILL GALT

EXHIBIT GG01

DRAFT POLICY FOR USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We all have a role to play in supporting the sharing of news within the Trust.

A range of internal communication channels are now in place within our Chester and Ellesmere Port hospitals.

This section of the intranet sets out the channels that are available, as well as describing how colleagues can support using these channels to find out information and share information.

The internal communication channels we have available are set out below:

- Intranet (including adverts)
- All staff emails
- Weekly round-up
- Monthly Countess briefing
- Countess blogs
- Screensavers
- Posters and notice boards

Why good internal communications are so important?

There are a number of reasons why it is important for us to engage with the internal communication channels that we have in place:

- It supports clarity about organisational direction and contribution
- Improved focus and understanding around key achievements as well as operational pressures and risks
- Opportunities for staff to get involved in providing feedback or connecting to other teams and initiatives
- Potential to improve staff motivation and morale

If we don't commit to seeking out and sharing information it can present a series of risks or problems. For example:

- A lack of consistency in messaging creates confusion for staff
- It prompts an over dependency on instantaneous email messages, which in turn is inefficient for the wider workforce in managing irrelevant messages
- It is limiting for new or temporary members of staff who are not clear on the informal arrangements for accessing information or services
- It can create a disconnect between corporate and clinical staff in their understanding and sharing of trust news

2.0 USE OF THE TRUST INTRANET

The Trust intranet is intended to support staff in accessing up to date internal news and information as well as providing quick links to other key systems and databases.

It has functionality that enables the web development team to set permission levels and issue user names and passwords so that service leads can populate and publish information on their own sections of the intranet.

Training on how to populate the intranet can be provided either via a toolkit, or in a session developed by the IT helpdesk.

A set format is suggested for teams developing their section of the intranet including:

- Who is who in the team with use of photographs
- An overview of what the team or service does
- A summary of frequently asked questions of the team or service that may be helpful
- Updates about any key projects you may be working on
- Links to any popular policies (please note these can only be links to documents held on Sharepoint to protect version control)

If you have a query about improving the functionality of the intranet this should be directed to the web development team.

If you have a request for a quick link button, these requests are considered under the clinical leadership of the Chief Clinical Information Officer for the Trust.

If you have a query about improving the written content on the intranet, support is available from the communications and engagement function. This is either via a phone call to 01244 362 102 or 01244 362 116 or email countess.feedback@nhs.net

If you have a request to promote your service or an initiative on the Trust intranet using the advertising banner, this should also be directed to the communications function. A schedule of requests is held centrally and reviewed on a weekly basis by this function. Content and design work may be adapted ahead of publishing.

While the intranet is a central repository for news and information, it is not a document library. This function is fulfilled by the Trust Sharepoint system and managed by the risk and patient safety function.

USE OF THE ALL STAFF EMAIL SYSTEM

Emails to All CoCH staff

There are some restrictions on 'To all CCOCH staff' to prevent inappropriate use of the system. Access to send a message should only be used for the following:

- Message from your Chief Executive / Chairman or leadership team
- Weekly round up
- IM&T alert (including information governance and system issues)
- An immediate security risk
- A significant safety or incident alert

Templates are in place for the weekly round-up and leadership messages to support staff recognition of the messages.

Administration rights and permissions levels for sending all staff emails are managed between the IT help desk and the executive team corporate affairs leads.

Emails To All CoCH optional

The 'ALL COCH-staff optional email' does not apply restrictions. All staff can choose to opt out of receiving these emails through adjusting their settings.

This channel is frequently used for the cascade of:

- Staff menu messages (up to 4x per day)
- Fundraising messages
- Issues around equipment / furnishings
- Lost and found messages
- Traffic problems when leaving the site
- In a social capacity (discussion, commentary, jokes etc...)

The 'ALL COCH-staff optional email' does not apply restrictions. All staff can choose to opt out of receiving these emails via a request to the IT helpdesk.

As a general principle users are encouraged not to use this channel to email all staff.

Appropriate use of this system is dependent on common sense and respectful behaviour from staff.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEEKLY ROUND UP

Every Monday at 4pm the communications function distributes an all staff email from countess.communications@nhs.net

The email is titled 'Weekly round-up' with the day, date, month and year. It also features on the front page of the staff intranet.

It is issued on corporate template, with content featuring:

- News around the Trust
- Local viewpoints

- Coming up
- Useful resources

All staff are asked to read the round up to keep up to date.

For those work areas where staff cannot access email, managers are encouraged to share information via other means. This may include:

- Referring to items of interest in team meetings
- Leaving a copy in a break area
- Placing a copy in a communications handover folder
- Pinning on a staff notice board

All staff, in particular team leaders, are encouraged to contribute items that may be of interest to wider staff groups.

Content should be brief (no more than three sentences) covering:

- What you need people to know?
- Why this is important?
- How can people find out more information if they are interested?

Content should include a link to a contact or an on-line resource for anyone interested in receiving further information.

Contributions should be submitted to countess.feedback@nhs.net

Content may be subject to editing, or may not be used if insufficient information is provided.

THE MONTHLY COUNTESS BRIEF

The Monthly Countess Brief is a publication of essential information from the leadership team that requires support from managers to cascade to teams and allows an opportunity for feedback and questions.

It is expected that all individuals with line management responsibility will share this information with teams within two weeks of the Countess Brief being published.

The principles for this communication are:

- To provide a leadership steer that addresses what people need to know
- Content is relevant to 90% of staff
- It focusses on calls to action, performance highlights and operational priorities or risks
- It is issued on a corporate template and is linked in its structure to Countess strategic themes of: safe, kind, effective

- Information should be succinct with a maximum of two pages with an opportunity for feedback

The publication schedule for the brief will be developed and published in advance so that team meetings can be scheduled around them.

The brief is drafted by the communications function with input from performance and patient safety / risk leads.

It is delivered by an executive team lead face to face - at a session for all line managers (previously referred to as staff open forum).

Attendance at the monthly forum for delivering the brief is mandated, with a focus on opportunity for discussion.

Following this face to face delivery it is electronically distributed to the list of staff with line management responsibilities.

Copies of the monthly brief are also posted on the Trust intranet two weeks after initially delivery.

PUBLICATION OF COUNTLESS BLOGS

The publication of Countess 'blogs' will be managed by the communications and engagement function.

Blogs are published on the Trust intranet via Blog Engine (with scope for comments and feedback) and the external Trust website.

Administration of the Blog Engine site is managed by the communications and engagement function.

Links to these blogs feature on social media, which provides scope for encouraging and monitoring further engagement.

Blogs that will benefit from staff feedback and debate are also issued in an e-bulletin template to all staff, with signposting on how to provide feedback.

The blogs are a key tool for the Trust leadership team in sourcing feedback. Any members of staff in leadership positions can contribute to a blog that reflects their professional viewpoint of topical or relevant subject matter.

The communications and engagement function will provide guidance on topical blogs and support for editing and publishing.

SCREENSAVERS

These are for 'at a glance' communications i.e. not much detail

The content must be of relevance and interest to 90 % of the workforce

We should be mindful that patients can also often view screensavers, and this may impact on content suitability

The design work is intended to be high impact i.e. a good/ strong quality image, used alongside a small amount of text

Where possible screensavers should demonstrate two or more of the following criteria:

- It primarily links to either strategic direction, a key initiative (relevant to all staff) or the Trust being safe, kind and effective
- It fosters pride in the organisation
- It makes people feel connected towards a common or shared purpose
- It has an educational or purpose
- There is a call to action (signposting to more information) that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the slide pack

Requests are managed by the communications function and should be sent to countess.feedback@nhs.net

The earlier an interest is registered for a screensaver the better, many are now linked to an annual planner.

If the screensaver request is not suitable, the communications and engagement function will work with colleagues on other options to communicate the message to the target audience (there is a wider range of options that may be more suitable).

The creative and design input will be under the guidance of medical photography as the trained experts in this field.

Providing staff have allowed a long enough lead in time there will be an opportunity for sign off, with one set of factual amends (not design amends). Any additional amends may potentially incur a cost due to limitations on the availability of the team.

POSTERS AND MANAGEMENT OF NOTICE BOARDS

Posters

Walls, windows and doors around the hospital should not be routinely used for displaying posters.

Posters should only be placed or pinned on notice boards or within designated frames, not directly on the walls of the hospital.

Posters in clinical areas should be laminated.

Posters should follow the following principles:

- Good quality design work

- Not hand written
- Succinct messages
- Quality images
- Reflecting the tone of voice and visual style of the Trust (as set out in the Trust *Communication and Engagement Strategy*)

If the poster is in place to provide an instructional message, and it is not working, the poster will be removed.

There may be alternative ways to communicate a message more effectively – for example through improved signage, face to face or with strategic input from the communications function. If in doubt, ask for support from your line manager.

Any posters that feature anywhere other than on a designated notice boards will be removed by domestics and facilities leads.

Any staff members that carry out a poster or information campaign on site that is time sensitive (i.e. for an event) must remove them post event.

Any staff member that notices an out of date poster on a notice board can remove it.

The Trust does not support the display of posters in public areas that:

- Promote private business that are not related to the NHS, patient care or staff benefits
- Are intended to recruit staff from The Countess to another competitor organisation

Management of notice boards

The hospital has a range of notice boards in public facing corridors including:

- Fundraising notice boards
- Celebration of Achievement (staff award) notice boards
- Governance notice boards
- Performance related notice boards
- Union notice boards

Leads from service areas outlined above are responsible for their maintenance.

Notice boards within ward areas are the responsibility of the ward manager.

Notice boards within patient waiting areas are the responsibility of reception team for that area, in partnership with the clinical team.

If a notice board is not being used effectively or kept up to date, it will be removed by the facilities team.

Any concerns about a poorly maintained board for removal can be directed to the communications team for removal.

Digital displays

The Trust will explore use of digital signs where appropriate.

This is to prioritise patient waiting areas in the first instance.

Content should be developed and prioritised to support management of patient experience and patient expectations.

The communications and engagement function will advise on the visual templates, and corporate content for these displays.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

All staff are asked to:

Play an active role sourcing information from the internal communication channels (i.e read the weekly round-up, ask for the monthly Countess briefing from your line manager).

Where appropriate, all staff are encouraged to identify opportunities for contributing to the channels set out in this policy – specifically service area intranet pages and the weekly round-up.

Support sharing corporate communications information that has been issued electronically with colleagues who may not have frequent access to a computer.

Use the all staff optional email system appropriately – i.e. not to send irrelevant or social emails that impact on effective email management.

Staff with line management or project management responsibilities are asked to:

Be an advocate of communications as a leadership tool

Escalate when there is a significant operational or patient safety risk that requires raising awareness using the internal channels or systems

Use the corporate internal communication systems set for service area news or project updates

Ensure corporate communications issued electronically are shared with team members who may not have frequent access to a computer

Ensure effective plans and systems are in place to effectively manage operational communications at a team or project level (i.e. communications that are not relevant to large groups and do not require strategic external or internal channels)

Your communications and engagement team will :

Manage the development and delivery of the channels set out in this policy

Work in partnership with the IM&T team to manage any systems or technical requirements that may impact on the functionality of the channels set out above

Advise managers on the most appropriate communication channels to support delivery of service area or project updates

Assume responsibility for allocating news and content to the most appropriate internal communications channel

Edit content to ensure that it is reader friendly and reflects the tone and voice of the Trust as set out in its Communications and Engagement Strategy (March 2015)

Manage scheduling and publishing of information in keeping with Trust priorities and annual plans

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