Communicating and involving your staff

This section provides some ideas on the process of involving your staff, which is one element of achieving a highly engaged workforce.

Good communication is key to maintaining an engaging culture within an organisation, whether this is from senior leaders keeping staff informed of business developments to managers telling their staff about things that affect their work.

Good quality communication is not only vital in engaging colleagues with their work and with that of the wider organisation, but also in understanding current performance issues and in recognising improvement opportunities. It builds trust and rapport with team members across networks, and enables everyone to share vital information needed for the smooth running of any organisation.

Evidence tells us that staff who feel informed and involved in decisions perform better within an organisation and have improved morale and a greater sense of well-being. Good communication within and between teams is key to this.

Top tips for creating meaningful and engaging communications

In order to create effective communications, where your message is seen, heard and understood, there are a number of things you need to consider:

Your audience
- How well do colleagues know and understand the issue to be discussed?
- How are they likely to feel about the issue?
- Are there any specific issues to be aware of, for example, levels of cynicism, cultural differences?
- What do I want them to do as a result of this message?
- What new attitudes, perceptions and behaviours will they need to adopt to be and feel successful?

What to say
- What do people need to know?
- What do you want to tell them?
- Where can they go for more information?
- What’s ‘in it for them’?

When to say it:
- Will my message compete with other messages or be affected by other events?
- How time-sensitive is it?

How to say it

There are various different methods to communicate your message. Depending on your answers to the questions above, you may consider using any or a combination of the suggestions below:

Events and conferences, intranet, staff notice boards, posters, bulletins and newsletters, podcasts, forums, email and other internal correspondence, Internet, workshops and training events, face-to-face meetings or 1:1s, team and branch meetings, social networking (for example, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, NHS Comms Link and NHS Networks). Use of these should be within local protocols.

There are challenges of communicating with dispersed workforces and staff that work at night.

Top tip: don’t just use one method – people respond differently to different medias. To engage with as many people as possible use a combination of methods.