

## **Communication Strategy & Action Plan**

### **Introduction**

The Communication Strategy and Action Plan support the Reconfiguration Programme through timely and interactive internal and external communications, which create an understanding of and commitment to the Programme.

The Communication Strategy outlines the approach that will be used to engage the Programme stakeholders. It summarises the overall communication objectives and establishes some general principles to which communications will adhere.

The Communication Strategy identifies the stakeholder groups and corresponding communication needs. It also identifies key messages for the Programme, together with some specific deliverables and communication channels.

Regular reviews and measuring the effectiveness of communication efforts will validate that messages are received and understood by the stakeholders.

### **Recommendation**

**The Board is asked to consider and approve the attached Communication Strategy and Action Plan.**

**Anne Currie**

**9 June 2009**



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# **Change Management**

## **Communication Strategy**

**June 2009**

## **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

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Programme name      **RECONFIGURATION PROGRAMME**

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Approvals

**This document requires the following approvals.**

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David Bingham and BSO Board		CX		

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## **Overview**

Communication planning is the identification of impacted people and the development and distribution of ongoing two-way exchange of information involving the right people at the right time in the right manner. An interactive communication process is key to successful change management. It is unlikely that staff will change their behaviours in support of the change imperative until they are given sufficient time and information both to understand and believe in the need for change.

## **Introduction**

The BSO Reconfiguration Programme is a business and process change programme moving from the legacy structures as at 1 April 2009 into a more stable, effective and efficient organisation. The Programme is taking forward a programme of practical work and a key strand of that work is communications. The overall aim of the Communications Strategy is to support the Reconfiguration Programme through timely and interactive internal and external communications, which creates an understanding of and commitment to the Programme.

As the work of the Reconfiguration Programme is taken forward over the next few months, there should be a strong focus on the need for effective communication about all aspects of the Programme which engages our stakeholders including, in particular, BSO staff and also staff in the wider HSC; and which will generate expectations about the changes that are involved in this strategic Programme. The Department has a key role in the management of public relations and the BSO will therefore liaise with it and other HSC organisations on appropriate publicity issues.

Both the Directorate of HR & Corporate Services and the Director of Customer Care & Performance will work to ensure a coordinated approach to communications across the programme, with a consistent approach to information, promoting best practice, identifying any communications gaps and providing feedback to the BSO Board.

## **Purpose of the Communication Strategy**

The Communication Strategy outlines the approach that will be used to engage the Programme stakeholders. It summarises the overall communication objectives and establishes some general principles to which communications will adhere.

The Communication Strategy identifies the stakeholder groups and corresponding communication needs. It also identifies key messages for the Programme, together with some specific deliverables and communication channels.

## **Communication Objectives**

The key communication objectives are to:

- Elevate and raise awareness of the importance of communications;
- ensure that all key internal and external audiences impacted by the Reconfiguration Programme are fully informed and engaged;
- improve the management of stakeholder expectations including ensuring consistent dialogue with them;
- ensure that internal and external stakeholders understand the vision, milestones, key activities, challenges, opportunities, who is affected and what it means for them – i.e. “making the unknown known”;
- increase the willingness of managers and staff to perform their jobs in the new environment and acceptance of potential role and task changes resulting from the changes in processes and perhaps technology;
- exploit innovative and existing communications channels and techniques to maximise awareness of and promote understanding of the Reconfiguration Programme;
- ensure that each communication is consistent with the principles (page 5);
- focus on continuous information sharing and reinforcement with a view to reducing resistance, fears, uncertainty, and rumours; and
- monitor and measure feedback.

Within the BSO, successful communications are vital to:

- raise awareness of the Reconfiguration Programme and in particular to engage staff in the change management process;
- ensure that staff have up to date and accurate information on progress on the Programme;
- encourage openness, honesty and feedback on the part of staff;
- prevent staff working in isolation and encourage joined up working; and
- involve staff in taking forward the work of the BSO and in the decision making process where appropriate.

The same objectives apply in relation to HSC staff and other audiences, where effective communications are vital to:

- promote a strong identity with and commitment to the HSC;
- inform stakeholders/clients of our plans;
- develop and maintain effective partnerships with clients and stakeholders; and
- encourage involvement and feedback.

The benefits of effective communications include:

- Communications tailored to the specific needs and preferences of stakeholders;
- Employees that understand what is expected of them in the new environment and what they can expect from the BSO;
- Increases employees acceptance of changes;
- Employees feel more comfortable and support rather than resist change; and
- Employees think and act like owners of the business.

The risks of ineffective communications include:

- Confusion;
- No clear identification of key stakeholders/audiences;
- Inconsistent engagement among key stakeholders resulting in communications that are not fully integrated;
- Failure to listen to stakeholders leading to resistance and rejection;

- Not concentrating equally on both the 'what' and the 'why';
- Negative perception of the Reconfiguration Programme;
- Failure to analyse communication processes/channels internally and externally (what works and what doesn't);
- Decision not to implement;
- Loss of support;
- Focus only on initial announcement and end results; and
- Programme aborted.

## **Communication Principles**

The communication strategy has been developed according to the following principles:

- **visible and accessible** - key senior management should deliver the 'business or general awareness' messages while managers deliver the 'individual awareness' messages (messages delivered to managers and then 'cascaded' to employees);
- **communicate the vision** - desire for employees to change is built through communications to convey the importance of changes to the business, the positive and negative consequences for employees, and the expected improvements the employee can expect that will enable them to envisage how they will be working differently in the future;
- **competent and professional** - making use of a wide range of communication methods and channels however it should be face-to-face where possible;
- **relevant, open and honest** - information should be up to date and consistent, and should reflect the position accurately;
- **timely, flexible and appropriate** – information must be available when it is needed, and the right information must be given, using the right methods and to the right people, avoiding duplication and overload;
- **comprehensive and focused** – communications should address all the issues that audiences are likely to want information about; and
- **clear, direct and two-way** – it is essential that there is provision for feedback so that audiences can ask questions and raise issues of concern; plain

language will need to be used, jargon free and without abbreviations, clear short messages should be the norm.

## **Key Messages**

Different audiences will require different messages. To facilitate this, communications must deliver simple, explicit and easily understood messages. In communicating with staff the focus will need to be on ensuring that they know what is expected of them and how the changes will impact on them; and ensuring that they are provided with relevant and timely information. It also needs to be recognised that people will not always absorb information completely at first hearing, and messages will need to be repeated where necessary – using different media and messages where appropriate.

For BSO staff, the key messages need to address:

- **Awareness** – of the new organisation and the change process being implemented under the Reconfiguration Programme and what it means for staff and what are the benefits; who is involved in taking work forward on specific aspects of the Programme.
- **Listening and understanding** – what parts of the BSO will be affected by these changes; and progress as the Programme rolls out in terms of activities, accomplishments and results to date; how vacancy controls are in place to facilitate redeployment; how every reasonable effort will be made to avoid compulsory redundancies; and that there will be fair and transparent selection processes for new posts.
- **Positive perception** – what should staff know at a particular point and how can they get involved.
- **Action** – what; when and how this will happen; training issues; who should staff speak to and what should they be doing.
- **Ownership** – what else do staff need to know; how can they help ensure success across the BSO.

For all clients and stakeholders, the key messages include:

- The Health and Social Care system is being transformed.
- The reforms are about putting patients and clients first with the BSO contributing to releasing more funds for frontline services.
- Services for the public are being improved.
- The management of health and social care is being streamlined.
- There are distinct and complementary roles for the BSO and the other HSC organisations.
- The BSO will be a leader in the area of delivering excellent business services to the Health and Social Care system and a 'best practice' environment that reflects the quality of both the work and the staff.

In effect, these are the core messages related to the Reconfiguration Programme. They set out in clear and unambiguous language what we are doing, and how we do it. The BSO will take every reasonable opportunity over the lifetime of this Programme to communicate and reinforce these messages and keep them under review to ensure that they continue to be relevant and appropriate.

## **Audiences**

Stakeholders will be both **internal** (BSO staff) and **external** (HSC). A key benefit of conducting an audience analysis is that identification and analysis of audience groups allows for targeted messages to each group, making communication more efficient and effective and accommodating the respective needs of different groups through customised communications. Tailoring communications accordingly shows a commitment to the stakeholders and a sincere interest in their understanding and acceptance of the new BSO organisation and its Reconfiguration Programme.

The stakeholder groups identified include:

<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Description</b>
BSO (Programme) Board	Chair, CX, Ex Directors, Non-Ex Directors
Senior Management Team	Directors, Chief Legal Adviser
BSO employees	All staff
External Clients	Department, HSCB, PHA, PCC, Trusts, Agencies

Key to the provision of effective communications will therefore be the delivery of the right messages, to the right people, at the right time. This will require a mix of overall Programme communications and individual messages. The messages, audiences and timescales will vary and it is important that Directors take a clear view on the issues that need to be communicated as a result of or as part of their work areas.

A successful outcome will be dependent on effective communication with the following key stakeholders:

- Minister
- Department
- BSO (Programme) Board
- Directors
- BSO staff
- Staff in the wider HSC
- Service users
- Other Government Departments and public bodies as appropriate
- Chairs and Chief Executives of HSCB, PHA, Trusts, Agencies and [PCC
- Family Practitioners (GPs, Opticians, Dentists and Pharmacists)
- Trade Unions
- Professional Organisations
- Media
- Universities and Colleges
- National standards and guideline-setting bodies.

## **Methods of Communication**

A range of tools and activities will need to be deployed to ensure effective communication. These will include:

- use of the BSO intranet for our staff;
- use of the internet for staff working in the HSC and the general public;
- an e-bulletin/newsletter for issue to staff in the Department and HSC organisations;

- bulletin and message boards;
- specific seminars and workshops as appropriate;
- discussion forums, roadshows, etc for staff;
- briefing papers for specific audiences;
- media briefing sessions as required;
- Board meetings, director meetings, staff meetings, including team briefing sessions;
- use of professional publications;
- promotional material including posters, leaflets, flyers;
- provision of material to stakeholder organisations for use in their publications and websites; and
- specific events relating to the changes in BSO structures from April 2009.

The following communication strategies will also be adopted:

- Communicate frequently
  - Once is rarely enough: repeat, repeat, repeat; and
  - Repetition will increase the likelihood of retention and demonstrate importance.
- Communicate as early as possible
  - It is uncertainty, not bad news that significantly impacts performance;
  - Early communications do not have to provide commitments or promises, just relevant information;
  - In absence of formal dialogue, stakeholders will go to the ‘grapevine’ for information; and
  - Once a ‘destructive’ rumor has been established, it is virtually impossible to stop.
- Reinforce and build upon the “bond of trust”
  - Employees generally trust their direct supervisors more than others in the organisation;
  - Leverage this relationship to:

- Be forthright on bad news; focus on communications that help reduce uncertainty;
- Speak the truth; focus on communications that present the ‘facts’;
- Never over promise; don’t make commitments that can’t be kept; and
- Do what you say you’ll do; actions speak louder than words.

## **Review Procedures**

Collecting feedback and measuring the effectiveness of communication efforts validates that messages are received and understood by the stakeholders. This allows the Communications Team to assess whether our development and deployment strategies are effective in achieving stated goals. In addition, feedback from stakeholders will help the Team assess the timeliness and appropriateness of messages, improve communications by updating the communications strategy to incorporate what was discovered during the feedback process, and assist in identifying key deployment issues, stakeholder concerns, and possible resolutions.

Feedback mechanisms will be put in place to support two-way communication, stakeholder engagement, and communication effectiveness. To ensure success of the communication strategy, feedback from stakeholders is imperative.

Mechanisms to collect feedback to measure performance can be both formal and informal. Formal mechanisms may include surveys, a suggestion box, or focus group sessions. Floor representatives may also be appointed to collect feedback. Informal mechanisms may consist of in-person discussions and e-mails.

Specific measures to review effectiveness will be developed and deployed in the Communications Feedback Matrix (**Annex A**). These will include reviewing:

- The BSO (Programme) Board – the extent to which the Board is content with the communications strategy;
- BSO staff – the extent to which they are aware of the Reconfiguration Programme, how it is being taken forward and its benefits; and

- Clients/Stakeholders - the extent to which they are aware of the Reconfiguration Programme and its benefits and to enable them to provide feedback.

## **Action Plan**

The attached Communications Action Plan (**Annex B**) has been developed summarising the various activities.

The BSO Board will keep the Action Plan under review.

### Communication Feedback Matrix

Feedback Mechanism	Timing	Purpose	Responsibility	Measure
Online Change Readiness Surveys/ Questionnaires	As needed	Informal mechanism to determine if communication activities are effective and to assess the level of understanding/awareness of particular issues	Directorate of HR & Corporate Services Director of Customer Care & Performance	xx% acknowledged that they heard of, understood and agreed that the particular communication/ message was effective
Focus Groups	6-monthly	To verify if stakeholder needs are being met and identify new needs and issues	Directorate of HR & Corporate Services Director of Customer Care & Performance	xx% acknowledged that they heard of, understood and agreed that the particular communication/ message was effective
Team meetings	Monthly	To solicit feedback about communications effectiveness	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser	xx% acknowledged that they heard of, understood and agreed that the particular communication/ message was effective
Electronic (anonymous) Feedback/Suggestion Box	Daily	To solicit feedback about communications effectiveness	Directorate of HR & Corporate Services Director of Customer Care & Performance	xx% acknowledged that they heard of, understood and agreed that the particular communication/ message was effective
Question/Answer Box Response Board	Daily	To solicit feedback about communications effectiveness	Directorate of HR & Corporate Services Director of Customer Care & Performance	xx% acknowledged that they heard of, understood and agreed that the particular communication/ message was effective

### Communication Action Plan

Communication	Key Message(s)	Vehicle	Frequency	Target Delivery Date	Target Audience	Owner	Complete Y/N	Comments
Introduction to the new change management process – i.e. Reconfiguration Programme	The objective of the Programme, over the next 12 months, is to reconfigure the BSO from the legacy structures into a more stable, effective and efficient BSO	Line Management Core Brief  Training sessions	Once	June 2009	All BSO staff	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser		
Launch of Communication Strategy	Importance of communications – overview of the strategy and forthcoming activities	Line Management Core Brief	Once	June 2009	All BSO staff	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser		
Corporate Identity	Change management process; key issues for 09-10; corporate identity/branding; discussions on corporate values/principles for organisation	Staff Engagement Workshops	Once	May/June 2009	All BSO staff	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser		
Keep stakeholders informed of new or changes to policies and procedures	Ad hoc messages	Staff briefings  Bulletins  Global e-mails  Training sessions	As needed	N/A	All HSC staff	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser	On-going	
Keep staff and customers (including the Department) as	Key organisational/structural changes to BSO	Staff briefings  Bulletins/	As needed	N/A	All BSO staff	CX, Directors and Chief	On-going	

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Key Message(s)</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Target Delivery Date</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Complete Y/N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
appropriate informed of organisational changes and updates	Ad hoc messages  Used to display who is in and out of the office; team events & activities  Key organisational/structural changes to BSO	Bulletin Board  Global e-mails  Training sessions  Newsletter  Team White Board  FAQs (including a database)	Quarterly  As needed  As needed	May, Sept, Dec '09, Mar 10  N/A  N/A	All HSC staff  All BSO teams  All BSO staff	Legal Adviser  CX, Directors and Chief Legal Adviser  Senior Managers  Director of HR & Corporate Services	  On-going  On-going	
To forge and cultivate customer relationships	To develop a shared vision and understanding of the values, purpose and objectives of the BSO	Customer Engagement Plan to include 30 customer visits by SMT  Information Leaflet to let our customers know what services the BSO is providing to them and contacts lists	Once  Once (and updated as necessary)	June 2009  June 2009	All customers  All customers	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser  Director of Customer Care & Performance		

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Key Message(s)</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Target Delivery Date</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Complete Y/N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
CX & Chair to meet with Chairs & CXs of the relevant HSC organisations	To establish key relationships	Customer Liaison Meetings	Once	June 2009	Chairs & CXs of the relevant HSC organisations	Chair & CXs		
Forum to present information to a broad audience in an interactive manner	Sharing of experience and best practice	Lunchtime seminars  Displays	6-monthly	Sept '09; March 2010	All BSO staff	Director of HR & Corporate Services		
Establish customer partnership boards with all customers of the BSO	The boards will both reflect on performance whilst providing a forum for partnership development of products and services	Customer Partnership Boards	N/A	December 2009	All customers	Director of Customer Care & Performance		
Provide information on organisational performance	Sharing of organisational performance annually	Annual Report  Annual Conference  Website	Monthly   Quarterly	May, June July, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec '09, Jan, Feb, Mar '10  May, Sept, Dec '09, Mar 10	Board & staff    All customers	CX, Directors and Chief Legal Adviser		
Establish E-mail distribution lists	Key organisational/structural changes to BSO  Ad hoc messages	Global e-mails	Once and then updated as needed	May 2009	All BSO staff	Director of HR & Corporate Services		

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Key Message(s)</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Target Delivery Date</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Complete Y/N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Feedback mechanism; tool to encourage discussion on a range of issues	Used to monitor, assess and measure acceptance levels internally/externally	Online Satisfaction/ Attitude Surveys/ Questionnaires	Annually	March 2010	All stakeholders	All Directors and Chief Legal Adviser		
	Allows staff to provide feedback anonymously on a range of pertinent issues	Electronic (anonymous) Suggestion Box	Daily	N/A	All BSO staff	CX, Directors and Chief Legal Adviser	On-going	
	Used to initiate discussion/feedback on a range of issues	Online Discussion Forums/ e-room/chat room	Daily	N/A	All BSO staff	Director of HR & Corporate Services	On-going	
Publicise 'good news'	Physical bulletin board where individual and team accomplishments are highlighted	Brag Board	Daily	N/A	Relevant BSO teams	Senior Managers	On-going	
Keep staff informed of individual/team performance	Display of operational statistics in support of the BSO mission/targets	Scoreboard	Daily/ Monthly Where appropriate	N/A	Relevant BSO teams	Senior Managers	On-going	
Development of Internet/Intranet as a powerful communication tool	Used to communicate a variety of key messages	Internet/Intranet Blog web page Web Banner – latest news	Daily	N/A	All stakeholders	Director of HR & Corporate Services	On-going	
Media opportunities	Key achievements in BSO; announce a topic that is considered newsworthy – goal is to attract favourable media attention	Press Releases	As needed	N/A	All stakeholders and wider business community	CX, Directors and Chief Legal Adviser	On-going	To be cleared by DHSSPS Press Office

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Key Message(s)</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Target Delivery Date</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Complete Y/N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Publicise internal/external forthcoming events	Calendar of important dates, reminders and activities	Events Calendar	As needed	N/A	All stakeholders	CX, Directors and Chief Legal Adviser	On-going	
Forum to present information to a broad audience in an interactive manner	Sharing of experience and best practice from other organisations to BSO and from BSO to other organisations	Informational Events Displays	As needed	N/A	All stakeholders	CX, Directors and Chief Legal Adviser	On-going	
Keeping staff side informed of developments	Used to communicate a variety of key messages and elicit feedback	Joint Negotiation & Consultation Forum	Quarterly	N/A	Staff Side	Director of HR & Corporate Services	On-going	