

# Seven steps to an effective health and wellbeing campaign

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# About us

NHS Employers is the employers' organisation for the NHS in England. We support workforce leaders and represent employers to develop a sustainable workforce and be the best employers they can be. We also manage the relationships with NHS trade unions on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

**Effectively communicating your health and wellbeing campaign or initiative is vital to promoting a positive staff experience. It can enhance employee engagement, increase retention and reinforce your organisational values. Investing in staff wellbeing creates a healthier, motivated, and supported workforce, better equipped to provide high-quality patient care. Ahead of planning and implementing a campaign or initiative in your organisation it is important to reach out to your communications team who might be able to offer you advice and guidance.**

## Initial considerations



**Steps to a successful health and wellbeing campaign or initiative:**

- Objectives**  
Define the objectives of the campaign or initiative and what your key messages and purpose will be.
- Target audience**  
Think about who you want to receive these comms and what you want them to do.
- Stakeholders**  
Meet with key stakeholders and communications colleagues to discuss your plans and get their input.
- Budget**  
Determine if any activities with costs that may affect your plans and identify the resources needed for your campaign.
- Channels**  
Decide on the channels that will be most effective to reach your target audience.
- Launch**  
Decide how you will launch your campaign or initiative. You may need to plan events and activities.
- Evaluation**  
Ensure you are evaluating your campaign or initiative against the objectives you set at the beginning.

# Objectives

Clearly outline your campaign or initiative's objectives as early as possible. Use the [NHS Staff Survey data to help set evidence-based objectives](#). Ensure they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). For example, aim to promote smoking cessation among nursing staff and reduce the number of smokers by five per cent by April 2026.

## Examples and resources

- [Developing a simple communications and engagement plan - Health Innovation](#)

# Target audience

Consider your target audience and define how they prefer to be communicated with and when.

- Decide which staff groups to engage with and why.
- Consider if the information applies to all staff.
- Understand the demographics in your organisation and how they impact communication choices.
- Keep an open mind, not everyone may be eager to engage. Listen to your staff's needs to communicate the right message at the right time.
- Plan how to engage hard-to-reach staff, like busy frontline workers. Learn how London Northwest University Hospital Healthcare NHS Trust implemented [wellbeing rounds](#) to reach time poor colleagues and communicate their health and wellbeing offer.
- Ensure your messages are inclusive. [Visit our equality, diversity, and inclusion pages](#) to learn how to implement inclusive practices in your strategy.
- Keep your messaging clear, concise and honest avoiding jargon.
- Use facts and local data to capture attention, including personal stories and testimonials.

## Examples and resources

- As part of Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Week, Dr Shamaila Anwar discussed the importance of [understanding](#)

intersectionality and engaging with diverse staff and communities.

- Seven suggestions for sustaining engagement in tough times
- Identifying and prioritising audiences - The Health Foundation
- Tone of voice - NHS England
- Write right The Health Foundation's house style guide
- Creating content - NHS Digital
- Read a blog by John Drew, director of staff experience and engagement at NHS England, about using NHS Staff Survey data to drive improvement
- Understanding the generations within your workforce can support you to build inclusive communications and initiatives. Read our rewarding and recognising and multigenerational workforce case study for more information.



# Channels

When starting a new campaign or initiative, you need to think about which communications channels to use. The key consideration is what will be the most effective way to reach your target audience.



## Top tips for choosing communication channels:

### Existing vs. new channels

Evaluate if your existing channels are appropriate for your target audience. Consider new channels based on your available resources.

### Central information hub

it's important to have one place where all the information is held, this could be on an intranet or internet site.

### Target audience considerations

Ask staff how they prefer to be communicated with:

- Do they prefer digital, physical or face to face channels?
- How many staff and are they located on different sites?

### Engagement

Consider collecting quotes and testimonials from staff or find a member of staff to be the face of your campaign. This can effectively showcase the impact of your initiative.

### Feedback mechanisms

How can staff communicate with you and provide you with feedback?  
Could you set up an inbox for enquiries?

## Examples and resources

- Taking a new direction on staff experience - Learn how North Bristol NHS Trust improved its staff survey response rate by adapting communication channels.
- The Northern Health and Social Care Trust created a digital wellbeing booklet for staff, featuring information, podcasts and videos on topics such as stress, anxiety, sleep and compassion fatigue.
- The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust created a Health and Wellbeing Roadmap for easy staff access to health information. They also use on-site stands for direct interaction with the wellbeing team and distribute small cards with financial advice and resource links.
- The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust uses MS Teams for their wellbeing channel, making all resources easily accessible in one place. The health and wellbeing team posts weekly messages, creating an interactive space. They also have a website within the channel with information on financial, family, mental, and physical health support, updated based on staff needs.
- University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust uses various channels to reach staff across four hospital sites. They send twice-weekly bulletins, share messages on social media, digital displays, and posters, and hold monthly briefings with the chief executive. Weekly wellbeing champion emails and fortnightly forums for wellbeing champions provide updates and Q&A sessions. As part of their engagement promise, the wellbeing team runs 30-minute webinars and provides PowerPoint slides and PDFs for staff and leadership teams to share key information.
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust uses a multi-channel approach to communicate its health and wellbeing offer. Information is shared through the weekly trust bulletin,

monthly newsletters, posters, and verbal updates from over 100 wellbeing champions. They also use a comprehensive SharePoint site, a wellbeing X account, and Microsoft Teams channels for their different staff networks and champions.

- Learn how Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust showcased their employment offer through an employee value proposition brochure.
- Read how Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust used reward and benefit champions to communicate its reward offering effectively.

# Stakeholders and buy-in

Before you deliver your campaign or initiative, it's essential to engage with key stakeholders and teams.

Working collaboratively will help ensure that your campaign or initiative is a success.

- Collaborate with your communications colleagues - it is important to involve your communications colleagues early as this will ensure your plans align with the organisation-wide strategy, they will also be able to help you with multiple aspects of your campaign.
- Secure buy-in from senior leadership - encourage leaders to highlight the importance of your messages and showcase their use of wellbeing initiatives. Showcasing how leaders embrace and use these initiatives can encourage staff to engage with them.
- Reach out to managers - attend team meetings to introduce yourself and key health and wellbeing initiatives. Actively engage staff rather than waiting for them to come to you.
- Introduce yourself during inductions - share details of local initiatives with new staff.
- Partner with charities - build connections with charities to support your campaigns and strengthen your wellbeing offer.
- Collaborate with other teams - by joining communication efforts you can use each other's networks to reach a wider audience. Building strong connections across the organisation helps spread the message more effectively, engage your audience, and encourage staff to get involved. It also raises your profile and fosters trusting relationships where staff feel comfortable approaching you.

## Examples and resources

- [Our guide](#) gives an overview of the NHS total reward package and supports line managers to promote the offer at various stages of an employee's career.
- [The role of line managers and total reward](#)
- Read how [Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust \(MPFT\) improved staff satisfaction by putting culture first and improving its reward and recognition initiatives.](#)

# Budget

Determine if any activities have associated costs that might impact your plans. You also need to consider what resources are required to deliver your campaign.

It's important to use your existing resources effectively and consider any opportunities to apply for funding.

Below are some tips you may want to consider:

- Use your health and wellbeing champions or clinical champions effectively, build in regular time to inform them of upcoming initiatives and to share ideas on effectively engaging staff. Read our guide on how you can [introduce wellbeing champions into your trust](#).
- Use existing channels where possible. For example, attending some staff network meetings allows you to reach these audiences and spark further conversations with staff. Listen to how [staff networks can support the health and wellbeing of staff in our webinar recording](#).
- Consider what funding your trust can provide (if any). Are you able to put in a bid to your trust's charity? Using [evidence-based approaches to workforce wellbeing](#) can support your bid.

## Examples and resources

- [Use this map to find NHS charities across the UK- NHS Charities Together](#)
- [Managing a centralised workplace adjustments budget](#)

# Launch

Plan the launch of your campaign or initiative carefully. You may need to organise events and activities, ensuring you allow enough time to promote them to your target audience.

Forward planning allows you to remain in control of planning and helps your communications team anticipate and support upcoming work.



## Top tips for your launch:

### **Build your timeline**

Start with the delivery date and work backwards. This will help ensure you have considered the time and resources you need in each step of the process.

What are your deliverables and timescales? Think about any upcoming health and wellbeing initiatives, awareness days and events that are already on your radar.

### **Consider the timing and support needed**

Consider the timing of your communications and how much support you will need for each initiative. For an event, ensure you factor in the communications for the build-up, during and after the event. Post-event communications can help ensure it remains in the spotlight and to encourage staff to engage in future events.

### **Build in flexibility and contingency**

Ensure you build flexibility and contingency into your plan. This is especially useful in the ever-changing climate and with the unpredictable nature of workforce issues.

## Examples and resources

- Our [eight elements to a positive staff experience](#) resource includes details and information that are essential for creating, implementing and evaluating an effective staff experience strategy.
- [Using the NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework successfully](#) – NHS England
- [NHS Health and Wellbeing Implementation Guide](#)- NHS England



# Evaluation

Once your campaign or initiative is in progress, make sure to continuously measure, evaluate, and adjust your approach to enhance its effectiveness. After delivering your campaign or initiative, you will need to produce an overall evaluation report that can aid data-driven planning for the future.

Some questions to initially consider are:

- What is the health and wellbeing campaign or initiative aiming to achieve? What does success look like for you?
- Whose behaviour is the campaign or initiative intended to change? Who will you need to engage with to collect statistics or feedback to inform your evaluation?
- What time period do you need to measure impact over?
- Identifying performance measures you will use for each activity. You could use these to assess performance against programme objectives, such as:
  - the number/type of activities carried out
  - the impact on audience awareness, understanding and intention
  - the numbers engaged in or exposed to the initiative
  - action taken or changed behaviour as a result of being involved in the initiative
  - review performance measures to see if you have, or are able to gather, benchmarking data.

Our [guide to evaluating your health and wellbeing programme](#) offers guidance on how to measure feedback from strategies and initiatives.

## Examples and resources

- [Enhancing the attraction, recruitment and support experience for new healthcare support workers](#) - Analysis of NHS Employers' second healthcare support workers survey covering trusts in Yorkshire and the Northeast.
- [Evaluation: what to consider](#) – The Health Foundation
- [Evaluation toolkit](#)- developed by [NHS Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board](#), the [National Institute for Health and Care Research Applied Research Collaboration West](#) and [Health Innovation West of England](#).

# Further resources

## Resources

- [Mental wellbeing in the workplace infographic](#) - Statistics and key facts on employee mental wellbeing in the workplace.
- [Back to basics for a healthy working environment infographic](#) - Statistics and key facts about the impact of hydration, nutrition, sleep, and regular breaks on workforce wellbeing.
- [NHS staff wellbeing needs poster](#) - This resource highlights the importance of basic needs to help ensure our NHS people feel healthy at work.
- [The dozen dos of staff engagement: guidance on good practice](#)
- [Read Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's rest, rehydrate, refuel project](#)
- [Communications guide for reward](#) - Download our reward communications guide to help you plan and communicate the reward package your organisation offers to staff.

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