



East Kent Hospitals' Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021-2025



3. About East Kent Hospitals University NHS Trust

East Kent Hospitals is one of the country’s largest Trusts, covering a largely remote and rural geography where more of the population is classified as deprived than the rest of the county.

The Trust has more than one million patient contacts a year. Around 7000 families use our maternity service each year.

In comparison to England, east Kent has more 50-69 year olds and more older people particularly over 70. There is a high prevalence of co-morbidities in the local population. Canterbury has a larger proportion of BAME residents compared with the Kent average.

The Trust has more than 8000 staff, with a wholly-owned subsidiary, 2gether Support Solutions, and a strong volunteer base. It has more than 10,000 members.

The Trust has begun a new quality improvement approach called We care which focusses on the areas that will make the biggest difference to our patients and staff.

We are working with its NHS and social care partners to develop plans for using our three acute hospitals at Canterbury, Margate and Ashford, in different ways in future to improve standards and deliver care and treatment in the best way possible.

This Communication and Engagement Strategy sets out how we will listen to and communicate with our patients, staff, local communities and key stakeholders over the next five years, to make sure people feel cared for, safe, respected and confident that we’re making a difference to their health and wellbeing.



Our Communications and Engagement Strategy on a page

Our mission: Improve Health and Wellbeing			
Our vision: Great healthcare from great people			
Our strategic objectives:			
Our patients	Our quality and safety	Our people	Our future
Our sustainability			
Our communication and engagement objectives			
Keep patients informed throughout their health journey with us, be open, involve them in decisions and use their feedback to improve their experience	Our staff are listened to, informed and engaged , and feel valued and able to make a difference	Our stakeholders are informed about the Trust’s performance and feel involved so they can support their communities and hold us to account	
What success will look like			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People will feel we are open, transparent and they are involved in decisions about their own treatment and care. ▪ People will feel they are engaged and confident their feedback makes a difference. ▪ People will feel involved when we make changes to services or re-design care pathways. ▪ People will feel the decisions we make about the future respond to the needs of our communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our staff will understand how their roles contribute to the purpose and values of the Trust, their teams and departments. ▪ Staff will have lots of ways to give feedback and ideas, raise questions and concerns. ▪ Staff will experience our values through the way we communicate with and about them, and engage them. ▪ Leaders and managers will feel supported and able to listen to, communicate with and engage their teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our stakeholders will have regular information about the performance and plans of the Trust and will feel informed. ▪ Our stakeholders will feel engaged and will have regular opportunities to engage with us and provide feedback. ▪ We will have an ‘open door’ approach to access to our hospitals and services to provide assurance and build confidence. ▪ As part of the wider system, we will involve and engage patients, staff and the public in service change and our plans for the future. 	
Our strategy is underpinned by our values			
People feel cared for as individuals	People feel safe , reassured and involved	People feel teamwork, trust and respect sit at the heart of everything we do	People feel confident we are making a difference

How we developed our strategy

The Communications and Engagement Strategy provides a framework for how the Trust will communicate and engage with patient, staff, stakeholders and the public.

We have used feedback from patients and staff, our governors and the public to inform our strategy and it was developed in consultation with;

- East Kent Hospitals Council of Governors
- Healthwatch Kent
- Patient Experience Committee
- Patient and voluntary sector representatives
- East Kent Hospitals staff

We have followed these principles:

- We value compassionate communication - every communication should at all times be consistent with our values
- We are open and transparent about how the Trust is performing and observe our duty of candour
- We adhere to the NHS Constitution, ensuring people can exercise their statutory right to have their say on current and future NHS services
- We work to meet the communication needs of diverse and hard-to-reach groups, and ensure their voice is heard
- We use NHS resources efficiently and effectively.

These are our aims, we recognise that we are not achieving this at the moment and there is much to do to make these aspirations a reality:

- Keep **patients informed** throughout their health journey with us, **be open, involve** them in decisions and **use their feedback** to improve their experience
- Ensure our staff are **listened to, informed, engaged and feel valued and able to make a difference**
- ensure our stakeholders (eg, MPs, Healthwatch, patient and community representative groups, our members) are **informed** about the Trust's performance and feel **involved** so they can support their communities and hold us to account.

Future key developments:

Development of the Council of Governors communications and membership engagement strategy.

A new co-designed model of patient engagement which embeds the use of patient experience to improve patient care.

An interactive digital platform to communicate and engage with staff more effectively.

A staff events co-ordinator to facilitate staff engagement events.

Roles and responsibilities

This is a strategy for the whole organisation. Everyone in the Trust has a role to play in supporting its delivery, to be good communicators and engage and involve other people.

Some groups have specific roles;

Council of Governors

Governors provide an important link between the communities they represent, and we serve, and the Board. Governors need to be well informed and aware of what is happening in the Trust and engage with their constituents so they can feed their views into the Trust's strategy.

Trust Board of Directors

The Trust Board's role is one of leadership and support. Board members individually and collectively represent the organisation and sets the strategy for how it communicates and engages with the public. Our chairman also has a leading role in chairing the east Kent Integrated Care Partnership.

Executive Directors

Executive Directors have an on-going day-to-day responsibility for delivering the organisation's strategic objectives which includes this strategy.

Communications and Engagement Team

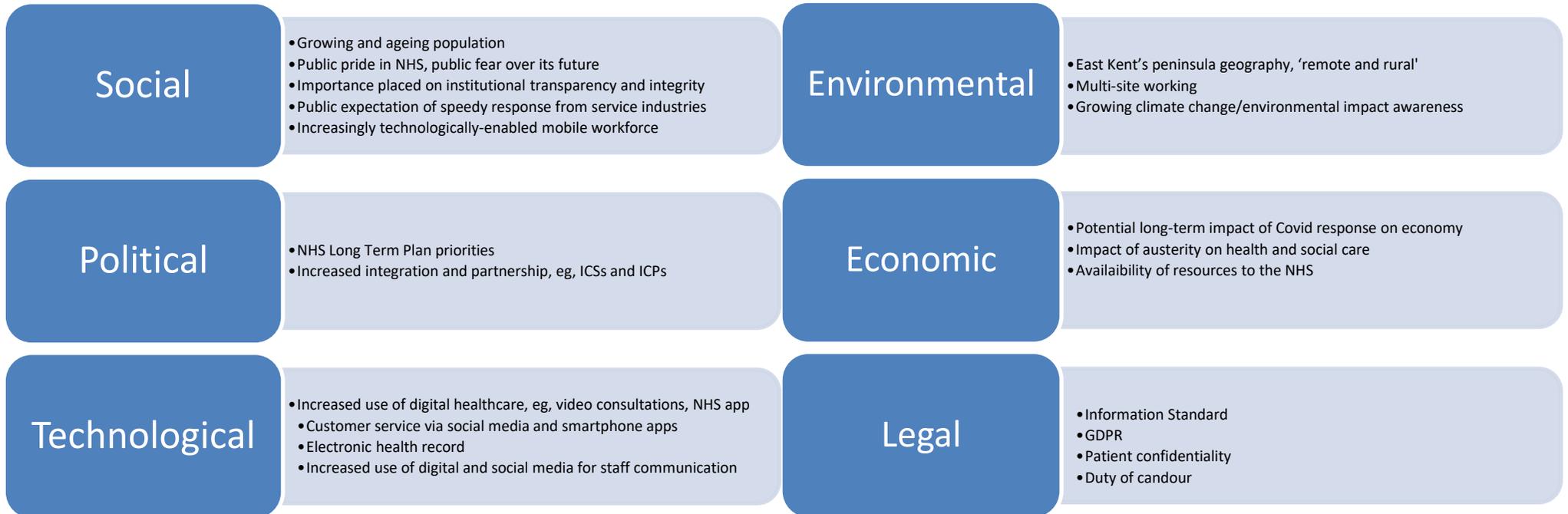
The Communications and Engagement Team is a small team of dedicated communications professionals providing leadership, technical expertise, advice and guidance. It has a lead role in providing information for staff, patients, the public and stakeholders, upholding the Trust's brand and reputation, developing communication channels and co-ordinating media relations. The Communications and Engagement Team should add value to others to enable them to do their work.

Care Group and Hospital leadership teams

The Senior Management Team has a responsibility to directly support the delivery of this strategy and to encourage their teams to do so, and has a responsibility in ensuring this strategy is delivered and information is cascaded throughout the organisation.

4. The communications environment

There are a number of additional drivers that shape our strategy



Our patients

Our aim is to keep patients **informed** throughout their health journey with us, **be open, involve** them in decisions and **seek feedback** on their experiences and needs to improve their experience

Our patient and public engagement strategy will focus on four areas:

- Be open and transparent and involve people in decisions about their own treatment and care, so they feel cared for, safe, respected and confident we're making a difference
- Engaging people in on-going service delivery so our services meet their needs
- Engaging people in making changes to services or re-designing care pathways, so the patient experience is at the forefront of service design
- Informing and engaging people in organisational decision-making, so we can respond effectively to the needs of our local communities.

Keeping patients informed

We have a range of channels for communicating with patients, from individual letters and information leaflets, to the Trust's website, social media and *Your hospitals* magazine. The Trust is developing a patient app.

Our quality and safety

Patient feedback

The Trust asks patients for feedback from the Friends and Family Test and a number of individual services are developing local surveys to gain further insight into patient experiences and needs.

A number of services also have patient groups, which are a valuable source of feedback. Patients are invited to tell their stories at the Trust's Board of Director meetings and patient stories are shared with staff through the staff newsletter and intranet.

The Trust also works with the CCG to engage patients and members of the public on decisions about services that may affect them.

Involving patients

We know much more needs to be done to establish a good foundation for effective patient engagement within the Trust and so we have engaged Healthwatch Kent to audit our current provision and make recommendations for improvement.

We want to co-design our engagement programme with patients, carers and members of the public, including seldom heard groups. We also want to give carers more opportunity to give us feedback on how we can improve. We will embed patient engagement within our new 'We care' quality improvement approach, so it becomes integral to our frontline-led improvement culture.

Our objectives for patient communication and engagement

Objective	How we will achieve this objective	How we will measure our progress
Listening and understanding		
Use data to engage staff in quality improvement	<p>We will communicate key themes from patient feedback (eg, Friends and Family Test and complaints themes) with staff through our internal communication and as part of the 'We care' approach.</p> <p>We will gather patient feedback on new or redesigned services, to understand what's going well and where we can improve.</p>	<p>Increase in measurable staff innovation to solve patient experience problems; examples of improvement work shared across the organisation through internal communication channels and shared externally through 'you said, we did'</p> <p>Improvement in NHS staff survey responses on 'I am able to make improvements in my area of work'; 'I look forward to going to work'; and staff FFT responses</p>
Develop tools for listening to and engaging with service users	<p>We will develop our use of social media to engage with service users. We are piloting a new approach to service user engagement and feedback via social media with the maternity Facebook provision for expectant and new mums. We will take lessons learned to other Trust services.</p> <p>Patient-facing staff are a rich source of patient feedback. We will provide regular opportunities for staff to tell the Trust what they are learning from patients.</p> <p>Develop a regular range of drop in, listening events and roadshows in partnership with our local stakeholders including Healthwatch and voluntary/advocacy services to facilitate improving patient experience</p>	<p>Quarterly patient experience dashboard developed and shared with the Board of Directors, Council of Governors and EKHUFT leaders, including ward managers</p> <p>Improvement in NHS Staff Survey responses to 'Patient care is a priority for my organisation'</p>

	<p>and service re-design.</p> <p>Attend voluntary sector regular meetings and forums – such as the Mental Health Forums in Kent or Carers groups and community events, eg, Pride</p>	
Understand our local communities	<p>Develop a robust ‘stakeholder map’ to understand the communities we serve and identify seldom-heard groups so we can effectively communicate with and engage with these groups.</p> <p>Build relationships with the voluntary sector, forming a ‘champions’ group to co-design solutions for regular, open and honest dialogue.</p> <p>Work with and support our public governors to listen to and feedback the views of their constituents.</p>	Increased access and feedback from hard to reach groups
Communication		
Develop communications materials and tools that help staff inform and support patients, families, carers and referrers, so they access our services and have a positive experience	<p>We will implement the Information Standard across the Trust, including in patient appointment letters. We will ensure our website is compliant and all staff can access resources to help them produce Information Standard compliant patient information.</p> <p>We will provide resources to help all staff develop high standard patient communication materials. We will use one branding and style guide across the Trust, and provide templates and ‘tone of voice’ guides for all staff to access on Staff Zone.</p> <p>We will audit patient letters and make recommendations for improvement based on best practice and patient feedback.</p> <p>We will review our ‘servicescape’ (the environment in which we</p>	Reduction in complaints on the quality of patient communication

	<p>provide our services) and make changes to improve the patient experience, eg, improved wayfinding.</p> <p>We will develop a 'menu of options' to improve access to information about the hospitals and the Trust, and opportunities to get involved.</p>	
Develop the Trust's website and digital communication channels	We will review the 'Information for patients' section of our website, taking into account patient feedback, identify good practice and implement changes.	Increased use of patient information pages on the website, measured through page analytics
Ensure patients and referrers can access clear and up-to-date information about the quality and performance of our services	We will ensure patients and referrers can easily access nationally-published performance and quality data about each of our services on our website.	Improved user experience measured through search function analytics
'You said, we listened'	<p>We will tell patients what we have changed as a result of their feedback via our website, social media and servicescape. We will work with patient 'champions' to co-design how to share where patient feedback is used to inform changes across the Trust.</p> <p>We will also share patient experiences (with consent), including feedback via Patient Opinion, on social media.</p>	
Engagement		
Review patient, family and carer engagement across the Trust and develop a road map for improvement by	We are working with Healthwatch Kent to review patient engagement across the Trust and develop recommendations and a methodology for improvement, testing this out with patient and public groups	Patient engagement improvement plan developed by 2022

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2022		
Develop our patient and public engagement structures	<p>We will increase the number of patients and carers who work with us, and develop 'experts through experience' panels</p> <p>We will review the membership of the Patient Experience Committee</p> <p>We will develop relationships with patient advocate and representative stakeholders, including Healthwatch Kent, charitable organisations and MPs</p>	<p>Increase in recruitment of patient/carer representatives</p>
Develop patient engagement tools that help staff engage patients, families and carers in quality improvements and service co-design	<p>We will provide resources to help all staff engage patients, families and carers in service improvement, including an engagement 'toolkit' and training</p>	<p>Increased engagement of patients, families and carers in service improvement</p> <p>Improvement in NHS staff survey responses on 'I am able to make improvements in my area of work'; 'I look forward to going to work'; and staff FFT responses</p>

Our people

Our aim is to ensure our staff are **informed, engaged and feel able to make a difference**. This requires purposeful internal communication that is two-way.

Strong internal communication supports retaining good people and enabling people to work at their best. Staff are ambassadors for the organisation and support major change.

People make life-changing decisions based on what they are told at work, eg, when they make choices about where to live, how to save for retirement or whether or not to change jobs. The integrity of what we tell staff matters.

Our internal communication strategy will focus on:

- A strategic narrative that provides a clear 'line of sight' between the purpose and values of the Trust, teams, departments and people's daily work
- Supporting leaders and managers to communicate with and engage their teams
- Ensuring there are regular and varied ways for people to give feedback and ideas, ask questions and raise concerns

Our quality and safety

- Caring for the caregivers, to ensure our people experience our 'We care' values

Supported by an internal communications infrastructure that is in line with current and future uptake of communication technologies in our daily lives.

Keeping staff informed

We have a range of channels for communicating with staff, from a weekly email newsletter and intranet, to webinars (replacing large face-to-face briefing meetings during Covid) and walk-rounds. The CEO writes a weekly email message to staff and the CEO podcast is available on the intranet.

We began using Mailchimp for the weekly staff newsletter and all-staff emails in 2020, which allows us to track open rates and the content staff are most interested in.

Staff engagement

We will embed staff engagement within our new 'We care' quality improvement approach, so it becomes integral to our frontline-led improvement culture.

Our objectives for internal communication and staff engagement

Objective	How we will achieve this objective	How we will measure our progress
Listening and understanding		
<p>Ensuring there are regular and varied ways for people to give feedback and ideas, ask questions and raise concerns</p>	<p>We will provide regular opportunities for staff to tell the Trust how it feels to work here, what they are learning from patients and their ideas for improvement, including face-to-face or webinars, the staff Friends and Family Test and NHS Staff Survey, and through the ‘We care’ programme.</p> <p>We will provide a single point of information on our intranet on ‘who can I tell?’ for any staff concerns, and publicise this at least quarterly through our internal communication channels.</p> <p>We will continue to ensure the executive and leadership teams are accessible for staff, eg, through walk-rounds, ensuring contact details are included at the end of staff messages.</p> <p>Work with and support our staff governors to listen to and feedback the views of staff.</p> <p>We will identify digital technology that improves the variety of feedback mechanisms available to staff, eg, a staff app.</p>	<p>Annual NHS Staff Survey</p> <p>Staff Friends and Family Test</p> <p>Number of staff raising concerns</p> <p>Number of staff joining webinars</p>

Communication		
<p>Provide communications materials and tools that help the Trust attract, inform, support and involve staff so they feel motivated, fulfilled and able to give their best</p>	<p>We will provide resources to help all staff develop high standard internal communication materials. We will use one branding and style guide across the Trust, and provide templates and ‘tone of voice’ guides for all staff to access on Staff Zone.</p> <p>We will continue to develop digital opportunities for staff communication and engagement, eg, exec-led webinars, and identify new channels, eg, staff app.</p> <p>We will explore the options and bring forward a business case for a replacement intranet which provides a high level of user engagement</p>	<p>Annual NHS Staff Survey</p> <p>Staff Friends and Family Test</p> <p>Staff retention rates</p> <p>Number of staff joining webinars</p>
<p>Support staff well-being</p>	<p>We will ensure information about mental health services is available on Staff Zone and publicised regularly, alongside information for staff on accessing other health services, including going smoke-free. We will make information about staff benefits more accessible for staff.</p> <p>We will help foster an EKHUFT team culture through a team narrative and shared experiences. We will increase the profile and opportunities for staff to participate in special occasions, such as the NHS birthday and national celebration days.</p> <p>We will ensure the communications planning grid meets the needs of BAME and other staff groups, working with staff networks such as the BAME, LGBT</p>	<p>Annual NHS Staff Survey</p> <p>Staff Friends and Family Test</p> <p>Staff retention rates</p>

	and Disability staff networks.	
Improve employee information	<p>We will regularly update staff on organisational priorities, such as quality and safety, and be clear about our performance and future plans.</p> <p>We will ensure clear information on practical issues, such as pensions or staff facilities on site, is easy for staff to access.</p>	<p>Annual NHS Staff Survey</p> <p>Staff Friends and Family Test</p> <p>Staff retention rates</p>
Engagement		
Support leaders to communicate and engage with staff	<p>We will further develop leaders' communications channels, to provide useful tools on Trust policy updates, key decisions and resources for our leaders.</p> <p>We will provide resources to help leaders engage their teams, including an engagement 'toolkit' and training through the 'We care' programme.</p>	<p>Annual NHS Staff Survey</p> <p>Staff Friends and Family Test</p> <p>Staff retention rates</p>
Help staff engage with and drive the Trust's 'We care' vision and values, so they feel able to provide the highest standards of care	<p>We will develop the 'We care' narrative and materials for use across the Trust's communications and in the 'We care' wards.</p> <p>We will help staff tell their 'We care' stories and share good practice through the Trust's internal and external communications and events.</p> <p>We will recognise staff who 'go the extra mile' through our reward and recognition scheme.</p>	<p>Annual NHS Staff Survey</p> <p>Staff Friends and Family Test</p> <p>Staff retention rates</p>

Our future

Our aim is to ensure our stakeholders (eg, MPs, Healthwatch, patient and community representative groups, our members) are informed about the Trust's performance and involved in major service decisions so they can support their communities and hold us to account.

Our stakeholder strategy will focus on:

- Providing regular information on the performance and plans of the Trust
- Providing regular opportunities for dialogue

Our sustainability

- An 'open door' approach, where we facilitate access to our hospitals and services as much as possible.

Building on engagement

In recent years, we have worked with the CCG to involve and engage patients, staff and the public in a number of service changes and our wider plans to use our three acute hospitals at Canterbury, Margate and Ashford, in different ways in future. We provide regular, written briefings to MPs on our performance and future plans.

Our objectives for communication and engagement with stakeholders

Objective	How we will achieve this objective	How we will measure our progress
Listening and understanding		
Facilitating public consultation and engagement on major service changes	In addition to day-to-day engagement with our service users on service re-design, we will support our commissioners in public consultation and engagement on major service changes within the legal framework.	Involvement in engagement activities
Communication		
Providing regular briefings and opportunities for dialogue	<p>We will provide regular written briefings for stakeholders, including a monthly bulletin, and face-to-face meetings as required, being clear about the challenges we face.</p> <p>We will provide regular briefings/releases to the media.</p> <p>We will facilitate access to our hospitals and services as much as possible whilst preserving patient confidentiality.</p> <p>We will offer regular meetings between MPs and the CEO and the Chair of the Trust, and facilitate visits to services and opportunities to meet or shadow staff.</p>	<p>Take up of communications and meetings</p> <p>NHS position included in media coverage</p>
Engagement		
Working in partnership to support public health and well-	We will seek the support of our stakeholders in health campaigns and local recruitment, to help us reach	Increased reach of communications

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<p>being</p>	<p>areas of the community we may not have contact with.</p> <p>We will work with our GP, CCG, ICP, PCN, KCC and LMC partners in constructive dialogue on day-to-day service provision.</p> <p>We will support the work of our stakeholders to improve health and well-being in our local communities.</p>	<p>Take up of communications and increased feedback</p>
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5. Our reach

Out now!
YOUR hospitals
 your health

- Life with Covid - stories from the front line
- Caring for the Caregivers
- Interview with Dr Sara Mumford

Available to download now

We care

Click now for details

Your hospitals magazine – over 30,000 copies distributed to 300 pick-up points in east Kent (digital only during Covid).

Welcome to East Kent Hospitals

JUST THINK 111 FIRST
 When you think you need A&E, contact NHS 111 by phone or online.

Coronavirus

Coronavirus, latest information and advice

Traveling to your hospital appointment

News

Our website has more than 140,000 visitors each month.

Social Media December 2020

NHS East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

New followers this month

Facebook	597	Total 7423
Twitter	126	Total 6586
Instagram	106	Total 2559

We increase our social media reach month on month.

Trust news East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust
 Your weekly round-up of EKHUFT news 22 January 2021

First vaccinations for NHS staff take place at The Spitfire Ground

Our staff were among the first to receive coronavirus vaccinations at Kent Cricket's The Spitfire Ground in Canterbury this week.

Health and volunteers from across the hospitals who had offered to act as vaccinators.

Over 9,000 people including nearly 6,500 EKHUFT and together staff have now been vaccinated by the Trust via the Wicks and the cricket ground.

Our weekly staff newsletter has an average open rate of 37%.

We issue an average of 11 press releases each month, alongside a monthly stakeholder newsletter and regular direct engagement.

Appendix 1: Our current communication channels

Channel	One-way (awareness)	Two-way (engagement)
Patients and public		
Website		
Your Hospitals magazine		
Information screens/posters in waiting areas		
Social media		
Traditional media (press, radio, TV)		
Patient committees and focus groups		
Board meetings live streamed		
Calendar of engagement events and annual members meeting		
Patient Engagement Network		
Staff		
Face-to-face staff forums		
Engagement in QII hubs		
<i>The Leader</i> briefing for managers		
Staff Zone (intranet)		
<i>Team Talk</i> for people managers/team meetings		
CEO blogs		
Listening into Action tool		
CEO and Exec visibility programme		
Weekly Trust newsletter		
PC 'desktop wallpaper'		
Mid-week round-up		
Staff information boards		
Professional journals		
Governors		
Face-to-face briefing sessions and Q&As		
Site and service visits		
Email briefings on emerging issues		
Weekly communications briefing		

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Members		
Trust magazine		
Members' newsletters		
Dedicated area of public website		
Calendar of engagement events/annual meeting		
Meet your Governors events		
Patient Engagement Network		
Partner organisations		
Whole system meetings		
Monthly stakeholder e-bulletin		
Programme of engagement		
Stakeholders		
Monthly stakeholder e-bulletin		
Programme of engagement		