



St. Michael's House

Organisational Communication Policy

Written By:	Barbara Wiseman, Head of Communications
Reviewed By:	Communications Committee
Approved By:	David Dunne, Director of Operations
		Signed: <i>David Dunne, Director of Operations</i>
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Distributed To:	All Organisation
Monitoring Mechanism:	Head of Communications

1) PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION POLICY:

This policy statement articulates St. Michael's House commitment to appropriate and effective communication across all the organisations stakeholders both internally and externally and to provide a structural framework for planning and delivery and to outline the roles and responsibilities of different parties within this.

2) ORGANISATIONAL DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION POLICY:

Communication is fundamental to the success of the organisation and provides opportunities for individuals to communicate and share the knowledge; skills and attitudes that will enable all stakeholders to achieve agreed individual and organisational objectives. It will allow opportunity to enhance and promote the good work of St. Michael's House to meet the challenges of Intellectual Disability healthcare services. Communication may encompass a wide range of channels and processes, both formal and informal at an individual and organisational level. The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but communication activities are wide and varied and this is intended to outline the responsibilities of all stakeholders in developing and maintaining good communication practice.

3) THE SCOPE OF THE POLICY:

The scope of this policy directly mirrors St. Michael's House Communication Strategy

As a healthcare service provider for Intellectual disability, St. Michael's House organisation is committed to the delivery of good service to the children and adults and their families that use our service. We recognise the importance of communication to all our stakeholders. Communication is vital to engage all our stakeholders to ensure we deliver the best services. Communication should be underpinned by the principles of respect for difference and cultural diversity, transparency, equity and fairness with all stakeholders having responsibility to develop and maintain good communication practice.

St. Michael's House will:

- i. Have a clear and well-articulated vision and mission that enables all to understand and engage with the strategic direction, goals and priorities of St. Michael's House.
- ii. Provide appropriate information to enable staff to deliver against goals and the agreed strategic direction of St. Michael's House
- iii. Ensure a robust Communication strategy for internal and external communications.

4) RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DELIVERY:

Communication is a responsibility of each member of St. Michael's House. We must therefore, be aware of and take full responsibility for, legislative responsibilities, and those outlined in this policy.

As a Health organisation in receipt of public funds we acknowledge and respect the legislative requirements placed upon us (for example, the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act, Immigration, Health and Safety and Equality legislation) and will work at all times to ensure that Communications are open, transparent and consistent. The roles and responsibilities of all our stakeholders are outlined below:

4.1 Responsibilities of Leadership

“Leaders” refers not just to the Core Executive, but to leaders of projects, programmes and teams. Leaders include Board members, Shared Service managers, Persons in Charge, Head of Departments, Clinicians, team leaders, Service Users key workers representatives, etc.

- iv. Ensure, as individuals and teams, we foster a culture of free discussion and exploration.
- v. Ensure all stakeholders are kept updated on relevant organisation activities to enable them to be as effective as possible.
- vi. Promote best practice in communication for all stakeholders namely; staff, families and service users and the community.
- vii. Ensure a communications strategy, policy and action plan is in place.
- viii. Manage strategic communication through an identified communication framework and team of communications advocates.
- ix. Ensure that information is made available to all stakeholders in a timely manner and via appropriate channels.
- x. Ensure that all stakeholders have appropriate skills and relevant information to enable effective communication with all parties.
- xi. Maintain open channels of communication of two-way communication and listen to feedback and comment from all stakeholders.
- xii. Monitor the effectiveness of the communications strategy, policy and infrastructure and ensure the communication action plan evolves to meet the needs of St. Michael's House.

4.2 Responsibilities of All Staff

"Staff" are employed by, or aligned to St. Michael's House, its subsidiary companies, agencies and partners.

- i. Ensure individual execution of good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- ii. To be informed and have information in order to be as effective as possible in a role and supportive of the strategic direction of St. Michael's House.
- iii. Take responsibility for communicating with stakeholders.
- iv. Use open channels of two-way communications to keep line managers, colleagues and stakeholders informed.
- v. Consider the need to communicate and ensure this happens in all pieces of work undertaken.
- vi. Continually measure and evaluate communication to review success and achievement of the key messages and aims and objectives.
- vii. Act as advocates and ambassadors of St. Michael's House

4.3 Responsibilities of Managers

"Managers" referring to managing of people and/or processes across St. Michael's House.

- i. Manage and implement strategic communication through an identified staff communication framework and team of communications advocates.
- ii. Communicate the annual strategic plan to stakeholders including teams and service users.
- iii. Ensure team members are taking opportunities to act as spokespeople, and are engaging with the communication department.
- iv. Communicate regularly with your teams, ideally face-face, to ensure relevant information is available, communicated and understood.
- v. Support and encourage teams to communicate about projects, news, updates, expertise.
- vi. Help to ensure all colleagues maintain good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- vii. Maintain two-way channels of communication to ensure feedback is obtained and to keep senior team and communication department informed.
- viii. Consider the needs of all stakeholders to enable effective communication to take place in all pieces of work undertaken.

4.4 Responsibilities of Communication Subgroups

"Communication subgroups" referring to operational committee members who represent different channels of communication, e.g. Print, Social Media, Website, etc.

- i. To provide guidance and support on communication, to ensure members of St. Michael's House can implement best practice and maintain high standards across all channels.
- ii. To build toolkits and templates for advice and guidance on how to use specific tools, tactics and channels. For example, how to engage professionally with (and benefit from) social networking – SoMe Subgroup.
- iii. Provide advice to project teams to ensure communication opportunities are maximised.
- iv. In conjunction with communication committee to prioritise, agree and coordinate an action plan.

5) IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

5.1 Support and Advice

St. Michael's House will deliver several action plans to support the delivery of the Communication Strategy and Policy. This will be reviewed bi-annually.

We will produce guidelines and toolkits to assist. These will include brand guidelines.

5.2 Communication Strategy

Stakeholders were consulted during the draft of the Communication Strategy and its Policy. We will continue to consult during the writing of an action plan and for future reviews through our focus groups and workshops with families, staff and service users from our communication subgroups namely: print, website, social media, Easy to Read and Policy groups.

6) EVALUATION

St. Michael's House is committed to continuous improvement in its service provision, and will continue to monitor the efficiency of this policy with qualitative and quantitative data based on KPIs identified through the Communication Business Plan. This process will ensure that a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy is undertaken, and any problems of implementation or management brought to the attention of the Communication committee.