The State Hospital

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

'ENABLING RESILIENCE AND GROWTH'

1   CORE PURPOSE

Communication is at the heart of everything we do. Within the State Hospital, the core purpose relates to all aspects of communications both internally and externally – from consultancy / advice and guidance to the provision of electronic communications, audio-visual production including video, dealing with the media, social media, the production of corporate publications, and stakeholder engagement. Specifically, the Head of Communications acts as a communications link between the Hospital and stakeholders including staff, the local community, general public, professional bodies, and local and national government, and drives forward improvements in communication. This enables the influencing and shaping of communication planning and strategy at all levels, ensuring good communications practice is firmly embedded in everyday service development, delivery, and change.

Given the nature and organisational arrangements of the Board, patients are uniquely viewed as internal communication stakeholders in addition to Non-Executive Directors, Volunteers, the Chaplaincy Team, Patients' Advocacy Service, and staff. Carers, the public and the media are included within external communication arrangements, which differs from the Communications function of other Boards. The State Hospital's public (patients) are with us for an average of 6.5 years, and some very much longer, and therefore are classed as internal stakeholders. The public are potential patients of territorial Boards and are viewed by them as external stakeholders. These Boards will therefore undertake direct engagement with their public in relation to health, wellbeing and services provided.

The two services predominately delivering internal and external communications within the State Hospital are the Communications Service and the Person Centred Improvement Service (PCIS). These two services work very closely together with the PCIS having specific responsibility for patient, carer, and volunteer communication. Combined key results areas include Stakeholder Communications (Internal and External including staff, patients, carers, and volunteers), Public Relations (Relationship Management), Crisis Management, Public Affairs (Media and Political) and Marketing Communications.

This annual report covers the work of the Communications Service from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Communication activity with patients, carers, and volunteers during 2024/25 is captured in the PCIS 12-month update reports. Additionally, stakeholder stories presenting feedback from patients, carers, and volunteers directly to the Board are a key feature of the Board's agenda.

Trust and confidence of our stakeholders can only be achieved through maintaining the highest levels of transparency. The work of the Communications Service and PCIS help drive our reputation locally, nationally, and globally through different channels by communicating with all stakeholders in a timely, accurate and consistent fashion. This in turn generates confidence, which ultimately supports the Board's vision and corporate objectives.

Within Communications, we believe that our values are the bedrock of our culture, guiding how we work with one another and our stakeholders.

2 LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is delivered in line with the State Hospital's Communications Strategy 2025/30, which supports the Hospital to achieve its vision and strategic objectives, respond to crisis situations, and meet its legal obligations:

2.1 Data Protection and Privacy Legislation

- *UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018*: Governs handling of personal data, ensuring secure, lawful, and transparent processing in all communications involving patient or staff information.
- *Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR)*: Regulates electronic marketing (emails, texts), confidentiality of communications, and the use of cookies.

2.2 Freedom of Information Legislation

- *Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002*: Requires public bodies to respond to information requests, unless exemptions apply, supporting transparency in communications.

2.3 Equality and Non-Discrimination Legislation

- *Equality Act 2010*: Prohibits discrimination and promotes accessibility, ensuring inclusive communication for all protected groups.
- *Fairer Scotland Duty (2018)*: Obligates public bodies to consider socioeconomic inequality when developing policies, services, and communications.

2.4 Healthcare-Specific Legislation plus Standards and Expectations

- *Carers (Scotland) Act 2016:* Mandates that carers are informed about their rights and available support.
- *Health & Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019:* Ensures safe staffing levels, indirectly supporting communications around workforce transparency.
- *Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Act 2016:* Covers statutory Duty of Candour and regulates treatment standards and nicotine products.
- *Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 / 2015:* Framework for patient rights and treatment, with implications for sensitive and rights-respecting communication.
- *Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011:* Supports person-centred communication, ensuring patients are informed and involved in decisions.
- *Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010:* Improves transparency, efficiency, and accountability across public services.
- *National Staff Governance Standard (4th edition, 2012)*: Promotes staff wellbeing, inclusion, and engagement in communications.
- *NHSScotland Workforce Vision (Everyone Matters), 2013*: Supports a motivated, person-centred workforce, emphasising effective staff communication.

2.5 Whistleblowing and Ethical Conduct Legislation

- *Duty of Candour Procedure (Scotland) Regulations 2018*: Requires openness and honesty following adverse events.
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)*: Protects whistleblowers who report wrongdoing, ensuring fair treatment and protection from retaliation.

2.6 Marketing and Advertising Standards

- *CAP Code (UK Code of Non-Broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing)*: Sets clear rules for fairness, transparency, and non-deceptive promotional materials.
- *Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008*: Prohibits misleading or aggressive communications and marketing tactics.

2.7 Human Rights and Communications Ethics

- *Human Rights Act 1998*: Upholds individual rights, including respect for privacy and freedom of expression in public communications.

2.8 Health-Specific Communication Frameworks – Strategy / Guidance

- *NHSScotland Communication and Engagement Strategy 2020–2024:* Provides a framework for meaningful engagement with patients, staff, and stakeholders. May now be integrated into broader NHS Strategic Frameworks post-2024.
- *Healthcare Improvement Scotland – "What Matters To You?" (2016):* Encourages listening and patient-centred dialogue in care conversations.
- *Leading Quality Health and Care for Scotland (2023–2028):* Strategic vision to embed quality improvement and leadership in care delivery.
- *NHS Recovery Plan (2021–2026):* Sets direction for post-pandemic transformation, digital innovation, and service resilience—relevant to evolving communications.
- *Scotland's Digital Health and Care Strategy (2021 Update):* Supports digital-first approaches to patient and staff engagement.

2.9 State Hospital Annual Delivery Plans

Focus remains primarily on performance, high-level finance and workforce; drawing together key planning assumptions which reflect local priorities.

3   COLLABORATIVE WORKING

A key aspect of the Communications Service is the requirement for effective and regular collaborative working across all directorate structures and teams. Being independent from other functions, services, or directorates, ensures effective broader organisational confidence, dialogue and connection is maintained. This is something that has been achieved over many years.

Within the State Hospital environment, it is important for staff to be able to see a function that not only serves all staff and disciplines equally but is positioned correctly to do this through a joined up internal network of strong lines and links in all directions with communications in the centre.

Collaborative working with the Scottish Government Mental Health Team, Scottish Government Communications colleagues, Health Board Communications peers, the Mental Welfare Commission, and other partners is well established.

4   STAFFING / RESOURCES AND INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The Communications Service has an establishment of three posts:

- Head of Communications.
- Communications Specialist (previously PR & Digital Communications Officer).
- Communications Assistant (previously PR & Media Communications Officer).

It was agreed to replace the previous PR & Media Communications Officer (Band 5) vacancy with a part-time Communications Assistant (Band 4) post. The decision was influenced by financial considerations. While not without impact, it was necessary to ensure the Service remained within budget and was able to support longer-term resilience and succession planning. The Communications Assistant post was due to be advertised in January 2025, however due to the extensive work surrounding the Cabinet Office Accessibility Audit (all-consuming from December 2024 to March 2025), a decision was made to delay to around May or June 2025 when the Service was not under so much pressure.

In terms of development:

- The Communications Specialist is nearing completion of the 'New to Forensics' training to further enhance knowledge / personal development.
- The Head of Communications attended an Artificial Intelligence (AI) for use in Communications webinar and participated in an in-house Cyber event which tested our contingency plans in response to a cyber-attack.
- Both posts attended the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) 'Show and Tell' Sharepoint Online training in addition to attending national Intranet Insights presentations. They also participated in a Communications Organisational Development (OD) Strategy session.
- Familiarisation with video equipment and training was mainly paused in year due to workload pressures.

5   KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Established KPIs relate to the core Communications Service as detailed below:

No	KPI	Source	Timescale	Status / Outcome
01	To produce a Communications Annual Report for presenting to the Board.	Board	Annually	**Continues to be met** In year it was agreed to move presentation to the Board from October to April.
02	To produce the Board's Annual Report.	Board	By 31 October each year	**Continues to be met**
03	To produce at least 44 weekly bulletins for staff.	CEO	Annually	**Complete** A bulletin was produced for every week of the year.
04	To produce special bulletins as a support to staff.	CEO	Annually	**Complete** Thirty-nine were produced.

No	KPI	Source	Timescale	Status / Outcome
05	To produce Staff Newsletter 'Vision' twice a year as a minimum.	CEO	Annually	**Complete** Nine editions were produced.
06	To deliver on 100% of all appropriate requests for Talks to the Community.	General Public	Annually	**Complete** There were no requests during the year.
07	To respond promptly to all Media Enquiries.	Media	Annually	**Continues to be met**
08	Complete the 'Well Informed' section of the Staff Governance Self-Assessment Monitoring Tool.	Staff Governance Standard	Annually	**N/A** There was no requirement for this during the year.
09	To attend at least four of the six State Hospital Board Meetings.	Board	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
10	Ensure Board business is published on the Website including Board Schedule of Meetings, Public Notices, Agendas, Minutes, and Papers.	Board	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Additionally, after each Board Meeting a review of all Board papers takes place to identify information / communication for the staff bulletin, staff newsletter 'Vision,' Intranet, Website, Media, and Social Media as appropriate.
11	To attend 90% of NHSScotland Strategic Communications Network Meetings.	NHSScotland	Annually	**Continues to be met** via Teams.
12	To ensure representation at the annual NHSScotland Event.	NHSScotland	Annually in June	**Continues to be met as appropriate** Comms did not attend the June 2024 virtual event.

The table below details activity in 2024/25 not covered by KPIs:

No	Workstream	Lead	Outcome	Key Result Area
01	Media Releases / Statements	Head of Comms	One Media Release and one Media Statement were produced.	Media Relations
02	Media Features	Head of Comms	One Media Feature was published.	Media Relations
03	Suspected Media Leaks	Head of Comms	Previously we only submitted a Datix for suspected media leaks. Following discussion with Risk Management, it was agreed early 2024/25 that a Datix be raised for all Media Enquiries and coverage. The process was reversed late 2024/25 as there was nothing to investigate if the enquiry or coverage didn't relate to a suspected media leak.	Media Relations
04	FOI Enquiries	FOI Lead	The number of FOI Enquiries is captured within the Information Governance Annual Report.	Public Relations

No	Workstream	Lead	Outcome	Key Result Area
05	Academic Published Articles	Research & Development Manager	The Research Committee Annual Report 2024/25 notes all published journal articles and the delivery of presentations.	Public Relations
06	Leadership Walkrounds	-	These were paused during the year. A "Once for Scotland" approach to Leadership Walkrounds is being explored and will commence in 2025/26.	Staff Relations

6   QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) OBJECTIVES

The table below details progress against QA objectives set for 2024/25:

6.1   Internal Communications

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
01	Provide professional advice and direction to the Board, line managers and all teams.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** This enables the influencing and shaping of communication planning and strategy at all levels, ensuring good communications practice is firmly embedded in everyday service development, delivery, and change.
02	Ensure effective communication with relevant stakeholders to share updates relating to strategic priorities including sickness absence and nursing resource utilisation.	Chief Executive / Service Strategy / Directors' Objectives	All Directors	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Specific focus was on sickness absence and Day Time Confinement.
03	Support the Board and Organisational Management Team (OMT) through dedicated staff bulletins covering each meeting.	Board / OMT	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
04	Review and update of State Hospital publications / information sheets.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Outstanding backlog was addressed during the year. Additionally, all information sheets were converted from .doc to .docx.

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
05	Review and update of State Hospital Banner Stands following rebrand.	Head of Comms	Comms	-	**On hold** Awaiting rebranding in light of new Forensic Board for Scotland.
06	Produce bulletins, newsletters, posers, publications, and other communications to advise staff of what is happening in the Hospital and the wider NHS.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
07	Periodic review of Board Photo Boards and update as necessary.	Board	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** with older photos updated in year.
08	Review and update of Comms Audio Visual Photo Consent Forms.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms / Information Governance	By Summer 2024	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Update involved new process for gaining consent.
09	Review of Board bulletin in respect of staff views.	Board Chair	Head of Comms	By end Dec 25	**New for 2025/26** **On track**

6.2   External Communications

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
10	Through effective communications, foster public and political confidence in the care and services provided to protect and enhance understanding of the Hospital.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
11	Report Communication incidents / leaks to the Media via Datix.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Process changed and reverted back during the year. Current position is that a Datix will only be done where there is a suspected leak to the media.

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
12	Keep the Scottish Government up to date on all matters relating to media activity and any correspondence with patients and families and / or carers which may require government officials and / or Ministers to become involved.	Annual Review	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
13	Inform Non-Executives and other identified staff of major events which are likely to attract Media interest.	Board	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
14	Ensure information is provided in an accessible format as required.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
15	Undertake quarterly reviews of website content and maintain website action plan. In addition, produce statistical report via Google Analytics.	Comms Strategy	Comms Specialist	Quarterly Annually	**Continues to be met**
16	Undertake an annual review and update of the content on the ONELAN screens.	Comms Strategy	Comms Specialist	Annually	**Continues to be met** Content is accurate and up to date.
17	Undertake annual reviews and updates of the State Hospital's Speakers' Directory and general presentation slides.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms	Annually	**Continues to be met** This update includes feedback from community talks.
18	Bi-annual review of Media Training requirements for Directors and other identified staff.	Comms Strategy	Chief Executive / Head of Comms	Autumn 2025	**On track**
19	Familiarisation with 'Dealing with the Media' Guidance for State Hospital Spokespeople.	Comms Strategy	On-Call Directors / CEO	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Note - This should be read in conjunction with the State Hospital's approved 'Media Lines for On-Call Directors' which have been prepared to assist those responding to media enquiries.

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
20	Maximise key messages about the Hospital's work, role and the services provided thus raising awareness of the Hospital's image, profile, and potential with external audiences locally, nationally, and internationally.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** During the year, we drove this through our social media channels as a means of educating stakeholders.
21	Manage the Communications Service eControl Book.	Health & Safety	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
22	Review of 'all user' email permissions.	eHealth Sub Group	Head of Comms / Infrastructure Operations and IT Security Manager	Every two years	**Continues to be met** Review undertaken in year.
23	Review and update of Comms responses to general enquiries.	Comms Strategy	Comms	By year end	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Review and update undertaken in November 2024.
24	Review of all State Hospital videos on the State Hospital YouTube channel with a new to updating or removing.	Comms Strategy	Comms	By March 2026	**New for 2025/26** **On track** The review will include ensuring the transcriptions are correct and meet website accessibility legislation.

6.3   Strategy / Policy

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
25	Conduct an interim review and update (if required) of the Communications Strategy, policies, and procedures.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms	Annually	**Continues to be met** Communications Strategy for 2025/30 developed and the Media Policy was reviewed and updated.

No	QA Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
26	Regular review and update of the Pandemic Influenza Communications Strategy.	Infection Control Committee	Senior Nurse for Infection Control / Head of Comms	April 2025	**Continues to be met** Review undertaken. Pandemic Communications Strategy 2025/30 produced.
27	Undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) for Communications.	Equality Act	Head of Comms	As required	**Continues to be met** There are five EQIAs in place to support communications work. All were reviewed and updated during the year.
28	Undertake Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for Communications.	GDPR	Head of Comms	December 2025	**Complete** All six existing DPIAs were reviewed and made obsolete. Content was streamlined info four new DPIAs covering all areas of Comms activity: • The Use of Audio Visual. • Staff Communications. • Public Communications • Media Policy.
29	Following handover of Intranet from eHealth to Comms, review and update Intranet Maintenance & Development Policy and associated Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to reflect changeover.	Comms Strategy / Equality Act	Head of Comms	Summer 2024	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Policy reviewed and replaced by guidance. The policy is now obsolete as is the associated EQIA.
30	Review of all State Hospital videos on the State Hospital YouTube channel with a new to updating or removing.	Comms Strategy	Comms	By March 2026	**New for 2024/25** **On track**
31	Review and update of Corporate Document Standards to include Records Management best practice.	Records Services	Head of Comms	By end 2026	**New for 2025/26** **On track** The update is also likely to include document accessibility standards.

7   QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) OBJECTIVES

The following table shows performance against QI objectives set for 2024/25:

7.1   Internal Communications

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
01	Redevelop the Intranet. The current Sharepoint site (now at end of life) will be replaced with the new 'Sharepoint Online' version which is being led nationally for all Boards by National Services Scotland (NSS).	National	Comms / eHealth	-	**Ongoing** The project remains on hold nationally pending resources, governance approvals and other necessary requirements to ensure successful implementation across NHSScotland.
02	Maintain the State Hospital Photo Library.	Head of Comms	Comms Specialist	-	**Continues to be met**
03	Continue to undertake staff engagement exercises to support corporate objectives.	Comms Strategy	Project Lead / Designated Individual	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
04	Support ad-hoc key events via dedicated staff bulletins / Vision / campaigns as appropriate.	Project Lead	Project Lead / Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** For example, visits and recruitment fairs.
05	Promote the work of Healthy Working Lives (HWL).	Values & Behaviours Group	OD Manager / PR & Media Comms Officer	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Achieved through the staff bulletin and the production of resources.
06	Raise staff awareness of the Hospital's sustainability work to meet net zero target.	Sustainability & Climate Change Group	Head of Estates / Comms Specialist	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Significant input went into promoting Climate Week 2024 from the development of a Communications Action Plan and promotional materials to an email footer, poster, social media posts, staff bulletin and Vision articles, dedicated Teams backgrounds, and the creation of a State Hospital Sustainability logo.

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
07	Support the 'Excellence Awards' and staff 'Long Service Awards.'	Values & Behaviours Group	OD / Comms	Annually	**Continues to be met** Communications is a member of the groups responsible for organising and managing these events.
08	Support Speak Up week 2024.	National	HR / Comms	Annually around Sep / Oct	**Complete** Significant resource was given to supporting this week from bulletin and Vision articles, an information sheet, the creation of pledge cards and posters to presentations, promotional items, social media posts, Teams backgrounds and a dedicated Communications Action Plan.
09	Annual redesign of the Weekly Staff Bulletin and Special Bulletin.	Board	Comms	Annually	**Continues to be met** New design launched 1 April each year.
10	Review and further develop Communications Guides.	Head of Comms	Comms	-	**Continues to be met**
11	Review and further develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).	Head of Comms	Comms	-	**Continues to be met**
12	Support HR initiatives.	HR	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Support was provided in respect of No Wrong Path, Recruitment (processes, pathways and job adverts), career fairs, new starts, Armed Forces Day, Cycle to Work, HR Directorate Development Day, Modern Apprentice, National Demonstrator Programme, New Student Placement, UK National Inclusion Week, South Lanarkshire Works, and HR themed awareness days.

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
13	Support Patient Initiatives.	Skye Centre Activity Centres	Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** In year, Comms supported the Beatson Cancer Charity Event / 5k run, Koestler Awards, Sports Week, Learning Awards, and Halloween / other activities.
14	Expand the existing range of Teams Backgrounds.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Backgrounds developed included those specific to roles and functions as well as generic photo backgrounds. Promotion of the use of backgrounds continues.
15	Support Occupational Therapy (OT) Week.	OT	Head of Comms	Each November	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Campaign included stand at Reception, social media posts, and photos.
16	Support IT Security Initiatives.	eHealth	Head of Comms / Infrastructure Operations and IT Security Manager	Each November	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Campaigns included phishing and cyber security.
17	Produce a suite of quality graphics to support Clinical Quality with its role and remit.	Clinical Quality	Head of Comms	Spring 2024	**New for 2024/25** **Complete**
18	Produce MS Forms to support the work of the Communications Service.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms	Spring 2024	**New for 2024/25** **Complete**
19	Build capacity for workload ensuring full complement of staff is in place.	Board	Head of Comms	-	**New for 2024/25** **Complete**
20	Review Communications categories on Datix relating to the media.	Head of Risk & Resilience	Comms	Sep 2025	**New for 2024/25** **Complete**

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
21	Communications to take over responsibility for investigating / closing off Datix submissions relating to the media.	Head of Risk & Resilience and Information Governance & Data Security Officer	Comms	Sep 2025	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** However there is now no need for this as we are only submitting a Datix for suspected media leaks which are investigated by Information Governance.
22	Explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) for use in communications.	NHSScotland Strategic Comms Group / eHealth Projects	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**New for 2024/25** Attended AI and Comms Webinar in June 2024 as a starting point. Currently piloting the use of AI for general communications.
23	Explore Microsoft Sway for staff communications.	Head of Comms	Comms Specialist	-	**New for 2025/26** Explore when Sharepoint Online is implemented as our new Intranet.
24	Develop Asset Registers for Communications.	GDPR	Head of Comms	Dec 2025	**New for 2025/26** **On track**

7.2 External Communications

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
25	Issue Media Releases surrounding good news stories, ensuring the safety and security of patients, staff and visitors is not compromised.	Comms Strategy	Comms	-	**Continues to be met**
26	Continue to invite visitors to the Hospital to learn about our work. Visitors include MSPs, Health Board Chairs and senior officials as well as other stakeholders.	Board	CEO / Directors	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Visits are captured in the Chief Executive's Report to the Board and are covered in the staff newsletter 'Vision' as appropriate.

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
27	Maintain links with other agencies and forensic services through the Forensic Network.	Comms Strategy	CEO / Medical Director / Other Professions	Ongoing	**Continues to be met**
28	Improve communications with partners about the Hospital's work, aims and successes and look for opportunities to work collaboratively.	Comms Strategy	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**Continues to be met** Good relationships maintained with Scottish Government, Mental Welfare Commission and NHS Boards.
29	Review Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with another National Board as a means of strengthening resilience within both Boards.	National Boards Collaborative	Head of Comms / Chief Executive	February 2026	**Continues to be met** MoU with the NHS Golden Jubilee reviewed and updated in February 2024. Next review 2026.
30	Undertake Video Training and practice sessions to enhance familiarisation.	Comms Strategy	Comms	Ongoing	**Slow progress is being made** Familiarisation training will continue until individuals are proficient. This was paused in year due to workload pressures although some practice took place in June and November 2024.
31	Explore 'Social Media for Businesses' and ensure two- factor authentication is enabled.	eHealth	Infrastructure Operations & IT Security Manager	-	**Partly complete** Two-factor authentication for Facebook is still being explored by IT.
32	Explore opportunity for the State Hospital to put a case forward for a State Hospital variant of the NHSScotland logo that more clearly identifies the State Hospital as an NHSScotland organisation.	Corporate Management Team (CMT)	Head of Comms	-	**On hold** Will be explored when new Forensic Board for Scotland is formed.
33	Produce key messages / facts including information on items that can be easily misunderstood or can cause concern, e.g. patient outings, patients with autism, misinformation etc.	Comms Strategy	Comms	By March 2025	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** This was done collaboratively with the Intellectual Disability (ID) Service.

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
34	Share Stakeholder Stories via the Website.	CMT	Head of Comms	-	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Specific page created September 2024.
35	Redesign of both the Volunteer and Recruitment Sections of the website.	PCIS and HR	Head of Comms	By July 2024	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** This involved the creation and promotion of volunteer roles both on the website and social media.
36	Following an audit in November 2024, ensure compliance against The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	Cabinet Office Audit	Head of Comms	Within 12 weeks	**New for 2024/25** Passed the re-audit in March 2025 with some actions outstanding which will be met in 2025/26.
37	Support the recruitment of Volunteer Roles through the website and social media.	PCIS	Head of Comms	Ongoing	**New for 2024/25** **Continues to be met**
38	Produce narrative that covers process from admission to discharge, referring to reason for admission to the State Hospital.	Comms Strategy	Comms Specialist + ID Service RMO	By March 2026	**Carried over from 2024/25** **On track**
39	Create narrative around detention / restriction orders and review process / rights to appeal.	Comms Strategy	Comms Specialist + ID Service RMO	By March 2026	**Carried over from 2024/25** **On track**
40	Explore Instagram.	Comms Strategy	Comms	By March 2026	**Carried over from 2024/25** **On track**
41	Redesign of Job Adverts on social media.	HR	Comms Specialist	By end Dec 2025	**New for 2025/26** **On track**
42	Produce a series of short educational videos that can be placed on the State Hospital website, YouTube, and other social media channels.	Comms Strategy	Comms	By March 2026	**New for 2025/26** **On track**

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
43	Create 'Meet the Board' Video.	Staff Governance Committee / HR	Comms	March 2026	**New for 2025/26** Comms has asked the Committee to clarify purpose and audience.

7.3   Collaborative Working

No	QI Objective	Source	Lead	Timescale	Status
44	Develop the leadership needs of NHSScotland Communications professionals: Directors of Comms and Comms Heads of Service.	Strategic Comms Group	Strategic Comms Leadership Sub Group	Ongoing	**Paused** This work has been paused since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.
45	Participate in State Hospital development sessions aimed at informing our Annual Delivery Plans and Medium-Term Plans.	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Quality / OD Manager	Head of Comms	31 October 2024	**New for 2024/25** **Complete** Three-year mission / objectives for the Communications Service were developed and shared at the event. As part of this, the Communications Service had to clarify its purpose and vision.

8   EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

All core Communications objectives, corporate objectives, and legislative requirements were met in 2024/25. The following are examples of positive outcomes evidencing effectiveness achieved during the year.

8.1   Internal Communications

- Met corporate responsibility by attending strategic planning events to inform the development of the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) and Medium-Term Plan (MDP). Also participated in Job Evaluation panels which helped ensure posts were looked at in a timely fashion.

- We facilitated a Community Engagement & Systems Redesign session with State Hospital engagement leads and the Strategic Engagement Lead from Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS).

- The 2024 iMatter Survey saw a response rate of 72%. The Board's Employee Engagement Index (EEI) was 75 (both scores were the same as last year, 2023).

- Requests for printed materials continued, evidencing fit for purpose and in demand. Our Publications Databases captures 75 information sheets, 18 banner stands, and 36 departmental initiatives. These were all reviewed and updated as appropriate in year.

- Developed graphics to support the Clinical Quality Strategy, Volunteer Handbook, Equality documents, Speak Up Week and Sustainability. These are timeless and can be used repeatedly to promote these key areas of our work.

- Workshops / events / training promoted via the Staff Bulletin were well attended evidencing that staff read the bulletin, and the bulletin remains an effective means of promoting these activities.

- With positive feedback, the staff bulletin and staff newsletter 'Vision' continued to keep staff and volunteers updated on all the latest news internally and externally. Staff requests for dedicated staff bulletins continued to be high, as were staff contributions to weekly staff bulletins and Vision.

- An initial exploration of SWAY was undertaken as a new method of communication. We will explore further when Sharepoint Online is implemented.

- Despite the need for redevelopment, the Intranet continued to play a vital role, creating a virtual environment where staff could stay informed, connect, communicate, and share. Our Intranet Upgrade Action Plan remained active, ensuring a seamless transition when approval is granted to migrate to SharePoint Online. The Communications Service page on the Intranet was reviewed and updated in year.

- The 'All User Email Request' icon on the Intranet was well utilised in year, accounting for over 90% of requests. The email system remained effective for issuing communications that were either urgent or not for inclusion in the staff bulletin, e.g. weather warnings, grounds access time changes, and items sought or no longer required, works on site, programme downtimes, public holiday staffing, lost property etc.

- Feedback arising from the policy consultation process (housed on the Intranet and advertised through the staff bulletin and email system) evidenced that staff took the time to read formal communications, respond and contribute to policy improvement.

- Communications staff are key members of numerous groups including the following:

  o Board
  o Corporate Management Team (CMT)
  o Gold Command (D&G Data Breach)
  o Organisational Management Team (OMT)
  o AfC Job Evaluation Steering Group
  o AfC Reduced Working Week (RWW)
  o Business Classification Scheme (BCS) Project Team,
  o Climate Change & Sustainability Group
  o Daytime Confinement (DTC) workstream
  o eHealth Sub Group
  o eRostering Project Team (now changed to Allocate Optima) / Loop
  o Freedom of Information (FOI) Committee
  o HCSA Project Team
  o Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Group
  o Staff Recognition Steering Group (Excellence Awards and Long Service Awards)
  o Task & Finish Group (Attendance Management)
  o Workforce Wellbeing & Organisational Development Delivery Group

- The continued development of Communications Guides and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in year has strengthened governance and effectiveness in terms of service delivery.

8.2   External Communications

- Our biggest achievement of the year was ensuring compliance with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This remediation work involved adjustments to the coding behind the website, alterations to the way the information on the website was presented, and remediation of nearly 1000 documents; mainly PDF files which involved having to tag every cell in every table in every document. This work was carried out in-house by the Communications Service. It was resource-intensive and highly challenging. The key points for noting are:

  o The significant workload placed on the Communications Service from December to March 2025. All other work was paused during this time unless absolutely essential.
  o The ongoing retrospective remediation of PDFs in 2025/26, which remains a substantial task for the Communications Service. This is outlined in our Website Accessibility Statement - which can be found within the footer of each web page - together with timescales for completion.
  o The broader impact of this work on all departments at the State Hospital.

- Despite the challenges of accessibility, the website continues to effectively meet the needs of our stakeholders. Quarterly checks throughout the year ensured that content on the main pages aligned with the FOI section, with this cross-referencing maintained as good practice. The Website Maintenance & Development Action Plan remained instrumental in keeping content relevant and up to date. The use of Google Analytics helps us track and report website traffic and user behaviour.

- A two-page article "Research into practice: Implementation of positive behaviour support in a high secure care intellectual disability service" by Zenzo Dube, Senior Charge Nurse, the State Hospital was published in the International Association of Forensic Mental Health Services (IAFMH) newsletter (volume 9, issue 2 - 2024 Q2).

- Our Media Release "State Hospital and University Shortlisted for Prestigious Nursing Times Award" of 17 July 2024 was coved by the Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News, the Daily Record, Renfreshire24, and our local Lanark & Carluke Advertiser.

- Through the effective management of media enquiries, we were able to protect the Hospital's reputation by either (1) preventing what could have been a potential news story or (2) by lessening the impact of a negative story through rebutting inaccuracies and providing information to ensure fair and balanced coverage. All media enquiries were shared with the Board, Scottish Government colleagues, and the Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) in support of knowledge exchange, collaborative working, and consistent messaging. Eleven media enquiries were received in year ranging from enquiries about individual patients to patients with autism and learning disabilities, female provision, sirens, documentary, staff wellbeing costs, and staff suspensions.

- Media Lines for On-Call Directors were reviewed and enhanced over the course of the year.

- During the year, 31 patient stories were published in the media without any prior media enquiry - some appearing in multiple newspapers. These mainly related to patient Court appearances. Additionally, there were nine instances of 'withheld newspapers' - cases where an article about a patient was published but subsequently removed by us before the newspaper was distributed to patients.

- Social media platforms X, Facebook, and LinkedIn were utilised to enhance stakeholder awareness about the Hospital and its services, with a total of 322 posts published in year. We have developed a Social Media Planner to ensure effective presence throughout the year. These channels are key for recruitment – we post each vacancy three times on each channel (i.e. nine posts for each vacancy). We also have a presence on Messenger, YouTube, Wikipedia and Google My Business. In terms of the latter, we responded to all reviews of the State Hospital submitted via this platform. In year we also created a Social Media Action Log for fake or negative social media posts / comments.

- The general State Hospital mailbox (tsh.info@nhs.scot) continued to receive a steady flow of enquiries, demonstrating its effectiveness and popularity as a valuable resource. These were responded to promptly and effectively.

- State Hospital promotional items remained in high demand throughout the year, particularly for recruitment events and fairs, and infection control awareness. In year they were also produced to support national initiatives such as Speak Up Week and Climate Week as well as Non-Executive visibility.

- Hosting visits to the Hospital continued as a means of engaging a broader audience, showcasing our work, and facilitating the sharing of best practices and networking. Information about visits during the year were captured in the Chief Executive's Report at each Board meeting. Key visits were also covered in the staff newsletter 'Vision'.

- The Chair provides feedback from the NHSScotland Chairs' Meeting at each Board meeting, keeping the Board informed of national developments, including updates on targets and priorities. Similarly, the Chief Executive shares insights from national CEO meetings.

9   SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

9.1   Staffing

The Communications Service operated below its full staffing complement all year, which presented certain challenges in terms of service delivery. Despite this, the team of two remained dedicated and resourceful ensuring that key objectives were met, and that the quality of work was maintained. While the reduced staffing levels required careful prioritisation and a more agile approach to project management, the team demonstrated resilience and continued to deliver high standards of communication across all areas.

Going forward, appointing a part-time Band 4 Communications Assistant to fill the full-time Band 5 PR & Communications Officer vacancy, will provide some support to the team but it will not offer the same capacity for growth, resilience, and service expansion that a like-for-like replacement would deliver. This reduced capacity also limits our ability to effectively meet the organisation's increasing demands and the Board's expectations. The decision was influenced by financial considerations, and while not without impact, it was necessary to ensure we remain within budget and can support longer-term resilience and succession planning.

In year, all mandatory training was up to date, staff objectives were developed and reviewed, staff appraisals were undertaken, and Personal Development Plans (PDP) were in place.

9.2   Performance – Target and Objectives

The Communications Service consistently excelled in delivering high-quality, comprehensive communications to stakeholders, ensuring that key objectives were met with efficiency and professionalism. In addition, others responsible for communication across the organisation continued to successfully achieve their goals, contributing to the overall effectiveness of collaborative efforts.

All core communications functions - encompassing key performance indicators, quality assurance, and quality improvement objectives - were fully delivered. The service not only met all legislative requirements but also achieved financial targets and identified savings, demonstrating strong fiscal responsibility.

These achievements were made while adhering to the core values and principles that the Board sponsors, and that are promoted throughout NHSScotland. The commitment to these values ensured that standards were met, fostering continued success and furthering the impact of our work.

9.3   Service Delivery

The Communications Service maintained a highly proactive approach throughout the year, consistently delivering timely, high-quality work across all areas. This commitment to excellence ensured that each project was carefully managed and tracked through well-maintained action plans.

All communications strategies and policies were regularly reviewed and kept up to date, ensuring their ongoing effectiveness. Supporting documentation was meticulously maintained, with planned reviews scheduled for those documents nearing their end of life. A notable achievement was the development of the Communications Strategy for 2025/30, which builds on the successes of the 2020/25 strategy, further strengthening our communications framework for the future.

Focus remains on continuously developing the Communications Service to enable the most efficient and impactful use of resources. A key component of this development is building capacity for the future, with a particular emphasis on enhancing resilience, succession planning, and fostering sustainable growth.

Equally important is the need to stay current with and embrace digital technologies and advancements, ensuring that communication channels remain innovative and effective in meeting the needs of stakeholders.

Our strategic approach will ensure that the Communications Service is well-equipped to meet the demands of tomorrow while maintaining its high standards of excellence today.

10   LOOK BACK

Areas of focus in 2024/25 as identified in last year's annual report are shown below together with an update:

- Implement Sharepoint online (new Intranet) – This project is being led nationally; however we are in a state of readiness for when we get the green light to go ahead.
- Develop audio-visual materials – in particular, video – On track for timeline of March 2026.
- Develop a Communications Information Asset Register – This work was paused in light of Website Accessibility Audit and subsequent workload.
- Review DPIAs – Complete. A full review of the existing six DPIAs was undertaken. These were subsequently made obsolete and replaced by four new DPIAs:
- Complete the State Hospital Rebranding – On hold in light of new Forensic Board for Scotland.
- Recruit to ensure staffing establishment of three is maintained – The post will be advertised by Summer 2025.

11.   LOOK FORWARD

Areas of focus in 2025/26 include:

- Implement Sharepoint online (new Intranet).
- Develop a Communications Information Asset Register.
- Develop audio-visual materials – in particular, video.
- Complete the State Hospital Rebranding – On hold in light of new Forensic Board for Scotland.
- Recruit, support and develop the Communications Assistant.
- Continue to develop the Communications Service to enable the most efficient and impactful use of resources.
- Embrace the evolving landscape of digital technology including AI.

Caroline McCarron Chart.PR MICPR
Head of Communications
14 April 2025