

POLICY DOCUMENT

# Communication and Engagement Strategy

## Policy Review Schedule

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Policy Owner: Administrative Director

### Amendment Overview

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2005 - 1.0	24 Nov 2005		Approved by Board	Margot Roberts
2009 - 2.0	23 Nov 2009		Approved by Board	Margot Roberts
2012 - 3.0 (Draft)	12 June 2012	all	Revised and presented to SMT	Margot Roberts
2012 - 3.0 (Draft)	21 June 2012		Presented to Board -agreed further consideration required	Margot Roberts
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2012 - 3.2 (Draft)	14 Dec/2012		Revised and presented to Board	Margot Roberts
2012 – 3.3	24/01/2013		Revised and presented to NIMDTA Board for approval. <b>Approved.</b>	Margot Roberts
2012 – 3.3	22/08/2013	22	Placed in new corporate policy format to include updated 'Role of NIMDTA' and new mission statement.	Linda Craig
2016 – 4.0 (draft)	12/09/2016	all	Updated to reflect new strategic objectives and presented to SMT	Margot Roberts
2016 – 4.0	29/09/2016	all	Presented to Board. Approved subject to completion of an Equality Screening exercise	Margot Roberts

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## **Role of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency**

The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) is an Arm's Length Body sponsored by the Department of Health (DoH) to train postgraduate medical and dental professionals for Northern Ireland. NIMDTA seeks to serve the government, public and patients of Northern Ireland by providing specialist advice, listening to local needs and having the agility to respond to regional requirements.

NIMDTA commissions, promotes and oversees postgraduate medical and dental education and training throughout Northern Ireland. Its role is to attract and appoint individuals of the highest calibre to recognised training posts and programmes to ensure the provision of a highly competent medical and dental workforce with the essential skills to meet the changing needs of the population and health and social care in Northern Ireland.

NIMDTA organises and delivers the recruitment, selection and allocation of doctors and dentists to foundation, core and specialty training programmes and rigorously assesses their performance through annual review and appraisal. NIMDTA manages the quality of postgraduate medical and dental education in HSC Trusts and in general medical and dental practices through learning and development agreements, the receipt of reports, regular meetings, trainee surveys and inspection visits. It works in close partnership with local education providers to ensure that the training and supervision of trainees support the delivery of high quality safe patient care.

NIMDTA recognises and trains clinical and educational supervisors and selects, appoints, trains and develops educational leaders for foundation, core and specialty medical and dental training programmes throughout NI.

NIMDTA is accountable to the General Medical Council (GMC) for ensuring that the standards set by the GMC for medical training, educational structures and processes are achieved. The Postgraduate Medical Dean, as the 'Responsible Officer' for doctors in training, has a statutory role in making recommendations to the GMC to support the revalidation of trainees. Revalidation is the process by which the GMC confirms that doctors are up to date and fit to practice. NIMDTA also works to the standards in the COPDEND framework for the quality development of postgraduate Dental training in the UK.

NIMDTA enhances the standard and safety of patient care through the organisation and delivery of relevant and valued career development for general medical and dental practitioners and dental care professionals. It also supports the career development of general medical practitioners and the requirements for revalidation through the management and delivery of GP appraisal.

NIMDTA aims to use the resources provided to it efficiently, effectively and innovatively. NIMDTA's approach to training is that trainees, trainers and educators should put patients first, should strive for excellence and should be strongly supported in their roles.

## **1. Statement of Purpose**

This Communication and Engagement Strategy is designed to ensure the provision of high quality postgraduate training for doctors and dentists in Northern Ireland through constructive engagement and effective communication with our staff, trainees, trainers, educators, training partners and other stakeholders. We recognise the importance of ensuring that information can be accessed quickly and easily and that our communications are clear, timely and easily understood.

This Communication and Engagement Strategy shows how effective communications can

- help us achieve our organisational objectives
- meet our obligations to listen, inform, consult and involve
- build and maintain understanding about the work that we do
- influence behaviour and perceptions where necessary
- support public involvement in decision making
- support change management
- To engage with other organisations within Health and Social Care (HSC)
- build trust and openness and give stakeholders a say and involvement in the services provided by NIMDTA
- motivate employees and to encourage identification with our aims and values
- combat injurious rumours, speculation and inaccurate media coverage
- improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery

## **3. General Principles for Communication**

NIMDTA's mission statement and core values, as set out in the Strategic Plan for 2016-19, underpin the delivery of the business of NIMDTA. All communications should support the vision of NIMDTA and should always be done in line with certain general principles.

NIMDTA is committed to:

- Acting in an honest, open and transparent fashion
- Working in partnership with other HSC organisations to promote the work of NIMDTA

- Working in partnership with other public sector and voluntary sector organisations to improve patient care
- Communicating in a clear, concise and inclusive manner
- Promoting high quality communications with staff and all stakeholders
- Responding in an effective and timely fashion to media and other enquiries
- Maintaining staff and client confidentiality

## **4. Requests for Information**

All requests for information that fall outside the scope of normal business should be re-directed to the Corporate Services Department ([informationrequest.nimdt@hscni.net](mailto:informationrequest.nimdt@hscni.net)). Requests will be dealt with in accordance with NIMDTA's Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies. If staff members are unclear as to what falls within the scope of normal business they should contact their line manager in the first instance.

All members of staff are bound by a strict duty of confidentiality and any information considered by NIMDTA to be confidential should remain so during their term of employment and on leaving NIMDTA.

## **5. Communicating with the Media**

Calls or requests for information from the media should always be re-directed to the Office of the Chief Executive. Only the Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean or nominated deputy can issue a press release or make a public statement.

## **6. Target Audiences**

NIMDTA needs to communicate internally within the organisation and externally with the public and other stakeholders. These can be identified as follows:

### **Internal**

- Members of the NIMDTA Board
- Staff employed by NIMDTA

- Medical and dental educators acting on behalf of NIMDTA including General Practice Appraisers, GP and Dental Trainers, Heads of School, Training Programme Directors, members of Foundation and Specialty School Boards, members of specialty training committees and other committees of NIMDTA.

## **External**

- Medical students, doctors and dentists
- Educational and clinical supervisors
- Department of Health (DoH)
- HSC organisations - HSC Trusts, HSC Board, Public Health Agency and other Agencies
- Queens University Belfast and other UK Universities
- Regulatory Bodies - General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC), Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)
- Health Education England
- NHS Education for Scotland
- The Wales Deanery
- Royal Colleges
- Training providers
- Staff organisations – BMA, BDA, NIPSA
- Community and voluntary sectors
- The media

## **7. Key Communication Methods**

### **Internal**

It is important that all aspects of NIMDTA's business are communicated clearly to staff and those working on behalf of NIMDTA and that staff understand NIMDTA's core values and aims and are confident in communicating clearly to trainees, partner organisations and other stakeholders.

NIMDTA will use a variety of methods to communicate with its staff and those acting on behalf of NIMDTA. These will include:

- Monthly senior management committee meetings
- Twice-monthly meetings of the Quality Management Group
- Quarterly meetings of the Lead Educators Forum
- Quarterly Departmental Team Leader Meetings
- Quarterly meetings of staff
- Meetings of the Joint Negotiating Forum
- Staff notice board
- Staff handbook
- NIMDTA Intranet
- Use of email communications and intranet to include publication of policies, business and strategic plans and minutes of meetings
- Communications objectives included in the business planning process and in the performance development plans of senior staff
- Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey
- Annual appraisal
- Staff Induction and Training

It is vital that the Board of NIMDTA is included in the communications activity and members are kept informed of all potential risks associated with the business of NIMDTA and the delivery of postgraduate medical and dental education.

The Board will be informed of the work of NIMDTA through reports of members of the Senior Management Committee to:

- Bi-monthly meetings of the NIMDTA Board
- Bi-monthly Board workshops
- Bi-monthly meetings of the Governance and Risk Management Committee
- Quarterly meetings of the Audit Committee
- As required under NIMDTA's Escalation of Risks Policy



## **External**

All information and communications material produced by NIMDTA should be easily accessible to all stakeholders and sectors of the public. Further guidance in relation to this is set out in NIMDTA's Equality Scheme.

Information should be clear and concise and available in other formats on request ie large print, Braille, audio cassette and other languages as appropriate.

Communication with external audiences will be carried out through a variety of methods which include:

- Written and verbal communication including the use of the telephone, video-conferencing, newsletters and emails
- The internet – as well as providing access to information NIMDTA's website will act as a portal to other organisations
- Board meetings – NIMDTA's Board meetings will be open to the public and publicised in the local media
- The use of existing networks – NIMDTA will seek to utilise existing forums for communicating with stakeholders to include:
  - Quarterly meetings of the NI Postgraduate Medical Education Forum
  - Quarterly meetings with the HSC Board/Public Health Agency
  - Annual Learning and Development Agreement (LDA) Reviews with Medical Directors and Directors of Medical Education
  - Quarterly meetings of the Department of Health's Medical Education and Policy Group
  - Quarterly meetings of the Foundation School Board
  - Quarterly meetings with the BMA Junior Doctors Committee
  - Quarterly meetings of the Responsible Officers Forum
  - Quarterly meetings of the Revalidation Delivery Board
  - Strategic and Clinical Academic meetings with Queen's University Belfast
  - NIMDTA representation on Education Committees of HSC Trusts

- Attendance at meetings of the HSC Medical Directors Group
- Attendance at the HSC Chief Executive's Forum (by invitation)
- Publications, reports and information leaflets – documents will be published and circulated to stakeholders and the public. Copies will be made available on request in accordance with NIMDTA's Publication Scheme and the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts
- Deanery visits – NIMDTA will communicate information to the Chief Executives and Medical Directors of Trusts through the use of formal visitations. Good practice will be highlighted and areas for improvement identified. Concerns will be raised in accordance with NIMDTA's Escalation Policy.
- Surveys and questionnaires – these will be used in accordance with NIMDTA's Quality Management Framework to triangulate concerns raised at Deanery Visits or directly with the GMC.
- Service Level Agreements- through the Learning and Development Agreement the requirements for the delivery of postgraduate medical and dental training are clearly stated.
- Induction – NIMDTA will communicate information to foundation trainees via the annual regional induction day. Induction materials will be circulated to all trainees entering a programme of training.
- Appraisal – trainees will have an annual appraisal with their educational supervisors and will be provided with an outcome based on the annual review of competence progression (ARCP)
- Press releases and publications in professional journals – job advertisements and press releases in relation to the business of NIMDTA will be advertised on NIMDTA's website and in the local press and national journals (BMJ, BDJ) as required
- Advertising of medical and dental training opportunities – information on training posts available will be advertised through the BMJ and BDJ, NIMDTA's website and on the College or Deanery website leading on national recruitment.
- HSC Internal Job Trawl – advertisements for job vacancies will be advertised through the HSC internal trawl mechanism housed within the website of the Business Services Organisation
- Social Media – information regarding GP Training will be available to GP trainees through NIMDTA's Twitter account Follow@NIDeaneryGP

## **8. Outcomes from the Communication and Engagement Strategy**

To enable NIMDTA to achieve its ambition for communications the following outcomes are anticipated.

### **Staff Communications**

- Staff feel valued as they are informed, listened to and involved
- The work of the staff is recognised and commended
- Staff are aware of and share in the values, objectives and aims of the organisation and understand their contribution to making these real
- Staff have the opportunity to develop communication skills and have tools available to enable them to share information easily
- Staff feel part of a team where information sharing is essential
- Staff feel supported through organisational change

### **Stakeholder Communications**

- NIMDTA's objectives for the delivery of postgraduate medical and dental education are clearly understood by doctors and dentists in training and those working in partnership with NIMDTA.
- The profile of NIMDTA and the NI Deanery is significantly raised both regionally and nationally
- Maximum benefit is achieved through sharing ideas and best practice
- Through the patient and public involvement (PPI) initiative the public feel informed and engaged in the design and delivery of services

## 9. Strategic and Communication Objectives

Each of NIMDTA's strategic objectives are broken down to demonstrate how operations and communications can contribute to delivering the objectives.

Goals and Strategic Objectives	Communication and Engagement Objectives
<b>To promote excellence in training</b>	
<p>1. To promote the highest standards of professionalism among doctors and dentists in training to enhance patient care and treatment</p>	<p>Ensure trainees are aware of their professional obligations (Trainee Agreement)</p> <p>Ensure trainers are aware of their professional responsibilities (Trainer Agreement)</p> <p>Communicate concerns about the professionalism of NIMDTA educators, trainers and trainees (Transfer of Information process)</p> <p>Communicate to the GMC/GDC any concerns about the Fitness to practise of trainees, trainers or educators</p> <p>Make revalidation recommendations regarding medical trainees to the GMC within required timelines</p> <p>Deliver in partnership with HSC organisations, the GMC and QUB generic skills programmes for Foundation and Specialty (iQuest) trainees</p>
<p>2. To uphold the value of training, trainers and trainees to the HSC</p>	<p>Engage and communicate effectively with the Department of Health and HSC organisations to positively influence the culture of the HSC</p> <p>Publish the achievements of educators, trainers and trainees on the website, in newsletters and in the Annual Quality Report</p> <p>Ensure that named clinical and educational supervisors are validated and recognised in</p>

	<p>their role and are facilitated to achieve their Recognised Trainer status (Achieving Recognition Day)</p>
<p>3. To attract, welcome and retain high calibre trainees</p>	<p>Work in collaboration with the DoH and HSC organisations to attract, welcome, value and retain trainees (VALUED Strategy)</p> <p>Ensure that trainees are provided with information relating to posts available within Foundation, Core and Specialty training programmes and in accordance with the <i>Code of Practice for the Provision of Information for Postgraduate Medical Education</i>.</p> <p>Ensure that the arrangements for recruitment and selection into specialty training are reviewed annually and communicated to trainees (Applicant Handbook)</p> <p>Ensure that trainees are provided with relevant information and materials as part of their induction into a programme of training (Regional Induction and Deanery Welcome events)</p> <p>Ensure the achievements of trainees are celebrated through use of the website, newsletters, annual Quality Report and the NIMDTA Educational Excellence Day</p>
<p>4. To engage constructively with training partners to ensure the provision of high quality postgraduate training for doctors and dentists in NI</p>	<p>Provide for an exchange of information between NIMDTA, the five HSC Trusts, the Public Health Agency and Queen's University, Belfast via regular meetings with the Medical Directors and Directors of Medical Education</p> <p>Ensure all local education providers are aware of their responsibilities and obligations in meeting the standards set out by the regulatory bodies through the Learning and Development agreement and the annual review meetings with HSC Trusts</p> <p>Ensure areas of concern, for improvement and good practice are communicated to Local Education Providers and highlighted in</p>

	<p>Deanery Visit Reports</p> <p>Ensure online reporting on outcomes of action plans and enhanced monitoring as required by the GMC</p>
5. To provide a high standard of regional teaching and maximise the value of study leave funding	<p>Ensure that information is provided to trainees on a timely basis via email, newsletters and the website so they can be released to attend regional teaching events</p> <p>Ensure that all trainees are made aware of the process for the approval and funding of study leave, as identified within the Study Leave Guidelines, on induction and through newsletters and email communication</p>
6. To effectively communicate with, engage and support trainees	<p>Ensure that educators and trainers are provided with the NIMDTA policy document on the Management of Trainees requiring support and that they are equipped with the tools to support trainees experiencing difficulties through the delivery of Trainee Support Workshops, Advanced Trainee Support Days.</p> <p>Enable cross-departmental communication through monthly Internal meetings of the Professional Support Review Group</p> <p>Ensure that trainers provide trainees with encouragement and feedback on their performance and outcomes are communicated at ARCPs.</p> <p>Ensure that opportunities are provided for the trainee voice to be listened to at Deanery Visits and by means of Trainee Surveys, Focus Groups and the Trainee Forum</p> <p>Communicate through the medium of weekly/monthly newsletters (Foundation Weekly Update; Specialty Trainee Newsletter)</p>
7. To enhance academic, research, simulation, leadership and quality improvement opportunities to trainees	<p>Work in partnership with HSC organisations to enhance the opportunities for trainees eg the ADEPT Programme</p> <p>Work in partnership with QUB through the</p>

	<p>Clinical Academic Training Committee to enhance opportunities for Clinical Fellows/Lecturers and Academic F2s</p> <p>Provide an opportunity for trainees to learn about research and present research findings through iQuest and the Annual Research Symposium</p>
8. To develop, support and retain high quality dental and medical trainers	<p>Promote the value of trainers through training events and engagement with HSC organisations</p> <p>Engage with prospective trainers regarding the benefits of participating in training</p> <p>Communicate through the medium of monthly newsletters (Specialty Lead Educator News)</p>
9. To actively participate in workforce planning for the HSC	<p>Nominate NIMDTA representatives on medical workforce planning task teams</p> <p>Ensure workforce plans are shared with the Postgraduate Dean for review and comment</p>
<b>To enhance patient care</b>	
10. To enhance the standard and safety of patient care through the provision of high quality continuing education to trained dental practitioners and dental care professionals	<p>Ensure that training courses and learning opportunities available are communicated to dental practitioners and dental care professionals via the course management system hosted on NIMDTA's website and through marketing materials</p> <p>Ensure that practitioners are provided with an opportunity to assess the educational value of the training provided</p>
11. To enhance the standard and safety of patient care through the provision of high quality career development for general medical professionals	<p>Work collaboratively with HSCB to facilitate requests regarding the career development of GPs (Service Level Agreement with the HSCB)</p>
12. To promote good medical practice, patient safety and to meet the GMC's requirements for revalidation, through GP Appraisal	<p>Work collaboratively with HSCB to support GP appraisal and the revalidation of GPs in accordance with the Communication Protocol and through the provision of twice</p>

	<p>yearly Appraisal Conferences</p> <p>Ensure all GPs on the Performers List are offered an opportunity to undertake an appraisal as communicated via the website and email correspondence from the GP Appraisal team</p>
<p><b>To demonstrate substantive systems of governance and internal control</b></p>	
<p>13. To value, develop support and train our staff</p>	<p>Ensure that all administrative and educator staff are formally inducted through the provision of Induction workshops</p> <p>Ensure that all policies are communicated to staff at induction and as they are reviewed and revised via email and newsletters</p> <p>Ensure all policies are available on the NIMDTA Intranet</p> <p>Ensure staff are aware of the organisational objectives contained within NIMDTA's Strategic and Business Plans through the use of staff workshops</p> <p>Ensure that specific objectives and development needs are identified as part of the annual appraisal process and documented in Personal Development Plans</p> <p>Ensure staff have an opportunity to communicate any concerns through a variety of methods (staff meetings; workshops; staff satisfaction surveys; annual appraisal; Joint Negotiating Forum)</p> <p>Facilitate the training and development of staff through the provision of internal training events and release to attend external training courses</p> <p>Deliver health and well-being events as part of the Staff Development Programme</p>



<p>14. To develop and monitor contingency plans for key operational functions</p>	<p>Communicate contingency plans to staff at team meetings, staff workshops and briefings to ensure business continuity in the absence of key individuals</p>
<p>15. To develop and use technological tools that empower the work of our staff and improve the quality of training</p>	<p>Raise any concerns identified in relation to the service provided and/or the functionality of Finance and HR IT systems through the BSO Customer Forum and SLA monitoring</p> <p>Ensure engagement at a national level in relation to medical and dental recruitment systems and trainee information systems through attendance at national meetings and the use of teleconferencing and videoconferencing</p>
<p>16. To review administrative structures to ensure that skills and knowledge of staff are effectively utilised</p>	<p>Ensure any changes to the organisational structure and job roles are communicated and agreed with staff through the intranet email, newsletter, staff briefings and workshops</p> <p>Ensure staff are aware of the framework for managing and redeploying staff affected by organisational change (intranet, staff handbooks, email, briefings workshops) and ensure that affected staff are supported throughout the process</p> <p>Work in partnership with staff organisations and in collaboration with the Joint Negotiating Forum to ensure any organisational change is managed fairly and consistently and adheres to employment and equality legislation</p>
<p>17. To manage financial allocations within stable, open and transparent financial arrangements</p>	<p>Meet with the BSO Finance team in preparation of the monthly finance report and management accounts</p> <p>Meet with the BSO Finance Team to ensure that the monthly monitoring return is submitted to the DoH in line with the required deadline</p> <p>Escalate to the NIMDTA Board, through meetings with the Chair and verbal and</p>

	<p>written reports to the Board, any concerns or issues identified</p> <p>Ensure staff are aware and understand the importance of complying with NIMDTA's Contract Management and Procurement Policy at induction, through email and staff briefings/workshops</p> <p>Publish the Annual Report and Accounts on the website</p> <p>Ensure contracts and service level agreements with external organisations are subject to review and monitoring and review meetings with HSC Trusts are held annually</p>
<p>18. to continually improve internal controls and monitor the application of these across all functions</p>	<p>Meet with internal and external auditors to agree audit plans and assignments and discuss audit recommendations</p> <p>Co-operate fully with internal and external audits and provide information as required</p> <p>Report to the NIMDTA Board on compliance with audit recommendations and controls assurance standards</p> <p>Report to the NIMDTA Board on progress against business objectives and risks identified</p> <p>Publish Board minutes on the website</p> <p>Meet with DoH Sponsor Branch and Permanent Secretary as required (quarterly bi-lateral meetings; ground clearing meetings; Accountability Reviews)</p> <p>Submit all departmental returns in line with required deadlines</p>
<p>19. To promote a culture of professional excellence and continuous improvement</p>	<p>Involve staff in the business planning process through staff workshops</p> <p>Communicate training opportunities to staff consistent with the staff development programme</p> <p>Share learning through staff workshops and cross-departmental working</p>

<p>20. To promote diversity, equality and patient involvement</p>	<p>Provide training in equality and diversity via the staff development programme</p> <p>Ensure staff are aware of NIMDTA's Equality Scheme and the requirement to comply with the statutory duties in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1198)</p> <p>Produce an Annual Progress Report on Equality for publication on the website</p> <p>Represent NIMDTA on the Regional Equality Forum and HSC PPI Forum</p> <p>Ensure members of recruitment panels are trained in NIMDTA's recruitment and selection procedures and equality and diversity by means of Recruitment and Selection Workshops</p>
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## **10. Review and Monitoring**

This Communication and Engagement Strategy will be reviewed annually by senior management. We will work with staff and partner organisations to maximise the opportunities for sharing information and gaining feedback.

## **11. Risk Assessment**

The Governance and Risk Committee will assess and review risks against the communications objectives and escalate, where appropriate, to the Corporate Risk Register, for consideration by the NIMDTA Board.