

Policy Title	Communications Policy and Procedure
Issue date (m/y)	10/2015
Author	Donna Welburn, Operations Manager
Approved by	Laura Cook, Director
Review date (m/y)	08/2016

Aim

Communication takes on many forms and is fundamental to the success of The Learning Support Centre. Communication is critical when engaging with all stakeholders, which includes internal communication within the team. This outlines the responsibilities, methods, expected response times and records required to maintain good communication. This policy [also details how response times are measured](#).

Principles

- To ensure the team are aware of their responsibilities for maintaining good communication practice;
- To ensure all communication is accessible;
- To ensure the team are fully informed of all relevant activity to allow them to be effective as possible in their role;
- To provide opportunities for staff, clients and stakeholders to feedback and engage in discussion regarding the services The Learning Support Centre offer;
- To ensure that The Learning Support Centre provide a high quality service to all clients;
- Ensure we meet requirements our auditing bodies Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Disabled Students' Allowances Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG);
- To maintain good quality relationships with all The Learning Support Centres stakeholders.

Responsibilities

Senior Management

- To ensure information is made available to all staff and clients in a timely manner and via appropriate channels;
- To ensure line managers have the relevant information available to communicate with their staff effectively;
- [To ensure that Key Performance Indicators \(KPI's\) are met;](#)
- To maintain open channels of two way communication, to listen to feedback and comments from all stakeholders.

Coordinators/Line Managers

- To communicate regularly with their teams, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of their role;

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- To maintain open channels of two way communication with all stakeholders, to listen to feedback and comments, and to keep senior management informed;
- To ensure all staff are maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this policy;
- To ensure all staff are aware when they, the line manager are unavailable and who staff should to report to in their absence;
- To ensure that communication turnaround times are met and any issues are reviewed and resolved to maintain effective communication;
- To meet targets relating to KPI's;
- To monitor and manage KPI's of the support team by providing reports generated from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system at the quarterly quality assurance meetings. The Operations Manager is responsible for managing the work flow of the team to ensure KPI's are met to agreed levels, as stated in the Strategic Plan;
- In relation to students funded by Disabled Students' Allowances Support Coordinators should email the Institution to notify them of the support being provided on site.
- To identify and raise any communication issues with senior management.

Support staff

- To contact students within 24 hours of referral to introduce yourself and confirm first appointment;
- To be informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role;
- To maintain good communication practice in accordance with this policy;
- To ensure all communication is accessible, utilising the Accessible Communications Format doc.
- To use open channels of two way communication to keep line managers and clients informed;
- To communicate with colleagues across The Learning Support Centre;
- To communicate politely, clearly and promptly with all stakeholders.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

To manage client communication The Learning Support Centre use a CRM system. This is a holistic approach which supports communication with clients, it allows the below information to be stored in one place.

- Email correspondence;
- Notes – phone conversations, client feedback;
- Compliments and Complaints;
- Paperwork – Assessment documentation, work carried out with support staff.

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Communication Tools

Email

- Email is the most common method of communication. Email can be over used therefore other methods should be considered where possible.
- The weekly email to all staff allows messages to go out to the support team in one email per week
- All part-time members of the team have an out of office response set up to make contacts aware that there may be a delay in response due to their availability.
- In absence due to sickness or leave an out of office response should always be set up with an alternative contact.
- All emails should be responded to within 1 working day, if the response will take longer than 1 working day a response of acknowledgement should be given.

Phone

- The Learning Support Centre have a halt system on their phone network that allows calls to divert to additional phones within the office if the front line member of the team is on a call. The office team are all required to take phone calls and all phone calls should always be answered by the office team unless dealing with a client face to face.
- Calls should be taken and immediately directed to the relevant expert, when the expert is not available a clear concise message should be taken.
- When taking a message, a realistic time should be given for a call back, the message taken should include the date and time the call was taken, the date and time in which was agreed the contact would get a call back if given, and the best time to make contact. If the promise of a call back is made for example on the same day ensure that this is made clear to the recipient of the message. All phone messages should be emailed.
- Coordinators managing support and dealing with urgent enquiries have mobile phones to support response times and to divert calls directly. The same turnaround time is expected.
- There is an out of hours' phone which supports staff and clients in emergencies. For example, a personal carer is unable to attend to a client in the evening and cover is required or a safeguarding situation has arisen.

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LSC Hub – social media platform

- The LSC Hub is our own social media platform it will act as a communication tool to support sharing of good practice and support the team culture that has made The Learning Support Centre successful. This is a new initiative and we envisage it replacing email long term.
- The LSC Hub can be accessed via an app on android, apple or windows devices or via a desktop.
- There are geographical groups and role specific groups.

Web

- The website is a source of information to all stakeholders
- The website contains news items, events and links to useful information for staff and clients
- Staff are encouraged to use the staff portal to access information and resources required for their role
- The website allows stakeholders to make enquires these are automatically emailed to info@learningsupportcentre.com

Social Media

The learning support centre use a range of social media platforms to communicate news and events to stakeholders. This is monitored and allocated members of the team manage this.

Printed Material

All printed material is required to follow the document procedure and be approved my senior management.

The Learning Support Centre is conscious of its carbon footprint and ask team members to only communicate via printed materials when other methods of communication are not appropriate.

Handbooks and Policies

All documents are reviewed annually to ensure that the information that is communicated to stakeholders is up to date and relevant to the reader.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), Work Plans and Progress Logs

Working documents used with clients are reviewed every session by their support tutor and or mentor. A progress review occurs at least every 3 months to ensure that support is being reviewed regularly. This

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supports the identification of any changes in the clients support requirements and supports the communication between support worker and client with regards to the support provided and outcomes set.

Professionalism in communication

- All staff are reminded that they are representing The Learning Support Centre and should ensure appropriate content when communicating on The Learning Support Centre’s behalf;
- All staff should ensure appropriate response times are adhered to when communicating, particularly via email and telephone.

Response times

The below are required response times set out by The Learning Support Centre and all staff are asked to adhere to this:

DSA QAF	Communication	Turnaround time	Action	Allocated	Monitored
	Email enquiry	1 working day 3 working days	Acknowledge To complete	All staff	CRM reports submitted at QA meeting for Operations Manager to monitor and follow up with appropriate action.
	Telephone enquiry	1 working day 3 working days	Acknowledge To complete	All staff	
*	Responding to SFE, DSA-QAG, Department of Education	1 working day 5 working days	Acknowledge To complete	Office team	
*	Request for a quotation	1 working day	Quote returned	Office staff	
	Complaint acknowledgement	1 working day	Acknowledge receipt and refer to policy for further action	All staff	
*	Referral for support	1 working day	Contact referred client	Office team	
*	Booking support sessions	between 24 hours and 7 days in advance	Confirm session	Coordinators Study Skills Tutors and Specialist Mentors	
*	Work plan and ILP reviews	At lease every 3 months	Review ILP and Work Plan	Study Skills Tutors and Specialist Mentors	

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*	A client terminates support	10 working days	Support Coordinator to inform funding body via the Finance Officer.	Support Worker, Study Skills Tutor, Special Mentor, Finance Officer	
*	Request for support from a needs assessor	1 working day	Confirm capacity to deliver support	Coordinators, Office team	
*	Change in rates	Submit from 20-25 th each quarter	Email DSA QAG publish changes on the 1 st working day of each quarter,	Director, Operations Manager	
*	Student terminates support	10 working days	Support team member to alert their Support Coordinator immediately via email, and Support Coordinator to email funding body.	Support Coordinators and Support Team	

Contact logs and auditing

- All contact is logged on the CRM system so that colleagues can see previous contact made with clients and so that an audit trail is provided;
- Staff that do not work in the office are required to complete timesheets accurately;
- Response times will be monitored monthly and action taken where response times are not being met;
- If there is contact that is not appropriate to communicate on a timesheet, staff are asked to contact their coordinator/line manager to ensure the information is added to the CRM system. The best method is via email as this can be attached directly to the client's record.

Account management and feedback

All clients (HEI, FEI, Employer, Apprentice Provider or Charity) will have an assigned Support Coordinator and Account Manager from the Senior Management Team (SMT). Accounts will be reviewed at the Senior Management Team monthly meetings, with all contact reported in the SMT Review Report Template.

Coordinators manage day to day running of accounts and have direct communications with the institutions disability team, this communication is recorded on the CRM system.

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Account Managers offer face to face review meetings with disability services staff September, January and May, with a summary email to be sent to attendees 48 hours following the meeting. If a face to face meeting is not possible a phone call to the head of service must be made, a summary email sent to the head of service within 48 hours.

Provide written reports in January and May containing feedback collated from students and recommendations on developing the service.

Related Documents

- Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Protection Guide for Staff
- Document Procedure
- Cancellation and Failure to attend Policy
- Missed Session Management Procedure
- Website content Policy
- LSC Hub User Guide
- Accessible Communications Format
- Timesheet Policy
- Strategic Plan
- SMT Review report template.