

Policy Title	Communications and Engagement Policy and Procedure
Issue date (m/y)	10/2015
Author	Donna Welburn, Operations Manager
Approved by	Laura Cook, Director
Review date (m/y)	03/2019

Aim

Communication in its diverse forms is fundamental to the success of The Learning Support Centre. It is critical when engaging with all stakeholders, and includes internal communication within the team. This policy outlines the responsibilities, methods, expected response times and the record keeping required to maintain effective communication. It also details how response times are measured.

Principles

- To ensure the team are aware of their responsibilities for maintaining effective communication practice
- To ensure all communication is accessible
- To ensure the team are fully informed of all relevant activities to allow them to be as effective as possible in their roles
- To provide opportunities for staff, clients and stakeholders to feed-back and engage in discussion regarding the services offered by The Learning Support Centre
- To ensure that The Learning Support Centre provides a high-quality service to all clients
- To ensure the requirements of The Learning Support Centre's auditing bodies, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Disabled Students' Allowances Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG), are adhered to.
- To maintain excellent quality relationships with all The Learning Support Centre's stakeholders.

Responsibilities

Senior Management

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

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Coordinators/Line Managers

- To communicate regularly with their teams, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the staff member's role/s
- 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 effective communication practice in accordance with this policy
- To ensure all staff are aware of who they report to in the absence of their line manager
- To ensure that communication turnaround times are met, and any issues identified are reviewed and resolved
- To ensure that students stated preferred methods of communication are confirmed and adhered to
- To ensure targets relating to KPIs are met
- To monitor and manage the KPIs 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 KPIs are met to agreed levels, as stated in the Strategic Plan.
- Support Coordinators to email institutions to notify them of the support being provided on site to DSAs funded students. All institutions will have a file on the CRM system, so an audit trail of communication is available on request
- Support coordinators to monthly review and contact non-engaging students
- Staff should not communicate with client's parents unless consent is in place
- To be creative and proactive in their approach to the engagement and retention of students
- To address issues of poor engagement with individual support team members
- 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 the first appointment
- To copy your coordinator into this email so it can be saved onto the student's file; please copy your coordinator into all your booking confirmation emails if not using the electronic time sheeting app. If using the electronic timesheet system, booking confirmation emails will be generated via email automatically.

Booking emails need to include.

1. Appointment date
2. Appointment time

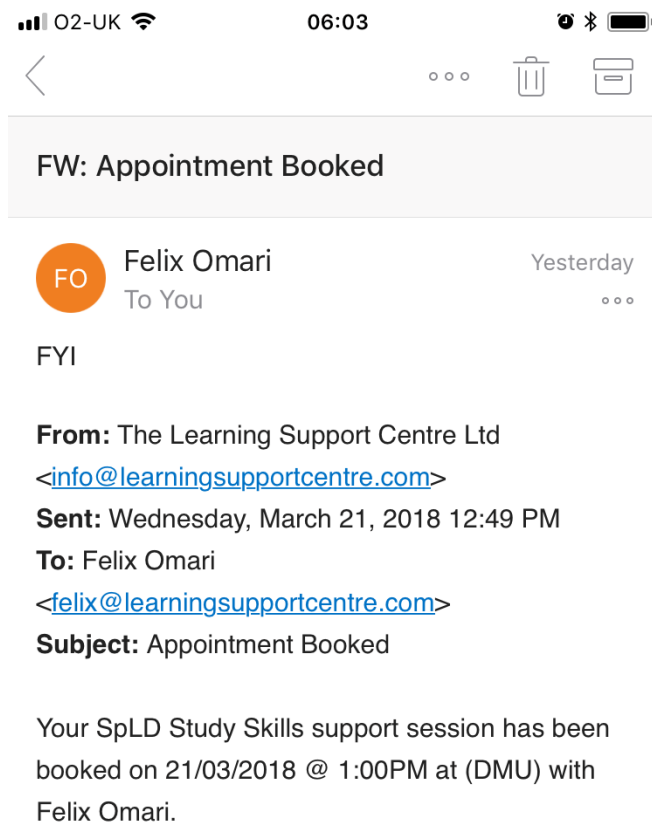
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3. Location
4. Type of support
5. Support staff name

Example of booking confirmation generated by the electronic time sheeting system.

Support Coordinators make bookings for all timetabled support, and domestic and personal care support.

This email is generated from the support staff member's user login_email where case-holding.



- To be informed and ensure access to relevant information to be as effective as possible in their role
- To maintain effective communication practice in accordance with this policy
- To ensure all communication is accessible, utilising the [Accessible Communications Format](#)

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- 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
- To ensure students' preferred methods of communication are confirmed and adhered to
- Specialist mentors and study skills tutors will submit Work Plans and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) respectively after completion of the first session. Work Plans and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) need to then be reviewed at three monthly intervals. Your Coordinator will check your administration at supervision. Staff must sign, ensure the student signs and date all Work Plans and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) prior to submission. All relevant paper work can be accessed via the staff portal. Staff using the electronic time sheeting system can submit ILPs and Work Plans electronically via the checklist facility
- Engagement - if a student has not engaged in support for a two week period support staff must notify their line manager.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

To manage client communication The Learning Support Centre, use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This is a holistic approach which supports communication with clients. It allows the following information to be stored in one place.

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

Communication Tools

Email

- Email is the most usual method of communication. Email can be over-used, therefore other methods should be considered where possible
- The Learning Support Centre's weekly email, 'The Voice' is sent to all staff and allows messages to be communicated 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 work pattern
- When staff are absent, due to sickness or leave, an out of office response should always be set up with an alternative contact

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- All emails should be responded to within one working day. If the response will take longer than one working day a response of acknowledgement should be given.

Phone

- The Learning Support Centre has a 'halt system' on the 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 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, a name and contact number must be recorded, the message taken should include the date and time the call was taken and the date and time for the agreed call back. All phone messages should be emailed promptly to the recipient
- Coordinators managing support and dealing with urgent enquiries have mobile phones to support response times and to divert calls directly.
- 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.

LSC Hub – social media platform

- The LSC Hub is our own social media platform. It is a communication tool to support sharing of good practice and support the team culture that has made The Learning Support Centre successful. In the long term we envisage it replacing email communication
- 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 for 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. Gareth Ravalde will email you your unique login for the staff portal. Please email gareth@learningsupportcentre.com with any access issues.

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- The website allows stakeholders to make enquiries. These are automatically emailed to info@learningsupportcentre.com.

Social Media

- The Learning Support Centre uses a range of social media platforms to communicate news and events to stakeholders. This is monitored and managed by allocated team members.
- The document procedure and style guide must be followed when producing printed material and be approved by senior management before circulation
- The Learning Support Centre is conscious of its carbon footprint and requests that team members only communicate using printed materials when other methods of communication are not appropriate.

Handbooks and Policies

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

Contact logs and auditing

- All client contact is logged on the CRM system so that colleagues can see previous contacts made and an audit trail is recorded
- Staff who 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 by email as this can be attached directly to the client's record.

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
- Staff should **not** use social media to communicate with students
- All staff should familiarise themselves with the company's style guide to ensure consistency of communication

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- All staff should ensure appropriate response times are adhered to when communicating, particularly by 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 the 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 least every 3 months	Review ILP and Work Plan	Study Skills Tutors and Specialist Mentors	
*	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 to publish changes on the 1 st working day of each quarter	Director, Operations Manager	
*	Student terminates	10 working	Support team	Support	

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support	days	member to alert their Support Coordinator immediately by email, and Support Coordinator to email funding body.	Coordinators and Support Team	
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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 monthly quality meetings, with all contact reported in the Communications Review Report Template.

Coordinators manage day to day running of accounts and have direct communications with the institutions' disability teams and HR teams. These communications are recorded on the CRM system.

Account Managers offer face to face review meetings with disability services staff in 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 and a summary email sent to the head of service within 48 hours.

Account Managers to 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
- [ICO Guide to General Data Protection Regulations](#)
- Document Procedure
- Cancellation and Failure to attend Policy
- Missed Session Management Procedure
- Website content Policy
- LSC Hub User Guide
- [Accessible Communications Format](#)

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- Timesheet Policy
- Strategic Plan
- SMT Review report template.