



Interim Management  
and Support

# Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan

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# Document Management

## Revision history

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## Reviewers

This document must be reviewed by the following people:

Reviewer name	Title	Date	Version
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Karen Robinson	Deputy Director Specialist Workforce Supply and NHS Interim Management Support (NHS IMAS)	09/02/2024	1.0

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This document must be approved by the following people:

Name	Signature	Title	Date	Version
Karen Robinson		Deputy Director Specialist Workforce Supply and NHS Interim Management Support (NHS IMAS)	09/02/2024	1.0

## Document control

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# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Scope	4
2.2 Timeframe	4
<b>3. Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Strategic Approach</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Key Stakeholder Messages</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Communication Methods</b>	<b>8</b>
7.1 Delivery	9
7.2 Governance	10
<b>8. Risks</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9. Evaluation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix A. Key Stakeholder Messages</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix B. Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan</b>	<b>14</b>

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of the stakeholder engagement and communications plan is to describe the communications and engagement activity for NHS Interim Management and Support (NHS IMAS) and establish how the service will manage its relationships with stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcome.

The stakeholder engagement and communications plan has been developed to identify and implement communications activities that will support the achievement of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) and the [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#) through the NHS IMAS Business Plan objectives.

The plan identifies, analyses and prioritises the programme's stakeholders and defines the objectives of the communications and stakeholder engagement activity.

Included is a detailed communications and stakeholder engagement action plan which describes:

- What activities will be undertaken;
- When they will be undertaken; and
- Who is responsible for delivering these activities.

## 2. Background

The purpose of NHS IMAS is to offer NHS organisations that need short- or medium-term support, the means to access the management expertise that exists throughout the NHS: 'By the NHS, for the NHS'.

NHS IMAS has several talent pools made up of experienced senior NHS managers and carefully selected independent consultants who undertake assignments to support NHS organisations.

A small core team at NHS IMAS is dedicated to building the NHS talent pool and managing assignments, they are the key point of contact for both the client and the NHS IMAS pool member.

NHS IMAS is funded by NHS England (NHSE) and is hosted by the Workforce, Training and Education Directorate as an independent resource to support all NHS organisations in England.

NHS IMAS is responsible for three key areas, utilising its systems and processes to deliver for NHS England and the NHS as a whole:

- **NHS IMAS Core Offer:** Provide senior short- or medium-term interim management and support to resource the NHS, including NHS Trusts, Integrated Care Systems, NHS England, Regional teams, Arm's Length Bodies, Commissioning Support Units and other Health and Social Care related organisations.
- **Talent Management:** Provide support to all seven regions of NHS England, specialist NHSE Registers and senior NHS leaders to develop talent within the NHS.
- **Flexible Resourcing for NHS England:** Work in collaboration with NHSE HR & OD on the flexible resourcing operating model for NHSE to meet the resource needs of the organisation to fulfil the needs of organisational priorities.

## 2.1 Scope

The scope of this plan includes all anticipated communications and engagement across NHS IMAS, along with associated stakeholders.

## 2.2 Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the overall NHS IMAS business plan and organisational priorities. This document will be reviewed in line with the timescales of deliverables identified in the five-year strategy document which is in development.

# 3. Aim and Objectives

The objectives of this stakeholder engagement and communications plan are to:

- Promote the services offered by NHS IMAS.
- Encourage NHS organisations to use NHS IMAS in the first instance when they have senior (Agenda for Change band 8d and above) interim management and support requirements.
- To raise awareness of developmental benefits for NHS staff at Agenda for Change band 8d and above (or those at an 8c ready to move into an 8d role) to register with NHS IMAS.
- Secure NHS IMAS as the preferred option in supporting NHS organisations to develop regional talent programmes.

- Sharing widely with NHS organisations the benefits and outcomes of using NHS IMAS.

This plan will support the delivery of the above objectives through undertaking specific NHS IMAS communication related procedures, which include:

- Establishment of a detailed project plan which will include key milestone deliverables and timescales to ensure transparency of outputs.
- Robust ISO Quality and Environmental Management Systems to ensure NHS IMAS continually improves its services through use of the business management system, making changes as appropriate.
- Production of a comprehensive stakeholder map to ensure clear, consistent, proactive engagement.
- Robust risk management to ensure associated risks affecting NHS IMAS are proactively managed and wherever necessary escalated accordingly.

## 4. Strategic approach

The strategic approach is based on a SWOT analysis and considers short, medium and longer term ambitions and activity.

### Short term

- To reinforce NHS IMAS' 'strengths' in communications to target audiences and stakeholders.
- To develop content and message creation and testing.
- To align differentiated messaging and engagement with stakeholder groups identified through stakeholder mapping.
- To have a targeted approach with the NHS England North East and Yorkshire SMT, alongside developing the regional model approach.

### Medium term

- Promotional activity across all regional SMTs following initial engagement with the North East and Yorkshire region, building on learning gained. A focus on addressing weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis.
- To review and identify areas to strengthen NHS IMAS' visual identity and develop a "campaign" approach to build client awareness.
- To review and identify areas to improve or re-focus communications materials.

- To conduct channel analysis based on available metrics to identify priority channels.
- To maintain and strengthen contact with talent pool members by reviewing current activity and identifying opportunities, such as scoping an e-newsletter (including editorial policy, content generation, editors, writers etc.); offering surgery style webinars; providing CPD learning opportunities.

### **Longer term**

- To exploit opportunities and plan to enter new markets.
- To identify future NHS leadership needs and consider how NHS IMAS can adapt its strategy and service offer.
- To establish what skills the NHS will need in the future and identify how NHS IMAS can help to meet those needs.

## **5. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis**

The nature of the NHS IMAS business model means that a wide range of stakeholders are directly involved, and it is therefore imperative to ensure that they are all appropriately engaged with. A comprehensive stakeholder map is in place and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with the overall NHS IMAS business plan and priorities.

The following list aims to illustrate who the key stakeholders are and in which context. Key audiences include:

**NHS organisations** (i.e. NHS Trusts, Integrated Care Systems, NHS England, Regional Teams, Arm's Length Bodies, Commissioning Support Units and other Health and Social Care related organisations)

- to encourage them to use NHS IMAS for interim and consultancy support and to support them on their wider talent programmes;
- to encourage senior staff to register with NHS IMAS as NHS pool members;
- to provide tailored support to specific teams and programmes of work including acute and mental health improvement support, HR investigations, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Exceptional Leaders Network and other specialist registers; and

- to offer coaching and mentoring opportunities targeted at specific groups of senior staff including Chairs, Chief Executives and Operational leaders.

### **Regional Talent Management Boards / teams**

- to encourage and promote the use of NHS IMAS for support, expertise and management of bespoke talent pools, enquiries and assignments.

### **Senior NHS managers**

- to encourage them to use NHS IMAS for interim and consultancy support;
- to encourage them or their staff to join the NHS IMAS pool; and
- NHS staff with specific skills and experience that could undertake assignments that NHS IMAS has identified as being 'hard to fill'.

### **NHS England and Flexible Resourcing colleagues**

- to support the HR & OD Directorate to develop and operate a flexible approach to staff deployment within NHS England to enable it to meet organisational priorities;
- to encourage them to use NHS IMAS for any internal interim and consultancy requirements; and
- to work closely with HR & OD colleagues to join up and refine policy and processes to support Flexible Resourcing across the organisation, including the Regions;

### **NHS IMAS Partners and Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) Members**

- to keep them updated on NHS IMAS business and progress;
- to support them in their duty to act as ambassadors for NHS IMAS to senior leaders in NHS organisations;
- to encourage them to recommend experienced individuals to join the NHS IMAS pool;
- to encourage them to coach and mentor pool members where appropriate;
- to encourage them to participate in presenting informative webinars for NHS IMAS pool members; and
- to use their skills, knowledge, experience and expertise to enhance the development of NHS IMAS' offer to organisations and individuals.

### **NHS IMAS pool members**

- to keep them updated on NHS IMAS business;
- to make them aware of training and development opportunities;
- to ensure their information is up to date; and



- to encourage them to recommend experienced individuals to join the NHS IMAS pool.

### **Experienced independent consultants**

- to encourage them to join the NHS IMAS pool; and
- to keep those who are already pool members informed of NHS IMAS' activities and developments.

## **6. Key Stakeholder Messages**

The overall messages that NHS IMAS wishes to tell its stakeholders are:

- NHS IMAS offers NHS organisations that need short or medium-term support, the means to access the management expertise that exists throughout the NHS: 'By the NHS, for the NHS'.
- NHS IMAS offers current and potential pool members a comprehensive framework to access the wide variety of roles and opportunities that are available across the whole health and social care sector, and the opportunity to take part in short or medium-term assignments with continued support and assistance from the NHS IMAS team throughout the assignment.

To ensure consistent messages to our stakeholders, there are key messages for the specific stakeholders in appendix A.

## **7. Communication Methods**

Key NHS IMAS communication and engagement activities are:

- Regular communications on the NHS IMAS website and social media platforms including Twitter and LinkedIn - posting regularly to raise awareness of NHS IMAS and its services and to encourage new high-quality pool members to register.
- Publication in internal and external NHS bulletins and staff network newsletters, as appropriate, including specialty specific bulletins where these are available and appropriate.
- Utilisation of the electronic corporate brochure to publicise NHS IMAS' key messages to target stakeholders.
- Delivery of Workshops and Presentations to Regions, ICBs and Providers to increase the profile of NHS IMAS.

- Development of appropriate partnerships with other NHS organisations and teams (such as NHS Providers, NHS Employers and Commissioning Support Units).
- Where appropriate, attend conferences and networking events to promote NHS IMAS services.
- Invite NHS IMAS' network of Partners to act as ambassadors and market NHS IMAS across the wider NHS.
- Raise awareness of NHS IMAS and its core offer through the NHS England Flexible Resourcing function.
- Encourage NHS IMAS' network of Partners to come to NHS IMAS with support requests and recommend colleagues who may be suitable to join the pool.
- Development and maintenance of an NHS IMAS FutureNHS Collaboration platform to provide a workspace for pool members and NHS organisations to interact.
- “Word of mouth” and reputation are powerful communications tools. The NHS IMAS team will proactively encourage clients and pool members to recommend NHS IMAS to colleagues and to encourage senior NHS staff to apply to join the pool.
- All opportunities will be considered and exploited as they arise to market NHS IMAS through new channels, such as networks, conferences and events, presentation opportunities and communication bulletins.
- Routinely review closed enquiries to confirm the ‘hard to fill’ roles to inform targeted communications to encourage NHS staff with those skills to apply to join the talent pool.
- Working with NHS England Programmes who require bespoke support and registers in line with the specialist nature of their work.
- NHS IMAS will also continue to proactively support the Regional and National Talent Management Programmes, within NHS England. This includes, acting as a key partner and working closely with the Talent Management teams in the seven NHS regions to support the management and deployment of aspirant Directors.
- Deliver the ninth cohort of Introduction to Consultancy and Facilitation Skills Blended Learning programme for NHS pool members.
- Identify and deliver web-based training and development webinars for all pool members.
- Make available coaching and mentoring to NHS pool members through Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Schemes (Chair and Chief Executives and Proud2BOps Networks).

## 7.1 Delivery

There is a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan (which includes pool member recruitment) that describes the activities that NHS IMAS will undertake to specifically encourage NHS staff to apply to join the talent pool (see appendix B).

The NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan and will be supported by the core team as appropriate.

## 7.2 Governance

The governance of NHS IMAS is through a Strategic Advisory Board that represents the broad spectrum of NHS client organisations.

## 8. Risks

A dedicated NHS IMAS risk register is in place to ensure risks, issues, assumptions, and dependencies are appropriately managed and monitored.

## 9. Evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of this plan and supporting approach will be undertaken by the NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead on an ongoing basis.

# Appendix A

## Key Stakeholder Messages

Key messages for the specific audiences are:

### **a. For NHS organisations**

- i. NHS IMAS does not charge any fees for using its services.
- ii. NHS IMAS pool members are established, experienced and credible amongst their peers and the organisations they work with. Independent and NHS pool members are re-referenced every two years. This ensures high quality candidates are available.
- iii. Support is tailored to the needs of the client and can include elements of interim short- or medium-term capacity and capability; consultancy to offer advice and expertise or to lead a specific piece of work; and supporting whole organisational renewal by deploying and supporting key individuals.
- iv. For each assignment, the client is allocated a Resourcing Lead from the NHS IMAS team who will remain in contact throughout the assignment to ensure it is progressing well against the agreed scope and objectives.
- v. Opportunity to grow and develop local talent, whilst enabling their staff to share good practice and bring learning back to the organisation.
- vi. NHS IMAS can carry out bespoke work including the development of specialist registers to help organisations run their talent programmes.

### **b. For Regional and National Talent Management Boards**

- i. NHS IMAS can provide bespoke support and expertise to roll out Talent Management Programmes across all seven regions in England.
- ii. NHS IMAS has 16 years' experience in profiling pool members, storing information usefully on a bespoke database; scoping assignments intelligently and supporting pool members and client organisations to ensure the assignment is successful.
- iii. Support is tailored to the needs of the client and can include elements of interim short- or medium-term capacity and capability; consultancy to offer advice and expertise or to lead a specific piece of work; and supporting whole organisational renewal by deploying and supporting key individuals.
- iv. For each assignment, the client is allocated a Resourcing Lead from the NHS IMAS team who will remain in contact throughout the assignment to ensure it is progressing well against the agreed scope and objectives.

- v. NHS IMAS will be the vehicle for matching individuals to assignments, tracking and managing the deployment of this resource and ensuring the scope of each assignment is agreed.
- vi. Opportunity to grow and develop local talent, whilst enabling their staff to share good practice and bring learning back to the organisation.
- vii. Bespoke management reporting arrangements can be put into place by NHS IMAS.

**c. For Senior NHS managers and NHS IMAS pool members**

- i. NHS IMAS will always prioritise using NHS pool members before considering independent pool members for an assignment.
- ii. All NHS IMAS pool members on assignment will receive regular contact from their dedicated Resourcing Lead to support them through any challenges on the assignment.
- iii. Other support and development is available such as a coach or mentor, exclusive access for NHS pool members to our accredited course - Introduction to Consultancy and Facilitation Skills, access to NHS Elect courses covering a wide range of areas, and invitations to regular learning webinars on topical areas within the NHS.
- iv. NHS IMAS pool members have access to a wide network of senior managers across the NHS, whilst having the opportunities to gain broader, new experiences, and the prospect of developing their career aspirations.

**d. For NHS England Flexible Resourcing colleagues**

- i. NHS IMAS will work in collaboration with HR & OD colleagues to join up individual systems to create a more cohesive methodology for deploying staff internally.
- ii. NHS IMAS will work in collaboration with HR & OD colleagues to develop policy and processes to support Flexible Resourcing across the organisation, including the seven Regions.

**e. For NHS staff with specific skills and experience**

- i. In addition to the benefits listed for Senior NHS managers and NHS IMAS pool members, NHS IMAS can support NHS staff with specific skills and experience to share their expertise in different parts of the NHS.

**f. For NHS IMAS Partners and SAB members**

- i. NHS IMAS Partners can help develop local NHS talent by supporting their staff to join the pool, supporting them on assignments and providing coaching or mentoring support for NHS pool members.

- ii. An opportunity to share their personal insight into the expertise, experience and challenges facing NHS leaders, whilst inspiring NHS IMAS pool members through web-based NHS IMAS Partner events.

**g. For experienced independent consultants**

- i. All NHS IMAS pool members on assignment will receive regular contact from their dedicated Resourcing Lead to support them through any challenges on the assignment.
- ii. Other support and development is available to independent pool members including invitations to regular learning webinars on topical areas within the NHS.

## Appendix B Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan

The following table summarises the required actions to implement the content of the NHS IMAS communications plan.

Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Deadline
Maintain and raise the profile of NHS IMAS on Twitter.	All audience groups as listed in table above	Tweet via the NHS IMAS account at least three times per week through a planned and varied social media schedule.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	Ongoing throughout the year.
Maintain and raise the profile of NHS IMAS on LinkedIn.	All audience groups as listed in table above	Post via LinkedIn account at least three times per week through a planned and varied social media schedule.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	Ongoing throughout the year.
Maintain and raise the profile of NHS IMAS on the NHS IMAS website.	All audience groups as listed in table above	To publish regular updates on the NHS IMAS website. Continuously review and update the NHS IMAS website content to ensure it is relevant and up to date.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead (Articles to be provided by all NHS IMAS team members)	Ongoing throughout the year.
Maintain an NHS IMAS Intranet page within NHS England SharePoint Hub.	Pool Members, NHS England staff and Flexible Resourcing colleagues	Maintain and update a point of contact page detailing NHS IMAS business and link to NHS IMAS website and other communications channels.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead / Business Support	Ongoing throughout the year.
Utilise the NHS IMAS electronic corporate brochure.	Pool members, NHS organisations and clients	The NHS IMAS corporate brochure to be widely used, to market NHS IMAS, recruit NHS pool members and feature how it can support the NHS.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	Ongoing throughout the year.
Web-based training, development opportunities and Partner webinars to be	Pool members and Partners	At least six web-based training / development events to be held throughout the year.	NHS IMAS Pool Member Development Lead	31 March 2025.

Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Deadline
identified and delivered to pool members and Partners.		Activities will be communicated via channels listed above.		
Act as key partner with NHS England for the Talent Management Programmes providing expertise and support for managing the specialist pool, enquiries and assignments.	NHS pool members, NHS organisations and clients, Regional Talent Management Programmes	Proactively support the development and management for Regional Talent Management Programmes across the NHS in England.	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / Head of NHS IMAS	Ongoing throughout the year.
Blended Learning consultancy course: 'An introduction to consultancy and facilitation skills'.	Pool members	Ninth cohort of delegates to have successfully completed the blended learning consultancy course. Activities and results of feedback / evaluation will be communicated as appropriate via channels listed above.	NHS IMAS Pool Member Development Portfolio Lead	31 March 2025.
"Word of mouth" communications.	Pool members, clients and Partners	All team members will proactively encourage clients and pool members to recommend NHS IMAS to colleagues.	All NHS IMAS team members	Ongoing throughout the year.
Coaching and mentoring.	Pool members	To continue to market the coaching and mentoring support that NHS IMAS can provide, including specific schemes (Chair and Chief Executive and Proud2BOps). This support will be communicated via channels listed above and with NHS IMAS NHS pool members, as appropriate, as they start new assignments.	NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads	Ongoing throughout the year.



Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Deadline
Continue to review 'hard to fill' enquiries.	Pool members, clients and Partners	This continuous review will help us understand the skillsets that are underrepresented within the NHS IMAS talent pool.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead / Pool Member	Ongoing throughout the year.
Develop and maintain an NHS IMAS FutureNHS collaboration platform.	Pool members, clients and other relevant stakeholders	A platform to enable collaboration and information sharing.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	31 July 2024.
Delivery of Workshops and Presentations.	Regions, ICBs and Provider organisations	To share key messages about NHS IMAS and its purpose and to raise its profile across the system.	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / Head of NHS IMAS	Ongoing throughout the year.
Attendance at key workforce events and conferences.	Potential clients and pool members	To provide opportunities for networking with potential clients and pool members and to share information about NHS IMAS.	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / Head of NHS IMAS	Ongoing throughout the year.