

Communications and Media Policy

Revision History

Action (Creation, Revision, Review)	Effective Date	Changes/Approvals
Creation	01.01.2021	Approved

Related Documents

Related procedures, forms, and other support documents enforce, maintain, and verify policy compliance. These procedures and forms support this policy: Document Name	Document Type
Code of Conduct for Board of Directors, Employees and Volunteers	Policy
Social Media Policy	Policy
Information Governance Policy Privacy Notice	Policy
Complaints Policy	Policy
Equality & Diversity Policy	Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 BfN recognises that effective internal and external communication helps our stakeholders to understand our mission, values and overall organisational objectives. This policy outlines BfN's communications policies in a range of specific areas –generally, internally, to stakeholders and with the media. The policy outlines the approach on communications with a variety of audiences, through diverse channels, and advises employees on BfN's communications approach, requirements and protocols.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support good internal and external communication and show that effective communication can help BfN to:

- Engage effectively with all stakeholders
- Demonstrate the success of our work
- Ensure people understand what we do
- Change behaviour and perceptions where necessary
- Demonstrate that we are well-governed and well-managed
- Build our supporter base and fundraise effectively

1.3 BfN is committed to equality and diversity and is applying this commitment across all of our policies. Equality and diversity is about our commitment to be inclusive, fair and equitable to all the mothers and families we support, our volunteers and staff. It is about listening and responding to all our diverse communities. Equality and diversity is central to how we communicate, listen to, treat and engage with our stakeholders and support them to access support. In all our communications we will respect equality and diversity as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

2. Policy Statement

BfN's communications activity should:

- Be open and honest
- Respect and uphold equality and diversity
- Give clear, accurate and consistent messages, linked to our vision and values
- Be relevant, accurate, sensitive and timely
- Engage meaningfully with stakeholders
- Recognise the importance and value of engaging with service users, employees, volunteers and external audience(s)
- Recognise that communication is a two way process
- Use plain English
- Be equally accessible to all, in line with the BfN's commitment to equality legislation, including the provision of material in alternative formats and languages on request
- Ensure that the BfN listens to stakeholders, acts on information received when appropriate and provides feedback
- Follows the principles of confidentiality, Data Protection and Equality legislation
- Innovate and be responsive to change

3. Internal Communication

3.1 BfN aims to provide timely and appropriate information to employees in order to ensure employees and volunteers are aware of BfN's:

- Vision, mission and values
- Aims and objectives
- Organisational structure
- Operational priorities
- Policies and procedures
- Significant news or changes

3.2 BfN will maintain following formal methods of communication with employees and volunteers:

- Team meetings
- Supervision (face to face/remote and group/121)
- Training and induction for new employees and volunteers
- Regular performance appraisal for employees
- Communication from Board of Directors
- Communication from the Chief Executive Officer
- Email communications to all employees and volunteers
- Employee and volunteer surveys
- Grievance, complaints policy and procedures
- Employee exit interviews
- Consultations with employees and volunteers

4. External Communication

4.1 BfN recognises the importance of engaging with key external stakeholders in regards to key developments in a timely manner.

BfN will achieve this by:

- Developing guidelines on BfN's communication strategy and media handling
- Ensuring there is awareness amongst stakeholders of relevant information regarding BfN services
- Actively promoting a positive identity
- Maintaining and monitoring methods of external communication such as:
 - Manage media relations
 - Maintain BfN's website
 - Email communications such as news
 - Maintain an online presence through our website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube
 - Publications of reports
 - Events such as project launches, report launches, conferences, study days and other types of events
 - Press releases and media statements
 - Consultations
 - Public liaison and campaigning relevant to infant feeding
 - Presentations
 - Direct and indirect personal contacts
 - Stories and articles in the media

4.2 Media spokespeople - All press and media (newspapers, TV and radio) enquiries in the first instance should be referred immediately to the Chief Executive Officer, who is the main spokesperson for BfN.

In the absence of the CEO, all press/media enquiries will go to the senior management team (SMT) which includes Project Managers. The CEO or a member of the SMT can nominate a suitable employee, volunteer or Director to speak on behalf of the organisation. BfN should ensure the spokespersons have undergone adequate media training and have appropriate advice and support from the Board of Directors.

4.3 All media and press statements issued by BfN will need to be approved by the CEO with support from the / and the Communications Manager. In the absence of the CEO the Chair of BfN can stand in. Some issues of major significance may need to be signed off by the CEO and Chair, these are things that have major reputational consequences for the charity as defined in the scheme of delegation such as issues affecting the ethos, constitution or independent standing of the charity.

4.4 BfN's Comms team employees (Social Media Officer, Comms Manager, Marketing Officer) are responsible for maintaining pro-active media relations on social media and BfN's website, including service development announcements, blog posting, and news of launches, new initiatives, events, fundraising activities and key achievements. This area of work will be supported by a list of positional statements which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

4.5 Handling a media crisis

If BfN becomes subject of any controversy, allegation, or accidents, the first priority will be to identify the problem, address it and to ensure there is no continuing danger or risk to the public or any chance of the same thing happening again.

The second priority should be to ensure that any media attention BfN receives does not cause any long term damage or loss of confidence in the organisation's reputation.

- Employees or volunteers receiving any such enquiries need to ensure that the CEO, Communications Manager and/or the Chair of the Board are immediately informed.
- CEO and/or the Chair will appoint a spokesperson.

- The CEO and Communications Manager and/or the Chair of the Board will establish the facts as soon as practicable.
- The nominated spokesperson will aim to provide accurate information to the media as soon as practicable.
- The nominated spokesperson will respond quickly, honestly and accurately.
- Where appropriate the Chair will instigate an investigation if further evidence is required.
- Social media accounts will be monitored appropriately during this period.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Lead responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy lies with the CEO and Comms Manager with support from the BfN Chair as needed.

5.2 Responsibility for the review of this policy rests with the Board of Directors who will review the policy every two years, with amendments being made as appropriate and communicated to all employees and volunteers.

5.3 All line managers have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is implemented in full within their respective roles. Line managers will ensure that:

- The policy is implemented in full within their teams using the appropriate means
- Information is disseminated in a timely and efficient manner to relevant individuals and/or teams
- All employees' line managed by them are adequately inducted into their role
- Communication is a two way process and that appropriate information is shared and understood
- All communication with the media must be conducted in accordance with this policy
- All team members have an opportunity to participate in team meetings
- BfN's identity and values are maintained and promoted at all times

5.4 All employees and volunteers have a crucial role to play in ensuring effective communication internally and externally. It is each employee or volunteer's responsibility to:

- Communicate effectively
- Be mindful that communication is a two way process and to ensure that appropriate information is shared and understood
- Promote a positive image of BfN at all times
- Act professionally with courtesy and regard for service users and other stakeholders
- Not act in a manner which could bring the reputation of BfN into disrepute
- Attend and actively participate in team meetings
- Identify opportunities for internally and externally promoting BfN's business
- Ensure when communicating externally that their personal views and opinions are not represented /viewed as BfN's position on any matter