



<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>Communications Policy</b>	
<b>Document Purpose:</b>	Provide clear a framework for communications both internally and externally, to ensure that the organisation is represented professionally and appropriately by all staff, volunteers and Trustees, promoting our mission, vision and values in the process.	
<b>Document Statement:</b>	HAD will be clear about how and when we communicate with our stakeholders and the responsibilities we each have to ensure clear and effective communication. This applies to our publicity and marketing, dealing with the media, social media and computers and electronic communication.	
<b>Document Application:</b>	Members of the Board of Trustees, all staff and volunteers	
<b>Responsible for Implementation:</b>	<b>Manager, staff and volunteers</b>	
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Associated Document: Memorandum and Articles. Mission, Vision and Values. Disciplinary Policy. Code of Conduct. Staff Handbook. Data Protection Policy.		
<b>APPROVAL RECORD</b>		
<b>Agreed by Board of Trustees:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Signed:</b>		

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## HAD Communications Policy

### 1. Communication and Marketing

1.1 The following draft protocol applies to all communications undertaken by Havering Association for People with Disabilities (HAD) staff members including Trustees and volunteers:

1.2 The Manager must approve and sign off all external communications regarding the organisation – i.e. communication with organisations outside of the immediate staff team. This is particularly important when:

- Designing, producing and/or distributing communication materials. For example: website development, presentations, external publications regarding the organisation
- Liaising with the media.
- Publicising the project via external communication channels, such as 3rd party publications and websites.

1.3 There must be consistency in the themes, messages, tone and style of all external communications. In particular:

- All external communications must reflect the organisations identity and key messages.
- All communication materials developed/issued by stakeholders regarding the project must include correct display of the HAD logo.

1.4 All external communications must be honest, succinct, accurate and approved by the Chair or Manager. Clear and plain English must be used wherever possible. All typed or word-processed material should be produced in the font Ariel 12 or above.

1.5 HAD staff, sponsors/partners and key stakeholders must be informed of HAD news and updates first, or simultaneously with external audiences. They should not be surprised by what they hear about the organisation from other sources – eg. the media, external organisations.

### 2. Media Policy

2.1 **Contact from the media (press, radio and TV):** It is the policy of HAD that any communications with the media must only be handled by the Manager or Chair of Trustees.

2.2 On any contact by the media they must be informed that we will be happy to provide a written response to a formal enquiry. As such no formal response will be given verbally.

2.3 The Manager will discuss any request from the media for comment from HAD with the Chair of Trustees before making any response.

### **3. Professional and public audiences**

**3.1 Speaking engagements/presentations:** The Manager will publicise the organization to professional and public audiences, including potential funders.

3.2 The Chair and nominated Trustees and Manager may provide a general overview of the organisation to public groups.

3.3 Members of staff or volunteers may be identified from time to time to speak on behalf of the organisation. Where this is the case, the content of these presentations must be agreed in advance with the Manager, diarised, and reviewed within staff meetings.

3.4 All other speaking engagements must be discussed and agreed with the Manager.

### **4. Publicity materials and correspondence**

4.1 All publicity materials and correspondence, including standard letters and templates, must be in line with the Data Protection Policy and Data Security Guidelines and must be approved and signed off by the Manager before distribution.

#### **4.2 Press releases**

Press releases should be:

- Short – a press release is an outline of facts and opinions and is not an essay
- Sharp – use clear, strong everyday language, keep sentences brief and use one idea for each sentence
- To the point – Don't get lost in detail, you don't have to explain everything but explain anything that the uninformed reader will not understand
- Use A4 newspaper, headed if possible, type double space, with wide margins on one side of the paper and make it fit on one page
- Write "press release" and date it at the top and include the name of the person for whom it is intended
- Short quotes give life to your message but they must be attributed to someone
- Avoid jargon, clichés, unexplained abbreviations, confusing or misleading statistics and avoid stating any facts you are not sure of.

#### **4.3 Using photographs**

- Make sure the photograph is well composed, sharp and correctly exposed

- When you use a press release it is a good idea to include a photograph
- Try to make the photograph “tell a story”
- A picture of one or two people may be better than a large group
- Try to get as close as possible when taking the picture
- An informal picture can be more interesting than a posed picture
- Get your logo noticed, whether it is on a sign in the background or on a branded t-shirt
- Say who is in the photograph (left to right) and spell names correctly.

#### 4.4 Designing newsletters

- Develop a consistent design, stick to it and include your logo
- Include your charity number if you are a registered charity
- Break your newsletter into sections so that readers can find what they want, avoid underlining headings and use a bold text instead
- Use a maximum of 2 font styles and a minimum text size of 12 point
- The amount of space above and below a line of text can make a big difference to the visual impact. Creating space makes it more inviting to the reader and easier for them to read
- Graphics and images are important elements to use in the design
- Colour makes your publication more attractive and interesting – consider a simple two or three colour design to save on printing costs
- A good newsletter will cover news stories, what’s on and features
- Use information from other newsletters and other publications
- Find out if readers have email and if they would like to get the newsletter this way
- Get someone to proof read the newsletter before you print it.

#### 4.5 Designing posters

- The three main ingredients of a good poster are impact (getting people’s attention) illustration (getting them to take an interest) and information (getting them to react positively)
- Bold or interesting graphics, pictures and typefaces can make your poster stand out
- Be aware what catches the eye and use pictures, graphics and photographs that are attractive, bright and arresting so it gets the message across to people quickly
- Include the event, date, time, venue, price, your charity number, purpose, contact details, where tickets can be bought, how to get to the venue and provide a simple map if possible.

### 5. Use of Logo

5.1 The HAD should appear on all external communication. The inclusion of other logo’s must be approved by the Board. External organisations wishing to use the HAD Logo must do so only with written authority from the Manager. A record should be kept of all permissions provided.

## 6. Social Media Guidelines

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 **Havering Association for People with Disabilities (HAD)** is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we do business. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve.
- 6.1.2 Social media' is the term given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.
- 6.1.3 The staff Handbook states that staff must not make reference to HAD or it's services, or represent themselves on behalf of HAD on social media without formal permission to do so. It is important, therefore, that all staff are familiar with this policy.
- 6.1.4 HAD will utilise a website, Twitter account and Facebook account. Other forms of social media will be considered by HAD and included within the framework as necessary.

### 6.2 Purpose

- 6.2.1 **Website:** To provide project information, news and events, as well as information regarding partners and links to partner information. The intended audience is service users and partners.
- 6.2.2 **Twitter:** To promote project activity and share up to date information relevant to the field of adult disability or carers. The intended audience is partner agencies, other professionals as well as related local and national organisations.
- 6.2.3 **Facebook:** To promote the project and provide up to date information regarding our activities and events and local information relevant to service users and local stakeholders. The intended audience is service users and local stakeholders.

### 6.2.4 Activity

- 6.2.5 HAD will be responsible for reviewing and updating content on all platforms on a regular basis i.e, Website- monthly, Facebook- weekly, Twitter-daily.
- 6.2.6 The website will have a sign up option. Details will be held on a database and utilised for mail shots, newsletters and updates an appropriate by the project. The website will have a Twitter feed and links to the Facebook page and Twitter account.
- 6.2.7 The Twitter account will tweet project events and activities or those of partners as appropriate. It will also retweet appropriate content from partners as well as other local and national organisations in relation to welfare benefits. Partners are encouraged to 'follow' the HAD Twitter account.
- 6.2.8 The Facebook account will be a closed account, members by invitation only. Service users will not be able to post on the page but will be able to message the account. Messages will be checked weekly and responded to via the project. Content will be limited to updates about social benefits and news or information about the project, its activities and events as well as those of partners.

### 6.3 Safeguards

#### 6.3.1 User safeguards will include:

- making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the partnership;
- obtaining permission from the partnership before embarking on a public campaign using social media

#### 6.3.2 **Any communications made by HAD will not:**

- **breach confidentiality**, for example by:
  - revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by HAD or;
  - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or partner contact) or organisation (such as a partner institution); or
  - discussing the project or partnerships internal workings (such as agreements that it is reaching with partner institutions/customers or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public) or;
- **do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual**, for example by:
  - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age or;

- using social media to bully another individual or
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content or;
- **bring the organisation into disrepute**, for example by:
  - criticising or arguing with service users, colleagues, partners or competitors or;
  - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
  - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content or;
- **breach copyright**, for example by:
  - using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
  - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

## **7. Computers and Electronic Communications**

### **7.1 Introduction**

7.1.1 This policy sets out the Organisation's guidelines on access to and the use of the Organisation's computers and on electronic communications. It sets out the action which will be taken when breaches of the guidelines occur.

7.1.2 You are only permitted to use the Organisation's computer systems in accordance with the Organisation's Data Protection, Monitoring Policies and the following guidelines.

### **7.2 Your responsibilities**

7.2.1 The Organisation's computer systems and software and their contents belong to the Organisation and they are intended for business purposes only. You are not permitted to use the Organisation's systems for personal use, unless authorised by your manager.

7.2.2 You are not permitted to download or install anything from external sources unless you have express authorisation from your manager.

7.2.3 No device or equipment should be attached to the Organisation's systems without prior approval of your manager.

7.2.4 The Organisation has the right to monitor and access all aspects of its systems, including data that is stored on the Organisation's computer systems in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **7.3 System Security**

7.3.1 You must only log on to the Organisation's computer systems using your own password which must be kept secret. You should select a password that is not easily broken (e.g. not your surname).

7.3.2 You are only permitted to log onto another member of staff's computer in their absence and with their permission. You are not permitted to disclose your password to anybody else other than the staff authorised by your Manager.

7.3.3 To safeguard the Organisation's computer systems from viruses, you should take care when opening documents or communications from unknown origins. Attachments may be blocked if they are deemed to be potentially harmful to the Organisation's systems.

7.3.4 All information, documents, and data created, saved or maintained on the Organisation's computer system remains at all times the property of the Organisation.

## **7.4 Use of e-mail**

7.4.1 Where the Organisation's computer systems contain an e-mail facility, you should use that e-mail system for business purposes only.

7.4.2 E-mails should be written in accordance with the standards of any other form of written communication and the content and language used in the message must be consistent with best practice. Messages should be concise and directed to relevant individuals on a need to know basis.

7.4.3 You should take care when opening e-mails from unknown external sources. Attachments to e-mails may be blocked if they are deemed to be potentially harmful to the Organisation's systems.

7.4.4 E-mails can be the subject of legal action (for example, claims of defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract) against both the employee who sent them or the Organisation. As e-mail messages may be disclosed to any person mentioned in them, you must always ensure that the content of the e-mail is appropriate.

7.4.5 Abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory e-mails must never be sent to anyone. If you do so, you may be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

7.4.6 Personal information should never be sent in the body of an email but in an encrypted document attached to an email, the password for which should only be provided to the intended recipient.

## **7.5 Internet Access**

7.5.1 You are required to limit your use of the internet to sites and searches appropriate to your job. The Organisation may monitor all internet use by employees.

7.5.2 are expressly forbidden from accessing web pages or files downloaded from the internet that could in any way be regarded as illegal, offensive, in bad taste or immoral.

## **7.6 Monitoring**

7.6.1 Monitoring of the Organisation's computer systems and electronic communications may take place in accordance with the Organisation's Monitoring Policy. Please refer to the Organisation's Monitoring Policy for further details.

## **7.7 Procedure**

### **7.7.1 Misuse of computer systems**

Examples of misuse include, but are not limited to, the following:

- accessing on-line chat rooms, blogs, social network sites
- use of on-line auction sites
- sending, receiving, downloading, displaying or disseminating material that discriminates against, degrades, insults, causes offence to or harasses others
- accessing pornographic or other inappropriate or unlawful materials
- engaging in on-line gambling
- forwarding electronic chain letters or similar material
- downloading or disseminating copyright materials
- issuing false or defamatory statements about any person or organisation via the Organisation's electronic systems
- unauthorised sharing of confidential information about the Organisation or any person or organisation connected to the Organisation, and
- loading or running unauthorised games or software

7.7.2 Any evidence of misuse may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice. If necessary, information gathered in connection with the investigation may be handed to the police.

## **7.8 Complaints of bullying and harassment**

7.8.1 If you feel that you have been harassed or bullied or are offended by material received from a colleague, you should inform your manager immediately.