

Communications Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out Weeke Community Centre's approach to how we communicate both within our organisation and externally with those that work with us and/or benefit from our services.

This policy statement (Section 3) must be read in conjunction with the procedure (Section 4) which sets out the actions to be undertaken by staff, trustees and other volunteers in order to meet the aims of this policy.

2. Statement

Weeke Community Centre believes that effective and appropriate communication is essential for good management and to achieve the Charitable purposes of the organisation. We need to ensure that the right people get the right information, in the right form, at the right time.

We believe that by implementing effective communication procedures we will:

- enhance the way we work together internally;
- enhance how we are perceived externally;
- be able to deliver a more effective service;
- be better able to fulfil our commitment to equality and diversity;
- reduce the risk of potential bad publicity for our organisation; and
- be in a stronger position to comply with our legal obligations related to communication.

We are committed to the following ways of working.

- Using the right information in the most appropriate form at the most appropriate time.
- Communicating clearly, briefly, to the point and using the most appropriate medium.
- Using e-mail to reduce costs and improve timeliness but not at the expense of effective person-to-person communication.
- Encouraging verbal communication but following up with written confirmation.
- Operating an 'open door' policy - providing opportunity for staff, trustees and other volunteers to discuss issues easily.
- Keeping noticeboards, websites etc up to date.

All staff, trustees and other volunteers will be responsible for carrying out the commitments outlined in this policy and described in detail in the Communications

Procedure.

3. Communications procedure

- Weeke Community Centre believes that effective and appropriate communication is essential for good management. We need to ensure that the right people get the right information, in the right form, at the right time.
- There needs to be clarity about; the purpose of the communication, what is expected as a result of the communication, who needs to receive it, any additional information that is required, the most effective medium for the communication. It should aim to be positive in tone.
- A single communication may have one purpose or several; information, questioning, background for discussion or consultation, background for decision, persuasion, action, confirmation or historical record. Whatever the purpose of the communication the aim should always be to keep the message short, clear, logical and to the point.
- The most appropriate medium will depend on what is being communicated, why, and to whom. Further considerations may include how many people are being communicated with, the need for instant response and the complexity of the information.
- Verbal communication either face to face or by phone is encouraged, particularly within staff teams, although because of the part-time nature of several posts, there is also the need to use emails. Decisions made verbally should be backed up by confirmation in writing.
- Where possible, communication with Trustees is by email as this is more cost effective for the organisation, although where there are longer reports or papers these will be sent by post to avoid the need for Trustees to download and print complex documents. Information for decisions at Board meetings will be sent out at least one week before the meeting.
- Written reports will normally use sentence case with Arial size 12 as the standard font, jargon and abbreviations will be avoided and bullet points used as appropriate. Reports must include a heading/title, the date and author, whether or not the paper is a draft document and where it is to be found.
- Email has made it much easier to communicate, but there is a serious risk of information overload. Before forwarding any information either internally or externally, consider whether or not this is appropriate and who really needs to know.
- When sending information electronically, it is important to ensure that people who are not on email also receive the information and that copies of relevant

documents are kept, either on paper or electronically.

- Consideration should be given to the use of the 'cc' and 'bcc' box. Using the 'cc' box enables people to know who else has received the information but it can be a breach of data protection and can waste a lot of paper if the document is printed out. The use of the 'bcc' box preserves confidentiality but means that there is no natural record of whom the document has been sent to so this must be kept by the sender. It also means that people cannot send a reply to all the other recipients.
- Weeke Community Centre's websites will be updated regularly and made as accessible as possible. We will aim to offer all publicity material in alternative formats such as large print, the spoken word etc.
- Communication with the media. All press releases will be approved by the Chair of Trustees, before being distributed. Individual staff members, trustees or volunteers will not respond to media enquiries without reference to the Chair of Trustees.

Date Policy Agreed: May 2019

Date of next review: May 2021