**WORK PLACE CHAPLAINCY SCOTLAND**

**Listening & caring - in confidence**

**COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**Guidelines**

Communication is a two-way exchange of information which should be easily absorbed and understood by the recipient(s). Effective communication will only be achieved if communicators, at all organisational levels, seek out feedback and take appropriate action to ensure the intended meaning is completely understood by the relevant audience.

An effective WPCS Communications Policy should cover all forms of formal and informal communication – verbal, written, email and social media, up, down and across the organisation.

Everyone should be clear about what their job requirements are and what the WPCS standards are to which they must adhere. Keeping everyone informed of how they are performing is key to effective communication. There should be no surprises when it comes to individual performance feedback and employees should always be able to say what's on their minds without retribution.

It is better to over-communicate than under-communicate. Everyone in the organisation - especially those who manage others -is accountable for the effectiveness of his or her own communication.

Important information must be made available to team leaders in a timely manner to enable them to relay it to their teams. Information should be cascaded down the organisation and communicated direct to team leaders as appropriate. Team leaders in turn, should make clear what information is available and communicate as requested.

Consistently truthful and open communication leads to credibility and trust of managers. Effective team leaders regularly communicate with their team members on a formal and informal basis, and actively seek feedback from their teams on the effectiveness of their communication with them.

Both good and bad news needs to be communicated quickly – if possible, in advance -even if the full impact of the decision or message may not be clear. Rumours in the workplace should be addressed as soon as is practicable. Being “too busy” is not an acceptable excuse for inadequate or ineffective communication and avoiding controversial issues.

Likewise, delaying communication "until all details are clear" goes against a policy of open communication in an organisation.

Care should be taken to decide what requires formal communication and by whom and what can be communicated informally. Unless something is commercially confidential, it can be communicated in a complete, unambiguous and timely manner and unless told otherwise, managers are authorised to communicate. Significant information being communicated should show who has authorised its release and be released in all locations at the same time.

Face-to-face communication, offering the opportunity for questions to be asked and answers to be received, enhances the effective exchange of meaning or understanding. Written or electronic messages should be supplemented by face-to-face communication where feasible.

Mischievous communication (such as starting or spreading rumours known to be untrue eg Re-Tweeting unreliable or defamatory information) should not be tolerated.