



HM Government



# GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2016/17





HM Government

**GOVERNMENT  
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN  
2016/17**



**Foreign Office (FCO)** @foreignoffice · Apr 22  
#humanrights promotion a fundamental part of promotion of UK  
national interests. #HRDReport [ow.ly/4mUnXj](https://www.gov.uk/4mUnXj)  
Joyce Anelay and Human Rights at FCO



### Human Rights & Democracy The 2015 Foreign & Commonwealth Report



14



10



**Dept for Business** @bisgovuk · Apr 1  
The #NationalLivingWage is now law. Workers aged 25 and over will  
get a step up in pay to at least £7.20 per hour.



50



24



**DWP** @DWP · Apr 9  
Saving into a #workplacepension is easy. Find out how you could benefit  
[ow.ly/10owKh](https://www.gov.uk/10owKh) #DontIgnoreIt



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# MINISTERIAL FOREWORD





## Foreword by Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office, Paymaster General and Chairman of the Government Communication Service Board.

As we move into the second year of this Parliament, the Government is delivering on its commitments to provide real security, stability and opportunity for the people of the UK.

Powerful public communication helps explain and deliver our key priorities: to provide economic security at every stage of life; to ensure our safety and leading role in the world; and to extend opportunity so everyone has the chance to get on.

The Government is establishing the sound public finances that our public services depend on and the economic stability that enables us to look to the future with confidence and ambition. We will seek cost efficiencies, innovate and reform to deliver better services for less.

The Government Communication Service (GCS) is essential to this effort. We will continue to change and improve our approach to communications, embodying the reform that is needed in public services.

We will use commercial partnerships to extend our reach and obtain the best value possible from our communications. We will focus on finding out what really works – experimenting, measuring impact and continuously improving what we do. New technology and digital tools will continue to be absolutely central to our communications work.

We are also changing the way we recruit and develop GCS professionals, to increase and harness diversity so that our work properly reflects modern Britain. And we will make sure that communicators in central and local government and wider public services keep collaborating, so that government communication is coordinated and relevant across the UK.

We have made great strides, but the Government – and its Communication Service – have ambitions for even greater change and impact in 2016/17.

**The Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP**  
Minister for the Cabinet Office



# COMMS HUB

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





## This is the Government Communications Plan 2016/17.

It sets out the commitment of Directors of Communication and the GCS to produce campaigns and other communications to support the Government's priorities in the year ahead. It also explains the structure and core aims of the GCS and highlights its programmes and plans for improving communications professional practice across government.

## Our priorities in 2016/17

This section sets out the Government's priorities under key themes. It describes the planned communications activity aligned with these themes.

- **Providing economic security for you at every stage of your life** – including campaigns to support apprenticeships, the National Living Wage, financial help with childcare, home ownership and exporting by UK firms.
- **Protecting our national security to keep our country safe and ensure our leading role in the world** – including communications to support our Armed Forces, tackle extremism, promote the impact of UK aid, and encourage trade with and investment in the UK.
- **Extending opportunity so that everyone has the chance to get on in life** – including communications to support education reform, promote help for troubled families, tackle childhood obesity and promote Universal Credit.

We outline communications ahead of the EU Referendum and highlight how communication will help strengthen the Union of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This section also describes the communications work involved in **'Delivering for Britain'**, which plays a vital part in effective government operations or public services such as tax collection, access to health care, blood donation or community rights.

## A world-class Government Communication Service

The GCS is committed to more effective and efficient communications than ever. This section of the plan describes the **scope, governance and guiding principles** of the GCS, and how we aim to **improve its capability** in 2016/17.

Each campaign under every theme has to demonstrate its effectiveness and efficiency, and ongoing improvements in its impact with citizens. We explain how we **control costs** – including our move towards a centrally managed budget for government campaigns – and **measure the value of communications**.

To continually raise the quality of our practice, we have established the GCS Professional Standards, which we expect all GCS communicators to adhere to. This section of the plan highlights our **Modern Communications Operating Model** and other standards and sources of **guidance**, including: strategy development and campaign planning frameworks; standardised evaluation; **partnerships** between central and local communicators; and adoption of **new technology**.

Developing and implementing world-class campaigns demands diverse and consistently high-quality professional skills, plus leadership that demonstrates personal responsibility and excellent professional knowledge. We describe changes to our recruitment, retention and development practices to **improve diversity and inclusion**. We also explain the scope of our **professional learning and development** offer, including our focus in 2016/17 on building **leadership** at all levels.

This Government Communications Plan lays out how GCS will support government priorities and improve lives in 2016/17 – and aim for even greater performance in the future.

A full copy of this document is available online at: <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/>.

A man in a dark suit and glasses is speaking at a podium. Behind him is a large screen displaying a network diagram with white nodes and lines on a red background. The foreground shows the backs of several audience members' heads.

# INTRODUCTION FROM DIRECTORS OF COMMUNICATION

## This is our fifth annual Government Communications Plan. It sets out the major communications work we will deliver as a profession in 2016/17.

The plan is written for government communicators, but it also explains our work in the year ahead for partners and stakeholders of the GCS.

We will deliver world-class, effective, efficient communications across the UK to support priorities under the government's key themes: providing economic security at every stage of life; ensuring our safety and leading role in the world; and extending opportunity so everyone has the chance to get on in life. Our role in the daily delivery of government operations and public services also safeguards and enriches people's lives.

The major campaigns in our plan for 2016/17 have been through a rigorous professional assurance process to ensure they are aligned with government priorities and will – collectively and individually – make best possible use of public funds.

We remain committed to insight-based, digitally driven, robustly evaluated communication and engagement with our audiences. We will strive for even closer collaboration across government and with local partners, in pursuit of the greatest possible cost-efficiency and impact. We will further embed our Modern Communications Operating Model and new GCS Standards for excellent professional practice. And we will develop even stronger leadership skills, to support the communication function's role as a visible, trusted, strategic partner across government.

This year will bring new challenges and we must keep up a rapid pace of change and professional improvement in the GCS. This will help to ensure that we are equal to the task, and considered by our partners to be a thoroughly modern communication service and a 'best-in-class' government profession.

Please read this plan and consider how you can help secure its success. The diverse talents of each and every communicator in the GCS will be essential – and we look forward to working with you to rise to the challenge.




**Alex Aiken**  
Executive Director of  
Government Communications



**Poli Stuart-Lacey**  
Cabinet Office



**Judith Porter**  
Department for Business,  
Innovation and Skills



**Stephen Meek**  
Department for Communities  
and Local Government



**Tracy Lee**  
Department for Culture,  
Media and Sport



**Suzy Jenner**  
Department for Education



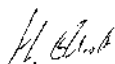
**Carl News**  
Ministry of Defence



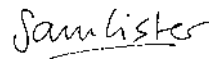
**Rae Stewart**  
Department of Energy  
and Climate Change



**Emily Tofteld**  
Department for Environment, Food  
and Rural Affairs



**Hugh Elliott**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



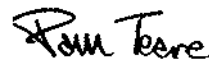
**Sam Lister**  
Department of Health



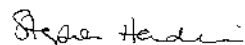
**Simon Wren**  
Home Office



**James Helm**  
Department for International  
Development



**Pam Teare**  
Ministry of Justice



**Stephen Hardwick**  
Her Majesty's Revenue  
and Customs



**Simon Baugh**  
Department for Transport



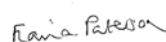
**Dan York-Smith**  
Her Majesty's Treasury



**Richard Caseby**  
Department for Work and Pensions



**Robert Hall**  
Northern Ireland Office



**Flavia Paterson**  
Scotland Office



**Allan Ross**  
Wales Office





# OUR PRIORITIES IN 2016/17



# A GOVERNMENT FOR WORKING PEOPLE

In 2016/17, our communications will support Government priorities to provide economic security, protect national security and extend opportunity for all.

## PROVIDING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR YOU AT EVERY STAGE OF YOUR LIFE

Without sound public finances, there can be no economic security. It is only when you control spending and live within your means that you can build a country with security and opportunity at its heart. We will:

- eliminate the deficit;
- create two million more jobs and three million more apprenticeships;
- increase the number of UK companies exporting abroad;
- build a Northern Powerhouse to help rebalance our economy;
- devolve greater powers to local areas across the UK;
- invest over £100 billion in our roads, trains and other vital infrastructure;
- move to a higher wage, lower welfare society through the introduction of the National Living Wage;
- raise the personal tax allowance and increase the 40p tax threshold;
- guarantee a five-year tax lock;
- offer 30 hours of free childcare to support families;
- build one million more homes and help first-time buyers get a place of their own;
- increase the state pension through our 'triple lock' to give you the security to plan for your future; and
- ensure immigration is controlled to protect our country's interests.

## PROTECTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY TO KEEP OUR COUNTRY SAFE AND ENSURE OUR LEADING ROLE IN THE WORLD

The UK is fortunate to have some of the finest Armed Forces, counter-terrorism police and security services in the world. Using our renewed economic strength, we will:

- spend 2% of GDP on defence and remain at the forefront of the NATO alliance;
- equip our security and armed services to defeat those that threaten us;
- tackle all forms of extremism, violent and non-violent, Islamist and far-right, at home and abroad;
- protect our aid budget of 0.7% of gross national income;
- develop a secure and resilient energy system;
- combat climate change;
- resettle 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees in the UK; and
- ensure our prosperity through encouraging trade and investment in the UK.

## EXTENDING OPPORTUNITY SO THAT EVERYONE HAS THE CHANCE TO GET ON IN LIFE

We want to see a country where nobody is defined by the circumstances of their birth. We will meet the challenge of living within our means and at the same time extend opportunity to all. We will:

- improve our education system;
- increase the life chances of every child, including working with 400,000 more families through our Troubled Families programme;
- speed up the adoption process;
- protect our NHS and introduce a truly seven-day health service;
- increase investment in mental health treatment;
- reform our welfare system;
- end discrimination in our boardrooms and job application processes; and
- transform our ageing prison system and reform prisoner education.

## EUROPEAN UNION

We will be safer, stronger and better off in a reformed Europe than we would be on our own, because:

- British businesses have access to the free-trade single market that brings jobs, investment, lower prices and financial security;
- our security services can fight cross-border crime and terrorism with other countries, giving us strength in numbers; and
- being part of the world's largest organisation helps make us world-leading and involved in the big decisions that affect us.

The task of reforming Europe doesn't end with this agreement. But our Special Status gives us the best of both worlds, by providing security and benefits for all of us, without having to join the euro or bailing out other Eurozone countries.

The **Prime Minister's Office** (PMO) will work across government to ensure the people of the UK have the information they need to understand the Government's position on the benefits of EU membership and to make an informed decision in the Referendum vote. The **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** (FCO) will lead our work abroad to ensure the Government's position is understood internationally.

## ONE UNITED KINGDOM

As a family of nations within a strong United Kingdom, we are determined to strengthen the Union. The UK Government is working to make lives better for people living in every corner of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Fair settlements and devolved powers will give people more control over their affairs.

Across government, we will work in partnership with the **Northern Ireland Office**, **Scotland Office** and **Wales Office** to explain and promote the benefits of the union, and increase awareness and understanding that we are delivering on our promises to devolve more powers.

Following the vote to remain in the UK, the **Scotland Office** will inform the public about the historic new powers transferring to Scotland.

**Her Majesty's Treasury** (HMT) will help explain how the fiscal framework signed in early 2016 helps the Scottish Parliament become one of the most powerful and accountable devolved Parliaments in the world.

The **Wales Office** will explain to people in Wales how the UK Government is delivering a stronger, clearer, fairer devolution settlement for Wales.

The **Northern Ireland Office** will be an active partner with the Northern Ireland Executive in explaining the benefits for everyone in Northern Ireland of the investment and programme of activity associated with the Stormont House and Fresh Start agreements.

## The role of communications in delivering government priorities

The aim of the GCS is to deliver world-class public service communications that support ministers' priorities, enable the efficient and effective operation of public services, and improve people's lives.

To achieve the outcomes it seeks, government can use five main levers: legislation, regulation, taxation, spending – and communication. When done well, government communication can make a profound contribution to policy creation and implementation, by:

- explaining government policies or programmes and clarifying legal or statutory requirements – for example, publicising welfare reform or the need to submit annual tax returns;
- supporting the effective operation of public services – for example, informing citizens about changes to electoral registration;
- helping achieve behaviour change – for example, causing people to take exercise, drive safely or donate blood;
- responding in times of crisis – for example, supporting the emergency response to pandemics or flooding; and
- protecting and supporting the reputation of the Government and the UK.

Many GCS campaigns and other communication activities extend to all parts of the UK, but some (where they relate to devolved powers) do not. Where we have shared priorities and interests, the GCS works closely with government in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. These administrations produce their own communications plans, reflecting their ministerial priorities, in areas of policy that are devolved.

## MAJOR CAMPAIGNS IN 2016/17

### IMPROVING, ENRICHING AND SAVING LIVES

#### Providing economic security

- Communications to support the recruitment of three million apprentices over the course of the Parliament.
- Explaining the benefits of the National Living Wage and changes to taxation.
- Publicising pension reforms and the childcare offers, creating new opportunities for individuals and families.
- Supporting the goal of increasing home ownership, including explaining to eligible council and social housing tenants their rights.
- Communicating the impact and benefit of the £100 billion infrastructure investment programme, including major projects such as HS2.
- Building for, and demonstrating the progress of, the Northern Powerhouse across Northern England and North Wales.

#### Protecting our national security

- Protecting national security and supporting recruitment to our armed forces.
- Communications to protect our borders and dissuade potential illegal migrants from trying to enter the UK.
- A new campaign to help counter extremism and deepen understanding of the values that bind the country together.
- Demonstrating the positive impact in the UK and globally of our commitments to international development, collective security and tackling climate change.
- Using the GREAT campaign to increase trade, investment and tourism, and to bring students to study in the UK.

#### Extending opportunity

- Explaining welfare reforms, including the roll-out of Universal Credit.
- Promoting better public health through 'change4life' and 'One You' to enable people to make changes that will improve their quality of life.
- Communicating reforms to the justice system including proposals for a new Bill of Rights, modernisation of the courts service, rehabilitation of offenders and the prison building programme.

## PROVIDING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR YOU AT EVERY STAGE OF YOUR LIFE

*“It’s that security that underpins our long-term economic plan: in a world of risks, we want to ensure the British economy, and British families, are secure.”*

The Prime Minister, David Cameron  
January 2016

Without sound public finances, there can be no economic security. The Government will control spending, clear the deficit and build a country with security and opportunity at its heart. The security we will provide for working people includes the dignity of a job, the security of a pay cheque, the chance of a home of their own and a decent, well-earned retirement.

Our communications will explain how the Government is boosting our economic growth by supporting everyone who is working hard and wants to get on.

## Earning a decent living

The **Department for Business (BIS)**, **Department for Education (DfE)** and the **Skills Funding Agency** will promote apprenticeships to employers, young people, parents and teachers. We will encourage existing employers to expand their apprenticeship programmes, more employers to come on board, and three million more apprentices to learn while they earn by 2020.

**BIS**, **HMT** and **HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)** communications will support the new National Living Wage. We will help ensure that low-paid workers across the UK know what they are eligible for and that businesses understand what they must do to comply.

Alongside the National Living Wage, **HMT** will explain how the increases in the tax-free personal allowance to £12,500 and the higher rate income tax threshold to £50,000 help working people keep even more of what they earn. We will also explain how the new Lifetime ISA helps young people save flexibly for the long term, either for a first home or for retirement.

The Government is committed to making the UK a higher wage, lower tax, lower welfare country. The **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** will continue to demonstrate how the growth in UK employment – the highest since comparable records began in 1971 – is transforming lives and saving the taxpayer money by reducing the cost of working age benefits.



## Support for business

**BIS** and **UK Trade & Investment** (UKTI) will run the Exporting is GREAT campaign in support of our targets of 100,000 extra companies exporting and £1 trillion exports a year by 2020. The campaign will highlight real opportunities for UK firms in sectors such as fashion, technology and infrastructure to sell abroad, and offer them the practical advice and guidance they need to sell overseas.

The **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs** (Defra) campaign to celebrate Great British Food as among the best in the world will help drive innovation and growth of British food in domestic and export markets. It will inform consumers about food with British provenance and improve perceptions and preferences at home and abroad.

**Natural England** will communicate its progress on work to create 2,700 miles of continuous coast path by 2020 – the longest coastal routes in the world. In doing so we will encourage even more people to enjoy the many advantages of our great outdoors and will also promote the economic and tourism benefits the coast path will bring to local communities.

The **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** (DCMS) #CreateUK campaign will champion and promote our world-leading creative industries, helping create employment opportunities, boost the economy and enhance our national reputation.

The **Ministry of Defence** (MOD) will show how defence enhances our prosperity through growth in the defence and security industries, the promotion of exports, increased spend with small and medium-sized enterprises, investment in innovation and infrastructure, and its contribution to the UK's national skills base. This sector will foster skills in much-needed STEM subjects and train 50,000 apprentices by 2020.

**MOD** and the **Scotland Office** will show the positive impact on Scottish jobs that defence brings. From the birthplace of the Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers at Rosyth, to the home of our nuclear deterrent at Faslane and long-term shipbuilding on the Clyde, these skilled jobs strengthen and support the United Kingdom.

**HMRC** and **HMT** will ensure that individuals and businesses are aware of changes arising in the 2016 Budget, including to: income tax; ISAs; corporation tax; capital gains tax; stamp duty; and excise duty.

**HMT** will highlight how our economic recovery is reaching and benefitting every part of the UK.

## Infrastructure and local growth

Across the UK, the Government is investing over £100 billion during this Parliament in vital infrastructure to help make our economy more productive. Over £60 billion of that investment will go to upgrade our railways, forge ahead with High Speed 2, and deliver the Roads Investment Strategy.

The **Department for Transport** (DFT) will demonstrate that transport investment means simpler, faster, more reliable journeys for the public and businesses, and helps create jobs, skills and apprenticeships. We will inform businesses about opportunities to work in the HS2 infrastructure supply chain and engage with communities affected by the building of our improved transport network.

The Government is committed to rebalancing the economy. Across government, our communications will explain how we are bringing together the great cities and towns of the North to create a powerhouse for our economy – with modern transport links, investment in world-class science, innovation and culture, and powerful and accountable civic governance.

A devolution revolution is giving local leaders new powers, such as the retention of business rates. They will have greater control to target investment, driving innovation, growth and prosperity in their areas.

**HMT**, the **Department for Communities and Local Government** (DCLG), **DWP** and **BIS** will explain – to the public, local government, educational institutions, local businesses and international investors – the diverse opportunities arising from this reform and investment, particularly in the Northern Powerhouse.

**DFT** will explain how building a faster, more frequent, fully-integrated transport system to better connect our cities and towns will help build the Northern Powerhouse, boosting local and UK-wide economic growth and opportunity.

The **Wales Office** will work with departments across Whitehall to communicate the benefits of the Northern Powerhouse to people living and working in North Wales.

**HMT** with the **Scotland Office** and the **Wales Office** will highlight how City Deals are strengthening city regions within Scotland and Wales.

Superfast broadband is now available to nine out of ten UK homes. **DCMS** will explain our plans to extend services across the country to rural and hard-to-reach areas, as we move towards 95% coverage by the end of 2017. We will also promote our satellite broadband scheme, which gives immediate assistance to those communities with the slowest speeds.

As part of the Rural Productivity Plan, **Defra** will communicate what the government is doing to create a productive rural economy and help people living in rural towns, villages and hamlets to enjoy the same opportunities as those in urban areas.

## Helping you and your family

**DfE**, **HMRC** and **DWP** will publicise the Government's childcare offers to working families, including: the increased offer of 30 hours a week of free childcare for three-year-olds and four-year-olds; Tax Free Childcare, offering tax relief of up to £2,000 per child per year; and changes to the help with childcare costs that is available through Universal Credit.

**HMRC** and **HMT** will publicise the Marriage Allowance to married couples and civil partners across the UK, ensuring that those eligible can benefit from the transfer of an unused portion of the personal tax allowance between spouses or partners.

**HMRC** will publicise changes to – and the deadline for renewing – tax credits, to ensure that six million families keep their records up to date and receive the tax credits they are entitled to.

**DCLG** and **HMT** will support the Government's aim of increasing home ownership by publicising the wide range of schemes that provide financial help to people who want to own their own home. This will include explaining the rights of eligible council and housing association tenants to buy their homes through Right to Buy, and the mortgage savings boost available from Government through the Help to Buy ISA.

**DWP** will explain how we are simplifying the State Pension, the biggest change to the system for 40 years. Our campaign will help people to 'Know the Facts' and encourage them to obtain a state pension statement, which gives a forecast of what they could get. With six million people already enrolled into a Workplace Pension, **DWP** will expand the 'Workie' campaign to publicise the obligations of small and micro employers to enrol their staff, as well as encourage individuals to remain in a scheme once enrolled. We will also build awareness of Pension Wise, our free impartial service to help people make informed decisions about retirement saving.

## Immigration

The **Home Office** will communicate the range of measures set out in the Immigration Bill to deter people from flouting immigration controls and to ensure that only those with the right to live and work in the UK can access protected public services and benefits.

Once the Migrant Access Bill has become law, the **Department for Health** (DH) will campaign to ensure that overseas visitors are aware they will be charged for NHS care.

## BRITAIN IN THE WORLD A SECURE AND PROSPEROUS UNITED KINGDOM, WITH GLOBAL REACH AND INFLUENCE

*“In ensuring our national security, we will also protect our economic security. As a trading nation with the world’s fifth biggest economy, we depend on stability and order in the world.”*

The Prime Minister, David Cameron  
November 2015

The UK is fortunate to have some of the finest Armed Forces, counter-terrorism police and security services in the world. Using our renewed economic strength, we will invest to protect our people, project our global influence and values, and promote UK interests and prosperity.

Our communications will support our strong, positive global role and keep our citizens informed about the vital work we do in their name across the globe.

## Security

**MOD** will explain how the UK’s NATO commitment to defence spending equivalent to at least 2% of gross domestic product, to equip and maintain our Armed Forces, is an investment in protecting our country, its interests and its allies. We will demonstrate the capability of our Armed Forces and explain the role of our nuclear deterrent as the nation’s ultimate insurance policy.

**HMT** will explain the Government’s commitment to spending 0.7% of gross national income on UK aid. The **Department for International Development** (DFID) will explain how this investment in our aid programme tackles the causes of instability, insecurity and conflict to help developing countries stand on their two feet and strengthen our national security at home.

The **Home Office** and **FCO** will explain how counter-terrorism efforts are protecting UK nationals both at home and abroad, working closely with the Met Police, MI5, the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) and GCHQ.

**FCO** and **MOD** will build resilience in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to Russian disinformation and hybrid warfare, and step up our work to support democracy and security in the Eastern Partnership countries. This will include fostering plurality and balance in Russian language media and engaging communities vulnerable to Russian propaganda.

**FCO**, the **Home Office** and **MOD** will work abroad and at home to counter propaganda from Daesh, co-leading the Global Coalition’s communication efforts and helping prevent radicalisation and extremism. We will explain the UK’s military, diplomatic and humanitarian work to defeat radical ideology and to move towards peace, stability and an inclusive settlement in Syria and Iraq.

The **Home Office** will develop campaigns across the UK to tackle extremism by enhancing community cohesion and promoting a positive alternative to extremism.

The **Northern Ireland Office** will work with security and justice partners to support and explain efforts to tackle the threat from Northern Ireland-related terrorism and continuing paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland.

The **Home Office** will communicate its border detection capabilities in all four home nations, to reassure the general public and to deter those who may plan to smuggle illicit goods and materials into the UK to cause the country harm.

**MOD**'s campaigns will explain and promote career options in the Regular and Reserve Armed Forces to young people from all backgrounds. The **Home Office** will run the 'Direct Entry' recruitment campaign to inspire, encourage and enable individuals of considerable achievement and capacity to join the police force at senior ranks.

As well as explaining the need for UK travellers to prepare properly, **FCO** will promote the range of practical information, essential advice and vital support provided in times of crisis to our citizens travelling or living abroad, including through the 'Travel Aware' campaign. **FCO** and the **Home Office** will highlight our work at home and abroad to support UK citizens at risk of being forced into marriage, or those whose children have been abducted, raising awareness of the issue and driving cultural change.

**DH, Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England (NHSE)** will respond to any major disease outbreaks that pose a threat to the UK and will create smarter, swifter systems to prevent and detect international health threats. With its partners, **DH** will campaign to reduce unnecessary use of antibiotics in the fight against anti-microbial resistance. **DFID** will explain how our work to tackle poverty overseas means tackling root causes of disease that could present a threat to the UK.

As part of its work to protect the nation against animal and plant diseases, **Defra** will educate farmers on the benefits of better biosecurity measures to help protect their herds from Bovine TB.

To help develop a secure and resilient energy system, the **Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)** will promote new energy generation (including nuclear, gas and offshore wind), build support for shale oil and gas exploration and encourage innovation. **DECC**, with the **Scotland Office**, will also work to increase understanding of government support for maximum economic recovery of North Sea oil and gas. The **Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)** will help to ensure that local communities and key stakeholders understand the decommissioning programme and to maintain public confidence in nuclear as a source of energy.

**DECC, FCO, DFID** and other government departments will work together to communicate the importance of combatting climate change through cost-effective decarbonisation in the UK and internationally.

**The Environment Agency's** 'Flood Action' campaign will build awareness of flood risk and inform people and businesses in at-risk areas about the actions that can help protect their homes and premises. It will also publicise the help that is available to support people to get back on their feet after being affected by flooding and the work we do to help communities become more flood-resilient. **DCMS'** work to promote our thriving tourism industry across the country will include a focus on flood-affected regions, to help boost their recovery.

**DFT** will explain how we are maintaining the highest standards of security and safety on our transport systems, so that they can be used with confidence by everyone.



## Values

**FCO** will promote work by its network overseas to strengthen the rules-based international order, project our democratic values and support universal human rights – including our leading role working to prevent sexual violence in conflict.

**DFID** will demonstrate how investing in international development creates a safer and more prosperous world for everyone and is in the UK's interest.

**DFID** will also continue to lead in emergencies. We will explain and build upon the UK's support for Syria and the surrounding region, in particular showing how UK aid supports education and jobs so that displaced people can remain living in the region.

The **Home Office** and **DCLG** will communicate our work to resettle 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees in the UK. We will harness public support, prepare refugees for life in the UK and help local authorities ensure refugees are welcomed, to promote integration and community cohesion.

**FCO**, **DFID** and other government departments will promote the Prime Minister's Anti-Corruption Summit at home and abroad.

The **Home Office** will continue to use communications to protect our borders and national security. This includes communications in Northern Europe and the Horn of Africa to dissuade migrants from making the dangerous journey across Europe and trying to enter the UK illegally. We will explain the increase in security measures at the Calais border and deter migrants from using smugglers or traffickers in order to get to the UK. We will advise hauliers on the measures they can take to secure their fleet and explain the penalties for smuggling people into the UK intentionally.

The **Home Office** will continue to raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and signpost help for those vulnerable to it. **DFID** will continue to campaign to end FGM and child, early and forced marriage in developing countries. We will also make the case that improving girls' and women's rights will double the number of people who can build their own future and reduce long-term dependency on aid.

The **Home Office** will run campaigns to help combat modern slavery. They will be aimed at victims and perpetrators, raising awareness of the risks of working illegally and signposting legal and credible alternative options and routes into work.

Working in over 100 countries, the **British Council** will continue to promote understanding between the UK and the wider world, including through the flagship 'Shakespeare Lives' campaign. With the GREAT Britain campaign and **Voluntary Services Overseas**, this campaign pays tribute to our greatest playwright and raises funds to help educate millions of children around the world who cannot read or write.

## Prosperity

**DFID** will continue to explain how UK aid helps create jobs in the world's poorest countries. This tackles a root cause of poverty and migration, as well as creating the UK's future trading partners.

**FCO** will promote the work of our missions around the world to support UK prosperity and explain the impact of the new £1.3 billion Prosperity Fund in supporting the economic reform and development that is needed for growth in developing countries.

Through the GREAT Britain campaign, we will encourage international trade with, and investment in, the UK. With other departments and agencies, **BIS**, **UKTI** and **FCO** will promote the UK's creativity, innovation and business-friendly environment to overseas firms, encouraging them to locate here and do business with us. With support from FCO missions, **DCMS**, **Visit Britain** and the **British Council** will promote the UK as a world-class tourist destination among international visitor audiences and encourage international students to come to the UK to study.

The **Home Office** and **UK Visas and Immigration** will tackle misperceptions about visa services in growth markets to help promote UK exports, trade and investment. They will give customers the information they need to make their visa process quick and convenient, while maintaining security.

**DCMS'** cyber security campaign will encourage businesses to adopt the Cyber Essentials Scheme, helping protect them from online attacks and make the UK one of the most secure places in the world to do business.

## EXTENDING OPPORTUNITY SO THAT EVERYONE HAS THE CHANCE TO GET ON IN LIFE

*“We can transform the life chances of the poorest in our country and offer every child who has had a difficult start the promise of a brighter future.”*

The Prime Minister, David Cameron  
March 2016

We want to see a country where nobody is defined by the circumstances of their birth. We will meet the challenge of living within our means and, at the same time, extend opportunity to all, offering individuals and families who are struggling a real chance at security.

Our communications will explain the Government’s work to fight poverty and disadvantage; and it will help inform and inspire people to make the most of their talents and seize opportunities to progress.

## Education

As part of our drive for educational excellence everywhere, **DfE** will work with parents, teachers and employers to build their understanding of the school-led system and reformed curriculum.

**HMT** will highlight the £20 million-a-year government funding for the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy. This is designed to ensure rapid action is taken to tackle the unacceptable difference in educational outcomes between the North and the rest of the country.

**DfE** and the **National College for Teaching and Leadership** will promote teaching as a career and explain training options, to attract 35,000 new entrants a year to the profession.

**BIS**’s Student Finance Tour will help ensure that school and college students considering higher education understand the options available to them for financing their investment in their working futures.

The **Cabinet Office**, the **National Citizen Service Trust** and **DFID** will promote the National and International Citizen Service programmes, encouraging thousands of young people to build their skills, confidence and resilience for later life, while contributing to social action projects in local and global communities.

**DCMS** will actively promote arts and culture across the country to help ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and participate in these sectors and benefit from the associated improvement to wellbeing.

## Life chances

**DCLG** will build awareness of the support that is available to help the most vulnerable people in our society. This includes the Troubled Families programme, which helps turn around the lives of families struggling with complex, long-term problems, and the action we are taking to break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Government is committed to ensuring that every child and young person is protected from harm. **DfE** will collaborate with Local Authorities on the ‘Together, we can tackle child abuse’ campaign, which encourages members of the public to report possible cases of child abuse or neglect.

The **Home Office** and **Government Equalities Office** (GEO) ‘Disrespect NoBody’ campaign will raise awareness of different types of abusive behaviour, including controlling behaviour and ‘sexting’, as well as issues around consent and pornography.

**DfE** will raise awareness of changes to the adoption system, such as speeding up adoptions for harder-to-place children and supporting the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies to improve adopter recruitment. We will explain the important role of social workers, to help attract more skilled people to the profession.

**DCLG** will regenerate some of the worst housing estates across Britain, either transforming them or knocking them down and replacing them with attractive and safe homes. Our communications will be targeted at local councils, housing associations and developers to help us identify suitable estates, innovative proposals and sources of additional funding.

## Welfare reform

**DWP's** communications will support the roll-out of Universal Credit, the biggest welfare reform in a generation, by showing how it removes barriers to work, boosts career progression among the low-paid and transforms people's lives. **DWP** will also promote sustained employment by demonstrating the benefits of work experience for young people and encouraging fuller working lives for those who are older.

The **Scotland Office** and **DWP** will work with the Scottish Government to implement new welfare powers in Scotland. They will help people understand what this means for them in areas such as employment programmes and winter fuel payments.

## Health

**DH** and partners will further the Government's ambition for a safer NHS, available seven days a week, by winning support for the expansion of weekend services in hospitals and enabling GPs and hospital trusts to deliver. With **Health Education England** and other partners, **DH** will campaign to recruit an additional 5,000 doctors into general practice by 2020 and attract former nurses back into the profession.

**DH** will implement a major strategy to tackle childhood obesity, along with further campaigns to tackle stigma and discrimination in mental health and a new cross-government carer's strategy, to support equality of opportunity for all.

**Public Health England's** 'One You' campaign will engage one million adults to improve their health and wellbeing.

**HMT** will promote the new soft drinks levy, highlighting the tax benefits for producers who change their behaviour. We will explain how the revenue from this levy will pay for sport in schools.

## Justice

The **Ministry of Justice** (MoJ) will run a campaign to support the reform of our prison system and the building of a high-quality modern estate, with a focus on education, training and rehabilitation. **MoJ** and the **National Offender Management Service** will encourage people to consider the Prison Service as a career and attract new recruits to work as frontline prison officers.

**MoJ** and **HM Courts and Tribunals Service** will explain and build public support for reforms that will modernise our courts and tribunals (including closing underused buildings) and introduce more cost-effective, accountable and convenient ways of providing access to justice for citizens.

The **Northern Ireland Office** will continue to listen to and work with victims and survivors of the Troubles, as part of the Government's effort to address the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland and create a brighter, more secure future for everyone who lives there.

**MoJ** will run a campaign to highlight proposals for a Bill of Rights, which will replace the Human Rights Act. The Bill will protect fundamental human rights and prevent their abuse.

## Ending discrimination

As we continue towards full employment, **DWP**, **DH** and **MoJ** will work in partnership to help employers recognise, recruit and retain the talent and potential contribution of workers with disabilities and from all kinds of backgrounds. This includes the long-term unemployed, those with long-term health conditions, offenders in prison or on release, and ex-offenders. We will raise awareness of the support available to those looking for work, to help boost their job searching skills.

The **Cabinet Office** will promote our work to make the Civil Service the UK's most inclusive employer and showcase the measures that the Government is taking to tackle inequality and promote opportunity. We will champion and lead the way on social mobility and opportunity for all, challenging other employers to do more in this space.

The Government is committed to removing barriers that prevent people from fulfilling their potential.

**GEO**, working with partners and business, will seek to change attitudes in order to: end the gender pay gap; prevent abuse and harassment online and in schools; and improve representation in senior decision-making positions.

## DELIVERING FOR BRITAIN FOR SMOOTH-RUNNING GOVERNMENT BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICES

*“We will finish the job of turning the economy around and doing what I call the bread and butter of good government... offering people the security they need to get on in their lives.”*

The Prime Minister, David Cameron  
June 2015

**Our communications play an essential role in the day-to-day business of running government well, helping people across the UK to access public services, and enabling them to understand and change behaviours to live happier, safer and healthier lives.**

### Service delivery

All government departments and arms-length bodies (ALBs) will support their workforces to understand and engage with the changes in the Civil Service, as it becomes smaller, more highly skilled, more digital, more effective and more efficient in serving the UK's citizens.

The **Cabinet Office** will communicate our work on smarter government to promote the relationship between citizens and the state. We aim to create simpler, clearer and faster public services to meet citizens' needs – through digital transformation, better use of property and the public estate, and better procurement of services from small and medium-sized enterprises.

**HMRC** will publicise how we are making it easier for 49 million people and more than five million businesses to manage their taxes and benefits online, to enable and encourage them to serve themselves online at times convenient to them.

**HMRC** will publicise the deadline for filing Self Assessment tax returns, to ensure that 11 million people in Self Assessment keep their taxes up to date and pay what they owe towards the funding of public services.

**HMRC** will reassure taxpayers of the integrity of the tax system, and that it supports the honest majority of taxpayers, by: publicising how we are tackling the small minority involved in tax evasion and the hidden economy; and publicising successes in tackling tax avoidance by the wealthy, and aggressive tax planning by large companies.

**DH** and partners will support the health and care system in making efficiency savings, to ensure every pound possible is spent on patient care that continues to be free at the point of need for the individual.

**DH, NHSE** and the **Health and Social Care Information Centre** will support radical improvements in how healthcare services are delivered, including making use of technology and data to improve patient care.



## Consumer choices

**DECC** will help consumers get a better energy deal by encouraging them to switch suppliers or tariffs and, with Smart Energy GB, will promote smart meters so that every home and business in the country has one by 2020.

**DFT** will explain the benefits of, and encourage motorists to choose, ultra low emission vehicles.

**HMT** will communicate the Government's commitment to increasing competition in the UK's retail finance sector, so that consumers can benefit from access to fairly-priced financial services.

**HMT** will explain the benefits of returning Lloyds to the private sector and provide information to give everyone the chance to become a shareholder in one of the UK's most respected financial institutions.

## Keeping safe and well

The **Home Office** will work to make more households safer from accidental fire in the home through the 'Fire Kills' campaign. By persuading householders to test their smoke alarms regularly and adopt other fire-safe behaviour, the campaign has helped to significantly reduce deaths and injuries. It will continue to apply behavioural insights to help save lives.

**DFT** will demonstrate that the Government is creating a safer transport network, reducing the number of people killed or injured every year, through communications such as the 'THINK!' road safety campaign. It aims to change attitudes and behaviours around drink-driving, drug-driving, cycle safety and the use of mobile phones in vehicles.

**NHS Blood and Transplant** will continue to encourage blood and organ donors to register and donate, helping to ensure a safe, sustainable supply of blood to hospitals for treatments and prevent avoidable deaths due to a lack of suitable organs for transplant.

**NHSE, PHE** and **DH** will help reduce demand on A&E and other urgent care services, in particular through the winter period, by: supporting frail and elderly groups to reduce their chances of being admitted to hospital; driving up the numbers of NHS staff being vaccinated against flu; and promoting the NHS 111 service for urgent care.

**PHE** will run social marketing campaigns to: support earlier cancer diagnosis; raise awareness of symptoms of stroke; encourage healthy eating in pregnancy; and reduce drug-taking and other risky behaviours among young people.

**DH** and partners will campaign to reduce stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths.

The **Home Office** will continue to work with industry on the 'Cyber Streetwise' behavioural change campaign that encourages people and businesses to adopt safer online behaviours.

## Strong communities

**DCLG** will continue to encourage the use of Community Rights that enable individuals and communities to take more control over their local area, including what happens to local amenities, and how local services are delivered. The Neighbourhood Planning campaign will highlight the rights that allow local people to decide the future development of their area, including where new homes and businesses should be built, what they should look like and what local infrastructure is needed.

Across Government, we will promote the Armed Forces Covenant, the nation's promise to the Armed Forces community, and encourage businesses and communities to support it.

As part of a national commemoration to mark the centenary of the First World War, **DCMS** and **MOD** will provide opportunities for the nation to honour those who served. Major events will mark the Battles of Jutland and the Somme and local ceremonies – supported by **DCLG** – will honour those who received the Victoria Cross. We will promote awareness of and engagement with the national commemorations and increase understanding and recognition of our Armed Forces and the First World War's impact, then and now.



# A WORLD-CLASS GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION SERVICE

## WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK

The aim of the GCS is to deliver world-class public service communications that support ministers' priorities, enable the efficient and effective operations of public services and improve people's lives.

The **GCS** draws together professional communicators from across the UK to support the work of 19 ministerial departments and over 300 agencies and public bodies. We have expertise in all communications disciplines, and we design, plan and deliver world-class press and media work, public-facing campaigns and stakeholder and internal communications (IC) of all kinds. We partner closely with organisations in the public, private and third sectors, opening the GCS up to external scrutiny to ensure our communications have the right impact with our audiences. And we work as a community, collaborating to achieve the best possible outcomes and sharing our learning to make sure we are always improving.

Our work is governed by the **GCS Board**, which is chaired by the Minister for the Cabinet Office and provides assurance to Cabinet that the GCS is delivering against government aims and profession-specific objectives. It challenges our performance and advises – or mediates, if necessary – on cross-government communications issues. The members of the GCS Board are:

- Matt Hancock MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General;
- Stephen Crabb MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions;
- Anna Soubry MP, Minister for Small Business;
- Lord Bridges, Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office;
- Melanie Dawes, Permanent Secretary, DCLG;
- Alex Aiken, Executive Director of Government Communications;

- Simon Baugh, Group Director of Communications, DfT;
- Sam Lister, Director of Communications, DH;
- Richard Caseby, Director of Communications, DWP;
- Stephen Hardwick, Director of Corporate Communications, HMRC;
- Russell Grossman, Director of Communications, Office of Rail and Road;
- Leonie Austin, Director of Communications, NHSBT;
- Selvin Brown, Director, Engagement and Policy Directorate, HSE;
- Michael Prescott, Director of Communications, BT; and
- Amanda Rendle, non-Executive Director, The Royal Mint.

The **Directors of Communication Group** ensures we work together effectively and use government resources efficiently to deliver the Government Communications Plan. The group captures and considers ideas and intelligence from the GCS community and other stakeholders and makes recommendations to the GCS Board about the direction, operations and development of the profession.





Several **heads-of-specialism groups** ensure that best practice is gathered and shared and that professional development needs are identified. The leaders for these groups are:

- Lee Bailey, DH – Chair, Heads of News;
- David Tomchak, PMO and CO – Chair, Digital Centre of Excellence;
- David Watson, PMO and CO – Chair, Heads of Campaigns and Marketing;
- Russell Grossman, Office of Rail and Road – Head of Profession, Internal Communication;
- Jean Ward, Home Office and Graham Leftwich, HMRC – Co-chairs, Whitehall Heads of IC;
- Shiona Adamson, Natural England – Chair, ALB Heads of Internal Communication; and
- Leonie Austin, NHSBT – Chair, ALB Heads of Communication.

Two **expert panels** – the Evaluation Council and the Futures Council – bring external perspective and expertise to key areas of practice (see p.30 and p.32).

A team reporting directly to the Executive Director of Government Communications is responsible for **professional standards and guidance**. It also supports recruitment to the profession and provides skills assessment tools and training and talent development programmes.

Every senior leader in the GCS has a responsibility to encourage great performance, provide visible **leadership** and direction, and nurture talent and creativity in their teams. We also expect and rely on communicators at all levels across government to show leadership – to be inspiring, confident and empowering – in the way they work.

The sections that follow in this plan provide more detailed information about our priorities for building professional capability in the GCS in 2016/17.

## PROPRIETY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**The work of the GCS will continue to adhere to our professional principles and be rooted in the Civil Service Code.**

Government communicators work to a set of **best practice principles**, to help ensure that our communications with the public are clear, helpful, professional and always evaluated to provide value for money:

- our communications will be audience-focused and leverage customer insight;
- digital and, in particular, social media will be at the heart of our content;
- our communications will not only transmit key messages, but also generate a two-way conversation with our audiences;
- we will strive to increase our productivity and work to be ever more cost-effective; and
- communicators should act as leaders – inspiring, confident and empowering.

The GCS operates as part of a modern, diverse and open Civil Service. Communications is the external face of the Civil Service and it is essential that we exemplify the core values and behaviours in the **Civil Service Code**:

- integrity – putting the obligations of public service above personal interests;
- honesty – being truthful and open;
- objectivity – basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence; and
- impartiality – acting according solely to the merits of each case and serving governments of different political parties equally well.

GCS' own framework of **propriety** mandates that government communication must be: relevant to government responsibilities; objective and explanatory (not biased, polemical, party-political or liable to be misrepresented as such); and undertaken in an economic and appropriate way, so that costs are always a justifiable expenditure of public funds.





# THE IMPROVEMENT AGENDA

## The GCS will embed changes driven by our professional improvement programme.

Our goal is to build an ever-more skilled, productive and unified Government Communication Service; one that is always seeking to innovate and adopt global best practice and is committed to relentless evaluation, accountability and improvement.

The GCS **improvement programme** identifies and implements specific actions to strengthen the profession at an individual, organisational and profession-wide level. The programme focuses on five core themes:

- changing how we operate in order to ensure tighter governance, faster movement of resources, and better sharing of services;
- establishing shared standards and frameworks to help align communications to business priorities, support integration in communications teams and enable a shared focus on evaluation;

- building capability through recruitment, talent management, employee engagement, and learning and development, with a focus on leadership;
- enabling of internal communications to be a strategic partner to leaders in managing organisational change; and
- improving engagement and cooperation between communications teams in central government, devolved administrations, local authorities and related public services.

The improvement programme has already delivered major developments in the GCS, such as: quarterly performance reporting against the annual Government Communications Plan; the Modern Communications Operating Model; an annual series of leadership 'roadshow' events; professionally accredited training for internal communicators; and an audit of public service communications teams and resources across the country.

This year, we will further embed new programmes and practices, assess their impact and identify remaining areas for improvement. The sections that follow in this plan describe the key strands of our work to: control costs and find efficiencies; reorganise to meet new challenges; recruit and develop a diverse, skilled workforce; and ensure excellent professional practice right across the Government Communication Service.

## GCS SELECTED 2016/17 HIGHLIGHTS

April	May	June	July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCOM Skills Survey</li> <li>• 'MCOM Live' events</li> <li>• GCS Apprenticeship recruitment</li> <li>• Cross-government entry-level recruitment campaign begins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016/17 Government Communications Plan launch</li> <li>• Leadership roadshow events</li> <li>• 'Comms Exchange' events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Civil Service Live' event</li> <li>• 'Comms Exchange' event</li> <li>• Leadership roadshow events</li> <li>• Futures Council launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCS Summer Interns start</li> <li>• Visits to departments by Executive Director of Government Communications</li> <li>• GCS Board meeting</li> </ul>
August	September	October	November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda setting for Improvement Programme Phase 4</li> <li>• Senior stakeholder perceptions research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCS Apprentices and Fast Streamers join</li> <li>• Expanded cross-government recruitment campaign begins</li> <li>• New supplier roster frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Inspire' participants submit Masters</li> <li>• Nominations for 'Early Talent Programme'</li> <li>• GCS Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Comms Academy': central-local government conference</li> <li>• Second wave entry-level recruitment</li> </ul>
December	January	February	March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations for 'Inspire' programme</li> <li>• GCS Leadership Award announced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCS Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Inspire' programme participants confirmed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCS Board meeting</li> <li>• GCS Apprenticeship recruitment begins</li> </ul>

## COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET CONTROLS

**The GCS will control spending and pursue maximum value for money in support of cross-government efforts to deliver cost efficiencies.**

The Government's long-term economic plan requires a continuing focus on deficit reduction, with tight controls over non-essential spending.

During the last Parliament, we implemented communications budget controls and achieved total audited savings of £1 billion.

The Government's 2015 Spending Review announced the introduction of a **centrally managed budget** for communications campaigns. The benefits of a single budget include:

- ensuring greater strategic alignment with the Government's agreed priorities;
- identifying opportunities to coordinate and streamline our activities – thereby creating fewer, but more impactful, communications;
- developing a definitive schedule for our communications in the year ahead, helping to maximise our media-buying power; and
- providing greater departmental transparency on communications spending.

In advance of the start of the 2016/17 financial year, the GCS carried out an analysis of communications campaigns planned by departments and their arms-length bodies, against their combined planned spend.

This enabled greater oversight of the communication planned for the year ahead, helping us to plan, coordinate and improve efficiency and effectiveness before public money is committed. It has been an opportunity to **better align campaigns** by audience, issue, channel and timing in advance, so as to reduce duplication and achieve greater impact and salience with those we're trying to reach.

The 2016/17 planning process has also highlighted positive evidence of **collaborative approaches**. For example, departments are planning a cross-government childcare campaign and a unified approach to UK export promotion. It has also shown that our work is correctly focusing on government priorities, such as home ownership, infrastructure improvements and 7-day NHS services.

Based on our work and analysis this year, we will undertake a series of transformative projects to ensure our communications are as efficient as they can be in terms of spend and cross-government collaboration.

### Audience-based planning

We will put even more emphasis on audience-based campaign planning this year. We will continue to **share audience data and insight** and coordinate to avoid overlaps or duplication in campaigns. Moreover, we will actively seek out ways to **combine messages and campaign delivery** where we have shared audiences and objectives.



There are six broad audience groups that government communication tends to address:

- young people;
- people of working age;
- businesses;
- families;
- older people; and
- international audiences.

We are already taking opportunities to **streamline campaigns** that are aimed at the same audiences, reducing costs and the risk of multiple government campaigns competing with each other, confusing the target audience and reducing our impact.

For example, in the last year, we have looked at how we are communicating to young people about their career options to help develop their skills and readiness for work.

By bringing together multiple schemes from three departments and an arms-length body under one campaign, we can now show young people a clear pathway to a career through opportunities such as work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships. The new 'Get In, Go Far' campaign will join up the range of options online, so that young people can find the best route into work, no matter what their starting point.

In addition, we are working across government departments to ensure that our digital advertising placement is coordinated and cost-efficient.



## Streamlined work with agencies

To ensure that government communicators can deliver excellent public service communications in the face of new demands and a rapidly changing communications environment, GCS needs access to the right kind of specialist services.

External communications and marketing services are secured by government under contracts managed by the Crown Commercial Service, to ensure that we are following **procurement best practice** in spending public funds.

GCS and the Crown Commercial Service will create **new market-leading contracts** for communications and marketing services in 2016/17, ensuring that our communicators are able to work with a wide range of specialist agencies from across the UK. We have consulted in detail with the industry and have designed our contracting process to **reduce and simplify** the paperwork required so that all agencies, especially small agencies, are able to bid for our contracts. We want suppliers to spend their time on understanding our needs, not filling in our forms.

## MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

**The GCS will continue to reinforce the professional discipline of rigorous evaluation, enabling us to evidence the impact of our work and make a robust case for communications activity in government.**

Robust evaluation of all our communications activity is critical to ensuring that we understand what works well and what doesn't in achieving our objectives. From this evidence base, we can make sound judgements about how we design communications and **allocate our resources efficiently**. And when we use a consistent approach across government, we can share evidence and learn quickly from each other.

In late 2015, GCS launched a standardised **evaluation framework** that government communicators are now expected to use to assess the impact of everything that they do. The framework gives guidance on how to plan for evaluation and sets out a recommended core set of measures (of inputs, outputs, outtakes, outcomes and organisation impact) for each communication discipline. It reflects the latest thinking in the international communications industry.

**“** *Based on my global research into evaluation of communication I believe the UK Cabinet Office is setting the standard worldwide.*

**Professor Jim Macnamara, Professor of Public Communication at the University of Technology, Sydney**

To help individual government communicators put the framework into practice, GCS has created a comprehensive user guide, a full illustrative example and case studies of actual government communication evaluation. There are more than 130 **evaluation champions** in government departments and public bodies. Members of the evaluation champions network are encouraged to play an active role in sharing innovative evaluation techniques, data sources and actionable insights about audiences, and providing direct advice to communications teams on their evaluation methods.

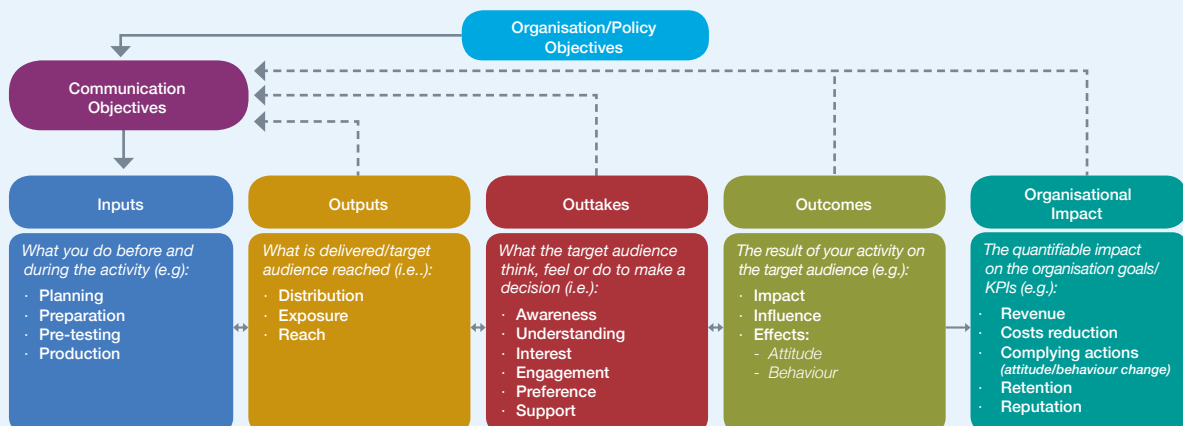
## Evaluation Council

Developments in evaluation practice within the GCS are encouraged, interrogated and championed by the Evaluation Council, whose members bring expertise from the private, public and third sectors and trade bodies.

Our expert external partners on the board include:

- Richard Bagnall, CEO, Prime Research and Board Director, International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communications (AMEC);
- Ben Matthews, Head of Strategic Communication, eBay;
- David Rockland, Partner, Managing Director, Global Research and CEO, Ketchum Change;
- Adam Chalk, Senior Industry Manager, Google;
- Neil Wholey, Head of Research and Intelligence, Westminster City Council;
- John Grounds, Strategic Marketing and Communications Consultant;
- Tina Trythall, Head of Insight, Oxfam GB;
- Charlie Snow, Chief Strategy Officer, Mullen Lowe; and
- Kevin Money, Professor of Reputation and Responsible Leadership, Henley Business School.

The Evaluation Council also plays a role in enforcing the discipline of full and proper communications evaluation in government. Departments submitting campaign plans to the GCS **Professional Assurance approvals process** must include evidence of effectiveness to support their communications approach and their proposed evaluation methods must be reviewed by the Evaluation Council. Campaign teams return to the council with the results of their evaluation, so that learning can be shared across government.





## MODERN COMMUNICATIONS OPERATING MODEL

The GCS will continue to support communications teams across government in reorganising and upskilling to meet new demands.

In the face of budget reductions and dramatic changes in the communications landscape, the GCS recognises that teams need to be smaller, more skilled and more agile. Across government, we are changing our **organisational structures**, skills sets and standards according to the principles of our Modern Communications Operating Model (MCOM).

Its key principles are that our teams should be: seamlessly integrated; based around audience understanding; insight and data-driven; and digitally integrated by default. We recommend that communications functions of any size, in departments or arms-length bodies, should be built around a **central core** of:

- strategic communication planning;
- media and campaigns;
- strategic engagement; and
- internal communications.



The needs of individual departments or organisations may require that other capabilities – such as sales or operational marketing, community engagement, or briefing services – are incorporated around this core foundation.

Quality **leadership** for these streamlined, integrated and multi-talented teams is essential. Our leaders will set the highest professional standards, inspiring and empowering communicators to confidently translate business objectives into effective communications activity.

“Our work with the MCOM model has shown us that it is a hugely valuable tool for teams aiming to become more agile: I am convinced that its principles are the way forward for successful government communications.”

Simon Baugh, Group Director of Communications, DFT

### Skills survey

In April 2016 GCS launched an online skills survey to enable communicators to self-assess skill strengths and areas for development in the context of the Modern Communications Operating Model. Alongside their survey results, individuals will be offered suggestions of relevant GCS training courses or other development steps, to help their **personal development planning** with line managers. At the aggregate level, anonymous survey response data will enable GCS to understand any **profession-wide skills needs** and adjust or expand the GCS learning and development offer accordingly.

### Shared services

GCS coordinates some central shared services – where this offers value for money and economies of scale. They include:

- design and publishing;
- pooled recruitment;
- supplier procurement; and
- production of TV and radio advertising fillers.

The new **GCS flexible resource pool** offers departments and arms-length bodies an option for filling capability gaps on a short-term basis. Experienced media and campaigns professionals from the pool can move where their expertise is needed most, on specific, project-based secondments, helping to transfer skills to their host communications team.

## STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

The GCS will protect and promote excellent practice by embedding standardised models for communications practice and providing expert guidance.

GCS has established a set of professional standards, models and guidance to help ensure consistently high-quality communications across government.

We expect all government communicators to adhere to these standards (shown opposite on p.33): Directors and Heads of Communications are accountable for this to the Executive Director of Government Communications.

GCS communicators also draw on central GCS teams for **advice and guidance** on planning and evaluating campaigns, and on GCS-endorsed expert groups and peer-to-peer networks in areas including insight, internal communications and digital communications.

### Partnering with local communicators

Developing effective central-local communication partnerships will be a key focus for our work this year. We know that trust in campaign messages increases when they are delivered in a local context – whether that is through regional media, with the use of local case studies or endorsements from community voices, or delivered and amplified through local partner channels.



We will help departments and arms-length bodies land our priority campaigns locally and join up with local partners across England and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to deliver campaigns of mutual interest. Our new ‘Communicating Locally’ training course, **toolkit for collaboration** and GCS resource map will help communicators locate and work with public communications colleagues operating across the nations and regions of the UK.

### Futures Council

Our audiences for government communications are becoming ever more connected. Significant changes in their behaviour are being driven by unrelenting **technological change**, and the GCS must keep pace.

In June 2016, GCS will launch the Communications Futures Council. This will be a focus for cross-government learning about how trends and innovations in technology and social or digital media – from the internet of things to augmented reality and beyond – might be applied to meet the needs of increasingly connected citizens.

The council will be made up of senior GCS communicators and partners with specialist knowledge from digital businesses, trade bodies, academia, media agencies and more. Together, they will:

- identify and showcase new technologies and innovative practices;
- debate their applicability to GCS operations and make recommendations for adoption;
- advise on the use of technology in campaigns and help ‘future-proof’ long-term campaign planning; and
- track progress with adopting new technologies or practices.

The Futures Council’s overarching objective will be to challenge and improve how the GCS works, helping us to deliver **cutting-edge communications** that maximise reach, impact and value. It will look particularly for innovations that apply to the core capabilities of insight, horizon-scanning, use of data and digital communication.

Its expertise, perspectives and recommendations will be shared across the GCS community via live-streamed events, blogs and other content published on the GCS website.

## GCS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The purpose of the GCS is to deliver world-class public service communications that support ministers' priorities, enable the efficient and effective operation of public services, and improve people's lives. It is held to account for implementation of the annual Government Communications Plan.

To make this possible, GCS staff commit to observing the highest standard of communications practice, professional development and ethics. The GCS has established a set of guidelines, models and templates to continually raise the quality of practice. The standards below should, at minimum, be applied consistently and rigorously across all communications teams in departments, agencies and other organisations with GCS staff.

**Skills:** The GCS competency framework sets the standard for individual proficiency, by grade. Communicators should demonstrate their ability to frame campaigns using insight, apply creative ideas, and swiftly implement and assess the impact of their work. The framework is used in appraisals, professional development and recruitment.

**Working model:** All GCS communications teams should adapt to meet the needs of a fast-changing audience environment by following the Modern Communications Operating Model principles and demonstrate their skills in the full range of disciplines: strategic communication planning; strategic engagement; internal communications; and media and campaigns.

**Campaigns:** The implementation of effective campaigns is at the heart of our work. For rigorous and systematic campaign development, GCS staff follow the OASIS campaigns framework, and make selective use of other GCS campaign planning tools where required.

**Evaluation:** GCS professionals use the GCS Evaluation Framework for every campaign, to improve performance and to take responsibility for the outputs, outtakes and outcomes of their work. Teams should summarise and exhibit these results in an evaluation hub.

**Digital:** The GCS digital vision is that government communicators should be confident in using digital technology and methods to: gain insight into audiences; develop the best ideas; implement plans; and provide maximum impact.

**Staff engagement:** A modern internal communications function acts as a strategic partner to enable change and support engagement. GCS standards are set out in Internal Communications Excellence, including the Standard Operating Model and the Job Description Principles for internal communicators.

**Leadership:** The GCS aims to develop confident, inspiring and empowering leaders. GCS staff should exemplify the Civil Service Leadership Statement in their work.

**Ethics:** GCS professionals will seek to achieve the highest standards of behaviour, as well as professional practice and leadership. This means, at minimum, they will abide by the Civil Service Code and observe its values of integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity. They will also uphold and actively promote the Civil Service diversity and inclusion policies and the GCS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

**Professional Development:** As communications develops, all communicators should continually work to improve their skills, completing and sharing with their colleagues at least four pieces of professional development each year. They should pay particular attention to the conclusions of the Future of Public Service Communication report which says that communicators must master the skills of social marketing, content creation, building alliances and handling data.

## A PROFESSION REFLECTING MODERN BRITAIN

The GCS will make changes to its recruitment, retention and development practices as part of a comprehensive strategy to improve diversity and inclusion.

Our relentless focus on audience-led communications and delivering world-class communication means that we must also build a diverse and inclusive profession of the **most talented people** that reflects our country – regardless of background, ethnicity, gender or disability. Our ability to create communications with impact turns on our understanding of our many and diverse audiences across the UK and the rest of the world.

With the wider Civil Service, the GCS is working to improve diversity and inclusion. Our priorities are to:

- understand and address profession-specific barriers to diversity and inclusion;
- improve diversity in the Senior Civil Service and bring representation of women at Senior Civil Service grades in line with that at all grades in the GCS;
- improve representation of black, Asian, minority ethnic groups and disabled people at all grades, focusing on our talent pipelines to Senior Civil Service grades; and
- attract and retain early talent from poorer socio-economic backgrounds.

In pursuit of these objectives, we want our top leaders to take practical action as a result of **reverse mentoring** and share this insight across the profession. Through leadership development training, we will build a **culture of inclusion** that values and champions difference and encourages all communicators to ‘bring their whole selves to work’.

We will use **innovative recruitment strategies** to attract more diverse candidates into the GCS, including government-wide **entry-level recruitment campaigns** and the first GCS-specific professional apprenticeship. We will use outreach work and social media to target our audiences and run a GCS ‘reflecting modern Britain’ summer **internship** to improve their perceptions of a career in government communications.

We will regularly assess diversity levels among the population of communicators across government, through the Civil Service People Survey. To enable change, we will evaluate and actively manage how diverse our talent pipelines are, creating tailored interventions where needed.





## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The GCS will further evolve its learning and development offer to reflect the changing demands of our profession, with a special focus on developing leadership capability at all levels.

In support of excellent practice and continuous improvement across the GCS, we offer a range of learning and development options to help government communicators boost their skills, build expertise and plan their careers. We are committed to making the most of the talent in the profession.

Our 'Aspire' programme offers communicators at any grade more than 1,600 places a year on internal **training** courses about essential practices such as the use of insight, campaigning or internal communication. Our 'Comms Exchange' events provide a platform for departments and arms-length bodies to showcase their excellent communications practice – an opportunity for **peer-to-peer learning** and review. Our partnerships with several communications industry professional bodies also give GCS members access to their learning events and resources – and their extensive networks.

One-to-one **mentoring** is available to any communicator in the GCS: mentees get help to build their knowledge, plan their careers and expand their networks; and mentors gain new perspectives and leadership experience.

We also actively manage the talent pipeline for the profession, via selective programmes of **accelerated learning** and development for communicators with the aspiration and potential to progress to leadership roles:

- Our 'Inspire' senior talent programme takes experienced communicators with potential to be our future directors of communication through a two-year planned series of academic learning, immersion placements, masterclasses and tailored support.
- Our two-year 'Early Talent Programme' uses classes, action learning, coaching and networking to equip communicators in junior roles with the skills to progress to senior positions.

The communications strand of the Civil Service Fast Stream programme also cultivates future leaders in the GCS. It offers **graduate recruits** communications-specific job placements, professional qualifications and external secondments over four years of development for a leadership career in the Civil Service.



### ASPIRE training curriculum

#### Leadership Masterclasses and Roadshows

#### Mentoring

#### Peer-to-peer learning and networking events

Early Talent Programme

Inspire Talent Programme

Apprenticeship

Fast Stream Programme

#### Professional bodies membership

#### Civil Service Learning

## Developing leadership at all levels

The development of confident, inspiring and empowering leaders is a priority for the GCS. Our aim is to embed the Civil Service Leadership statement across the profession, so that communicators are **visible, trusted advisors** to their ministers and senior executives in carrying out government business and delivering public sector reform. We will:

- extend the schedule of existing GCS leadership-related training courses;
- include a focus on leadership development needs in matching 2016/17 GCS mentors and mentees;

- roll out a new course helping teams apply leadership principles to live organisational challenges;
- introduce ‘Leaders as Communicators’ training to build the communications skills of managers across the Civil Service;
- pilot leadership coaching for talented communicators from target diversity and inclusion groups; and
- actively promote networking opportunities among GCS leaders.

In addition, we will create a **leadership-specific award** as part of the GCS Public Service Excellence Communications Awards scheme, to recognise individuals who exemplify the kind of leadership that we want to see in government communications.

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: [gcs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:gcs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)



