



Sample ebola comms plan

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- As the Ebola situation develops, we will work to keep people informed at the appropriate level, in line with pre-agreed pandemic communication principles.

Project overview

- **Health & Safety** (including Occupational Health) – source of advice for line managers, colleagues and the crisis co-ordinator, decisions on closing areas or sites.
- **Business Continuity / central pandemic planning group** – absence level reporting requirements, continuity operating plans.
- **HR** – decisions on disrupted working guidance, absence management, liaison with union FTOs.
- **Travel provider** (eg Capita) – what info can we upload to booking portal?
- **IT/IS** – do external websites need adding to the whitelist? eg NHS, Gov.uk, F&CO
- **Facilities / office management** – decisions on cleaning, hygiene supplies etc.

Key partners

- To provide clear and consistent advice on reducing risk of infection, supporting NHS and Government advice.
- To ensure colleagues understand the measures we are taking and the reasons why we've reached this decision.
- To ensure colleagues understand how they can personally reduce their risk and take action to do so.
- To provide consistent and controlled messaging across all [company] Business Units to address media hype.
- To provide clear guidance on how the business needs to respond and what actions individuals need to take in order to reduce the risk of infection for colleagues and customers while keeping the operation running.
- To provide advice and support to managers during outbreaks on dealing with HR issues.

Communication objectives

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1. In proportion to the level of risk – leaving ourselves ‘somewhere else to go!’

- Information available at point of need eg travel booking portal; self-serve intranet hub.
- Additional communication ramped up if events require it, built around (a) World Health Organisation (WHO) threat level and (b) local events.

2. Controlled communication, using expert sources

- One UK comms plan, controlled by [Name Name], to ensure consistent messages and tone across business units. BU comms contacts brought in as response to changing local situation.
- Pushing employees to official sources of health and travel information and advice , not creating our own eg NHS, Gov.uk, Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

3. Line manager led

- Dedicated intranet section (Ebola ‘hub’)
- Designed for managers to self-serve information and guidance to manage their team’s questions and attendance
- Provide a route for additional questions.

4. Supported by UK and local channels for wider employee base

- Using BAU channels such as intranet, site-specific emails
- Existing ‘crisis management’ channels eg Employee Emergency Info Line

Communication principles

What do we want people to...

Know?	The current situation, our plans, any changes to BAU ways of working, and ways they can reduce their risk of infection
Feel?	That [the company] is working to protect their health and maintain business continuity during outbreaks
Do?	Follow actions to reduce their risk of infection; follow any new ways of working.

Know, feel, do

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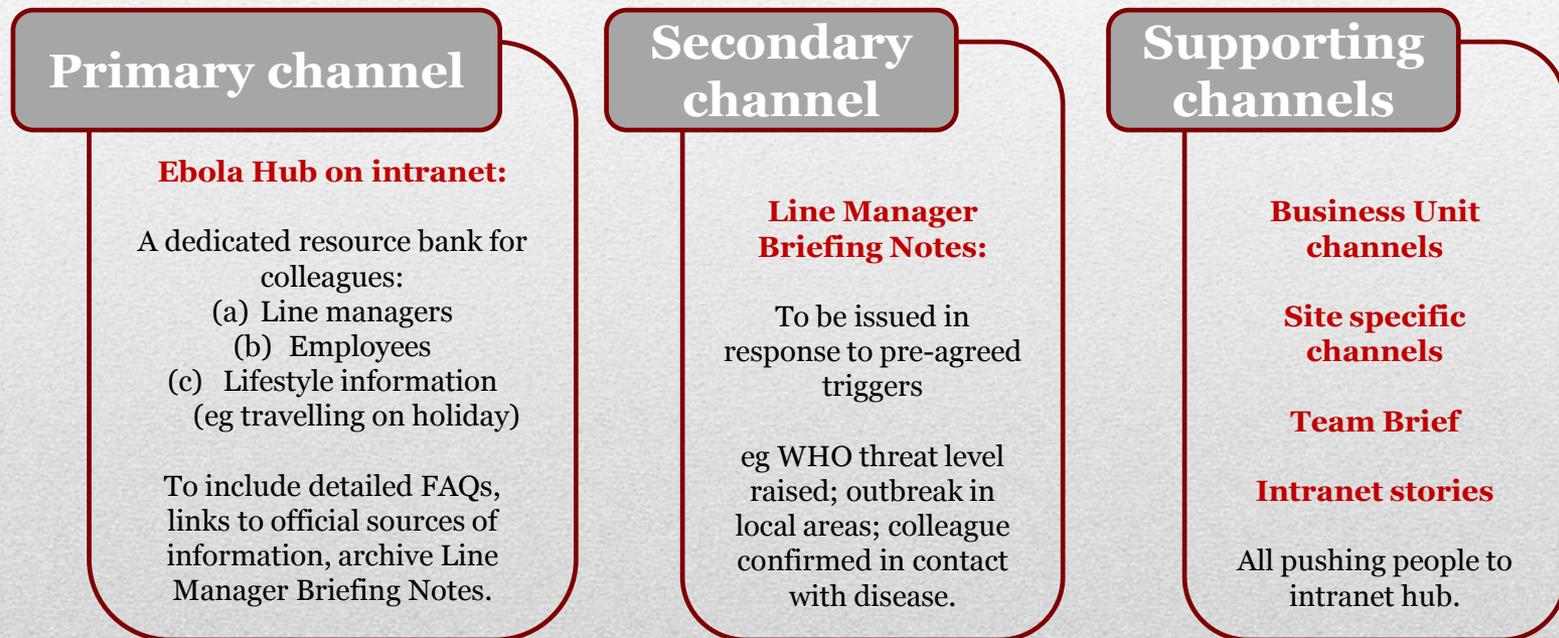
Impact The business result	What happened to attendance levels? Were any HR issues encountered? <i>Work with Business Continuity and HR to evaluate and refine comms approach if needed.</i>
Behaviour What are people doing?	Are people reading the advice, following the advice, asking questions if necessary, via the right routes? <i>Monitor hits on articles and intranet pages; email opens; questions to Occ Health. Add new FAQs to intranet page if they come up.</i>
Attitude What do people think?	Do people agree that [the company] is committed to protecting their health and ensuring business continuity during the outbreak? <i>Monitor intranet comments; calls to HR and union reps; ask line manager contacts.</i>
Awareness What do people know?	Are people aware that advice is available? Have we provided the right FAQs? <i>Monitor calls to Occ Health / HR; update FAQs if needed.</i>
Process How is the communication process working?	Are the channels being accessed? Is the message getting to the people who need it? How many new questions were received? <i>Monitor hit rates; calls to Occ Health / HR; new questions asked.</i>

Measurement

Our main communications purpose is to **inform** colleagues and ensure they have access to the right information, at the time they need it.

So we will host all information in one place, to avoid inconsistent messages, and link to it from the channels we know best reach our key audiences.

Crisis Co-ordinator will be responsible for stakeholder comms eg updates to Top 60; central pandemic group. IC will support content creation.



Channels

Who	Key messages	How to reach them
Senior leaders eg Top 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation and threat level • Current comms approach in line with threat level • Their role 	Direct email from crisis co-ordinator eg Business Continuity Head
Frequent travellers / travel bookers eg PAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation • Any Company travel restrictions • Where to get info ie travel portal, ebola hub, Gov.uk, Foreign Office website 	Direct email from crisis co-ordinator eg Business Continuity Head
Travellers to affected regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation • Any Company travel restrictions • Where to get info ie travel portal, ebola hub, Gov.uk, Foreign Office website 	<i>Flag from travel booking service eg Capita</i>
Occupational Health team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required action in risk situations – OH to determine and provide • Correct source of info – refer people to ebola hub etc 	<i>Direct from OH manager</i>
Line managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to self-serve information and guidance (hub) • When they will receive extra info with advice and actions to take • When they should contact OH 	Direct email from recognised source eg regular LM briefing channel; HR Helpdesk; internal comms mailbox.
All colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of ebola hub; Employee Emergency Info Line in case of site closures • Any required actions in line with risk level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager briefings • Ebola hub

Audiences

Threat levels – taken from swine flu pandemic levels

No confirmed cases in our country – not yet declared an epidemic / pandemic – up to WHO Level 4 (*sustained outbreaks within a community*)

WHO Level 5 – confirmed cases in at least two countries in one WHO region. Most countries aren't affected at this stage, but declaration of Phase 5 is a “strong signal that a pandemic is imminent.” *Media coverage will increase but this level does not necessarily require a change of comms message – reassurance and balance should be the aim.*

WHO Level 6 - in addition to the countries affected in Phase 5, there are community-level outbreaks in at least one other country in a different WHO region. A global pandemic is occurring. *Media coverage will increase and comms activity should show that we are aware and responding– reassurance and balance should remain the tone.*

Travel is restricted

Outbreak in [the company's] local area eg a community in which we're based

Confirmed case on our site

Comms trigger points

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Comms objectives at this stage:

- Reassurance that we are monitoring the situation
- Reassurance that BAU is appropriate and there are no changes to ways of working
- Ensure people are aware of and using the dedicated ebola hub.

- **Senior leadership team/Top 60:**
 - Recap what's in the press
 - What is a pandemic?
 - What is the WHO threat level?
 - Not at pandemic yet
 - What we're doing:
 - Keeping the situation under review with WHO and Government
 - Working with Business Continuity groups across the organisation
 - Current comms approach and plan for further comms if threat level changes
 - Who the internal pandemic group leaders are.

- **Line Managers** (via briefing note) and **All Colleagues** (via intranet story and usual channels for fieldworkers):
 - Reassurance and balance – no outside BAU action required
 - Promotion of main channel (ebola hub)
 - Current situation
 - Outbreak currently contained within group with links to Africa – advice if travelling to/from these areas.
 - Where you can get advice (NHS Direct, Gov.uk, Foreign Office)
 - Symptoms
 - How to reduce your risk of infection (personal hygiene measures)
 - Low risk but this is what you can do to reduce your risk.

Up to WHO level 4

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Comms objectives at this stage:

- Reassurance that we are monitoring the situation
- Reassurance that BAU is appropriate and there are no changes to ways of working
- Ensure people are aware of and using the dedicated ebola hub.

- **Senior leadership team/Top 60:**
 - Current WHO threat level and implications
 - Update on our business resilience and comms plans
 - Symptoms
 - Travel advice – BAU but consider limiting travel
 - Advice on attending work – normal absence management applies

- **Line Managers** (via briefing note) and **All Colleagues** (via intranet story and usual channels for fieldworkers):
 - Reassurance and balance – no outside BAU action required
 - Promotion of main channel (ebola hub)
 - Reassurance of current level of risk
 - More detail on symptoms
 - Reminder of previous hygiene advice on how to reduce your risk of infection
 - What to do if symptomatic (contact NHS Direct)
 - Advice on attending work – if you are unwell, our normal absence management process applies.
 - Still BAU but consider limiting travel.
 - What we're doing (increasing desk cleaning; providing wipes for phones etc)

- **On site comms: posters in loos**
 - Hygiene advice for reducing risk of infection (using Winter Flu posters) - 'Catch It, Kill It, Bin It' in public-areas', 'Wet, Soap, Wash, Rinse, Dry' in toilet facilities.

WHO level 5

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Comms objectives at this stage:

- Create comfort that BAU is safe and appropriate
 - Create belief that [the company] is prepared to keep both colleagues and the operation secure
 - Create belief that [the company] is agile and can respond to the changing situation
 - Help people understand the steps they can take to reduce risk of infection
 - Ensure managers feel supported in preparing for and dealing with potential eventualities.
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- **Senior leadership team/Top 60:**
 - Current WHO threat level and implications
 - Update on our business resilience and comms plans
 - Symptoms
 - Travel advice – BAU but consider limiting travel
 - Advice on attending work – normal absence management applies
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- **Line Managers** (via briefing note) and **All Colleagues** (via intranet story and usual channels for fieldworkers):
 - Reassurance and balance – no outside BAU action required
 - Promotion of main channel (ebola hub)
 - Reassurance of current level of risk
 - Symptoms
 - Assessment advice
 - Hygiene advice
 - Reporting and managing process if people taken ill at work
 - Briefing advice – how to answer colleagues' questions
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- **On site comms: posters in loos**
 - Hygiene advice for reducing risk of infection (using Winter Flu posters) - 'Catch It, Kill It, Bin It' in public-areas', 'Wet, Soap, Wash, Rinse, Dry' in toilet facilities.

WHO level 6 – pandemic

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Comms objectives at this stage:

- Ensure awareness of the advice and what this means for colleagues
 - Understanding of what does not change and is still BAU
 - Create comfort that BAU is safe and appropriate
 - Create belief that [the company] is prepared to keep both colleagues and the operation secure
 - Create belief that [the company] is agile and can respond to the changing situation
 - Help people understand the steps they can take to reduce risk of infection
 - Ensure managers feel supported in preparing for and dealing with potential eventualities.
- **Senior leadership team/Top 60:**
 - Current situation
 - What remains BAU vs what's difference
 - Status of our business resilience plans
 - Stop travel / stop external meetings requiring travel
 - Stop external recruitment
 - Steps we're taking to protect field workers
 - **Line Managers** (via briefing note) and **All Colleagues** (via intranet story and usual channels for fieldworkers):
 - Reassurance and balance – what remains BAU and where something difference is required
 - Promotion of main channel (ebola hub)
 - Current situation
 - Any restrictions eg stop travel / stop external meetings requiring travel / stop external recruitment
 - Steps we're taking to protect field workers / those who have to enter customers' homes
 - Reminder of steps you can take to reduce risk of infection
 - Reminder of symptoms

Travel is restricted

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Comms objectives at this stage:

- Enable local managers to deal with the situation
 - Ensure people understand any changes to local procedures
 - Ensure people feel safe in coming to work if not affected
 - Confirm and action special arrangements for immune-comprised or other vulnerable groups
 - Create comfort that BAU in other locations is safe and appropriate
 - Create belief that [the company] is prepared to keep both colleagues and the operation secure
 - Create belief that [the company] is agile and can respond to the changing situation
 - Help people understand the steps they can take to reduce risk of infection
 - Ensure managers feel supported in preparing for and dealing with potential eventualities.
- **Senior leadership team/Top 60:**
 - Current situation
 - Still maintaining BAU in other locations
 - Status of our business resilience plans
 - Any restrictions (Stop travel between sites?) (Stop external meetings in locality?) (Stop external recruitment?)
 - Steps we're taking to protect field workers / people who have to enter customers' homes
- **Line Managers** (via briefing note) and **All Colleagues** (via intranet story and usual channels for fieldworkers):
 - Reassurance and balance – what remains BAU and where something difference is required
 - Promotion of main channel (ebola hub)
 - Current situation
 - Stop travel / stop external meetings requiring travel
 - Stop external recruitment
 - Detail of what you should and shouldn't do if you have to enter customers' homes
 - Reminder of steps you can take to reduce risk of infection
 - Reminder of symptoms

Case confirmed in our area

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Comms objectives at this stage:

- Enable local managers to deal with the situation in line with required processes *May also require comms direct to everyone on affected site*
- Ensure local colleagues understand symptoms and what to do if unwell
- Ensure people understand any changes to local procedures (if changed)
- Ensure people feel safe in coming to work if not affected
- Ensure people understand the steps they can take to reduce risk of infection
- Ensure that affected colleagues are treated fairly and in line with duty of care
- Create comfort that BAU in other locations is safe and appropriate
- Create belief that [the company] is prepared to keep both colleagues and the operation secure
- Create belief that [the company] is agile and can respond to the changing situation

- **Senior leadership team/Top 60:**
 - Situation
 - Action plans
 - Resourcing issues

- **Line Managers** (via briefing note) and **All Colleagues** (via intranet story and usual channels for fieldworkers):
 - Reassurance and balance – what remains BAU and where something difference is required
 - Promotion of main channel (ebola hub)
 - Situation
 - Action plans including relocation, working at home, working at different site
 - What to do if you've been at that site in the last [2 weeks??]
 - Symptoms
 - Hygiene advice / reminder of steps you can take to reduce risk of infection
 - *Consider use of crisis channels eg emergency info line if site is closed.*

Case confirmed on our site

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GENERAL FAQs:

- What are the symptoms?
- What are high risk groups?
- Someone in my team is in a high risk group. What should I do?
- What should I do if a colleague in my team contracts [the disease]?

• **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT FAQs:**

- How do I record absence during this time?
- Are there any special arrangements for absence management at this stage of the outbreak?
- What happens if a local school is closed?
- What if someone needs to care for a sick dependant?
- Who do I contact if I need absence management advice?

• **CLEANING FAQs**

- What cleaning arrangements are in place?
- Where can I get hygiene advice / info on reducing my risk?

• **TRAVEL FAQs**

- I've been to an affected area, or been in contact with someone who has. What do I do?
- Does [the company] have any travel restrictions in place?

Sample FAQs

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