
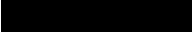


Covid-19: Internal Communications Strategy

1. **ISSUE:** To consider a strategic communications framework for engaging with British Council staff on the issue of Covid-19.
2. **RECOMMENDATION:** That you provide any feedback and agree the Communications Framework (**Annex A**) and next steps (**Para 8**).
3. **BACKGROUND:** Covid-19 is now a global issue and as a result the communications challenges for the British Council have exponentially increased. There are few other public organisations that operate on this scale. Additionally, we have a heterogeneous internal audience which includes local and international staff, consultants and teachers, and a business model that is predicated on intercultural exchange. At the best of times, this means that we have different audiences who need to digest different messages.
4. Because the speed of Covid-19 is affecting countries differently and because the policies of partner governments are changing at speed, the risk of our staff receiving mixed messages is elevated. Our own experiences also suggest that our operations are very sensitive to disruption due to Covid-19. As the WHO has now designated Covid-19 a pandemic, we can expect the pace of decision-making and required communications to increase. Many staff will be anxious. All staff will be expected to change their behaviour in some way.
5. The messages we give to staff are particularly important in a time of crisis. We need to meet the following communications objectives:
 - a. Leadership and reassurance
 - b. Clear and timely instruction
 - c. A safe, and coordinated way to share concerns and raise questions
6. Crisis communications are best managed strategically. This can reduce staff anxiety, increase organisational trust and effectively manage the resources we have. This framework offers a systematic way to deliver regular communications to all staff while giving in-country teams the scope to communicate with their own staff as needed.
7. As part of the delivery of this strategy we will ensure to solicit feedback and iterate our approach as needed.
8. **NEXT STEPS:** If you are content with the Communications Framework, we will also issue it to Regional Marketing Directors and Regional Heads of Communications to implement. The first communication would be sent following today's IMT meeting.

, Director of Communications
, Head of Internal Communications and Change

13/03/2020

Annex A: Internal Communications Framework: Covid-19

Category	Objective	Sender	Audience	Frequency	Content
Global Leadership	Confidence that leadership is on top of the situation / Motivation / Sense of camaraderie and working together in the face of adversity	CEO	Global staff	Fortnightly after Gold	Latest global developments / major changes / stories of colleagues' resilience and innovation.
Operational and People (Global)	Confidence that leadership is managing the situation / Colleagues are reassured, feel they have clear information and support the measures being put in place	Jointly from the COO, Director Global Network and Global People Director, Director of Digital	GLT, SBU Leads and CDs	Same day after Silver	Global situation update, changes to global operational procedures, HR policies or global health advice and best practice and case studies.
Regional/SBU Leadership	As above	Regional Directors	Regional staff	Day after Silver	Regional situation update, changes to operational procedures, HR policies or global health advice.
Operational and People (Country)	As above	Country Directors	In-country staff	Following Country Bronze	Local situation update, changes to procedures or policy and reassurance.
Two-way communications (Global Webinar)	Confidence that leadership is listening to employees' questions and dealing with concerns / feel motivated and supported	CEO with appropriate SMT member	Global	Monthly	Report of latest global developments and our evolving response, but mainly a chance for staff Q&A.