

# EONI COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

## Introduction

Effective communications are essential to the efficient operation of all organisations. The Electoral Office continues to strive to ensure that staff are kept fully informed of issues which relate to all aspects of the core business and to how they perform their duties.

The Communication Strategy does not take account of the numerous informal contacts between staff at all levels; these play an invaluable role in ensuring the passage of information within the organisation.

## Core Components of the Strategy

The following outlines the strategy in place within EONI from mid 2006:

### a. Monthly Board Meetings

All pertinent issues are discussed at the monthly Management Board and fully minuted. All papers and minutes are saved in TRIM and staff are notified when they are available to view.

Wherever reasonably practicable staff are consulted before decisions are taken at the Board. Exceptions include matters:

- relating to individual members of staff
- on which an immediate decision is required
- in respect of which security requirements make consultation inappropriate
- concerning the budget

Where consultation is possible:

- the Board paper or a note of the issue is sent to all members of staff along with an invitation to comment within seven days.
- all responses received are considered by the Board/CEO in taking the decision.

### b. Team Briefings

Managers bring together their staff for discussions of matters relevant to their section (e.g. AEO meetings, Corporate Services meetings, Area Office internal meetings). Their purpose can be to:

- inform staff of management decisions or new procedures
- discuss key issues
- focus on implementation or review of methods of work

Such briefings are crucial to the work of EONI, especially for AEOs who are dispersed across seven geographic locations.

c. Workshops/ Focus Groups/ Seminars

Personnel are invited to attend sessions to “brainstorm” new areas of work, plan for key activities and review/evaluate material or events. These are also important methods of consulting with staff to inform policy development and decision making.

d. Staff Notices

Official notices on relevant issues are sent to staff as and when necessary. These may originate from any member of the headquarters team, depending on the topic.

e. Email

This is the quickest and most effective method of internal communication. It is recognised that, if required, it is good practice to respond to internal emails as soon as is reasonably practical.

f. Annual Staff Survey

EONI conducts an annual survey of staff opinions on a range of topics. This is analysed externally. The results and opinions expressed by staff are disseminated throughout the organisation and used to inform future decision making.

g. Away Days

When resources are available, staff are invited to attend corporate sessions in a location away from EONI to address important issues, undertake “team building” exercises, receive training or plan key events.

h. Information Unit/ Helpline

Since the central Helpline was introduced in 2005, telephone communications within EONI have been quicker, more effective and more easily managed. The Helpline staff provide consistent, timely and effective responses to all external callers.

The Helpline is based within the Information Unit. The Information Officer has responsibility for updating the website.

i. Whistleblowing Policy

EONI has recently introduced a policy on whistleblowing which outlines the formal procedures to be followed in the event that a member of staff suspects inappropriate activity by a manager or colleague.

j. TRIM

The centralised electronic records management system (TRIM), gives staff access to papers and correspondence originating within or received by EONI.