

Communication within BASHH: advice on good practice

This advice has been drawn up at the request of the BASHH Board in response to concerns expressed by some people as to uncontrolled and potentially problematic communications within the organisation.

This guidance is intended to refer to both written and electronic communications, although because of the nature of the medium it is particularly relevant to emails.

- Be careful about forwarding emails to third parties who have not previously been copied in. Be particularly careful to read down to the beginning of the forwarded emails and ensure that there is nothing potentially embarrassing in them. If in doubt, always check with the sender of the email that they are happy for you to forward it on to third parties.
- Senders of emails should always be careful as to the content. Derogatory and potentially libellous comments have no place in emails (or in paper communications).
- As a rule of thumb use the following benchmarks: -
 - Would you be happy if this email found its way to every member of BASHH?
 - Would you be happy to see your communication, or excerpts therefrom, published in a newspaper?
 - If material in your email is sensitive and not for widespread dissemination, then always state this specifically.
- Conversely, if you wish information to be cascaded on (e.g. to Branch Chairs via the secretary of the Clinical Governance Committee) then always state this explicitly. Material that is intended to be widely disseminated in such a manner should first be put in the form of a Word document, to ensure that there is no confusion over this.

As always in such matters, guidance such as this cannot be comprehensive and can not cover every conceivable situation. It is not a substitute for common sense and professionalism, which must always prevail.

Keith Radcliffe
General Secretary
June 2005

Approved by the Board on 23 September 2005