Government
Communication
Service

Modern Communications Operating Model
A blueprint for government communication

Contents

Foreword

Launching the Modern Communications Model (MCOM) in 2015, I asked of the profession:

"Do you have the right structure in place for a modern communications function and do you have the latest tools and guidance to enable you to evaluate in the most effective way?"

Since then, the communications profession has changed dramatically, but the question remains valid and is one all government communicators should regularly ask themselves.

As a function and profession, our practices need to constantly evolve, anticipate and keep pace with technological change, be audience-focused and demonstrate our effectiveness. Through our leadership, people, practices and performance we are seeking to build a diverse workforce, but also inclusive workplaces.

MCOM2.0 provides a blueprint for the government communications profession and practice which compliments the Government Communications Functional Standard GovS0.11. MCOM2.0 is not a prescriptive model intended as an organisational structure (although organisations may structure teams around the model), but a fundamental statement of the essential capabilities and practices of government communication.

I am extremely proud of our achievements in GCS. We have developed world-leading communications practice through successive improvement programmes led by Directors of Communications and volunteers from all areas of GCS, and MCOM2.0 gathers many of these resources together to help communication teams deliver the finest public service communications and support better outcomes for our audiences.

As a leading Civil Service function and profession we must continue to raise our standards. GCS2020, Year of Marketing and Accelerate are current programmes that will enhance our practices and add to the catalogue of resources provided under future editions of MCOM.

My challenge to government communicators is to use MCOM2.0 and the Government Communication Functional Standard as tools in your organisation to answer my earlier question, to audit and assure your organisations practice, to inform professional development, and as a framework for reporting, sharing and celebrating our best practice.

Alex Aiken

"Over the last four years MCOM has been instrumental in delivering exemplar communications. With the introduction of MCOM2 I am confident we will continue to actively lead the way in the future world of communications. It is also great to see the Government Communication Service re-emphasising marketing in the new model as part of a co-ordinated approach to government communication."

Selvin Brown MBE
Director, Engagement and Policy, Health and Safety Executive,
and member of the Ministerial Communications Board, author of
the original MCOM principles

"MCOM puts people, practice and performance at the heart of government communication – from understanding our audiences to creating a diverse, inclusive profession and workplace."

Cheryl King-McDowall
Deputy Director, Professional Standards,
Government Communication Service

Introduction

Our purpose

The Government Communication Service (GCS) is the Civil Service function and professional body for people working in communication roles in HM Government departments, agencies and arm's length bodies. It brings together over 4,500 professionals across 25 ministerial departments, 21 non-ministerial departments and nearly 400 agencies and public bodies. Our aim is to deliver world-class communications that support HM Government priorities, improve people's lives and enable the effective operation of our public services.

The CORE purpose of government communication

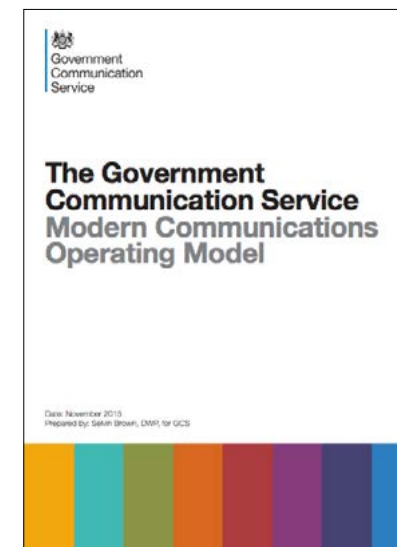|	
C	Changing behaviours for the benefit of society
O	Operational effectiveness of public services
R	Reputation of the UK and responding in times of a crisis
E	Explanation of government policies and programmes

Communication is one of the five main levers of government alongside legislation, regulation, taxation and spending. When done well, its contribution to delivering government policies is profound. It should be no surprise that communication is regarded as one of the leading professions within the Civil Service.

GCS and its members commit to observing the highest standards of communication practice, professional development and ethics. We demonstrate the core values of the Civil Service Code – integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

Modern Communication Operating Model MCOM

In the autumn of 2015, GCS published the Modern Communications Operating Model (MCOM). This model was in line with the vision of GCS to build a more skilled and unified profession and function, one which is always seeking to innovate and adopt global best practice. MCOM was developed from research conducted into the organisational design and operating practice for the communications profession across the major Whitehall departments, influential private sector agencies, external media and the digital sector.

For further information see Modern Communications Operating Model (2015)

Government
Communication
Service

**The Government
Communication Service**
Modern Communications
Operating Model

Date: November 2015
Prepared by: Selvin Brown, DWP, for GCS

Introducing MCOM2.0: the case for change

MCOM provided a blueprint for the government communication profession, setting out core principles for improving the capability, structure, skills and resources required to deliver more efficient and effective government communications.

From early 2016 onwards, departments, agencies and ALBs across GCS have embraced the principles of MCOM, delivering organisational re-design and enhanced professional practice accordingly. An annual skills survey conducted across all GCS members measures practitioner capability and helps drive continuous professional development across the profession and function.

GCS has, through its continuous improvement programme, extended and developed a range of products and resources which collectively form a comprehensive canon of professional practice.

MCOM2.0 is consistent with the Government Functional Standard GovS0.11: Communications and will be regularly updated with the latest GCS guidance.

"The communications landscape is inherently dynamic. The only certainties are that tomorrow our audiences will be a little different, the technology and techniques available to us a little more advanced, and our methods and practices a little better. **Our challenge in GCS is not merely to keep up with the pace of change, but to actively lead the way.**"

Since the publication of MCOM, the world of communications has continued to evolve at an accelerated pace. **5 Trends in Leading-Edge Communications** sets out five current and predicted trends across the profession, providing prompts to inform best practice and stimulating thought around longer-term strategies and agile principles.

MCOM2.0: the way forward (how the model has changed)

MCOM2.0 is built around five disciplines with strategic communication at the core.

External affairs explains policies, but also listens to help build campaigns that deliver.

Marketing raises awareness of policies, influences attitudes and behaviours and supports the operation of services.

Internal communication engages staff in delivering priorities and supporting organisational and cultural change, maximising performance and delivering business strategy most effectively.

Marketing

Strategic

External affairs

CORE purpose of government communication

Internal communications

Communication

Media

C – Changing behaviour
O – Operational effectiveness of public services
R – Reputation management
E – Explaining policies

Media includes proactive and reactive handling of the press, relationship management, content creation and insight and evaluation.

Strategic communication sets, co-ordinates and guides the implementation of activity, based on insight as part of an overarching plan to deliver against agreed priorities to measurable effect.

The five core disciplines are underpinned by a number of professional practices that should be consistently applied by practitioners across all MCOM disciplines. Essential practices include campaigning and the OASIS model. Previously defined as a discipline, campaigning is now more clearly recognised in MCOM2.0 as an essential practice for all disciplines.
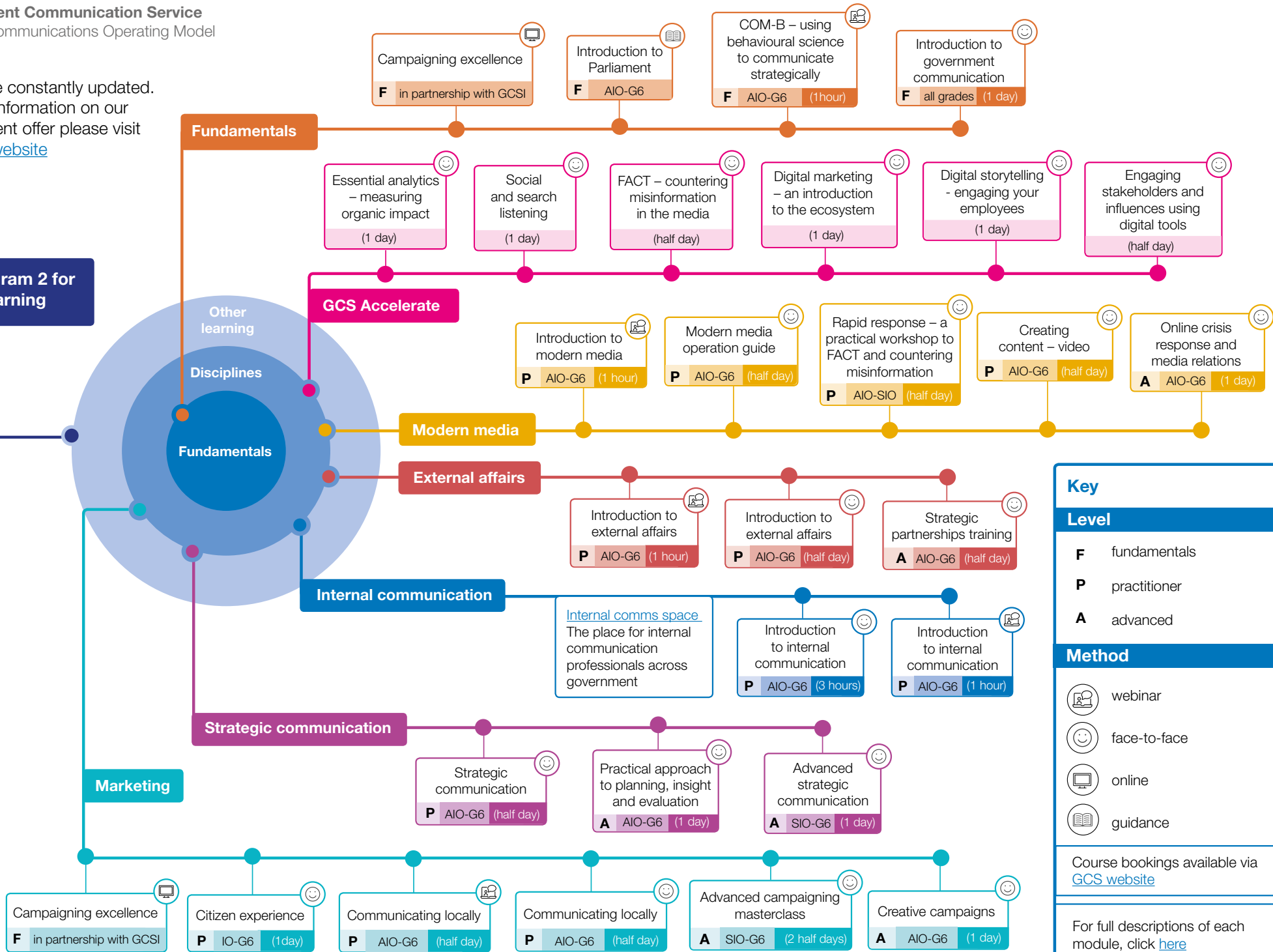
In MCOM2.0, we acknowledge that there is no communications discipline that has not been and will not continue to be transformed by digital technology. It recognises that we need a cultural and structural change in the way we approach digital and technology within communications – a recognition that it is not exclusively the domain of digital professionals (though they may exist within teams), but one for all government communicators.

Government communicators may have a primary specialism in one MCOM discipline (such as media, internal communications) and may also have advanced specialist skills (for example those working in insight and evaluation, design and creative roles), they should all seek to develop capability in all MCOM disciplines. GCS members are supported in this by an extensive professional development curriculum, guides, tools and a programme of events and conferences sharing best practice with colleagues across all UK Government and devolved authority public services.

Each of the five MCOM2.0 disciplines has clear principles for excellence. A summary of operational guidance is set out in the following pages. All GCS standards and guidance are available in full on the **GCS website.**

Government Communication Service
Modern Communications Operating Model

This will be constantly updated. For more information on our development offer please visit the GCS website

see diagram 2 for other learning

Other learning
Disciplines
Fundamentals

Fundamentals

Campaigning excellence
F — in partnership with GCSI

Introduction to Parliament
F — AIO-G6

COM-B – using behavioural science to communicate strategically
F — AIO-G6 — (1 hour)

Introduction to government communication
F — all grades — (1 day)

GCS Accelerate

Essential analytics – measuring organic impact
(1 day)

Social and search listening
(1 day)

FACT – countering misinformation in the media
(half day)

Digital marketing – an introduction to the ecosystem
(1 day)

Digital storytelling - engaging your employees
(1 day)

Engaging stakeholders and influences using digital tools
(half day)

Modern media

Introduction to modern media
P — AIO-G6 — (1 hour)

Modern media operation guide
P — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Rapid response – a practical workshop to FACT and countering misinformation
P — AIO-SIO — (half day)

Creating content – video
P — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Online crisis response and media relations
A — AIO-G6 — (1 day)

External affairs

Introduction to external affairs
P — AIO-G6 — (1 hour)

Introduction to external affairs
P — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Strategic partnerships training
A — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Internal communication

Internal comms space
The place for internal communication professionals across government

Introduction to internal communication
P — AIO-G6 — (3 hours)

Introduction to internal communication
P — AIO-G6 — (1 hour)

Strategic communication

Strategic communication
P — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Practical approach to planning, insight and evaluation
A — AIO-G6 — (1 day)

Advanced strategic communication
A — SIO-G6 — (1 day)

Marketing

Campaigning excellence
F — in partnership with GCSI

Citizen experience
P — IO-G6 — (1day)

Communicating locally
P — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Communicating locally
P — AIO-G6 — (half day)

Advanced campaigning masterclass
A — SIO-G6 — (2 half days)

Creative campaigns
A — AIO-G6 — (1 day)

Key

Level

F	fundamentals
P	practitioner
A	advanced

Method

webinar	
face-to-face	
online	
guidance	

Course bookings available via GCS website

For full descriptions of each module, click here

MCOM2.0 strategic communication

Strategic communication sits at the heart of the revised MCOM. Alongside the other disciplines, strategic communication has a particular role to set, co-ordinate and guide the implementation of activity, based on insight, in a timely way, as part of an overarching plan to deliver against agreed priorities to measurable effect.

It is the central prism through which the practitioner disciplines of MCOM operate represented by the **SCORE** model:

S	**Strategic** input
C	**Changing** behaviour by encouraging people to lead healthy, safer lives
O	Ensuring **operational** effectiveness of government by informing people about public services
R	Enhancing and maintaining the **reputation** of the UK and responding in times of crisis, including promoting interests internationally
E	**Explaining** government policies and programmes to clarify legal or statutory requirements

To operate at a truly strategic level, government communicators must be part of the decision-making process, rather than a tactical consideration at the end of the policy development process. Communications, policy and operations colleagues working collaboratively across functions creates better solutions, as we:

- diagnose the problem from an audience perspective
- take a united course of action
- implement in a co-ordinated way and get better outcomes for audiences

Strategic communication puts audience understanding at the heart of policy and service design, resulting in better decision-making and improved delivery. The engagement framework (see below) outlines the strategic communication interventions from problem identification through to implementation.
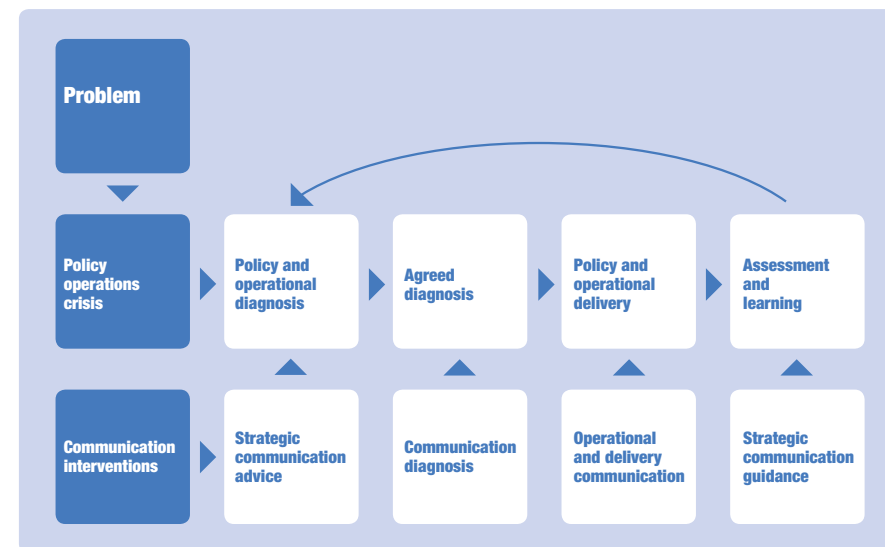
For further information see **Strategic communication: MCOM function guide**

The National Security Communications Delivery Model demonstrates the real world advantage of Strategic Communications across four strategic pillars underpinned by professional expertise and capability. See overleaf for structure.

Government Communication Service   **NATIONAL SECURITY COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERY MODEL**

ABCDE Delivery Model

BUILDING **ALLIANCES**

- Identifying influential stakeholders
- Communicating mutual interests
- Shaping the debate by telling the story
- Capitalising on UK's soft power advantage

CHANGING **BEHAVIOUR**

- Identifying a theory of change
- Using behavioral science (COM-B, EAST)
- Effecting change by influencing audiences
- Analysing impact in real time and long run

FRAMING **CONTEXT**

- Scanning for trends, risks & opportunities
- Providing situational awareness
- Influencing the information environment
- Exposing disinformation

AMPLIFYING **DETERRENCE**

- Explaining HMG's objectives
- Building resilience in domestic audiences
- Projecting UK capability
- Demonstrating cost of malign action

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS OFFERS REAL WORLD ADVANTAGE ACROSS FOUR PILLARS, UNDERPINNED BY PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE AND CAPABILITY.

PROFESSIONAL **EXPERTISE AND CAPABILITY**

- Convening the XWH community to provide full spectrum of communications skills
- Building capability alongside allies

MCOM2.0 external affairs

The new discipline of external affairs develops the strategic engagement discipline of the original MCOM to better reflect the discipline.

External affairs is about building and maintaining relationships with influential individuals and organisations for the public benefit. It means fostering genuine two-way engagements so government communicators have a better understanding of what our audiences are thinking, and building awareness and understanding of government policies by explaining what we are trying to achieve. This kind of engagement helps create true advocates in the longer term.

For further information see External Affairs operating model

Building and maintaining relationships with influential individuals and organisations for the public benefit

Listening

Allowing us to gather intelligence to inform internal thinking, horizon scan and provide early warning

Dialogue

Obtaining balance (encourage supportive voices, mitigate criticism) and disseminate messages through stakeholder channels

Awareness

Explaining government policies to influential individuals and organisations for public benefit

Best practice

Co-ordinating high-level stakeholder engagement, providing advice based on gathered intelligence and evaluating impact

MCOM2.0 marketing

Government marketing enables people to access public services, increases the choices available and improves life chances. It is a powerful force for good, using data, behavioural science and creative skills to create credible campaigns which build confidence and trust in our institutions and brands.

The government defines marketing as "the strategic application of a range of techniques that help fulfil operational and policy objectives by effectively understanding and meeting the needs of citizens".

Marketing programmes include research into citizen behaviour, insight generation, strategic planning, implementation of communications programmes across multiple channels, effectiveness measurement and a focus on delivering a high-quality end-to-end service and customer experience. It supports the raising of awareness of policies, influences attitudes and behaviours and aids the operation of services.

For further information see Year of Marketing

2019 GCS launched the Year of Marketing programme, a renewal of the discipline to ensure that marketing meets the challenges of the 2020s.

The programme focuses on enabling government communicators to stay ahead of trends and challenges in the marketing industry through events and training.

GCS has published the Year of Marketing, a thoughtpiece highlighting the marketing trends that GCS predict will shape the marketing landscape over the near future and setting out six opportunities for government marketeers to consider the effects of, discuss, and act upon:

data – as our world is being rebuilt by better use of data and advanced analytic techniques, there are chances to harness relevant and appropriate data to give the best citizen experience

customer experience – with increasing application of artificial intelligence and machine learning, we are able to interact with our citizens in more seamless and intuitive ways

channel – shifting media consumption habits can lead to a broader blend of channels and engagement opportunities to deliver short, medium, and long-term outcomes

platform – as our citizens continue to use various online platforms, marketers will look towards creating and implementing long-term platform-specific strategies

trust – recognising how organisations build trust with their consumers by helping them navigate misinformation and ensuring appropriate use of their data

creative – ensuring that creative ideas cut through a world where more decisions are influenced and automated using technology

MCOM2.0 media relations

Media relations is at the heart of government communications. The media is our vital partner to create public understanding of the aims of government and build the trust the public places in our services. This partnership requires highly skilled media officers who can respond successfully to the combined demands of the public, ministers and stakeholders in the 'always on' age.

The media has a duty to hold government to account and our media teams should promote, explain and justify government policies accurately. They should also do so creatively and must be prepared to speak with honesty and on the basis of professional expertise and evidence to advise ministers and officials on the best approach to meet the needs of the media and achieve the government's objectives.

For further information see Modern Media Operation: A Guide

[image: Government Communication Service]
Government
Communication
Service

Modern Media Operation
A Guide
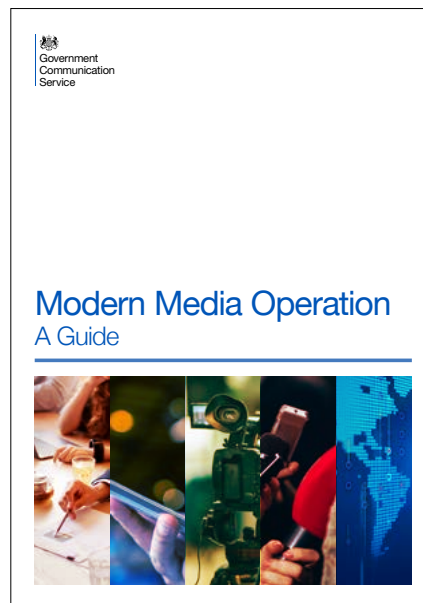
Five core functional aspects which teams and practitioners are required to operate with confidence and appropriate expertise
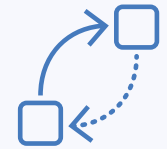
Proactive media handling

- Making announcements
- Nations and regions
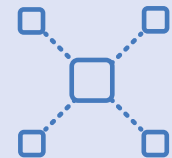- Consumer media
- BAME
- International
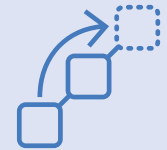
Reactive media handling

- Media monitoring
- Call handling/rebuttal
- Crisis communications

Relationship management

- Policy shaping and corporate
- Integration with other comms
- Ministerial and special adviser engagement
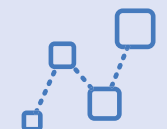- Winning and retaining journalists' trust

Digital/content creation

- Digital
- Content creation

Insight and evaluation

- Insight
- Evaluation

MCOM2.0 internal communication

"Internal communication helps leaders in your organisation inform and engage employees, in a way which motivates staff to maximise their performance and deliver the business strategy most effectively. It is not about 'sending out stuff'."

Russell Grossman, Head of Profession for Internal Communications, Director of Communications, ORR

Effective internal communications will:

• help the organisation deliver its objectives

• help staff see the connection between their job and the organisation's vision

• understand employee engagement and what drives it

• help managers communicate better with their teams

GCS has developed an extensive library of resources for internal communication professionals including the Internal Communication Standard Operating Model, competencies and a suite of tools and guidance hosted on The IC Space website, providing internal communicators with the skills and support required to be excellent in their jobs.

Internal communication in GCS embraces the principles of Engage for Success and the four enablers of engagement.

Strategic narrative

Visible, empowering leadership providing a **strong strategic narrative** about the organisation, where it's come from and where it's going.

Engaging managers

Managers who focus, coach and stretch their people, giving them scope and treating them as individuals.

Employee voice

Employees have a voice throughout the organisation for reinforcing and challenging views, between functions and externally. Employees are seen not as the problem, but as central to the solution – to be involved, listened to and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas.

Integrity

Organisational **integrity** – the values on the wall are reflected in day-to-day behaviours. There is no 'say-do' gap. Promises made and promises kept, or an explanation given as to why not.

Government Functional Standard GovS011: Communication

Communications is one of 14 government functions. Every civil servant and every part of government is impacted by the work of the functions

Government functions include:

- HR
- Project Delivery
- Property
- Finance
- Commercial
- Security
- Counter Fraud
- Debt
- Analysis
- Digital and Communications

The communications function is essential to the effective operation of the Civil Service, the delivery of HM Government priorities and improved outcomes for citizens.

What are functional standards?

Functional standards are management standards to guide people working in and with the UK government. They exist to create a coherent and mutually understood way of doing business across organisational boundaries, and to provide a stable basis for

- assurance
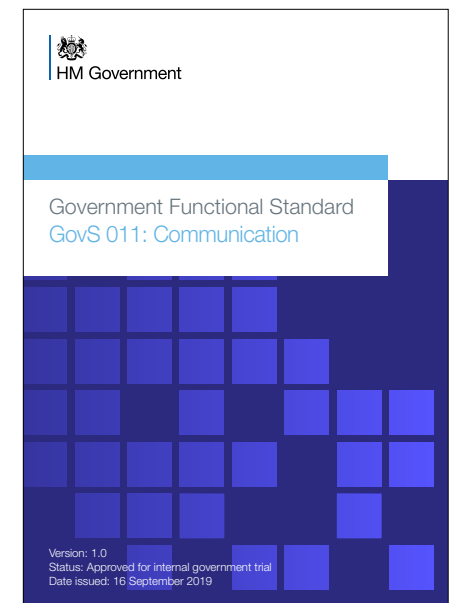
- risk management

- capability improvement

Functional standards should help people working at all levels in the UK government to be:

- efficient: save time and money by asking the right questions and avoid reinventing the wheel

- effective: do the right thing, right time, right way – including finding the right balance between effort and risk

- empowering: help professionals share learning and improve ways of working

The purpose of the Communications Functional Standard is to set expectations for the management and practice of government communications. The standard is supported by extensive GCS best practice guidance and resources and provides direction and guidance for everyone involved in communications:

- permanent secretaries, directors general (and chief executive officers (CEO) of arm's length bodies)

- senior leadership and board members within organisations

- those commissioning communications

- communications leads within organisations

- those involved in developing, managing and delivering communications

- third parties engaged in government communications, including in partnership marketing

For further information see **Government Communication Functional Standard GovS011: Communication**

HM Government

Government Functional Standard
GovS 011: Communication

Version: 1.0
Status: Approved for internal government trial
Date issued: 16 September 2019

GCS career framework

The GCS career framework is for everybody working in or looking to embark on a career in government communications.

Our UK wide community of communications professionals includes those working in the five MCOM disciplines and a range of specialist roles; from internal communication managers in NHS Blood and Transplant, digital officers at the Scottish Government to graphic designers in Department for Work and Pensions. As a profession our inclusivity lies in our shared aim to deliver excellent public service communications.

The GCS career framework is designed to help GCS members and those seeking a career in government communication to navigate and plan their career progression. The framework is a living document and will evolve with our improvement programme and commitment develop a profession fit for the future

What is a career framework?

The GCS career framework provides a breakdown of job roles at different grades and enables GCS members and those interested in a career in government communication to identify what is expected for each role, at each level, and to see how they might progress or develop their skills through different job roles and levels.

There are a range of career paths within GCS, and gaining experience across each MCOM discipline will help GCS member's to develop their core capabilities, develop a rounded set of skills, knowledge and experience to progress their career within the profession.

The GCS career framework may be used as part of a personal development plan, in discussion with line managers and during objective setting to agree capability levels and progress during the performance year. It may also be used as a basis for career and talent conversations, to discuss future aspirations and possible career moves.

For further information see GCS Career Framework

Case study

Tanaye Reid

GCS Project Support
Officer, Cabinet Office
and former GCS Intern

"I originally joined GCS as an intern with a 12-week placement in internal communications.

I was immediately impressed by my colleague's passion for the job and willingness to support my development. I've taken advantage of the extensive professional development and networking opportunities available within GCS and have had the freedom to explore what interests me most – which incidentally is where you will find me next... campaigns.

GCS wants the best for you, to get the best out of you – I truly believe that."
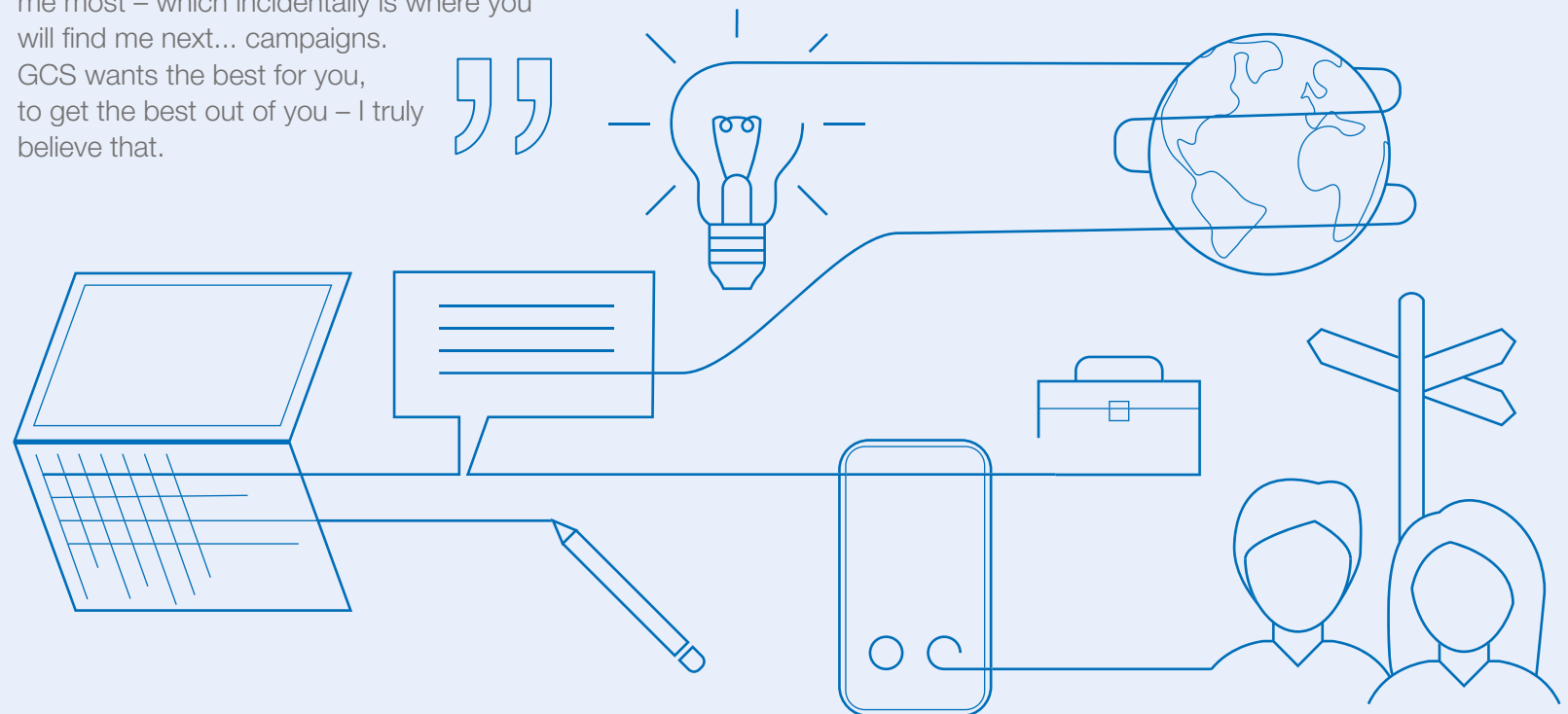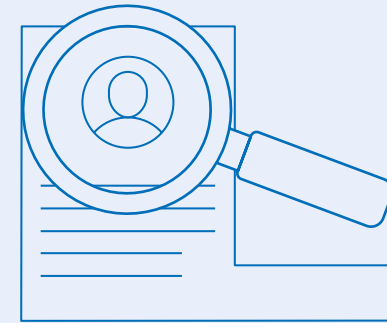
MCOM2.0: essential practices

No matter which of the five MCOM disciplines government communicators may be operating within at any given time, there are core professional practices in common. Government communication teams and individual GCS members must seek to build skills and capability in the following.

Leadership

GCS aims to develop confident, inspiring and empowering public service leaders. GCS members should exemplify through their work the values of the Civil Service values Leadership Statement

As Civil Service leaders, we take responsibility for the effective delivery of the government's programme and ministers' priorities, living the Civil Service values and serving the public.

Inspiring
about our work and its future

- We will show our pride in and passion for public service, communicating purpose and direction with clarity and enthusiasm.
- We will value and model professional excellence and expertise.
- We will reward innovation and initiative, ensuring we learn from what has not worked as well as what has.

Confident
in our engagement

- We will be straightforward, truthful and candid in our communications, surfacing tensions and resolving ambiguities.
- We will give clear, honest feedback, supporting out teams to succeed.
- We will be team players, and will not tolerate uncollaborative behaviour which protects silos and departmentalism.

Empowering
our teams to deliver

- We will give our teams the space and authority to deliver their clearly set objectives.
- We will be visible, approachable and welcome challenge, however uncomfortable.
- We will champion both difference and external experience, recognising the value they bring.
- We will invest in the capabilities of our people, to be effective now and in the future.

Propriety

Government communicators must carry out their work objectively and without political bias, in accordance with the standards of behaviour set out in the **Civil Service Code**.

The Government Communication Service Propriety Guidance defines how civil servants can properly and effectively present the policies and programmes of the government of the day.

The following basic criteria have been applied to government communications by successive administrations, that government communication should be:

• relevant to government responsibilities

• objective and explanatory, not biased or polemical

• conducted in an economic and appropriate way, and to justify the costs as expenditure of public funds.

Government communication should not be – or liable to be – misrepresented as being party political.

Publicly-funded government communications cannot be used primarily or solely to meet party political objectives. However, it is recognised that the governing party may derive incidental benefit from activities carried out by the government.

For further information see GCS Propriety Guidance

Diversity and inclusion

Our vision is to be a communication profession that is representative of modern Britain and that actively supports talented individuals to succeed regardless of race, ability, gender or background.

Diversity and inclusive practices are central to our mission – communicating government policy facilitated by two-way dialogue with the people we serve.

Embedding diverse and inclusive practices in our approach to communications and performance, ensuring that our work reflects and represents the views and expectations of people across UK regions and nations is vital. A more diverse and more inclusive Civil Service better represents the full spread of public opinion by bringing different points of view to the centre of the decision-making process.

The GCS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our ambition for the profession. The strategy is a living document, one that will reviewed and revised to ensure we are delivering on our vision.

Campaigning

"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."

Alex Aiken, Executive Director of Government Communications

A campaign is a planned sequence of communications and interactions that uses a compelling narrative over time to deliver a defined and measurable outcome.

All government communications should be viewed in the context of a wider campaign: what do we want to achieve and where does it fit in? This way we can ensure all our work links to a clear objective and we can evaluate the impact of everything we do.

For further guidance see OASIS planning guide

Review and refresh the approach after each phase of the campaign

Feedback to optimise implementation

Objectives

Audience insight

Strategy/idea

Implementation

Scoring/evaluation

Behaviour change

Behaviour change is one of the primary functions of government communication – helping change and save lives, helping the government run more effectively and saving taxpayers' money. Behaviour change is fundamental to all government communication, regardless of discipline.

A behaviour is not a change in attitude, being more aware of something, being engaged in something, a culture shift or a social norm. These are often important steps in getting people to the stage where they adopt the behaviour but are not your ultimate behaviour goal or outcome. They are a means but not an end.

The framework devised by the Behavioural Insights Team provides an easy-to-use checklist based around four key principles known as EAST – making it Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely. Each element of the framework is designed around well-established behavioural theory principles.

The COM-B (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour) model helps identify the barriers to behaviour change in a systematic and effective way. It says there are three conditions that need to be met before behaviour takes place. The barriers to overcome are anything that prevents those conditions being met.

For further guidance see Strategic communication: a behavioural approach

Capability

Does your target audience:

Have the right knowledge and skills?

Have the physical and mental ability to carry out the behaviour?

Know how to do it?

Opportunity

Does your target audience:

Have the resources to undertake the behaviour?

Have the right systems, processes and environment around them?

Have people around them who will help or hinder them to carry it out?

Motivation

Does your target audience:

Want to carry out the behaviour?

Believe that they should?

Have the right habits in place to do so?

Government Communication Service

Strategic communication: a behavioural approach

Digital

In the context of GCS, 'digital' means the application of contemporary data and technology to all specialisms set out in MCOM, and the use of web, mobile, social media and other non-analogue channels for communication with the public.

Digital skills vary according to MCOM specialism and range from – but are not limited to – creating content, managing platforms, securing third-party influence, digital marketing, data modelling, coding and open-source, anonymised social listening.

However, mindset is as important as skillset, and all communicators should maintain a broad awareness of the latest technological advances, an understanding of the implications for government of current communications trends, and active consideration of emerging opportunities for innovation.

The GCS Accelerate programme offers industry-leading professional development, consultancy and training across government to ensure that GCS is leading the way digitally. The programme will drive innovation and help communication professionals commit time, resources and energy to personal and team upskilling. It will help communicators stay abreast of the latest technological advances, understand current communication trends and be able to consider emerging opportunities for innovation within government. Accelerate delivers transformation through six specialist learning hubs, which each align to the disciplines set in MCOM2.0.

For further guidance see Transforming Our Profession

Government Communication Service

GCS Accelerate

OVERVIEW

TRANSFORMING OUR PROFESSION:
The UK Government digital skills and culture transformation programme

Insight

Understanding audiences is essential to government communication. By finding out more about audiences' attitudes, habits and preferences, insight can guide appropriate audience segmentation and ensure government communications are as relevant, meaningful and effective as possible.

Insight takes information and data beyond 'interesting' – it drives thinking and guides action.

For further guidance see the Knowledge Hub pages on the GCS website

Insight framework

General:	Vital statistics	Who they are	General lifestyle
	How many people are like this? Trends? Indices and comparisons?	Key economic or demographic characteristics (individuals' age, sex etc.)	How they live. What they like doing. Priorities. Aspirations. Consumer trends. Attitudes to government/life in general.

This area/ Issue:	Needs, benefits and motivations	Behaviour – what they do	Influencers	Beliefs and attitudes
	Rational needs, emotional or hidden needs. What motivates them?	What drives and triggers action? Where do they do what they do? How frequently? Barriers to doing/thinking? Key words / language used?	Who or what influences them? Why? (See also 'media', below.)	Thoughts, beliefs, attitudes to this? What values do they hold that relate to the issue? What makes them feel good? Bad? Why?

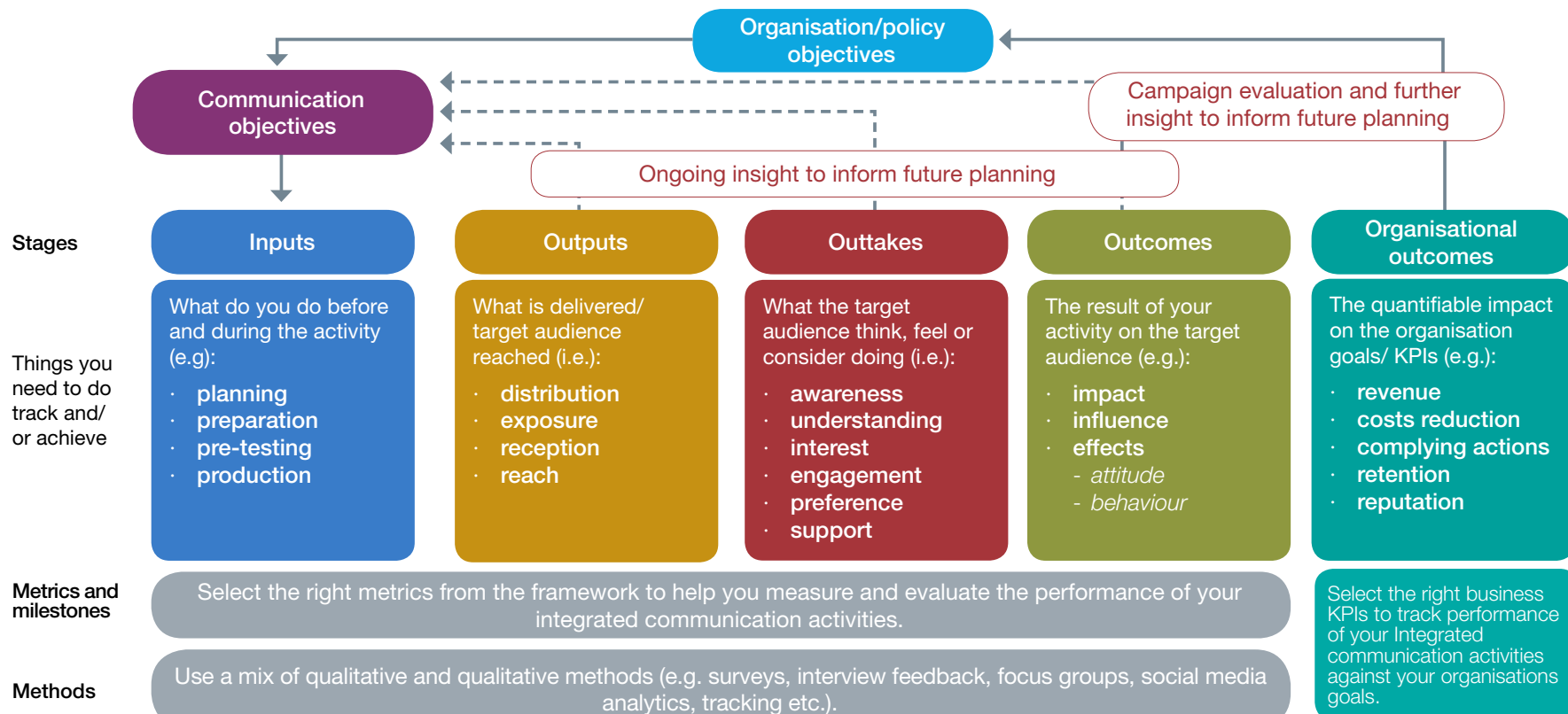| Media:	Getting information and messages				Who influences them	
	Place, time and how they get info	How much info they want/need	Where they get it from and media they use	When and where they're most receptive	Who they do/ don't listen to and respect	Who delivers for them? In contact with?

Evaluation

Evaluation allows us to assess our performance in delivering on objectives such as changing behaviour, improving operational effectiveness, building the reputation of the UK and explaining government policies and programmes.

Our approach to the measurement and evaluation of our communication needs to be outcome-focused, robust, consistent and of a world-class standard. **For further guidance see GCS evaluation framework 2.0**

GCS evaluation framework

	Inputs	**Outputs**	**Outtakes**	**Outcomes**	**Organisational outcomes**
Stages	Inputs	Outputs	Outtakes	Outcomes	Organisational outcomes

Things you need to do track and/ or achieve	What do you do before and during the activity (e.g):
	· planning
	· preparation
	· pre-testing
	· production
		What is delivered/ target audience reached (i.e.):
		· distribution
		· exposure
		· reception
		· reach
			What the target audience think, feel or consider doing (i.e.):
			· awareness
			· understanding
			· interest
			· engagement
			· preference
			· support
				The result of your activity on the target audience (e.g.):
				· impact
				· influence
				· effects
				  - *attitude*
				  - *behaviour*
					The quantifiable impact on the organisation goals/ KPIs (e.g.):
					· revenue
					· costs reduction
					· complying actions
					· retention
					· reputation

Metrics and milestones	Select the right metrics from the framework to help you measure and evaluate the performance of your integrated communication activities.				Select the right business KPIs to track performance of your Integrated communication activities against your organisations goals.
Methods	Use a mix of qualitative and qualitative methods (e.g. surveys, interview feedback, focus groups, social media analytics, tracking etc.).				

Organisation/policy objectives

Communication objectives

Campaign evaluation and further insight to inform future planning

Ongoing insight to inform future planning

Emergency planning framework

From flooding to terror attacks, the public expect the government to be a fast and reliable source of information in times of crisis. The pace at which emergencies can evolve, and new forms of media allowing information to be disseminated in real time, means high-quality and timely communication is now as important as the management of the crisis itself.

As public bodies, it is essential that during a crisis we are the source of accurate, relevant and timely information. A strong crisis communication strategy can keep stakeholders informed, build and maintain public trust in the government and ensure accurate information is being reported by the media. Drawing on best practice across the public sector, GCS developed a package of practical tools and templates for communication professionals showing how to plan, develop and implement an effective response during a crisis.

Our resources are focused on six critical stages which make up the GCS PRIMER framework for crisis communications.

- **Plan** – It is essential to have a communications plan, regularly update it and know where it is when you need it.

- **Rehearse** – A crisis response works best if tested in advance, and doing this with partners can ensure you build important relationships in calmer times.

- **Implement** – Getting it right from the start can be critical – this section looks at how you set up your crisis response in the right way.

- **Maintain** – Crisis scenarios can be a test of stamina and character – these resources will help you ensure you maintain quality while supporting your team.

- **Evaluate** – It is crucial to measure what's getting through and what's not.

- **Recover** – Communication has an important role in rebuilding trust and confidence – this section offers practical advice on how to respond after a crisis.

For further guidance see Emergency planning framework
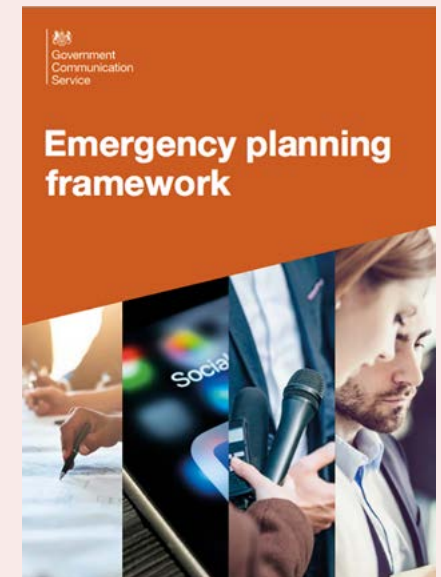
Countering disinformation

Disinformation is the deliberate creation and/or sharing of false information with the intention to deceive and mislead audiences. A changing media environment means disinformation can now spread faster than ever, to more people than ever. It is therefore crucial that government and public sector employees learn how to resist disinformation. This will help support the dissemination of reliable, truthful information that underpins our democracy.

The RESIST toolkit promotes a consistent approach to the threat and provides six straightforward steps to follow:

For further guidance see Resist Counter-disinformation toolkit

1. Recognise disinformation

2. Early warning

3. Situational insight

4. Impact analysis

5. Strategic communication

6. Track outcomes

Business partnering

A number of government departments and bodies – including the Department for Transport, HMRC and Defence Equipment and Support – have created business partners to create a formal link between policy and communication teams.

Communication business partners are critical links between communication teams and the rest of the organisation. They provide expert advice to the teams they work with so that communications is at the heart of planning and decision-making.

The GCS guide to **Business partnering for government communication:**

- explains what business partnering is and its benefits
- describes the role and typical responsibilities of a communications business partner
- provides guidance on team structure and recruitment
- advises how a business partner model can be developed
- provides case studies of business partnering in action

For further guidance see Business partnering for government communication
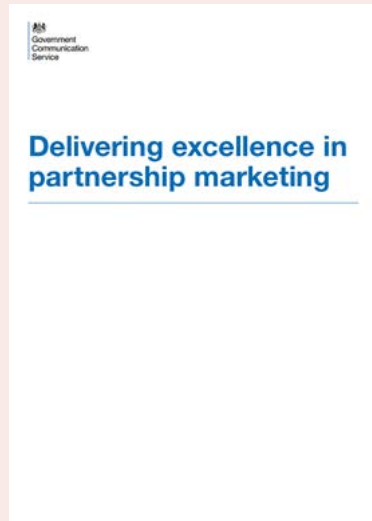
Partnership marketing

When done well, partnership marketing can have a transformational impact on government campaigns. As a result, partners are playing an increasingly important role in the communications mix. By working with partners in the public, private and third-party sectors, GCS is able to ensure cost-efficient and effective campaigns and outcomes for our audiences.

Various types of partnership activities are undertaken by government as illustrated above. The partnership approach taken will largely be dependent on the specific objectives, with partnership marketing predominately focused on either driving awareness and/or behaviour change.

For further guidance see Delivering Excellence in Partnership Marketing

Types of partnership activity

Raising awareness
Amplifying government messages through one or more of partners' marketing and communications channels (online and offline).

Supporting
Providing and signposting solutions that motivate, support and sustain behaviour change.

Sponsorship
A commercial agreement by which a sponsor contractually provides financing to establish an association between the sponsor's organisation, brand or products and a sponsorship property (e.g. a government campaign) in return for the rights to promote this association.

Partnership marketing
Business partnerships

Business/policy partnership
Government defines the policy framework, sets basic standards and facilitates partner involvement. Partners create and deliver initiatives/services that provide solutions.

Strategic engagement
Building alliances with third parties to listen effectively, share content and communicate policy messages with the aim of enhancing government understanding, support and reputation.

Government Communication Service

Delivering excellence in partnership marketing

References

1. **Government Functional Standard GovS0.11: Communications**

2. **Modern Communication Operating Model (2015)**

3. **5 Trends in Leading-Edge Communications**

4. **Strategic Communication: MCOM function guide**

5. **External Affairs operating model**

6. **Year of Marketing**

7. **Modern Media Operation: A Guide**

8. **The ICSpace**

9. **GCS Career Framework**

10. **Civil Service Leadership statement**

11. **Government Communication Service propriety guidance**

12. **GCS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

13. **Strategic Communications: A behavioural approach**

14. **OASIS campaign planning**

15. **Accelerate: Transforming our Profession**

16. **GCS Knowledge Hub**

17. **GCS Evaluation Framework 2.0**

18. **Emergency Planning Framework**

19. **RESIST Counter-disinformation Toolkit**

20. **Business Partnering for Government Communication**

21. **Delivering Excellence in Partnership Marketing**

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