



Interim Management
and Support

Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan

2026/27

Version 1.0

Document Management

Revision history

Version	Date	Summary of changes

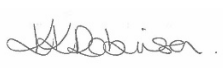
Reviewers

This document must be reviewed by the following people:

Reviewer name	Title	Date	Version
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Karen Robinson	Deputy Director Specialist Workforce Supply and NHS Interim Management Support (NHS IMAS)	08/04/2026	1.0

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This document must be approved by the following people:

Name	Signature	Title	Date	Version
Karen Robinson		Deputy Director Specialist Workforce Supply and NHS Interim Management Support (NHS IMAS)	08/04/2026	V1.0

Document control

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the stakeholder engagement and communications plan is to describe the communications and engagement activity for NHS Interim Management and Support (NHS IMAS) and establish how the service will manage its relationships with stakeholders to ensure effective market engagement and communication.

The stakeholder engagement and communications plan has been developed to identify and implement communications activities that will support the achievement of the [10-Year Health Plan for England](#), through the NHS IMAS Business Plan objectives.

The plan identifies, analyses and prioritises the programme's stakeholders and defines the objectives of the communications and stakeholder engagement activity.

Included is a detailed communications and stakeholder engagement action plan which describes:

- What activities will be undertaken;
- When they will be undertaken; and
- Who is responsible for delivering these activities.

2. Background

The purpose of NHS IMAS is to offer NHS organisations that need short- or medium-term support, the means to access the management expertise that exists throughout the NHS: 'By the NHS, for the NHS'.

NHS IMAS has several talent pools made up of experienced senior NHS managers and carefully selected independent consultants who undertake assignments to support NHS organisations.

A small, core team at NHS IMAS is dedicated to building the NHS talent pool and managing assignments, they are the key point of contact for both the client and the NHS IMAS pool member.

NHS IMAS is funded by NHS England (NHSE) and is hosted by the Workforce, Training and Education Directorate as an independent resource to support all NHS organisations in England.

NHS IMAS is responsible for three key areas, utilising its systems and processes to deliver for NHS England and the NHS as a whole:

- **NHS IMAS Core Offer:** Provide senior short- or medium-term interim management and support to resource the NHS, including NHS Trusts, Integrated Care Systems, NHS England, Regional teams, Arm's Length Bodies, Commissioning Support Units and other Health and Social Care related organisations.
- **Talent Management:** Provide support to all seven regions of NHS England, specialist NHSE Registers and senior NHS leaders to develop talent within the NHS.

2.1 Scope

The scope of this plan includes all anticipated communications and engagement across NHS IMAS, along with associated stakeholders.

2.2 Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the overall NHS IMAS business plan and organisational priorities. This document will be reviewed in line with the timescales and deliverables identified in the five-year strategy document which is in development.

3. Aim and Objectives

The objectives of this stakeholder engagement and communications plan are to:

- Promote the services offered by NHS IMAS.
- Encourage NHS organisations to use NHS IMAS in the first instance when they have senior (Agenda for Change band 8d and above) interim management and support requirements.
- To raise awareness of developmental benefits for NHS staff at Agenda for Change band 8d and above (or those at an 8c ready to move into an 8d role) to register with NHS IMAS.
- Secure NHS IMAS as the preferred option in supporting NHS organisations to develop regional talent programmes.
- Sharing widely with NHS organisations the benefits and outcomes of using NHS IMAS.

This plan will support the delivery of the above objectives through undertaking specific NHS IMAS communication related procedures, which include:

- Establishment of a detailed project plan which will include key milestone deliverables and timescales to ensure transparency of outputs.
- Robust ISO Quality and Environmental Management Systems to ensure NHS IMAS continually improves its services through use of the business management system, making changes as appropriate.
- Production of a comprehensive stakeholder map to ensure clear, consistent, proactive engagement.
- Tracking and reporting communications and engagement activity through the Communications and Engagement tracker.
- Robust risk management to ensure associated risks affecting NHS IMAS are proactively managed and wherever necessary, escalated accordingly.

4. Strategic approach

The strategic approach is based on a SWOT analysis and considers short, medium and longer-term ambitions and activity.

Short term

- To reinforce NHS IMAS' 'strengths' in communications to target audiences and stakeholders.
- To develop appropriate content for different stakeholder groups.
- To align differentiated messaging and engagement with stakeholder groups identified through stakeholder mapping.
- Provide access to specialist Mental Health Improvement expertise required by the system, including managing the register and deployment of Mental Health Senior Interveners (Adult and Children's) to support systems.
- Continue to support the deployment of senior leaders into challenged organisations.

Medium term

- To prioritise identifying and attending in-person events to develop stronger relationships within systems (including regional forums and networks).
- To strengthen the regional model through Chief People Officer Networks and regional talent leads, workforce leads and Temporary Staffing leads, as well as engaging with regional Workforce Education and Training (WT&E) activities.

- To review the effectiveness of LinkedIn in generating new talent pool members and awareness within NHS organisations through existing KPI metrics.
- Continually review and identify areas to improve or re-focus communications materials in line with emerging priorities (10 Year Plan).
- To conduct channel analysis based on available metrics to identify priority channels.
- To maintain and strengthen contact with talent pool members by reviewing current activity and identifying opportunities, such as; offering surgery style webinars; providing CPD learning opportunities; community creation through the Talent Timebanking platform.
- To create a bank of assignment case studies which demonstrate the added value of NHS IMAS to both the NHS and pool members.

Longer term

- To exploit opportunities and plan to enter new markets.
- To identify future NHS leadership needs and consider how NHS IMAS can adapt its strategy and service offer.
- To establish what skills the NHS will need in the future and identify how NHS IMAS can help to meet those needs.

5. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

The nature of the NHS IMAS business model means that a wide range of stakeholders are directly involved, and it is therefore imperative to ensure that they are all appropriately engaged with. A comprehensive stakeholder map is in place and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with the overall NHS IMAS business plan and priorities.

The following list aims to illustrate who the key stakeholders are and in which context. Key audiences include:

NHS organisations (i.e. NHS Trusts, Integrated Care Boards/Systems, NHS England, Regional Teams, Arm's Length Bodies, Commissioning Support Units and other Health and Social Care related organisations)

- to encourage them to use NHS IMAS for interim and consultancy support and to support them on their wider talent programmes;
- to encourage senior staff to register with NHS IMAS as NHS pool members;

- to provide tailored support to specific teams and programmes of work including acute and mental health improvement support, HR investigations, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Exceptional Leaders Network and other specialist registers;
- to encourage and facilitate the NHS to use the wealth of skills already available to it, to improve and sustain the quality of health care services in the local communities they serve; and
- to offer coaching and mentoring opportunities targeted at specific groups of senior staff including Chairs, Chief Executives, Chief People Officers and Operational leaders (Proud2bOps Network).

Regional Talent Management Boards / teams

- to encourage and promote the use of NHS IMAS for support expertise and management of bespoke talent pools, enquiries and assignments.

Senior NHS managers

- to encourage them to use NHS IMAS for interim and consultancy support;
- to encourage them or their staff to join the NHS IMAS pool;
- NHS staff with specific skills and experience that could undertake assignments that NHS IMAS has identified as being 'hard to fill', including deploying senior leaders into challenged organisations; and
- to provide access to specialist Mental Health Improvement expertise through the management of the register and deployment of Mental Health Senior Interveners (Adult and Children's).

NHS IMAS Partners and Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) Members

- to keep them updated on NHS IMAS business and progress;
- to support them in their duty to act as ambassadors for NHS IMAS to senior leaders in NHS organisations;
- to encourage them to recommend experienced individuals to join the NHS IMAS pool;
- to encourage them to coach and mentor pool members where appropriate;
- to encourage them to participate in presenting informative webinars for NHS IMAS pool members; and
- to use their skills, knowledge, experience and expertise to enhance the development of NHS IMAS' offer to organisations and individuals.

NHS IMAS pool members

- To grow and develop local NHS talent, working with NHS leadership development;

- to keep them updated on NHS IMAS business;
- to make them aware of training and development opportunities;
- to ensure their information is up to date; and
- to encourage them to recommend experienced individuals to join the NHS IMAS pool.

Experienced independent consultants

- to encourage them to join the NHS IMAS pool; and
- to keep those who are already pool members informed of NHS IMAS' activities and developments.

6. Key Stakeholder Messages

The overall messages that NHS IMAS wishes to tell its stakeholders are:

- NHS IMAS is a **free service** for NHS organisations in England – it does not charge any commission or fees for its services, helping the NHS reduce reliance on private agencies while still accessing the right skills and experience.
- **NHS IMAS helps NHS organisations access experienced senior leaders** for short- or medium-term support, using expertise from across the NHS – by the NHS, for the NHS.
- **NHS IMAS supports its pool members** by giving them access to a wide range of interim and consultancy opportunities, with dedicated support from the NHS IMAS team throughout each assignment.

To ensure consistent messages to our stakeholders, there are key messages for the specific stakeholders in appendix A.

7. Communication Methods

There is a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan (which includes pool member recruitment) that describes the activities that NHS IMAS will undertake to specifically encourage NHS staff to apply to join the talent pool (see appendix B).

The NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan and will be supported by the core team as appropriate.

Key NHS IMAS communication and engagement activities are:

- Support the operational implementation and deployment of experienced senior leaders to the most challenged NHS organisations. Leading the management and coordination of a rapid deployment model.
- Provide access to specialist Mental Health Improvement expertise required by the system. This also includes managing the register and deployment of Mental Health Senior Interveners (Adult and Children's) to support systems with their most complex long stay cases to discharge patients into community services, delivering additional bed capacity, saving NHS money and improving patient experience.
- Regular communications on the NHS IMAS website and LinkedIn - posting regularly to raise awareness of NHS IMAS and its services and to encourage new high-quality pool members to register.
- Attend conferences and networking events to promote NHS IMAS services.
- Publication in internal and external NHS bulletins and staff network newsletters, as appropriate, including specialty-specific bulletins where these are available and appropriate.
- Utilisation of the electronic Corporate Brochure to publicise NHS IMAS' key messages to target stakeholders.
- Delivery of Workshops and Presentations to Regions, ICBs and Providers to increase the profile of NHS IMAS.
- Development of appropriate partnerships with other NHS organisations and teams (such as NHS Providers, NHS Employers and Commissioning Support Units).
- Invite NHS IMAS' network of Partners to act as ambassadors and market NHS IMAS across the wider NHS.
- Raise awareness of NHS IMAS and its core offer through the NHS England Flexible Resourcing function.
- Encourage NHS IMAS' network of Partners to come to NHS IMAS with support requests and recommend colleagues who may be suitable to join the pool.
- Development and maintenance of an NHS IMAS FutureNHS Collaboration platform to provide a workspace for pool members and NHS organisations to interact.
- "Word of mouth" and reputation are powerful communications tools. The NHS IMAS team will proactively encourage clients and pool members to recommend NHS IMAS to colleagues and to encourage senior NHS staff to apply to join the pool.
- All opportunities will be considered and exploited as they arise to market NHS IMAS through new channels, such as networks, conferences and events, presentation opportunities and communication bulletins.
- Routinely review closed enquiries to confirm the 'hard to fill' roles to inform targeted communications to encourage NHS staff with those skills to apply to join the talent pool.
- Working with NHS England programmes who require bespoke support and registers in line with the specialist nature of their work.
- NHS IMAS will also continue to proactively support the Regional and National Talent Management Programmes, within NHS England. This includes, acting

as a key partner and working closely with the Talent Management teams in the seven NHS regions to support the management and deployment of aspirant Directors and CEOs.

- Deliver the eleventh cohort of Introduction to Consultancy and Facilitation Skills Blended Learning Course for NHS pool members.
- Identify and deliver web-based training and development webinars for all pool members.
- Make coaching and mentoring available to NHS pool members through Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Schemes (Chair and Chief Executives, Proud2Bops and CPO Networks).
- Launch NHS IMAS presence within the Talent Timebanking platform to enable a talent pool community for shared learning activities.
- Develop case studies from pool members and clients to create promotional materials to highlight the benefits of using NHS IMAS across the system as an affordable alternative to the private sector and to encourage NHS colleagues to engage with interim assignments to support their career development within the NHS.

8. Risks

A dedicated NHS IMAS risk register is in place to ensure risks, issues, assumptions, and dependencies are appropriately managed and monitored.

9. Evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of this plan and supporting approach will be undertaken by the NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead on an ongoing basis.

Tracking of communication and engagement activity to be cross-referenced against regional assignment engagement and conversion rates.

Appendix A

Key Stakeholder Messages

Key messages for the specific audiences are:

a. For NHS organisations

- i. NHS IMAS does not charge any fees for NHS organisations in England using its services.
- ii. NHS IMAS is exempt as a Temporary Staffing Organisation. Therefore, when using NHS IMAS to identify a senior individual to support NHS organisations, this does not need to be declared as Agency Spend. Providers will need to ensure the ICB and region are sighted on the spend and are supportive via their usual governance processes.
- iii. NHS IMAS pool members are established, experienced and credible amongst their peers and the organisations they work with. Independent and NHS pool members are re-referenced every two years. This ensures high quality candidates are available.
- iv. Support is tailored to the needs of the client and can include elements of interim short- or medium-term capacity and capability; consultancy to offer advice and expertise or to lead a specific piece of work; and supporting whole organisational renewal by deploying and supporting key individuals.
- v. For each assignment, the client is allocated a Resourcing Lead from the NHS IMAS team who will remain in contact throughout the assignment to ensure it is progressing well against the agreed scope and objectives.
- vi. Opportunity to grow and develop local talent, whilst enabling their staff to share good practice and bring learning back to the organisation.
- vii. NHS IMAS can carry out bespoke work, including the development of specialist registers to help organisations run their talent programmes.

b. For Regional and National Talent Management Boards

- i. NHS IMAS can provide bespoke support and expertise to roll out Talent Management Programmes across all seven regions in England.
- ii. Since 2008, NHS IMAS has profiled pool members, stored information usefully on a bespoke database; scoped assignments intelligently and supported pool members and client organisations to ensure the assignment is successful.

- iii. Support is tailored to the needs of the client and can include elements of interim short- or medium-term capacity and capability; consultancy to offer advice and expertise or to lead a specific piece of work; and supporting whole organisational renewal by deploying and supporting key individuals.
- iv. For each assignment, the client is allocated a Resourcing Lead from the NHS IMAS team who will remain in contact throughout the assignment to ensure it is progressing well against the agreed scope and objectives.
- v. NHS IMAS will be the vehicle for matching individuals to assignments, tracking and managing the deployment of this resource and ensuring the scope of each assignment is agreed.
- vi. Opportunity to grow and develop local talent, whilst enabling their staff to share good practice and bring learning back to the organisation.
- vii. Bespoke management reporting arrangements can be put into place by NHS IMAS.

c. For Senior NHS managers and NHS IMAS pool members

- i. NHS IMAS will always prioritise using NHS pool members before considering independent pool members for an assignment.
- ii. All NHS IMAS pool members on assignment will receive regular contact from their dedicated Resourcing Lead to support them through any challenges on the assignment.
- iii. Other support and development is available such as a coach or mentor, exclusive access for NHS pool members to our accredited course - Introduction to Consultancy and Facilitation Skills, access to NHS Elect courses covering a wide range of areas, and invitations to regular learning webinars on topical areas within the NHS.
- iv. NHS IMAS pool members have access to a wide network of senior managers across the NHS, whilst having the opportunities to gain broader, new experiences, and the prospect of developing their career aspirations.

d. For NHS England Flexible Resourcing colleagues

- i. NHS IMAS will work in collaboration with HR & OD colleagues to join up individual systems to create a more cohesive methodology for deploying staff internally.
- ii. NHS IMAS will work in collaboration with HR & OD colleagues to develop policy and processes to support Flexible Resourcing across the organisation, including the seven Regions.

- iii. NHS IMAS will work in collaboration with HR & OD colleagues to reduce the need for organisations to source senior individuals from private sector agencies which improves quality and saves NHS money.

e. For NHS staff with specific skills and experience

- i. In addition to the benefits listed for Senior NHS managers and NHS IMAS pool members, NHS IMAS can support NHS staff with specific skills and experience to share their expertise in different parts of the NHS.

f. For NHS IMAS Partners and SAB members

- i. NHS IMAS Partners can help develop local NHS talent by supporting their staff to join the pool, supporting them on assignments and providing coaching or mentoring support for NHS pool members.
- ii. An opportunity to share their personal insight into the expertise, experience and challenges facing NHS leaders, whilst inspiring NHS IMAS pool members through web-based NHS IMAS Partner events.

g. For experienced independent consultants

- i. All NHS IMAS pool members on assignment will receive regular contact from their dedicated Resourcing Lead to support them through any challenges on the assignment.
- ii. Other support and development is available to independent pool members including invitations to regular learning webinars on topical areas within the NHS.

Appendix B Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Action Plan

The following table summarises the required actions to implement the content of the NHS IMAS communications plan.

Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Timescale
Maintain and raise the profile of NHS IMAS on LinkedIn.	All audience groups as listed in table above	Post via LinkedIn account at least two times per week through a planned and varied social media schedule.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	End of each week. Progress reviewed Monthly (highlight report).
Maintain and raise the profile of NHS IMAS on the NHS IMAS website.	All audience groups as listed in table above	To publish regular updates on the NHS IMAS website. Continuously review and update the NHS IMAS website content to ensure it is relevant and up to date.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead (Articles to be provided by all NHS IMAS team members)	Individual content details described in the communications tracker. Tracker reviewed quarterly
Maintain an NHS IMAS Intranet page within NHS England SharePoint Hub.	Pool Members, NHS England staff and Flexible Resourcing colleagues	Maintain and update a point of contact page detailing NHS IMAS business and link to NHS IMAS website and other communications channels.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead / Business Support	Reviews at the end of each quarter.
Utilise the NHS IMAS electronic Corporate Brochure.	Pool members, NHS organisations and clients	The NHS IMAS corporate brochure to be widely used to market NHS IMAS, recruit NHS pool members and feature how it can support the NHS.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead / NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads	Reviewed and updated annually
Web-based training, development opportunities and Partner webinars to be identified and delivered to pool members and Partners.	Pool members and Partners	At least six web-based training / development events to be held throughout the year. Activities will be communicated via channels listed above.	NHS IMAS Pool Member Development Lead	31 March 2027

Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Timescale
Act as key partner with NHS England for the Talent Management Programmes providing expertise and support for managing the specialist pool, enquiries and assignments.	NHS pool members, NHS organisations and clients, Regional Talent Management Programmes	Proactively support the development and management for Regional Talent Management Programmes across the NHS in England.	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / Head of NHS IMAS	Progress reviewed monthly (Highlight Report)
Blended Learning Course: 'An introduction to consultancy and facilitation skills'.	Pool members	Eleventh cohort of delegates to have successfully completed the blended learning consultancy course. Activities and results of feedback / evaluation will be communicated as appropriate via channels listed above.	NHS IMAS Pool Member Development Portfolio Lead	31 March 2027
"Word of mouth" communications.	Pool members, clients and Partners	All team members will proactively encourage clients and pool members to recommend NHS IMAS to colleagues.	All NHS IMAS team members	Progress monitored quarterly (Referral Source data)
Coaching and mentoring.	Pool members	To continue to market the coaching and mentoring support that NHS IMAS can provide, including specific schemes (Chair and Chief Executive, Chief People Officer and Proud2BOps). This support will be communicated via channels listed above and with NHS pool members, as appropriate, as they start new assignments.	NHS IMAS Mentoring portfolio lead / NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads	Uptake of the scheme reviewed monthly (highlight report)

Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Timescale
Continue to review 'hard to fill' enquiries.	Pool members, clients and Partners	This continuous review will help us understand the skillsets that are underrepresented within the NHS IMAS talent pool.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead / NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads	Reviewed Quarterly
Maintain an NHS IMAS collaboration platform (E.g. NHS Futures).	Pool members, clients and other relevant stakeholders	A platform to enable collaboration and information sharing.	NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	Content reviewed Quarterly
Delivery of Workshops and Presentations.	Regions, ICBs and Provider organisations	To share key messages about NHS IMAS and its purpose and to raise its profile across the system.	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / Head of NHS IMAS	Reviewed Monthly & Quarterly
Attendance at key workforce events and conferences.	Potential clients and pool members	To provide opportunities for networking with potential clients and pool members and to share information about NHS IMAS.	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / Head of NHS IMAS	Reviewed Monthly & Quarterly
Operate using the Regional Model	Regions, Talent and Workforce Leads	To work alongside the regional model to strengthen regional relationships and support bespoke regional needs.	NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads	Monthly
Development of exclusive NHS IMAS area within Talent Timebanking platform	NHS IMAS Pool Members	To launch the NHS IMAS area within the Talent Timebanking platform in order to create a community and build knowledge sharing within the pool.	NHS IMAS Communications and Pool Member Development Portfolio Leads	31 March 2027

Action	Stakeholders	Description	Owner	Timescale
Communications and engagement activity tracker	NHS IMAS colleagues	To maintain the use of the communications and engagement activity tracker to effectively manage engagement across the system. To support effective reporting of activity.	NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads / NHS IMAS Communications Portfolio Lead	Quarterly (update meetings)
Prioritise attending in-person events	Pool members, clients and other relevant stakeholders	To extend our reach through attending in-person/virtual events, where we will generate strong connections and raise awareness across the system.	All NHS IMAS team members	Quarterly (through review of communications tracker)
Provide access to specialist Mental Health Improvement expertise	Regions, ICBs and Provider organisations	Managing the register and deployment of Mental Health Senior Interveners (Adult and Children's).	NHS IMAS Senior Manager / NHS IMAS Resourcing Leads	Monthly (update meetings)