

# The NHS identity at a local level

Developing a design style for your organisation



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**The DH Information Reader Box is located on the inside back cover of this document.**

# Introduction

**We are all part of one NHS working in partnership towards the same values. As the NHS is changing – and delivering new services in different ways – the presentation of a unified professional service is vitally important.**

The NHS identity plays a key role in helping to signpost NHS services – and it also gives patients and the public confidence in the treatment, information and advice they receive.

But as the NHS begins to provide more personalised services with choices for patients, many trusts and other NHS organisations have identified a need to develop a more distinctive image and to raise awareness of their services.

This document has been developed for communicators and designers within the NHS who want to create a specific design style for a programme, initiative, or their organisation as a whole. It aims to demonstrate the scope and flexibility within the NHS Identity Guidelines to create a distinctive local design style relevant to local needs.

# Developing a local design style

## Why develop a design style?

The changing environment within the NHS has meant that more organisations are becoming aware of the need to raise awareness of their services. Many communicators in the NHS have chosen to develop local design styles within the NHS identity in order to:

- help the organisation present a consistent and unified image;
- create a sense of local identity; and
- ensure that communications materials look professional and support the public's confidence in you as a professional organisation.

A local design style for your organisation will help you manage your image and reputation. But, as always, the most powerful way to distinguish your organisation and raise awareness of your services is to ensure that people's personal experience of your services, the interaction they have with front-line staff, as well as third-party reporting or 'word-of-mouth' about your organisation are positive.

## Working with the NHS identity

Any design style you develop needs to work within the NHS identity, whether it is for your whole organisation or for a specific health promotion campaign, initiative or publication.

Your design style will combine elements of the NHS identity to create a unique mix – the mix will then be applied consistently across all your organisation's communications. The design style will include:

- the NHS logo or your local NHS logotype as appropriate;
- NHS typefaces; and
- a choice of colours from the colour palette.

It may also include a graphic device, such as a particular shape or image used consistently in your materials.

You could also use appropriate imagery – such as photography and illustration. Please avoid using clip-art as this does not support the professional look of your communications. All NHS organisations can use the recently redeveloped NHS Photo Library [www.nhs.uk/photolibary](http://www.nhs.uk/photolibary) which holds a wide range of images.

For more detail on the elements of the NHS identity see page 29.

# Example of a design style – NHS Integrated Service Improvement Programme:

Consistent use of colour selected from the NHS colour palette

NHS logo in top right position

Text set in Frutiger font

Consistent use of graphic device

# Example of a design style – NHS Care Records Service:

NHS Logotype in top right position

Text set in Frutiger font

Consistent use of graphic device

## The importance of the NHS logo

A design style is not about creating a new brand or designing a new logo.

The NHS logo is the cornerstone of the NHS identity and is one of the most powerful logos in the UK:

- It has over 90% instant and unprompted recognition amongst the public.
- It carries with it very strong levels of trust, credibility and authority.
- It is trusted as an impartial and credible deliverer of health advice, information and services.



Anytown   
Primary Care Trust

## No new logos

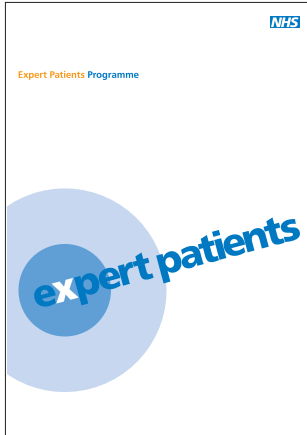
The NHS Identity Guidelines do not allow new or alternative logos to be developed. This is because the NHS logo and local logotypes represent the NHS brand – any additional logos would only compete with and compromise its integrity.

Further problems with new logos are that they:

- do not demonstrate a correct line of accountability for the information and services that you provide as an NHS organisation;
- are not immediately recognisable to the public who already recognise and trust the NHS logo;
- incur unnecessary costs in their development and implementation as well as additional investment to raise awareness.

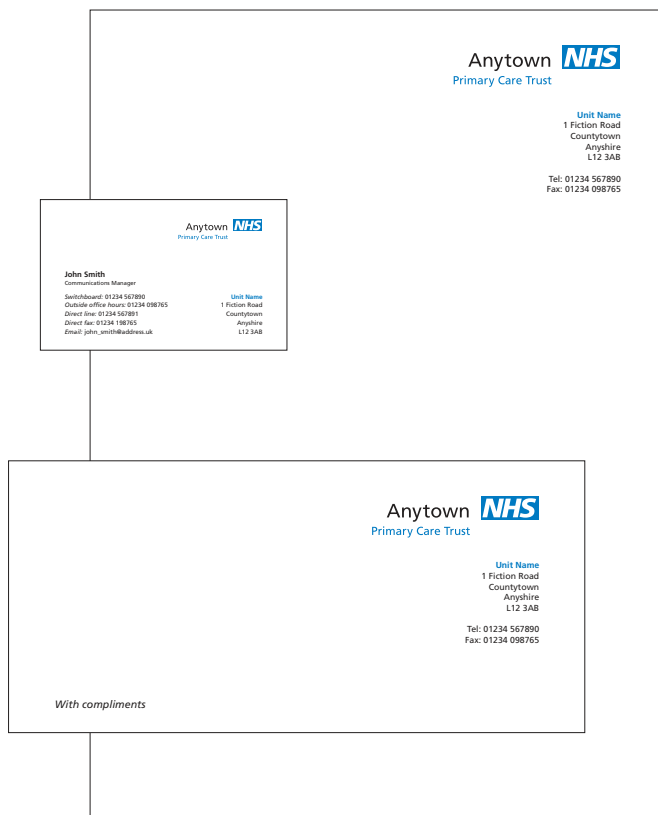
## Where can I apply my local design style?

Once you have developed a new design style based on the NHS Identity Guidelines, you can apply your local design style on most communications materials, including patient information, internal staff communications, annual reports and health promotion campaigns.



## Expert Patients Programme

However, all NHS corporate materials including letterheads, compliments slips, business cards, signs and badges must follow the "Core Identity Guidelines" to project our shared NHS identity. You can find the Core Identity Guidelines at [www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/coreidentity/index.htm](http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/coreidentity/index.htm).



# Getting started

## Introduction

Before you start, asking yourself a few questions will help to structure your project. There is a sample project structure on page 8 and there are case studies on pages 9–23 which show how other NHS trusts have developed local design styles.

### **Which communications materials should we change?**

We recommend you conduct a communications audit before commissioning a local design style. Review all the communications your organisation prepares and decide which need to carry the new design style. Some NHS trusts develop a simple design style for patient information leaflets only, while others unify all the communications materials used by their organisation, including annual reports and websites. Remember that stationery and signs must not use your local design style.

### **Should we change our processes for developing materials?**

At the same time as you develop a local design style, you may want to consider changing the process used to develop your materials. By centralising the process and using templates, e.g. for patient information, you could save time and costs over time.

### **What resources do I have?**

Depending on the approach you take, developing a local design style can be both costly and time-consuming. For example, developing a complex design style and set of templates for a range of materials can involve several months' work. You may decide to allocate budget to a design style project as part of your annual financial planning – or you may be able to gain extra resources from your Chief Executive for the project.

### **Do I need to use an agency?**

To produce design work of a professional standard you may need to use an agency. Alternatively, you could use your internal design resource, if you have one. As well as being potentially more cost effective, this can offer a number of advantages. In-house design staff often already have knowledge and experience of your organisation's particular situation and audience. For example, they may be aware of sensitivities around accessibility and social inclusion. They can also provide ongoing support to create and modify materials as required.

When producing any design materials there are a number of existing NHS tools and resources that you could consider using, such as the templates provided in the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information and photography from the NHS Photo Library (see page 25 for more information). You can also contact the NHS Identity Helpline on 020 7972 5250 for any branding advice.

If you do choose to work with an external design agency, bear in mind that as a simple and more cost effective option, you could provide the templates from the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information as a starting point and ask the agency to adapt and customise the templates to suit your organisation (see page 25 for more information).

Either way, any design style you develop must follow the NHS Identity Guidelines.

### **Is there anyone else I can work with?**

You may want to team up with colleagues in your own organisation or other trusts in your area and pool your resources. For example in the Liverpool area, three PCTs share a health promotion service and design studio (see page 18), so that designers can work with PCT staff to develop professionally produced health promotion materials.

### **How should I use colour?**

Consider whether you always need to use full colour. High production, glossy work is often not appropriate and it can appear wasteful to the public. Designs that use only one or two colours can have the same or greater impact. They can, for example, stand out against a mass of full colour leaflets or provide greater clarity when using simple designs and illustrations.

You could approach your printer to discuss the most appropriate solution depending on your desired result and your budget and resources.

### **What issues should I consider with the content?**

The content is as important as the design. You should always aim to use clear, easily understandable language, both in English and when you need to translate copy. Accuracy is equally important. Always check that the basics are correct such as spelling and grammar.

In addition, make sure all copy is checked and approved by the relevant teams, for example, your clinical governance team and your trust's patient forum. The NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information can help you plan, write and check your communications (see page 25 for more information).

### **What kind of buy-in do I need?**

You will probably need the approval of your Chief Executive or the board. Remember to engage staff and stakeholders too. See the case studies section (pages 9–23) for examples of how different organisations have obtained buy-in for their design styles from staff and stakeholders.

## Structuring your project

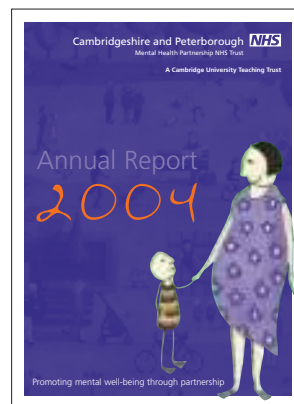
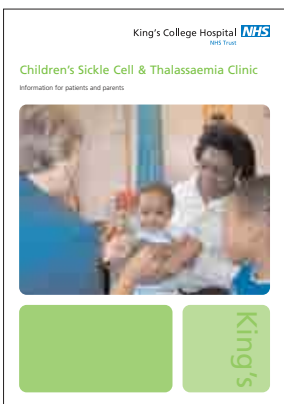
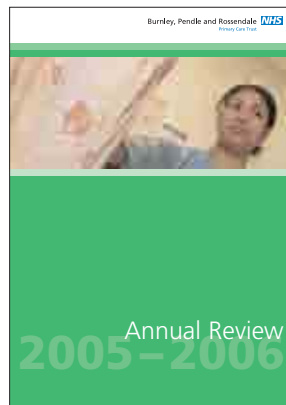
Every project is different but there are key stages that will be common to many projects. You may want to use the suggested project structure below to help you develop your own project plan.

Key milestone	Description	Timing
Project identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify rationale for project and project objectives</li> </ul>	
Communications audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing communications materials</li> <li>Review existing processes for creating new materials</li> </ul>	
Project definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine project objectives</li> <li>Define project scope</li> <li>Identify budget and timings for project</li> <li>Develop specific project plan</li> </ul>	
Presentation to trust board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present project plan to board for sign-off</li> </ul>	
Brief development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write brief</li> </ul>	
Tender	If working with outside agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite agencies to tender</li> <li>Appoint agency</li> </ul>	
Development of design concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with designers on development of design concepts</li> </ul>	
Launch plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on a communications and stakeholder engagement plan for launch of the new design style to staff and public</li> <li>Plan monitoring and evaluation strategy</li> </ul>	
Update presentation to trust board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present design concepts, outline of launch plan and evaluation strategy to board for approval</li> </ul>	
Design style development and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If approved by board, work through to completion, finalising all design style outputs as specified in brief</li> <li>Work with internal colleagues e.g. IT, to work out how to implement any templates</li> </ul>	
Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch new design style</li> </ul>	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the project against your objectives</li> </ul>	

# Case studies

The following case studies provide real examples of how organisations have created their own distinctive local design styles within the NHS Identity Guidelines. These examples have been chosen to illustrate the flexibility and scope within the NHS identity.

Please note that while they are intended to prompt ideas, these design styles are owned by the organisations featured and you should not attempt to recreate or copy them.



# 1. Adapting the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information

*Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust worked with a local printer to develop the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information for their use.*

## **Why did you decide to develop a design style?**

The results of our patient surveys had highlighted the need for better information for patients and carers. Many of the existing leaflets were untidy, out-of-date, full of jargon, had been photocopied several times and did not meet the NHS Identity Guidelines. We developed both a design style and a new process for creating leaflets at the same time.

## **How did you go about it?**

We approached a local printer with a design resource and asked them to adapt the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information so that staff could create leaflets themselves. They designed a series of on-line templates in various sizes and colours to give the trust a strong corporate image – and the printer carried out the design free of charge because of the additional print work we could guarantee them. If you have an in-house design resource, you can get them to adapt the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information for your use – as our colleagues at Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust in London did.

## **How did you get buy-in?**

We expressed our concerns about the patient information to the Chief Executive, and gained approval to set up a process to standardise leaflets throughout the trust. Once we'd developed the process, we held a series of staff roadshows to raise awareness of it.

## **How is the design style used?**

Templates for creating leaflets and a step-by-step guide for producing patient information are on the staff intranet. Staff use the templates to create materials themselves and all draft leaflets are reviewed by the clinical governance department and a reader panel. The leaflets are then emailed to the printers and printed within 48 hours.

## **Was it successful?**

The process of producing leaflets is much less time-consuming for staff and the quality of our written information is much better. Because of this, we won the Association of Healthcare Communicators Award in 2004.

## **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

Before we started the project, we identified two reasons for the poor quality of leaflets – lack of consistent process and lack of consistent design style. When you develop a new design style, think about whether you need to change your process as well.

*“Our leaflets look professional and the quality of patient information has improved – which means that patients are better informed about their treatment and care.”*

*Caroline Hastie – Communications Manager*

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals **NHS**  
NHS Trust

## Tonsillectomy (Children)



Ear Nose and Throat Directorate

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals **NHS**  
NHS Trust

## Working Together to Prevent Pressure Ulcers

A Guide for Patients and Carers



Clinical Governance Directorate  
Tissue Viability

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals **NHS**  
NHS Trust

## Lancashire and South Cumbria Regional Cardiac Centre



Cardiac Directorate  
Recruitment 2004

Join Our Team and  
Make a Difference

### Contact

**Caroline Hastie** – Communications Manager

Telephone: 01253 303538 caroline.hastie@bfwhospitals.nhs.uk

### Best practice points

- ✓ Uses the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information as a starting point
- ✓ Correctly follows the NHS Identity Guidelines
- ✓ Uses a local landmark (the hospital clock tower) to create a sense of local identity
- ✓ Information is high quality and patient friendly because it has been reviewed by the clinical governance department and the reader panel
- ✓ Cost-effective design and streamlined on-line process

## 2. Developing a new design style for a hospital

*King's College Hospital NHS Trust developed a design style for patient information by working with an external design agency.*

### **Why did you decide to develop a design style?**

We wanted to ensure that our patient information was accessible and of a professional standard – and we also wanted to streamline the process for producing patient information by getting involved in the literature generation process.

### **How did you go about it?**

Instead of using the NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information, we decided to create a distinctive design style for the trust. We briefed a design and brand management agency and asked them to develop a style reflecting our corporate personality which could work within the NHS Identity Guidelines. From three initial ideas, we chose the King's design style – it's fresh and easy to implement, and the materials are colour coded for different audiences (corporate, staff, patients), using colours from the NHS palette. It took several months to develop the design style.

### **How did you get buy-in?**

We consulted senior managers at the beginning of the process, and then distributed the concepts to the board and executive as the design style was developed. We also liaised with the clinical effectiveness department, where patient information was generated, and asked them to add our contacts to the process checklist so that we were always involved in literature generation. This – coupled with a general staff announcement about the new design style – helped us get buy-in from staff.

### **How is the design style used?**

We produced our own guidelines for patient information based on the NHS Identity Guidelines – which ensure that staff use the design style correctly and consistently and help people understand the new process.

### **Was it successful?**

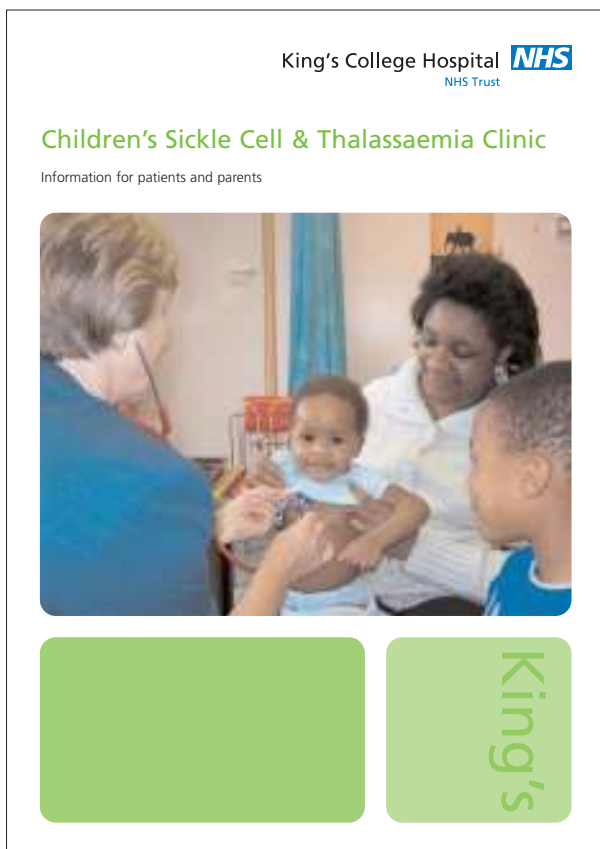
People have been receptive to the design style, which has helped them make the change to involving us in creating new patient information. We're very happy with it!

### **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

Right from the start, ask your design agency to create some design templates which staff can use in-house. Otherwise, simple materials like posters and departmental newsletters always have to go through the design agency.

*"The design style is eye-catching and recognisable – and the style is flexible enough to be adapted so that it always looks fresh."*

*Marie Orara – Corporate Identity and Web Manager*



## Contact

**Marie Orara** – Corporate Identity and Web Manager

Telephone: 020 7346 3723    [marie.orara@kingsch.nhs.uk](mailto:marie.orara@kingsch.nhs.uk)    [www.kingsch.nhs.uk](http://www.kingsch.nhs.uk)

## Best practice points

- ✓ Simple yet distinctive design style using the round cornered box as a key element
- ✓ King's name is integrated into the design style making it unique to the trust
- ✓ Lots of white space makes information easy to read
- ✓ Materials are colour coded to help people identify them quickly
- ✓ King's have produced their own guidelines based on the NHS Identity Guidelines to ensure the design is correctly applied

### 3. Building on existing materials

*Swale PCT worked with an external design agency to develop a consistent design style for communications material that could be used across the trust.*

#### **Why did you decide to develop a design style?**

We wanted to create a visual expression of the caring attitude of the NHS and to unify the appearance of material produced across the organisation – from our past experience, we knew that a design style is invaluable in creating confidence and loyalty among staff and patients.

#### **How did you go about it?**

Our design style uses a sunflower graphic device, which was originally developed for a one-off print of staff training and development folders. We asked a design agency to evolve the sunflower graphic device, using the NHS Identity Guidelines. The whole process took about six months.

#### **How did you get buy-in?**

We got buy-in before we commissioned the designers. Staff had already informally adopted the sunflower graphic device – in fact, people from the finance director to the care-assistants were using the surplus folders to carry their work. We also got formal approval from the board and the senior management team to develop the design style by presenting our project plan and the sunflower graphic device.

#### **How is the design style used?**

Every time the design style is applied to new materials, the agency develops the graphic device so that it is kept fresh and vibrant – for example, using the sunflower petals on page numbering on the annual report. Other design agencies also provide new directions and approaches for its use.

#### **Was it successful?**

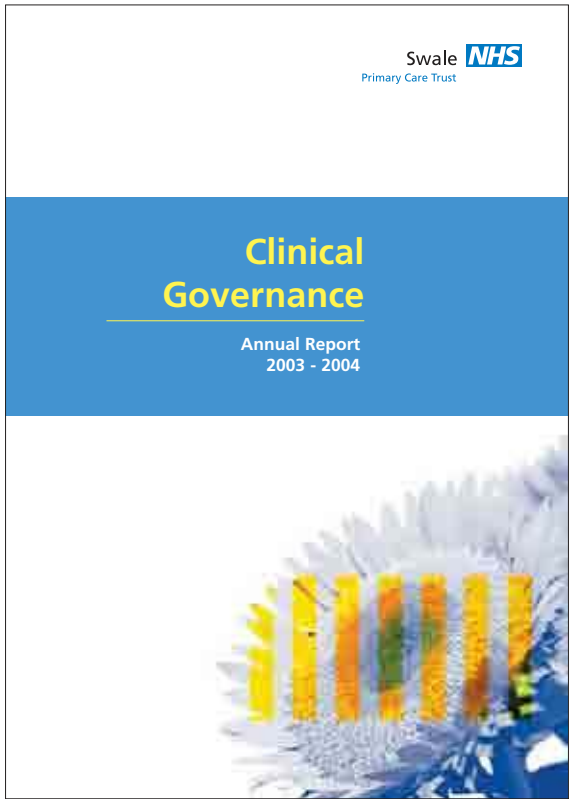
Very much so. We've had positive feedback from both staff and patients. We feel that the design style has strengthened the identity of Swale PCT at an emotional as well as a conceptual level.

#### **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

The sunflower graphic device has worked very well for us – but at times, it has been hard work to keep it fresh. If you're developing a design style of your own, it will be easier if there is more to it than a single image.

*“The sunflower graphic device has been very important in providing staff and colleagues with a sense of unified approach.”*

*Michael Bukht – Communications Manager*



14

**improving outcomes  
and best practice**

**OBJECTIVE: TO IMPROVE THE OUTCOMES FOR THOSE TREATED BY OUR SERVICES, MAKING SURE BEST PRACTICE AND 'NICE' GUIDANCE IS IMPLEMENTED**

Many of the services provided to our patients are directed by a variety of national guidelines and standards. The National Service Frameworks and Cancer Plan set specific targets and actions for improving the care of people with heart disease, diabetes, cancer and mental health problems. In each of these areas, in the Swale district, clinical professionals are working with patient representatives and managers to improve services. We have seen much success at critical points: the targets for speeding up referrals to the chest pain clinic and for people with suspected cancer to be seen within two weeks have been met throughout the year.

The systems for clinical governance in the PCT have been further developed during the year. A clinical governance manager has been appointed and clinical leads in each team are sharing their experience and leading service improvements. The Swale area now has 11 pharmacies accredited with the Kent clinical governance scheme. All GPs in Swale have received an appraisal and all practices have been visited by teams made up of senior staff and non-executive directors. Half day closures for all practices have enabled GPs, nurses and practice staff to focus on a number of important areas including the electronic patient record and new guidelines for specific conditions.

The ACES scheme (Achieving Clinical Excellence in Swale) continued to support GP practices. The objective was to make sure the management of people with chronic diseases continued to improve. Almost 90% of people with heart disease now receive anti-platelet therapy, 82% have their blood pressure controlled to below the standard and 80% of diabetic patients have a regular test (HbA1c) to ensure good control. Some excellent results in the reduction of deaths from circulatory disease (8% against a national figure of 4%) reflect this work as do the figures for reduction in cancer deaths of 14.7% against a national figure of 1.8%.

**Contact**  
**Michael Bukht** – Communications Manager  
 michael.bukht@swalepct.nhs.uk    www.swalepct.nhs.uk

- Best practice points**
- ✓ Design style based on NHS Identity Guidelines
  - ✓ Positive impact at an emotional level
  - ✓ Bright, strong, memorable image
  - ✓ A single design style applied in a variety of ways

## 4. Creating a design style for merging organisations

*Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust, a newly formed organisation, worked with an external design agency to develop a consistent design style for all communications material.*

### **Why did you decide to develop a design style?**

Our trust was formed from the merger of services from seven other organisations. We wanted staff to feel part of a single organisation and the service users to recognise and identify with the trust after the merger.

### **How did you go about it?**

Five months before the official merger, the project board for the merger agreed to develop a design style for the new trust. We approached a design agency with experience of working with mental health issues and we explained our objectives and philosophy to them as part of the briefing process. The agency developed three ideas and we chose a design style based on a park-scene illustration showing people from all walks of life.

### **How did you get buy-in?**

Before the project began, we had buy-in from staff, service users and carers as the suggestion to develop a unifying design style came from them. And, because the project director became the CEO of the new organisation, we also had commitment from senior management.

### **How is the design style used?**

Since its development three years ago, the design style has evolved with the need to apply the 'park-scene' illustration across different materials. The guidelines for the illustration allow us to use sections of the scene either individually or in different combinations – which means that the design style develops and still appears fresh in new materials.

### **Was it successful?**

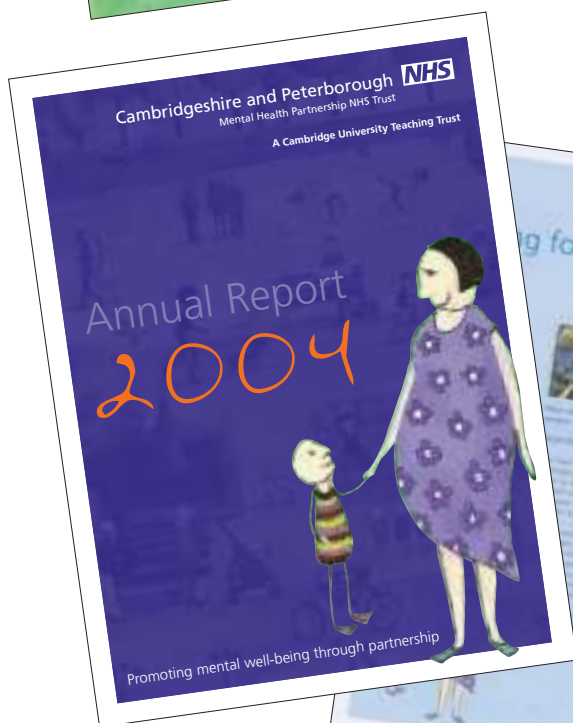
Yes, our design style has great recognition wherever it is used. There's a lot of scope within the NHS Identity Guidelines to create new design styles.

### **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

We discovered that if you're not careful, a design style based on an illustration can be quite time-consuming and costly. For the first six months, the design agency retained copyright of the materials – which meant we had to approach them every time a change or new piece of work was required. We now hold the copyright ourselves and make changes in-house.

*"The sense of identity that the finished product evoked has been the biggest achievement. The service users and staff feel that it is an identity that they are proud to be a part of and feel a connection and ownership of it."*

**Linda Aschettino** – Associate Director,  
Communications and Corporate Affairs



## Contact

Linda Aschettino – Associate Director, Communications and Corporate Affairs  
[linda.aschettino@cambsmh.nhs.uk](mailto:linda.aschettino@cambsmh.nhs.uk)

## Best practice points

- ✓ Design style based on NHS Identity Guidelines
- ✓ Design style was developed with the needs of service users in mind
- ✓ Sections of the scene can be used individually or in combination so that the design looks fresh and works across different materials

## 5. Developing a design style for a campaign

*Central Liverpool PCT used Liverpool Health Promotion Service, a shared advice and design service funded by three Liverpool PCTs, to develop a fresh antibiotics campaign.*

### **Why did you decide to develop a design style for your campaign?**

Generally we try to implement or extend national campaigns as it's a more cost effective use of NHS money and resources. However at the time, there wasn't a national antibiotics campaign. From research with local GPs we felt that the message regarding the most appropriate use of antibiotics needed to be communicated locally. We wanted to implement a fresh new campaign that was plain-speaking, as simplifying the information is generally more effective and appealing to a wider audience.

### **How did you go about it?**

We approached the design studio, which is part of Liverpool Health Promotion Service. They prepared a detailed brief specifying the target audience, budget, and the materials and formats required – and then developed the 'bugged out' graphic device and applied it. It took about two to three weeks to develop the drafts and negotiate the content.

### **How did you get buy-in?**

Once we decided to create the campaign, we presented our rationale to the board for funding and resources. We consulted with GPs to ensure that we were promoting the right messages. In addition to this, we also recommend approaching staff and other stakeholders for a chance to comment on the campaign. Involving staff and stakeholders at an early stage can help to ensure that your staff are supportive in delivering the campaign.

### **How is the design style used?**

The material was designed so that it can be applied across as many different formats as possible including posters and badges as well as leaflets.

### **Was it successful?**

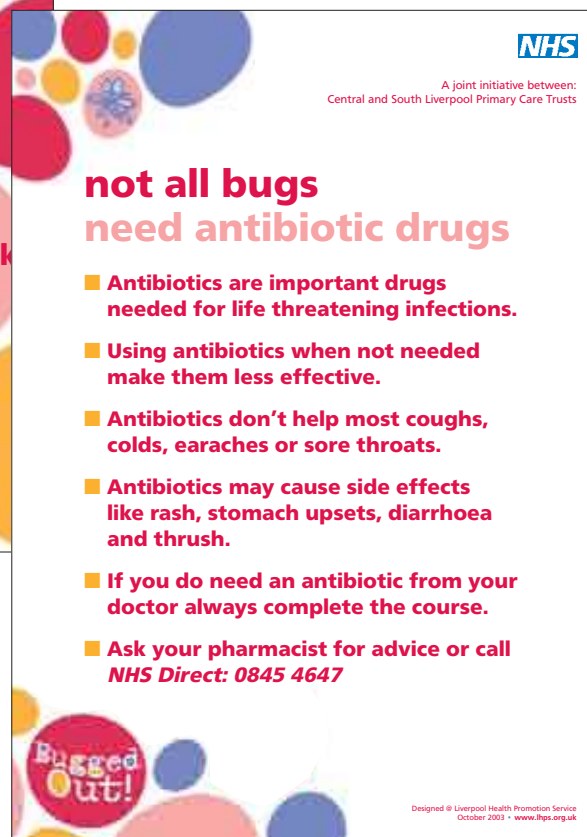
Our campaign objectives were to raise awareness through education that an antibiotic will not help with curing a virus. We also wanted to raise the profile of this message with GPs so that they did not feel pressured by patients to prescribe antibiotics for a virus. From our ongoing campaign evaluation we know that the 'bugged out' design style raised the profile of the campaign message, which in turn helped to meet our objectives.

### **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

It's important to consider accessibility issues when preparing new materials. But providing you start from the NHS Identity Guidelines, some accessibility points should be considered automatically – for example, by using a 12 point font size for ease of readability. You should also make sure that the colours used are of high contrast on a plain background so that the materials are easy to read. Additionally it is important to focus on the language of the campaign message and use plain English, or other languages and formats where appropriate, to meet the needs of your target market.

*"The simplicity of the message in the 'bugged out' campaign is attractive to a wide range of people with its quirky, fun approach."*

*Dr Sandra Davies – Development Manager,  
Health Equity Action Team, Public Health Department*



## Contacts

To find out more about the 'bugged out' design style, contact:

**Andrew Dineley** – Design Service Co-ordinator

andrew.dineley@centralliverpoolpct.nhs.uk    [www.lhps.org.uk/design\\_services.html](http://www.lhps.org.uk/design_services.html)

For advice about developing an in-house resource and design studio, contact:

**Jennie Piet** – Acting Head of Liverpool Health Promotion Service

jennie.piet@centralliverpoolpct.nhs.uk

## Best practice points

- ✓ Design style based on NHS Identity Guidelines
- ✓ Striking, distinctive and memorable design style
- ✓ Adaptable across a variety of materials
- ✓ Flexible enough to be used across a broader campaign
- ✓ PCTs working together on a joint initiative, using the Liverpool Health Promotion Service

## 6. Cost effective, powerful two colour print

*Liverpool Health Promotion Service's awareness campaign for testicular cancer, 'Bits + Bobs', used two colour printing to create a strong impact and ensure value for money.*

### **Why did you decide to develop a design style?**

Central Liverpool PCT asked us, as their in-house design service, to create campaign materials for testicular cancer that were simple and non-threatening. The message needed to reach a wider male audience in a fresh and more involving way than previous campaigns. There was also very little money to make it happen, so we needed to create a design style that could be used to create a strong impact on a limited budget.

### **How did you go about it?**

We took a simple approach, both with the copy and the design. We developed a basic but attractive illustration style and straightforward way of writing using everyday language. The title, 'Bits + Bobs' was light-hearted without being facetious. The decision to feature an illustration of a naked man was based on the need to be upfront and tackle any embarrassment head on. All aspects were developed in house from the original concept to the illustration, copy and target market testing.

### **How did you get buy-in?**

We consulted with health workers and a consultant in public health medicine to ensure that we had our facts right. We then tested the leaflet with a men's health group to make sure that we had the tone and style right in an area that is notoriously sensitive. It was also important that the organisations who'd be displaying the leaflets and posters felt comfortable with the treatment. So, we designed a poster that acted as a leaflet holder that hid the potentially embarrassing bits!

### **How is the design style used?**

The colour palette and illustration style are simple and bold to create impact. Part of the appeal of the design is not just the simplicity but also the tongue in cheek approach. We've used the design style on campaign balloons, which, when used two at a time, have proved very popular with people displaying the materials!

### **Was it successful?**

'Bits + Bobs' has proved incredibly popular with the target audience, health professionals and other NHS organisations. The initial print run was exhausted within a couple of weeks. Within the first three months of the campaign getting national exposure, we had commissioned four print runs and distributed over 25,000 leaflets locally and nationally. We've used the design style across six other men's health areas including prostate cancer and obesity. The leaflets have been produced in Braille, large print, signed, subtitled and in multiple languages.

### **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

Less is more. Don't try to do too much with the content or with the design. There's a feeling that we need to explain everything about a health issue. We found that people prefer simple facts which we themed with consistent headings such as 'Stuff to know', 'Stuff to find out about'. Simplicity can be really successful in communicating a message and saving money.

*"Less is more – keep it simple."*

*Andrew Dineley – Design Service Co-ordinator*



## Contact

Andrew Dineley – Design Service Co-ordinator  
 andrew.dineley@centralliverpoolpct.nhs.uk

## Best practice points

- ✓ Design style based on the NHS Identity Guidelines
- ✓ Uses two colour print for a strong impact on a limited budget
- ✓ Uses a selection of colours from the NHS colour palette
- ✓ Simple light hearted approach using illustration and everyday language

## 7. Developing a new local design style for a PCT

*Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT worked with an agency with a local presence to develop a flexible, easy to use design style and templates.*

### **Why did you decide to develop a design style?**

We wanted to make our communications consistent, instantly recognisable and to express the NHS identity in a local way. We believed that this would help our local communities understand who we are and what we do, as well as helping our staff feel part of a local NHS organisation. It was also important that we had a set of templates, which managers with different levels of expertise could use easily.

### **How did you go about it?**

We worked with an agency which had a designer near us in Preston. They helped us to prioritise the materials we needed, such as patient information leaflets, exhibition stands and annual reports. We developed a brief around the key issues, stressing how important it was to develop something both identifiably local, yet which reflected our area's cultural diversity. The agencies developed three routes. We chose one design that they then developed into easy to use templates and guidelines, from which we could create designs ourselves.

### **How did you get buy-in?**

We had a carefully structured communications programme aimed at all our stakeholders. We presented the first concepts to board members, senior management and more widely to staff and patients through team briefings to managers and patient forums.

### **How is the design style used?**

We're launching the new design style in the New Year, 2006. The guidelines will be available on CD and cover all our areas of communication. We will gradually introduce materials using the new design style as and when our current stocks run out.

### **Was it successful?**

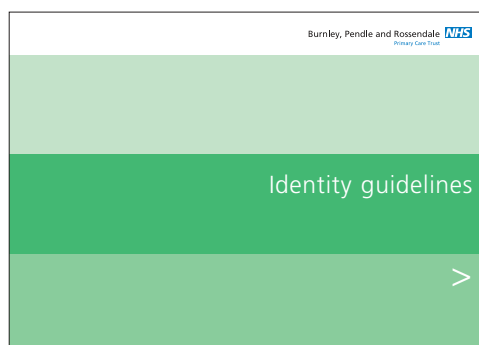
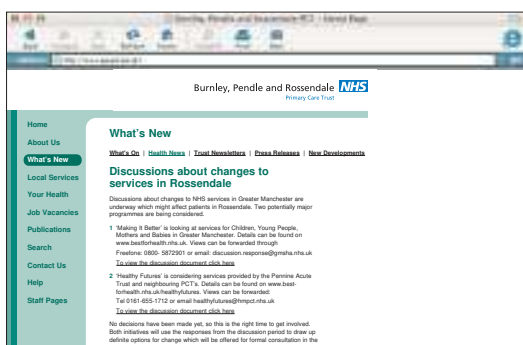
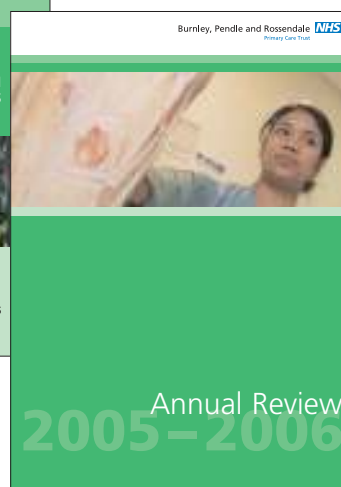
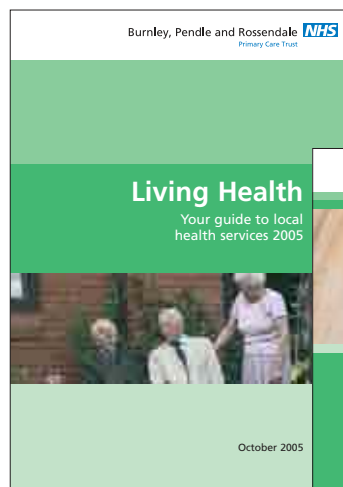
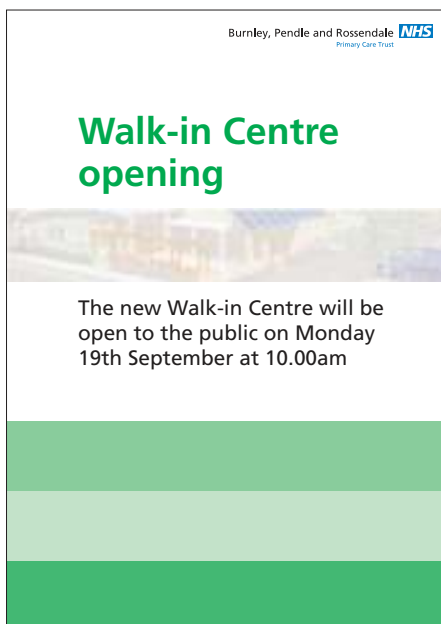
Much of the project's success lies in the future after the launch. We have developed a plan to make sure everything runs smoothly. But the extensive consultation programme has already helped our stakeholders to focus on raising standards.

### **What advice would you give other NHS trusts?**

We found that a key part of the project was looking at how we create materials, such as who's responsible, whether the materials are produced internally or externally and which software packages to use. This approach helped us achieve the right solution. And make sure you involve stakeholders properly. It really improves acceptance.

*"The project has been invaluable as one of our key drivers has been to improve our standards of communication. The focus on good design and clear internal processes has helped to make that happen."*

*Hilary Thornton – Corporate Services Manager*



## Contact

Hilary Thornton – Corporate Services Manager  
[hilary.thornton@bprpct.nhs.uk](mailto:hilary.thornton@bprpct.nhs.uk)

## Best practice points

- ✓ Carried out a consultation and communications programme to engage staff and stakeholders and obtain buy-in for the project
- ✓ Produced their own guidelines, based on the NHS identity guidelines and created simple, easy to implement in-house templates to ensure the design style is correctly applied
- ✓ Used design process to help streamline the production of communications materials

# Tools and resources

This section contains tools and resources to help you get started, whichever approach you decide to take.

## Reference resources

### NHS Identity Website

This website is a central resource for all issues concerning the NHS identity. It contains the complete range of guidelines and advice on using the NHS identity on all communication materials. The website can be used by communicators within the NHS, design companies and external suppliers responsible for developing NHS communications. The NHS Identity Guidelines and a range of NHS logo file types are available to download from this website at: [www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity).

Alternatively, you can contact the DH Publications Orderline on 08701 555 455 to order a copy of *The NHS Identity Guidelines* (quoting code: NHS G 01) and *The NHS Identity Guidelines: Stationery* (quoting code: NHS G 02).

### NHS Identity Guidelines for Websites

If you are planning to produce a new website or re-design an existing website, you will need to follow The NHS Identity Guidelines for Websites. These guidelines are available at: [www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/websites](http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/websites). The guidelines apply to all NHS branded sites in England, including corporate, campaign and staff-facing websites. They cover how to use the NHS logo, the colour palette, typefaces and images, as well as accessibility issues, tone and style. For details on the NHS web colour palette, please see the NHS identity section of this document on page 32.

The NHS Identity Guidelines for Websites are based on and also include elements from the Guidelines for UK Government Websites, published by the e-Government Unit. Site authors, developers and procurers should be aware of the full Guidelines for UK Government Websites, which can be found at [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/resources/handbook](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/resources/handbook).

### NHS Identity Helpline

There is a dedicated support telephone helpline that can help you with any queries regarding the correct use of the NHS identity on your communication materials. You can contact the NHS Identity Helpline by calling 020 7972 5250 or 020 7972 5261 or by fax on 020 7972 1501. Alternatively, you can contact the helpline by email: [nhs.identity@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nhs.identity@dh.gsi.gov.uk).

## **NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information**

The NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information provides guidance for anyone who produces written information for NHS patients, their carers and the public. There are practical steps on how to write information for different situations and how to present the information for publication.

An accompanying CD features five standard size formats of print quality templates to help you produce consistent, high-quality information for patients. These templates meet the guidelines of the Royal Institute for the Blind and the NHS Identity Guidelines. The templates have been designed to be used with QuarkXPress software, the industry standard within design and print.

The NHS Toolkit for Producing Patient Information is available to download at [www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity). Or, you can order a copy from the DH Publications Orderline on 08701 555 455 quoting code 33952.

## **NHS Comms Link Website**

NHS Comms Link is a secure website enabling NHS communicators to access and share news, resources, ideas and experiences. To access NHS Comms Link, visit [www.nhscommlink.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscommlink.nhs.uk) and register.

## **NHS Marketing Communications Toolkit**

The NHS Marketing Communications Toolkit is an online resource designed to help communications managers within local primary care trusts. The toolkit includes an NHS Editorial Library and information on targeting communications through priority audience insights and health mapping. The NHS Marketing Communications Toolkit is available to communicators who have registered on the NHS Comms Link website at: [www.nhscommlink.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscommlink.nhs.uk).

## **NHS Photo Library**

The NHS Photo Library is a comprehensive online resource for the NHS and related social care organisations, which provides access to free photography for use in NHS communications materials. You can download print-quality photography direct from the website. Access to the NHS Photo Library and use of the imagery is restricted to authorised users only. To access the library or register as a new user, visit: [www.nhs.uk/photolibary](http://www.nhs.uk/photolibary).

## **Accessibility of information**

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has a large section on its website about providing accessible information services ([www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)).

## Outline brief

Whether you are working with an external agency or with an in-house designer, you will need to develop a brief for the project. Here is an outline of a brief that you might want to adapt for your own use.

### YOUR ORGANISATION NAME

**Purpose of the brief**  
e.g. **brief to develop a design style**

**This brief contains the following three sections:**

- 1. Background**
- 2. Project brief**
- 3. Tender responses**

### 1. Background

#### Who are you and what do you do?

- What sort of organisation are you and how do you fit into the broader NHS? You may want to refer to the [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) website, which explains the structure of the NHS and the role of different organisations (for example primary care trusts, strategic health authorities etc.).
- What is your role? You may want to include your mission statement and vision if you have them, your priorities and the services you offer. You could include your latest annual report as an appendix.
- What community or communities do you serve and what health and social issues do they face?

#### The NHS identity

- As an NHS organisation, you must base your local design style on the NHS identity:
  - The NHS logo has over 90% instant and unprompted recognition amongst the public.
  - The NHS identity carries with it very strong levels of trust and credibility.
  - The NHS is trusted as an impartial and credible deliverer of health information and health services.
- You may want to refer your agency to the NHS Identity Website [www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity) for full details on the NHS identity, values and communications principles.

## The rationale for this project

Some examples might be:

- to raise awareness of your services;
- to give your communications a clear, consistent and professional local design style, while remaining within the NHS Identity Guidelines;
- to communicate better with the public, staff and stakeholders;
- to produce materials that are easier to read, and more likely to be read.

## 2. Project brief

### Objectives

*Clear, concise statement or points that need to be achieved, for example:*

- to help the local community recognise our communications and therefore gain a better understanding of who we are and what we do;
- to enable our staff to feel proud as members of a local NHS organisation.

### Audience

*Audience groups that the local design style needs to appeal to, for example:*

- the local community;
- staff;
- other stakeholders.

Include advice on how you wish to reflect the local community in the design style. Should it reflect diversity or should it be generic enough to work across all communities? Are there any particular cultural sensitivities – e.g. imagery that should be avoided – which the designers should be aware of?

### Use

*A list of communications materials that the design style needs to work across, for example:*

- patient information;
- staff communications;
- exhibition stands.

### Key considerations

*What factors do the designers need to take into account when developing a design style for you? Are there any specific problems that need to be addressed?*

Considerations might include:

- whether you wish to produce the materials in-house in the future;
- how the design style must work: in 4-colour, 2-colour and mono;
- who will approve the design style.

### Budget

*Clearly state your budget for the project and what this must include e.g.*

- We have a set budget for this project of £x. excluding VAT.
- Costs should be detailed and should include all fees and expenses.

## Timings

*Use this section to set out all the relevant timings e.g. if you are inviting agencies to tender, including:*

- when a response to this invitation to tender is due;
- when will they be notified if a presentation is required (usually one or two days after);
- when the presentations, if required, will be (give one or two dates the following week that they should keep clear just in case);
- when the project will be awarded (usually that afternoon or following day);
- when the project must be completed and any key dates. This may depend on the successful agency's project plan, however you may already know some key dates e.g. when you will need to present the project to the board.

## Deliverables

*What are the end deliverables of this project?*

Deliverables might include:

- agreement of copyright;
- CD containing all the elements of the design style and whatever else is required (e.g. Quark templates), so that another design agency or printer can produce professional and consistent communications on your behalf;
- clear set of guidelines explaining how to use the elements of the design style;
- a set of simple word templates so that your internal staff can produce good-quality internal communications (e.g. newsletter) and basic patient information (e.g. simple one-sided, mono, A4 sheet).

## 3. Tender responses

*Usually for work of this kind, it is necessary to invite a number of agencies to tender and you will need to follow the policy of your organisation. You should cover:*

- when they need to respond;
- how they present or structure this response, including a proposal that sets out their plan of action to complete this project; key milestones; a clear breakdown of how they will allocate the budget; a brief summary of other relevant work experience and examples of it; a brief summary of who in their team who will be involved and that you may require them to follow up their response with a short presentation to gain a better understanding of their proposal and to meet the team;
- how their response will be evaluated.

Note that it is usually considered bad practice to ask design agencies to submit draft designs without payment as part of a tender. You should be able to assess the quality of their creative work from looking at their other work experience.

# The NHS identity

## The elements of the NHS identity

Like other corporate identities, the NHS identity is made up of a number of design elements:

- the NHS logo;
- typefaces; and
- a colour palette.

These key elements must be used across all NHS material to ensure a consistent expression of the NHS identity. To find out more, visit [www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity).

## The NHS logo



Anytown **NHS**

Primary Care Trust

The NHS logo represents the NHS identity (see page 2 for more information). The NHS logo and local logotypes must be used correctly and consistently in accordance with the NHS Identity Guidelines and must not be altered in any way. You can download the NHS logo from [www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity). If you need a local logotype, you can order one free of charge from the website or from the NHS Identity Helpline (020 7972 5250).

## Typefaces

Another way to establish a recognised and professional identity is to use consistent typefaces that are clear and easy to read.

The NHS principal typeface is Frutiger, chosen for its clarity and flexibility. Arial can be used for internally produced documents as an alternative when Frutiger is not available. You can use Frutiger in different **weights**, *styles*, **SIZES** or **colours** to create a unique design style for your documents.

Although Frutiger should be used wherever possible, there may be occasions when other fonts are more suitable (for example when producing communications materials aimed at children). The alternative typeface must, however, conform to the NHS principles of clarity and accessibility. Because there may be accessibility issues with NHS audiences, the minimum typeface size for body copy is 12 point.

Frutiger

*Frutiger italic*

**Frutiger bold**

***Frutiger bold italic***

Arial

*Arial italic*

**Arial bold**

***Arial bold italic***



## Electronic use

The NHS palette of colours for use on the web and in other electronic media can be found in The NHS Identity Guidelines for Websites (Appendix C: NHS web colour palette) at: [www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/websites](http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/websites). As with printed materials colour can be used to create a different image in electronic media while keeping an NHS look and feel.

The web colour palette uses a different system from the print palette to specify colours. For example, NHS Blue is displayed using the following hexadecimal format (HTML 0066CC). Do not use tints of any of the NHS web palette colours.

### Core palette

<b>NHS Blue</b> HTML 0066CC
<b>Black</b> HTML 000000
<b>White</b> HTML FFFFFFFF

### Primary palette

<b>NHS Blue</b> HTML 0066CC
<b>Black</b> HTML 000000
<b>NHS Dark Green</b> HTML 003300
<b>NHS Green</b> HTML 009933
<b>NHS Light Green</b> HTML 66CC33
<b>NHS Aqua Green</b> HTML 009966
<b>NHS Aqua Blue</b> HTML 0099CC
<b>NHS Light Blue</b> HTML 0099FF
<b>NHS Dark Blue</b> HTML 000099
<b>NHS Purple</b> HTML 330099
<b>NHS Dark Pink</b> HTML 990066
<b>NHS Dark Red</b> HTML 990000
<b>NHS Red</b> HTML CC0000
<b>NHS Orange</b> HTML FF6600
<b>NHS Yellow</b> HTML FFFF00

### Secondary palette

<b>NHS Blue (secondary)</b> HTML 6699FF
<b>Black (secondary)</b> HTML 999999
<b>NHS Dark Green (secondary)</b> HTML 99CC99
<b>NHS Green (secondary)</b> HTML CCFCC
<b>NHS Light Green (secondary)</b> HTML CCF99
<b>NHS Aqua Green (secondary)</b> HTML 66CC99
<b>NHS Aqua Blue (secondary)</b> HTML 99CCFF
<b>NHS Light Blue (secondary)</b> HTML 99CCFF
<b>NHS Dark Blue (secondary)</b> HTML 9999CC
<b>NHS Purple (secondary)</b> HTML 9999FF
<b>NHS Dark Pink (secondary)</b> HTML CC99CC
<b>NHS Dark Red (secondary)</b> HTML CC6666
<b>NHS Red (secondary)</b> HTML FF6666
<b>NHS Orange (secondary)</b> HTML FFCC99
<b>NHS Yellow (secondary)</b> HTML FFFFCC

## NHS Identity Checklist

Every time we communicate, we are projecting the NHS identity. Letters, leaflets, websites and promotions should all support our values and principles. The following questions might be helpful when you are evaluating a communications project to judge whether it supports the NHS identity.

### The basics

- Is the NHS logo, or your local logotype, in the correct position, in its correct colour and at the correct size?
- Does it sit in the right amount of clear space?
- Are the colours chosen from the NHS colour palette?
- Are the typefaces Frutiger or Arial?

### Our values

Does the communication support these NHS values:

- **Health** Does it reinforce (or not contradict) our support for health and healthy lifestyles?
- **Care** Does it show respect for the audience and avoid stereotypes? Does the tone of the wording show care and empathy?
- **Professionalism** Does it demonstrate pride in what we are doing? Are we able to challenge poor standards in any existing communications?
- **Efficiency** Is the budget right for the task? Are the tone and style right for the audience you are communicating with?
- **Equality** Does the imagery convey that the NHS is for everyone e.g. spanning ages and cultures (where appropriate)?
- **Choice and responsiveness** Does it portray the NHS as an organisation that is focused on providing choice and access to information about services, treatment and performance to help people make a choice?

## Our communications principles

Does the communication support these principles:

- **Clear** Is it easy to read and easy to understand?
- **Cost-effective** Has the budget been used wisely?
- **Modern** Does it support new NHS developments and aspirations?
- **Straightforward** Does it avoid gimmicks and over-complicated design or wording?
- **Honest** Does it avoid misleading information and false promises? Does it withhold information that the receiver has a right to know?
- **Accessible** Has it been tested with the target audience? Do they understand it? Are versions in other languages, symbols or formats needed? Is it easy to obtain?
- **Respectful** Does it show respect for the receivers' feelings and beliefs? Does that "funny" drawing or headline risk offending anyone? Does this communication support a positive reputation for the NHS? Is it clear and relevant to the public?

# Glossary

**Brand** The intangible sum of an organisation’s qualities. This can include its name, its history, its reputation, its logo and the way it is positioned to the public.

**Logo** A distinctive visual symbol that represents a brand. Also known as a logotype when used with an NHS organisational name.

*Example:*



**Typeface** A common style of lettering, numbering, punctuation and the arrangement of text on a page – this includes sizing, spacing and fonts.

*Example:*

**Frutiger**

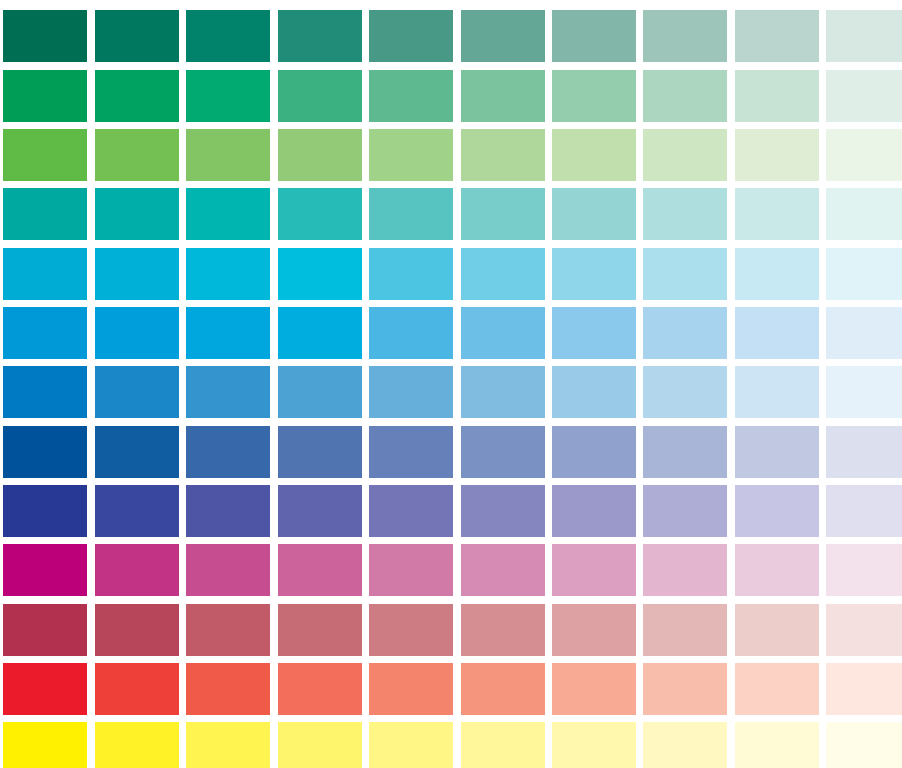
*Frutiger italic*

**Frutiger bold**

*Frutiger bold italic*

**Colour palette** The range of colours and their tints that can be used when creating design styles.

*Example:*



**Imagery** Photography, illustration or diagrams.

**Artwork** Creative work finished to a standard which can be sent to a printer.

**NHS identity** The sum of all visual and verbal elements (logo, typefaces, colour palette, tone of voice, etc) that define a communication from the NHS. It plays a strong role in representing what the organisation is and what it stands for.

**Local design style** A unique mix of the NHS logo, colour palette and typeface – coupled with imagery and possibly a graphic device – used to represent the NHS identity at a local level.

**Graphic device** An element of a design style that can be reproduced in a variety of formats and settings to increase recognition and create a sense of familiarity.

N.B. A graphic device may be used as part of a design style but should never be used on its own or to replace the NHS logo.

*Example:*



**DH INFORMATION READER BOX**

<b>Policy</b>	Estates
HR / Workforce Management	Performance
Planning	IM & T
Clinical	Finance
	Partnership working
<b>Document purpose</b>	Best Practice Guidance
<b>ROCR ref:</b>	<b>Gateway ref:</b> 5936
<b>Title</b>	The NHS Identity at a local level – developing a design style for your organisation
<b>Author</b>	Department of Health Branding Team
<b>Publication date</b>	January 2006
<b>Target audience</b>	PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Care Trust CEs, Foundation Trust CEs , Communications Leads
<b>Circulation list</b>	
<b>Description</b>	This guidance demonstrates how the consistent use of colour, typefaces and imagery can be used to produce a unique local design, within the NHS identity.
<b>Cross ref</b>	'The NHS Identity Guidelines'
<b>Superseded docs</b>	N/A
<b>Action required</b>	N/A
<b>Timing</b>	N/A
<b>Contact details</b>	Department of Health Branding Team Communications Directorate Skipton House 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity">www.nhs.uk/nhsidentity</a> <a href="http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/designstyle/index.htm">www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/designstyle/index.htm</a>
<b>For recipient's use</b>	



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