

# 'Be Kind' Campaign Communications Toolkit

(For NHS trusts across the Black Country)

## Toolkit Contents

1. Introduction / What do we hope to achieve?
2. Communications objectives
3. Evaluation
4. Key messages
5. Creative assets and social media copy
6. Internal staff message
7. Senior manager / Trust executive video script
8. Regional press template

If you wish to share a tailored media release, please follow your normal local and regional sign-off process for media releases.

All creative assets can also be located on the Black Country Integrated Care Board website: [Zero Tolerance :: Black Country ICB](#)

If you have any questions or require further materials, please contact the RWT Communications team on [rwh-tr.communicationsdept@nhs.net](mailto:rwh-tr.communicationsdept@nhs.net)



## **Introduction**

The majority of people who need support from NHS staff do so in a respectful way, but sadly there are small numbers of people who are verbally and / or physically abusive.

It's understandable some people may feel frustrated, particularly if it relates to waiting times or delays, and may wish to share their opinion about the quality of healthcare they receive, but it is not acceptable to intimidate, abuse or harass staff when trying to resolve the situation.

Name-calling, personal attacks, kicking, and shouting are all forms of verbal abuse that should be eliminated in the workplace.

In the NHS Staff Survey 2020 results, 26.7 per cent of respondents had experienced at least one incident of bullying, harassment, and abuse from patients / service users (within the previous 12 months). In response to this we are launching our #BeKind campaign.

We want to create a zero-tolerance attitude towards abuse in the Black Country and want to enable staff to continue caring for patients without an attack of hurtful words or physical aggression.

## **What do we hope to achieve?**

The use of children in the #BeKind campaign is a hard-hitting tactic to remind the public that there's a human being behind the uniform, many of whom have their own children at home.

They are someone's friend or loved one and they want to be treated in the same way you would treat a member of your own family.

We hope the campaign will encourage those frustrated individuals to be more respectful when interacting with staff, considering the wider impact of their actions on the person's wellbeing and the resulting impact on their family.

For those who do experience abuse or harassment, we want to encourage them speak up and report incidents.

## **2. Communication objectives**

- Encourage people using local healthcare services to treat staff with kindness and respect as the pandemic continues.
- Highlights the impact abusive behaviour can have on NHS staff during the course of their work.
- Remind staff that we are here to protect them and to keep them safe while at work.



## **3. Evaluation**

This campaign will be evaluated through data relating to physical / verbal attacks across the Trusts in 2021-22. Intel gathering in departments, through conversations with staff, at the start of December 2021 and at the end of November 2022 may suggest if staff have seen a noticeable difference.

#### 4. Key messages

- Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated.
- Any form of abuse towards staff will be taken extremely seriously.
- Everyone should be entitled to work in an environment where they feel safe and free from aggression or abuse.
- The majority of patients are grateful for the care they receive and we're grateful to them for giving staff the respect and kindness they deserve.
- Our staff are working tirelessly to care for people in need during what continues to be an incredibly challenging year.
- Please give our colleagues the respect they deserve.
- Our staff are working to keep everybody safe, so please treat them as you'd wish to be treated.
- We recognise that this year has been testing for everybody and an increased demand on healthcare services has led to longer wait times for appointments and treatment however abuse is unacceptable.
- We welcome constructive feedback as it allows us to improve services for our patients, however the abuse of staff will not be tolerated and may lead to prosecution.

#### 5. Creative assets and social media copy

Suggested social media copy	Creative asset
<p>We've launched a new campaign to ensure everyone knows that abuse and aggression aimed at NHS staff will not be tolerated. Please #BeKind</p> <p>**</p> <p>Events of abuse and aggression at work can impact NHS staff in their personal lives. Many don't want to take this home to their families. Please #BeKind</p>	
<p>If you're upsetting a staff member, you're no doubt upsetting their family too. Please think about the impact of hurtful words and actions. #BeKind</p> <p>**</p> <p>We welcome constructive feedback as it allows us to improve services for our patients, however abuse is not acceptable. Please #BeKind</p>	

There's a human being behind the uniform, many of whom have their own children at home.

Please #BeKind to them, they are doing their best to support you.



Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“Daddy wrestles with me – he doesn’t want to wrestle with you.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

We want to create a safe environment for our staff and patients, you can help us do this. Please #BeKind to hardworking NHS professionals.



Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“There is no excuse for abuse – please be kind to Granddad.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

When feeling frustrated about the quality of care you receive, please remember the healthcare professional you are talking to is someone’s friend or loved one. Please #BeKind when airing your feelings or concerns.



Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“There is no excuse for abuse – please be kind to my Mum.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Please be respectful when interacting with our staff, you may never see the extent to which it upsets them and their loved ones. #BeKind



Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“There is no excuse for abuse – be kind to my Dad.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Our staff should be able to come to work without fear of abuse. They are there to help you, not to be abused. Please #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“Our daddy comes to work to help you, so please be kind to him”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

If you do need the NHS, please #BeKind and respect our staff – they're working hard to look after you and your loved ones.

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“We test mummy's patience enough – please don't you.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Incidents of violence and aggression towards staff and our patients are rare, but when they do happen they can have a real impact. Please treats others as you wish to be treated. #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“I give mommy enough grief at home – she doesn't need yours too!”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Please remember that all parts of the NHS are under significant pressure right now. Staff are trying their best. #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“Mommy always comes to my rescue, be kind when she comes to yours.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Our staff are real people. Please treat them with the same respect you and your family would expect to receive. #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“Daddy is just trying to keep you safe – please be nice to him”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Let’s make sure TOWN / CITY continues to be a great place for our staff and our patients to live and be cared for. To do this we want to stop any abuse or aggression towards our staff and our patients. #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“Don't be mean to my Grandma.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

Dealing with people who are abusive or aggressive towards our staff and our patients, takes staff away from caring for you. Let’s work together to ensure abuse and aggression is eliminated. #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“Be nice to my Granddad.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

We have the right to refuse treatment and take further action against anyone who threatens the safety of our staff and our patients. #BeKind

Protect  
Respect  
Be Kind

NHS

“My parents are my heroes – treat them with respect.”

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated  
#bekind

## **6. Internal staff message**

### **Launch of 'Be Kind' campaign**

Today the Trust has launched a new campaign to urge people using local health and care services to treat you, our hard-working staff members, with kindness and respect.

While most of the care given by staff is gratefully received, it is unfortunate that small numbers of patients take out their frustrations on the people working to support and help them. Not helped by the COVID-19 pandemic where in some cases, at times of peak demand, some treatment was delayed due to prioritisation of those needing urgent care.

The 'Be Kind' campaign therefore highlights the message that abuse of any kind will not be tolerated, under any circumstances, and that staff should be able to work in an environment where they feel safe – because after a challenging 18 months, feeling protected at work is the least you deserve.

Launched across the Black Country, the campaign features the children of healthcare workers dressed up in the uniforms of the professions of their parents or grandparents, including a nurse, paramedic, allied health professional, doctor, porter and receptionist. It is hoped seeing the children will bring home the message that there is a story and family behind every uniform. Thanks to our own staff members and their children who featured in the campaign for showing their best stern expressions!

The Trust will always welcome constructive feedback as it allows us to improve services for our patients, however we hope the campaign emphasises the fact that verbal or physical abuse is not acceptable.

We would also like to remind staff to speak up about any form of abuse they may experience as these incidents will always be taken extremely seriously.

## **7. Senior manager / Trust executive video script**

**Hi, I'm NAME and I'm the JOB TITLE for TRUST / ORGANISATION.**

I'm here today to talk about our new 'Be Kind' campaign.

The majority of patients are appreciative of NHS staff and the care they receive, but some can be abusive and intimidating. This is a longstanding issue faced by the NHS, but no doubt has this been exacerbated in some areas due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our staff are working tirelessly to care for people in need during what continues to be an incredibly challenging time, but despite this we continue to hear of incidents of aggression and upset. This is affecting staff in all roles and levels, both clinical and office-based, and often these situations are way beyond their control.

It is fundamentally wrong that the very people who have dedicated their lives to helping others should be on the receiving end of any kind of offensive language, intimidating behaviour or violent actions. No one should feel undermined or devalued for trying to help others.

I've seen first-hand how this complete lack of respect can affect people and this is why the #BeKind campaign is so important. Here it highlights how we, as an NHS trust, will not tolerate any violence, abusive behaviour or intimidation towards our staff.

We will use all means possible to protect staff and every mechanism at our disposal. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with all our colleagues and take action where required.

We will always welcome constructive feedback as it allows us to improve services for our patients, however the abuse of our staff is simply unacceptable. Our **patient experience / patient relations** team are on hand to support with any concerns you may have.

**So please, whatever you do, please be kind and respectful when using our services.**

## **8. Regional press Template**

### **New campaign to protect staff against abuse in the workplace**

Children of staff across the NHS in the Black Country have made a plea to patients and relatives to treat healthcare professionals with respect.

The initiative sees photographs of the youngster asking anyone who uses NHS services to keep their relatives safe, being displayed across NHS healthcare buildings ready for the winter, when activity is expected to increase.

The children are dressed up in the uniforms of the professions of their parents or grandparents, including a nurse, paramedic, allied health professional, doctor, porter and receptionist.

It is hoped seeing the children will bring home the message that there is a story and family behind the uniform for all staff.

The latest staff survey carried out at the trust showed around 10 per cent of respondents had experienced violence from patients, relatives and members of the public in the last 12 months.

David Loughton, chief executive of The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, said: "It is not acceptable that our staff, who are working hard every day to help others, are subjected to abuse.



“They are dedicated healthcare professionals and should be able to carry out their job without people making it harder for them. It is completely unacceptable for them to be subject to any form of violence or aggression.”

Nita Astley is an administrator for Carlisle Support Services, a partner organisation who provide parking and security services at New Cross Hospital. Her son Rhys was featured in the campaign wearing a security officer’s uniform.

She explained: “My role is largely office-based, however my colleagues working across the New Cross Hospital site are dealing with abuse on a daily basis – I think it is very important to get the message out there that violence and aggression won’t be tolerated.

“While growing up, I was always told by my parents to ‘treat others as you’d wish to be treated.’ This is the sort of value that I want to instil in my son. I hope the campaign will help teach others the same value of respect.”

Deborah Darley, has been a paramedic for 18 years and is based at the Stoke-on-Trent hub. Her grandchildren, Meg and Mollie are pictured in one of the campaign posters.

She said: “Sadly I have been on the receiving end of abuse numerous times. Five years ago I was assaulted which ended with myself with a cast on my left arm and consequently the assailant eventually a custodial sentence.

“I am passionate about our safety and felt this campaign was a positive way to highlight this.”

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***