

# Heads of Communications Survey 2018

December 2018



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## Foreword

Welcome to our 2018 heads of communication survey results. Each year this survey provides us with the chance to reflect on the state of our profession and the challenges and opportunities facing senior communicators across local government. Thank you to those of you who took part. I hope the results will provide you with some useful insight and benchmarking for your own organisation.

This is the first heads of communications survey since we launched #FutureComms – our online communications resource developed in partnership with LGcommunications, Solace and the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA). #FutureComms sets out what good strategic communications looks like and offers advice and thinking from senior communicators from across the public and private sectors. It also offers insight from political leaders and chief executives, and case studies from councils implementing the thinking and seeing the benefits that more strategic communications can bring.

The survey shows really high awareness of the #FutureComms resource and people really value the case studies. Whether you are a sole practitioner or part of a team, there is much we can learn from each other to improve communications across the whole of local government and the wider public sector to enhance the way we engage with communities, and change behaviour. My thanks to all of you who contributed your experiences to this important, and dynamic resource. We will continue to refine and develop #FutureComms over the coming weeks and months with new content, new case studies and further practical support to help councils develop communications that align with, and deliver, organisational objectives and engage the people they serve.

The results show some signs that our calls for communications to be seen - and for us to see ourselves – as a strategic, corporate function are being heard. This is a positive move from last year when there was more of a focus on channels. Most councils now have a communications strategy aligned to corporate priorities – but there is still work to do to ensure all councils have a strategy. This is vital if we are to demonstrate added value, deliver real impact and play a measurable part in helping our organisations to achieve their goals.

It is encouraging to see that access to, and influence with the ‘top table’ is becoming the norm. Most heads of communications meet with their chief executive (or equivalent) more often than once a month to discuss and plan communications strategy and activities. However, we are yet to see any significant increase in heads of communication reporting into the chief executive. As a profession it is vital that we continue to develop, hone and strengthen those relationships with our political and corporate leaders and continue to demonstrate the value of our work.

Effective evaluation is essential if we are to demonstrate the value we can add and to cement our position as a strategic service. This year’s results suggest that there is still room for improvement, with only half regularly measuring and evaluating communications activity. This is also the case for regular reporting to the organisation’s political and managerial leadership.

If we want communications teams to have parity with colleagues in service areas, or corporate functions, this needs to change. We need to include insight and evaluation as key components of every campaign. If we can't demonstrate impact, communications will not be seen as a key service.

In terms of the skills mix, we are seeing more and more teams move to a multi-skilled model. That is, professional communicators with a range of skills across key disciplines. While models differ between councils, the results clearly show a need for communicators to embrace new platforms, channels and skills. It's an important message, particularly in this time of rapid technological change.

The need to keep learning is a message that many respondents are also attuned to with most people investing time in their own personal development, including membership of one or more professional communications organisations. Working with partners in LGcommunications and the PRCA we will continue to look for ways to support learning and development over the coming year.

Looking ahead, again it's encouraging that communicators are highlighting themes that link with corporate priorities. Internal change and transformation, economic development and regeneration, and council reputation all feature highly. As local government continues to address its financial challenges and explore ways to work more efficiently and effectively, change and transformation should be at the top of most people's priority lists.

One of the major challenges for the coming year, and beyond, is diversity in our profession. We all need to work hard to ensure we truly represent the communities we serve. This is not just about getting the numbers up but working hard to ensure we see diversity at the very top of our profession, at conferences and events and recognising it in the way we approach things such as ways of working.

So how can the LGA help? Awareness of our various support offers remains high, as do the number of requests we get from our member councils for help and support. We are at our strongest when we harness the skills and expertise of colleagues from across local government and wider public services – whether that's capturing the best examples of strategic communications for #FutureComms, being part of our pool of communications professionals for our health checks and peer reviews, or joining our crisis communications cohort to support colleagues during times of major incident.

This year's survey shows that over the last year council communicators have started to make the changes that will see us being able to make a strong case for the added value that strategic communications brings. Local government continues to be an exciting and challenging place to develop a communications career and I remain hugely proud to be a part of it.

David Holdstock  
Director of Communications  
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# Summary

## Background

In November 2018 the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted a survey of council Heads of Communications in England and Wales. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on the current state of local government communications at the local authority level and to enable the LGA to assess the sector on issues such as size and structure of communications teams, budgets and future strategies.

The survey asked about a range of topics including length of service within local government, workforce characteristics, membership of professional organisations, and where Heads of Communications reported to. It also explored issues including the types of campaigns that communications teams conducted, the channels they use and the level of awareness that Heads of Communications had about the support available from the LGA. The survey achieved a response rate of 53% (n= 117) and it can be found in Annex B.

## Key findings

- Two thirds (66 per cent) of Heads of Communications in respondent councils were female, most (91 per cent) were from a white English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ethnic background and over half (59 per cent) were 35-49 years old;
- Over two fifths of respondent Heads of Communication (43 per cent) had been working in local government for between five and 14 years and a further 39 per cent had been working in local government for between 15 and 24 years.
- Almost half (46 per cent) were members of LGcommunications, over a quarter (30 per cent) were members of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), seven per cent were members of the Public Relations Communications Association (PRCA) and nine per cent belonged to other professional organisations;
- On average, seven full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were working in corporate communications teams in respondent authorities;
- 60 per cent of respondents had staff performing core communications functions in other parts of their council, with the average number of staff involved in this being 3 FTE;

- Two thirds (66 per cent) of respondent Heads of Communications reported to a service head or director and a quarter (26 per cent) reported to the chief executive;
- Over a third (39 per cent) of Heads of Communications in respondent councils sit on their council's corporate/senior management team or equivalent;
- Two thirds (66 per cent) reported that they have a budget for communications activity, but that other parts of their organisation also fund specific communications-related projects;
- One third (33 per cent) of respondent councils will likely have their non-staffing budgets reduced in 2018/19, whilst 53 per cent of budgets will remain approximately the same, five per cent report a moderate increase, and eight per cent did not know.
- Almost all corporate communications teams in respondent authorities covered media relations (99 per cent), Communications strategy (96 per cent), Campaigns and marketing (95 per cent), web/digital/social media communications (95 per cent), reputation management (93 per cent), internal communications (93 per cent), and crisis/emergency communications (90 per cent).
- The skills distributions of most communications teams in respondent authorities were either characterised by multi-skilled communicators able to work across communications disciplines and platforms (46 per cent) or a mixture of multi-skilled communicators and retained subject matter specialists (46 per cent).
- The most frequently reported communications priorities for respondent authorities over the next 12 months were internal change/transformation programmes (53 per cent), council reputation (49 per cent), economic development/regeneration (42 per cent), resident engagement (36 per cent), and behaviour change (23 per cent). Six per cent of respondents were very confident and 53 per cent of respondents were fairly confident that they would have adequate resources to meet these communications priorities. The most common reason for lack of confidence in meeting these priorities was insufficient people resources (84 per cent of those who were not confident).
- Almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of respondents meet with their authority's chief executive or equivalent more often than once a month to discuss and plan communications strategy and activity. This figure is 63 per cent for their authority's leader or equivalent, and 73 per cent for their authority's senior managers other than the chief executive.

- Almost a third (32 per cent) of communications teams in respondent authorities regularly work closely with their communication counterparts in other local public sector bodies, such as police authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). The most frequently cited way in which authorities worked together with these counterparts was through joint campaigns (75 per cent), followed by regular meetings (57 per cent) and mutual aid during crisis (57 per cent). Over half (53 per cent) expect to work more closely with other public sector bodies over the coming twelve months.
- Over three-quarters (76 per cent) of respondents' authorities have a communications strategy aligned to corporate priorities. Over half (56 per cent) of respondents' authorities have a corporate narrative. Almost 40 per cent of respondents' authorities have an annual campaign plan signed off by senior leadership.
- The most frequently utilised communication channels used by authorities to share news and information with residents were stories in the local media (97 per cent), Twitter (97 per cent), website updates (97 per cent), Facebook (96 per cent), and public consultations (81 per cent).
- Over half (54 per cent) of respondents reported that they regularly measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their campaigns and media channels to a moderate extent. A further 10 per cent reported doing this to a great extent. The most frequent methodology for carrying out these evaluations was quantitative data analysis (90 per cent of those who evaluate), followed by qualitative analysis (70 per cent) and anecdotal or informal feedback (67 per cent). Over a third (39 per cent) produce a regular dashboard or report of their activities and evaluation, which is shared most often with the chief executive (74 per cent), senior managers across the organisation (70 per cent), and the communications team (70 per cent).
- Over half (57 per cent) of authorities currently conduct a residents' or reputational survey to determine their communities' news access and satisfaction with their authority. Of these, 38 per cent carry out the survey every year. Over half of those who run a survey (54 per cent) report that it is carried out by an independent polling company. The survey is most often administered online (50 per cent), by post (46 per cent) or by telephone (38 per cent). The most common reason for an authority not carrying out a residents' survey was the expense of doing so (41 per cent of those who do not run a survey).
- Over seven out of ten (71 per cent) respondents have seen #FutureComms, the joint LGA, LGcommunications, Solace and PRCA guide to strategic communication. The aspects of #FutureComms that were rated most useful by

respondents were case studies (76 per cent) and thought leadership (51 per cent).

- Ninety per cent of respondents were aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils. The communication support offers provided by the LGA which were most often reported as being used in the last 12 months were the LGA website (51 per cent of those who were aware of LGA support), the CommsNet bulletin (47 per cent), #FutureComms (35 per cent), CommsHub communication resources (27 per cent) and workshops or events (25 per cent). Of those who have used LGA communication support in the last twelve months, 83 per cent were either very or fairly satisfied, one respondent was fairly dissatisfied, and none were very dissatisfied. The aspects of this support which were rated most useful were knowledge/expertise (77 per cent), ease of communication (61 per cent) and professionalism (61 per cent), whilst the least useful aspects were quality and detail of feedback (eight per cent) and bespoke support (six per cent).
- The types of communications support which were rated as most useful over the next twelve months were workshops, events or seminars (63 per cent), case studies/online resources (55 per cent), training or professional development (50 per cent), networking and contact-building with other councils (47 per cent), new #FutureComms chapters (29 per cent), and one-day health checks of their authority's communications (27 per cent).
- The most useful areas of training and professional development chosen by those who indicated that they would find training useful were evaluation and insight (66 per cent), behaviour change (59 per cent), stakeholder engagement (42 per cent), strategic skills (41 per cent) and campaign planning (39 per cent).
- Most respondents (68 per cent, 80 respondents) were willing to be involved in the LGA's pool of communications professionals to support councils. A majority of respondents (61 per cent, 69 respondents) were also willing to join the LGA crisis communications cohort. A large majority of respondents (84 per cent, 97 respondents) were happy for their response to be shared with other local authorities on request, including 62 per cent who wished to remain anonymous and 22 per cent who were happy for their name to be shared.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted online during Autumn 2018 via a link sent to Heads of Communications, or their equivalent, in councils and combined fire authorities across England and Wales. Authorities were contacted to ask for contact details for their Heads of Communications, and where they were available, to ask them if they wanted to be included in the survey. Those authorities which did not have a Head of Communications, or which had a Head of Communications who was not responsive to this request or who declined to participate in the survey, were not included in the cohort to whom survey invitations were sent.

The result of this process was that 220 Heads of Communications were contacted initially with the survey week. These Heads of Communications were contacted again with reminders whilst the survey was in the field, over a period of around three weeks.

Of the 220 Heads of Communications who were invited to complete the survey, a total of 117 respondents provided a complete response – a response rate of 53 per cent.

Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all Heads of Communications, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the position of the sector more widely.

Some respondents did not answer all of the questions in the survey so within this report findings are based on different numbers of respondents, this number (the base) is shown below all tables.

Where the response base is less than 50, figures can be skewed due to the small sample size and care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore, where this is the case, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

## Survey Findings

The survey asked respondents about their gender, ethnic background and age group. Two thirds (62 per cent) were female and most (95 per cent) were from a white English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ethnic background. Just over half (56 per cent) were 35-49 years old while a third were in the 50-64 years age group. A full breakdown of these findings are shown in Tables 2,3 and 4.

**Table 1: Gender of respondents**

|                   | Number | Per cent |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| Male              | 39     | 34       |
| Female            | 76     | 66       |
| Prefer not to say | 1      | 1        |

Base = 116

**Table 2: Ethnic background of respondents**

|   | Number | Per cent |
|---|--------|----------|
| English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British | 106    | 91       |
| Irish   | 3      | 3        |
| Gypsy or Irish Traveller                              | 0      | 0        |
| Any other White background                            | 4      | 3        |
| White and Black Caribbean                             | 0      | 0        |
| White and Black African                               | 0      | 0        |
| White and Asian                                       | 1      | 1        |
| Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background          | 0      | 0        |
| Indian  | 1      | 1        |
| Pakistani   | 0      | 0        |
| Bangladeshi   | 0      | 0        |
| Chinese   | 0      | 0        |
| Any other Asian background                            | 0      | 0        |
| African   | 0      | 0        |
| Caribbean   | 0      | 0        |
| Any other Black / African / Caribbean background      | 0      | 0        |
| Arab  | 0      | 0        |
| Any other ethnic group                                | 1      | 1        |
| Prefer not to say                                     | 0      | 0        |

Base = 116

**Table 3: Age group of respondents**

|                | Number | Per cent |
|----------------|--------|----------|
| Under 25 years | 0      | 0        |
| 25-34 years    | 7      | 6        |
| 35-49 years    | 69     | 59       |

|                   |    |    |
|-------------------|----|----|
| 50-64 years       | 37 | 32 |
| 65 years or over  | 0  | 0  |
| Prefer not to say | 3  | 3  |

Base = 116

Most respondents had either worked in local government for five to 14 (43 per cent) or 15 to 24 (39 per cent) years, although a small number (13 per cent, 16 respondents) had worked in local government for zero to four years, and six respondents (five per cent) had worked in local government for 25 years or more.

**Table 4: Years worked in local government by respondents**

|                  | Number | Per cent |
|------------------|--------|----------|
| 0 to 4 years     | 16     | 13       |
| 5 to 14 years    | 52     | 43       |
| 15 to 24 years   | 47     | 39       |
| 25 or more years | 6      | 5        |

Base = 121

Almost three quarters (72 per cent) of respondents were a member of one or more professional communications organisations, while 28 per cent did not belong to any. Almost half (46 per cent) of respondents were members of LGcommunications, 30 per cent were members of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), seven per cent were members of PRCA while nine per cent belonged to other professional organisations as shown in Table 5. Those who reported that they were members of other organisations were asked to specify these. They included the Chartered Institute of Marketing (five respondents), the National Union of Journalists (two respondents), and one respondent each for the Society of Information Technology Management, CIPR, BCS (the Chartered Institute for IT) and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

**Table 5: Membership of professional organisations**

|                    | Number | Per cent |
|--------------------|--------|----------|
| LGcommunications   | 57     | 46       |
| PRCA               | 8      | 7        |
| CIPR               | 37     | 30       |
| Other organisation | 11     | 9        |
| None               | 35     | 28       |

Base = 123 Note: some respondents belonged to more than one organisation.

Respondents were asked how many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were working in their council's corporate communications team performing core functions as at 1 October 2018. Core functions were defined as:

- media relations;
- crisis communications;
- campaigns and marketing;
- reputation management;

- internal communications;
- print/design; and
- web/digital/social media communications.

The overall average (median) number of staff was 7 FTE, ranging from a minimum of 0.9 to a maximum of 48. It should be noted that not all teams deliver all the core functions listed above, and that core functions may not encompass the same activities in all councils.

The type of council with the highest median number of communications staff was Shire Counties, at 20. However, the type of council with the highest ratio of communications staff per 10,000 resident population was London Boroughs, with 0.69 FTE staff per 10,000 residents. Shire Districts have the lowest median number of communications staff, and Combined Fire Authorities have the lowest ratio compared to resident population.

**Table 6: Number of communications staff in FTE by authority type**

|                         | <b>Average (Mean)</b> | <b>Median</b> | <b>Ratio per 10,000 population</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Shire County            | 19.6                  | 20            | 0.19                               |
| Shire District          | 5.5                   | 5             | 0.43                               |
| London Borough          | 19.8                  | 18.6          | 0.69                               |
| Metropolitan District   | 18.7                  | 15.5          | 0.47                               |
| Unitary Authority       | 9.4                   | 9.4           | 0.48                               |
| Combined Fire Authority | 6.8                   | 6             | 0.05                               |
| <b>All</b>              | <b>9.4</b>            | <b>7</b>      | <b>0.31</b>                        |

Base = 116

Over half (60 per cent) of respondents reported that there were staff in other parts of their council performing core communications functions. On average the median number of these staff was 3 FTE. Respondents were asked to specify which other teams these staff are located in using an open text box; among the most common words to be entered into this box were 'web', 'digital' or 'ICT' (24 mentions); 'leisure' (12 mentions); 'marketing' (10 mentions); 'print' (6 mentions); 'housing' (5 mentions); 'events' (4 mentions); 'waste' (4 mentions); 'fostering' (4 mentions); 'tourism' (4 mentions); 'business' (3 mentions); 'customer' (3 mentions); 'design' (3 mentions); 'development' or 'regeneration' (3 mentions each) and 'community' (3 mentions).

Sixty-six per cent of respondents reported to a service head or director, a quarter (26 per cent) reported to the chief executive or equivalent and seven per cent had another officer as their line manager. Table 6 shows these findings and lists of the service heads and directors, and the other line managers reported to are shown in Table A1 in Annex A.

**Table 6: Heads of Communications' line managers**

|                       | Number | Per cent |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| Chief executive       | 32     | 26       |
| Service head/director | 80     | 66       |
| Other                 | 9      | 7        |

Base = 121

Over a third (39 per cent) of Heads of Communications sit on their council's corporate/senior management team or equivalent. These findings are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Heads of Communications sitting on councils' corporate/senior management team or equivalent.**

|     | Number | Per cent |
|-----|--------|----------|
| Yes | 47     | 39       |
| No  | 74     | 61       |

Base = 121

Two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) reported that whilst they have a budget for communications activity, other parts of their organisation also fund specific communication projects. A smaller number (18 per cent) reported that all communications spending in their organisation is centralised, whilst 15 per cent reported that all communications activity is funded when commissioned by other parts of their organisation. One respondent selected the "other" option, but this respondent described a situation identical to the second option, with a mixture of centralised and project-based communications funding.

**Table 8: Heads of Communications' responsibility for their organisation's communications budget**

|  | Number | Per cent |
|--|--------|----------|
| All communications spending is centralised   | 22     | 18       |
| Has a budget for communications activity but other parts of the organisation also fund specific projects | 80     | 66       |
| Communications activity funded by other parts of the organisation when projects are commissioned         | 18     | 15       |
| Other (please specify)   | 1      | 1        |

Base = 121

A small majority of respondents (53 per cent) reported that their authority's non-staffing communications budget will remain roughly the same between 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. Six respondents (five per cent) reported a moderate increase, whilst no respondents report a great increase. One quarter (25 per cent)

of respondents reported a moderate decrease to their budget, whilst a further eight per cent reported a great decrease.

**Table 9: Changes to non-staffing communications budgets between 2018/19 and 2019/20**

|                         | Number | Per cent |
|-------------------------|--------|----------|
| Great increase          | 0      | 0        |
| Moderate increase       | 6      | 5        |
| Remain roughly the same | 64     | 53       |
| Moderate decrease       | 30     | 25       |
| Great decrease          | 10     | 8        |
| Don't know              | 10     | 8        |

Base = 120

Almost all corporate communications teams in respondent councils covered media relations (99 per cent), communications strategy (96 per cent), campaigns and marketing (95 per cent), web/digital/social media communications (95 per cent), reputation management (93 per cent), internal communications (93 per cent) and crisis/emergency communications (90 per cent). A slightly smaller majority delivered services relating to print/design (82 per cent), communications training (75 per cent) and behaviour change (59 per cent). A minority of communications teams in respondent councils covered community engagement (48 per cent), income generation (48 per cent), member briefings (47 per cent), place marketing (45 per cent), consultation (43 per cent), public affairs (43 per cent) and commercial marketing (39 per cent). Only a small minority of councils delivered services concerned with policy (17 per cent) and tourism (12 per cent). Thirteen respondents specified other services delivered by their corporate communications team: whilst some of these specified services already on the list, other service types mentioned include filming and photography (four respondents), branding (three respondents), and events, distribution, publications and Freedom of Information requests (one respondent each).

**Table 10: Services delivered by corporate communications teams**

|   | Number | Per cent |
|---|--------|----------|
| Media relations                         | 121    | 99       |
| Communications strategy                 | 117    | 96       |
| Campaigns and marketing                 | 116    | 95       |
| Web/digital/social media communications | 116    | 95       |
| Reputation management                   | 114    | 93       |
| Internal communications                 | 114    | 93       |
| Crisis/emergency communications         | 110    | 90       |
| Print/design                            | 100    | 82       |
| Communications training                 | 91     | 75       |
| Behaviour change                        | 72     | 59       |
| Community engagement                    | 59     | 48       |

|                        |    |    |
|------------------------|----|----|
| Income generation      | 59 | 48 |
| Member briefings       | 57 | 47 |
| Place marketing        | 55 | 45 |
| Consultation           | 53 | 43 |
| Public affairs         | 52 | 43 |
| Commercial marketing   | 48 | 39 |
| Policy                 | 21 | 17 |
| Tourism                | 15 | 12 |
| Other (please specify) | 13 | 11 |

Base = 122 (multiple responses were possible)

Equal numbers of respondents described their communications teams as being composed principally of multi-skilled communicators and a mixture of multi-skilled communicators and retained subject specialists (46 per cent each). Seven per cent described their team as being composed solely of retained subject matter experts and specialists. No respondents specified any other form of skills distribution for their communications team.

**Table 11: Skills distribution of respondents' communications teams**

|  | Number | Per cent |
|--|--------|----------|
| Retained specialists/subject matter experts working on one communications discipline or platform | 9      | 7        |
| Mixture of multi-skilled and retained specialists  | 56     | 46       |
| Multi-skilled communicators able to work across communications disciplines and platforms         | 56     | 46       |
| Other (please specify)   | 0      | 0        |

Base = 121

**Figure 1. Skills distribution of respondents' communications teams.**



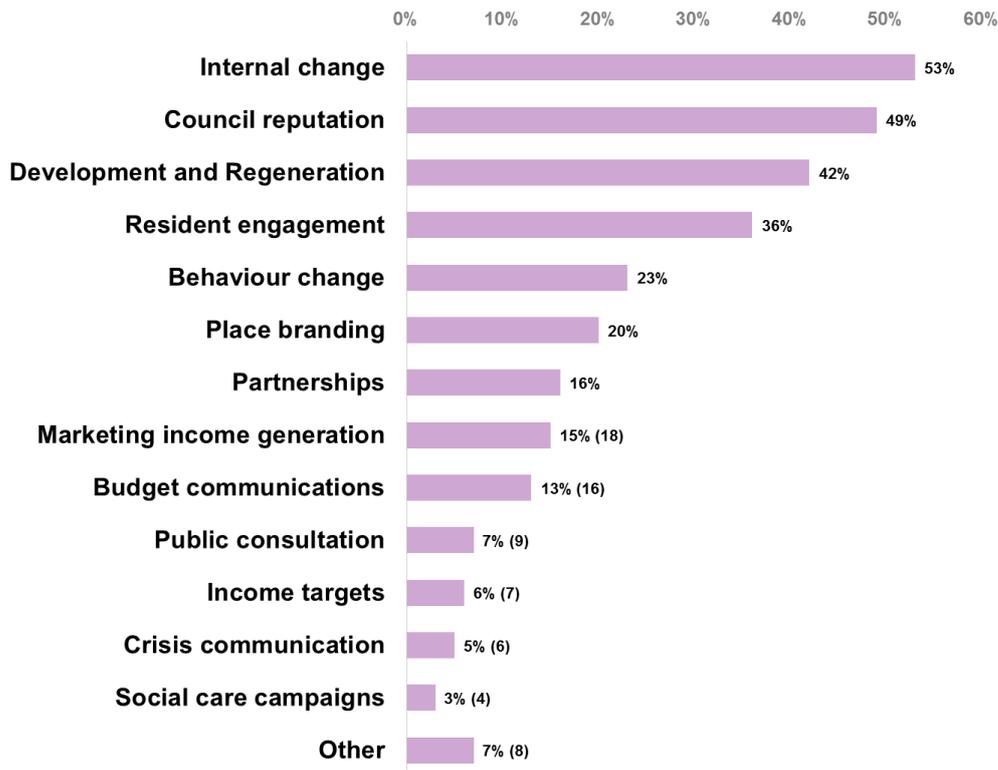
The top communications priorities for respondent's authorities over the next 12 months were internal change/transformation programmes (53 per cent), council reputation (49 per cent), economic development/regeneration (42 per cent), resident engagement (36 per cent) and behaviour change (23 per cent). The other priorities are shown in Table 10 below. Eight respondents specified other priorities for their authorities: these encompassed specific campaigns (three respondents), reforms to their authority or to local government, (two respondents), and customer experience, housing growth and leisure development (one respondent each).

| Table 12: Top communications priorities for respondents' authorities over the next 12 months |        |          |
|--|--------|----------|
|  | Number | Per cent |
| Internal change/transformation programmes  | 65     | 53       |
| Council reputation   | 60     | 49       |
| Economic development/regeneration  | 51     | 42       |
| Resident engagement  | 44     | 36       |
| Behaviour change   | 28     | 23       |
| Place branding   | 24     | 20       |
| Partnership working  | 20     | 16       |
| Marketing income-generating services   | 18     | 15       |
| Finance/budget communications  | 16     | 13       |
| Public consultation  | 9      | 7        |

|                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Achieving income targets | 7 | 6 |
| Crisis communication     | 6 | 5 |
| Social care campaigns    | 4 | 3 |
| Other (please specify)   | 8 | 7 |
| None                     | 0 | 0 |

Base = 122 (multiple responses were possible)

**Figure 2. Top communication priorities over the next 12 months.**



A majority (53 per cent) of respondents were fairly confident that they will have adequate resources to meet the priorities specified in the previous question. A further six per cent were very confident, adding up to a total of 59 per cent who feel very or fairly confident that they are able to meet their organisational priorities. Over a third of respondents (36 per cent) were not very confident in meeting their authorities' priorities, and four per cent were not at all confident.

**Table 13: Confidence in having adequate resources to meet organisational priorities**

|                                 | Number    | Per cent  |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Very or fairly confident</b> | <b>71</b> | <b>59</b> |
| Very confident                  | 7         | 6         |
| Fairly confident                | 64        | 53        |
| Not very confident              | 44        | 36        |
| Not at all confident            | 5         | 4         |
| Don't know                      | 1         | 1         |

Base = 121

Of the 49 respondents who felt not very confident or not at all confident in meeting organisational priorities, 84 per cent mentioned insufficient people resources as a reason for this lack of confidence. The next most frequently mentioned reason was insufficient budget (53 per cent), followed by unclear priorities/targets (33 per cent) and unrealistic priorities/targets (24 per cent). No other reasons for lack of confidence were given.

**Table 14: Reasons for feeling a lack of confidence in having adequate resources to meet organisational priorities**

|                                | Number | Per cent |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Insufficient people resources  | 41     | 84       |
| Insufficient budget            | 26     | 53       |
| Unclear priorities/targets     | 16     | 33       |
| Unrealistic priorities/targets | 12     | 24       |

Base = 49 (multiple responses were possible)

Almost three quarters (74 per cent) reported meeting with their authority's chief executive or equivalent more often than weekly or between weekly and monthly to discuss and plan communications strategy and activity. This figure was very slightly lower (73 per cent) with regard to their authority's senior managers, and 63 per cent with regards to their authority's leader or equivalent. Eight per cent of respondents reported that they do not meet with their chief executive in this way on a regular basis, compared with 11 per cent with regard to their leader and three per cent with regard to their senior managers.

**Table 15: Frequency of meeting with colleagues to discuss and plan communications strategy and activity**

|   | Chief executive | Leader          | Senior managers |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>More often than weekly or between weekly and monthly</b> | <b>90 (74%)</b> | <b>76 (63%)</b> | <b>86 (73%)</b> |
| More often than weekly                                      | 35 (29%)        | 23 (19%)        | 25 (21%)        |
| Between weekly and monthly                                  | 55 (45%)        | 53 (44%)        | 61 (52%)        |
| Between monthly and quarterly                               | 18 (15%)        | 22 (18%)        | 22 (19%)        |
| Between quarterly and yearly                                | 3 (2%)          | 7 (6%)          | 6 (5%)          |
| Less often than yearly                                      | 0               | 2 (2%)          | 0               |
| Not on a regular basis                                      | 10 (8%)         | 13 (11%)        | 4 (3%)          |

Base = 121, 120 and 118 for chief executive, leader and senior managers respectively

Almost a third of respondents (32 per cent) reported regularly working closely with their communication counterparts in partner organisations, such as the police, fire and rescue authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). A further 26 per

cent reported sometimes working closely with these counterparts. The most common response (36 per cent) was that respondents worked closely with their counterparts when necessary. Four per cent reported working closely with counterparts infrequently and two per cent not at all.

**Table 16: Whether respondents work closely with their communication counterparts in partner organisations**

|                     | Number | Per cent |
|---------------------|--------|----------|
| Yes, regularly      | 39     | 32       |
| Yes, sometimes      | 31     | 26       |
| Yes, when necessary | 43     | 36       |
| Yes, infrequently   | 6      | 4        |
| No                  | 2      | 2        |

Base = 121

The most common ways that they worked together were joint campaigns (75 per cent), regular meetings (57 per cent) and mutual aid during crisis (57 per cent). Less common ways of working together include shared resources (15 per cent), shared staff (seven per cent) and joint budgets (one per cent). Of the twelve respondents who specified other ways of working together, three referred to amplifying the impact of other organisations' campaigns, two each referred to intelligence and information sharing, joint training courses, a resilience forum, and considering a merger, and one referred to assisting with reputation work.

**Table 17: Ways that communications teams work with partner organisations**

|                          | Number | Per cent |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| Joint campaigns          | 88     | 75       |
| Regular meetings         | 67     | 57       |
| Mutual aid during crisis | 67     | 57       |
| Shared resources         | 18     | 15       |
| Shared staff             | 8      | 7        |
| Joint budgets            | 1      | 1        |
| Other                    | 12     | 10       |

Base = 118 (respondents who work closely with partner organisations)

Over half (53 per cent) of respondents who work closely with partner organisations anticipate working more closely with these organisations over the next twelve months. Over a third (36 per cent) anticipate their relationships with partner organisations staying the same. Three per cent anticipate working more separately, and six per cent don't know. One respondent selected "other" but declined to specify.

**Table 18: What respondents expect to happen to their relationships with partner organisations over the coming twelve months**

|                            | <b>Number</b> | <b>Per cent</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Work more closely together | 63            | 53              |
| Stay the same              | 43            | 36              |
| Work more separately       | 4             | 3               |
| Other (please specify)     | 1             | 1               |
| Don't know                 | 7             | 6               |

Base = 118 (respondents who work closely with partner organisations)

A majority of respondents (76 per cent) reported that their organisation has a communications strategy aligned to its corporate priorities. A smaller number (56 per cent) report having a corporate narrative, and 40 per cent report having an annual campaign plan signed off by senior leadership. Those who reported having an annual campaign plan were asked to specify some of their most recent or future campaign themes. The most common responses to this question are specified in the word cloud below.



**Table 20: Communication channels used by respondents' authorities to share news and information with residents**

|                            | Number | Per cent |
|----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Stories in local media     | 116    | 97       |
| Twitter                    | 116    | 97       |
| Website updates            | 115    | 97       |
| Facebook                   | 114    | 96       |
| Public consultations       | 96     | 81       |
| E-bulletins/E-marketing    | 86     | 72       |
| YouTube                    | 84     | 71       |
| Face-to-face meetings      | 78     | 66       |
| Instagram                  | 73     | 61       |
| Council magazine (print)   | 68     | 57       |
| Council magazine (digital) | 46     | 39       |
| Messaging apps             | 10     | 8        |
| Snapchat                   | 6      | 5        |
| Other (please specify)     | 8      | 7        |

Base = 119

A majority of respondents regularly measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their campaigns and channels to either a great (10 per cent) or a moderate (54 per cent) extent. Almost a third (31 per cent) do this to a small extent, whilst six councils do not do measure or evaluate.

**Table 21: Extent to which respondents regularly measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their campaigns and channels**

|                                      | Number    | Per cent  |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>To a great or moderate extent</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>64</b> |
| To a great extent                    | 12        | 10        |
| To a moderate extent                 | 64        | 54        |
| To a small extent                    | 37        | 31        |
| Not at all                           | 6         | 5         |
| Don't know                           | 0         | 0         |

Base = 119

The method most commonly used for the evaluation of communications activity was collection and analysis of quantitative data (90 per cent), followed by qualitative data (70 per cent) and anecdotal/informal feedback (67 per cent). Six respondents selected "other", and specified the following additional methods: monitoring behaviour changes, monitoring outcomes achieved, monitoring the sentiment of local press coverage, a citizens' panel, web analytics, and the Government Communications Service evaluation framework.

**Table 22: Methods used to evaluate effectiveness /impact of communications channels and/or campaigns**

|                             | Number | Per cent |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Quantitative data           | 102    | 90       |
| Qualitative data            | 79     | 70       |
| Anecdotal/informal feedback | 76     | 67       |
| Other (please specify)      | 6      | 5        |
| Don't know                  | 1      | 1        |

Base = 113 (multiple responses were possible)

Almost six out of ten respondents (60 per cent) do not produce a regular dashboard or report of their activities and evaluation.

**Table 23: Whether respondents produce a regular dashboard or report of their activities and evaluation**

|            | Number | Per cent |
|------------|--------|----------|
| Yes        | 46     | 39       |
| No         | 71     | 60       |
| Don't know | 2      | 2        |

Base = 119

Of the 46 respondents who produce a regular dashboard or report, 74 per cent (34 respondents) regularly share it with their authority's chief executive or equivalent, followed by 70 per cent (32 respondents) for senior managers across the organisation and another 70 per cent for their communications team. A minority of respondents share this dashboard or report with their authority's leader or equivalent (48 per cent, 22 respondents), senior managers within communications (41 per cent, 19 respondents), members (24 per cent, 11 respondents) and all staff (two per cent, one respondent). Seven respondents selected "other" and their responses encompassed their cabinet (three respondents), portfolio holders (two respondents), service director and senior leadership team (one respondent each).

**Table 24: Personnel with whom the dashboard or report is regularly shared**

|   | Number | Per cent |
|---|--------|----------|
| Chief executive                           | 34     | 74       |
| Senior managers (across the organisation) | 32     | 70       |
| Communications team                       | 32     | 70       |
| Leader                                    | 22     | 48       |
| Senior managers (within communications)   | 19     | 41       |
| Members                                   | 11     | 24       |
| All staff                                 | 1      | 2        |
| Other (please specify)                    | 7      | 15       |
| No one                                    | 0      | 0        |
| Don't know                                | 0      | 0        |

Base = 46 (multiple responses were possible)

The majority (57 per cent) of respondents' councils currently conduct a residents' or reputational survey.

**Table 25: Whether respondents currently conduct a residents' or reputational survey**

|            | Number | Per cent |
|------------|--------|----------|
| Yes        | 68     | 57       |
| No         | 49     | 41       |
| Don't know | 2      | 2        |

Base = 119

Of the 68 respondents who conduct a residents' or reputational survey, 38 per cent reported carrying it out every year and a further 37 per cent reported carrying it out every two years. Four per cent reported carrying it out every three years, and twelve per cent reporting carrying it out as required, with no regular plan or schedule. Six respondents selected "other"; the time periods they specified are quarterly (three respondents), three times a year (one respondent), following incidents (one respondent), and a recent transition from annual to biennial (one respondent).

**Table 26: Frequency of residents' surveys**

|                               | Number | Per cent |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Every year                    | 26     | 38       |
| Every two years               | 25     | 37       |
| Every three years             | 3      | 4        |
| As required (no regular plan) | 8      | 12       |
| Other (please specify)        | 6      | 9        |

Base = 68

Of those authorities who conducted a survey, 54 per cent use an independent polling company whilst 41 per cent carry it out in-house. Three respondents selected "other"; two of these specified using a joint survey with other public sector bodies, whilst one specified a survey administered by the LGA in partnership with an independent polling company.

**Table 27: The organisations who carry out the reputational survey**

|                             | Number | Per cent |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Independent polling company | 37     | 54       |
| Own authority               | 28     | 41       |
| Other                       | 3      | 4        |

Base = 68

Half of the respondents who carry out a survey report using an online method of administration. This is followed by postal surveys (46 per cent), telephone (38 per cent), face-to-face (24 per cent) and citizen's jury/panel (18 per cent).

**Table 28: Types of residents' or reputational survey**

|                      | Number | Per cent |
|----------------------|--------|----------|
| Online               | 34     | 50       |
| Postal               | 31     | 46       |
| Telephone            | 26     | 38       |
| Face-to-face         | 16     | 24       |
| Citizens' jury/panel | 12     | 18       |
| Other                | 0      | 0        |

Base = 68 (multiple responses were possible)

Respondents from councils who did not conduct a residents' or reputational survey were asked to indicate the main reason why they did not carry one out. The most common reason is that it is too expensive to do so (41 per cent, 20 respondents), followed by a lack of senior support within the council (29 per cent, 14 respondents) and a lack of confidence that it would be a worthwhile exercise (12 per cent, six respondents). Seventeen respondents selected "other". Four of these reiterated budget constraints, three mentioned that they are planning to run a survey in the near future, two stated that they prefer to use qualitative or other forms of feedback, two mentioned that due to changes in their council the issue is not considered high priority, and one each cited lack of time and a perceived lack of need due to elections and frequent contact from residents. One respondent found it unclear why such a survey was not being run, and one did not specify the reasons for not doing this.

**Table 29: Reasons for not conducting a residents' or reputational survey**

|  | Number | Per cent |
|--|--------|----------|
| It is too expensive                      | 20     | 41       |
| No senior support within the council     | 14     | 29       |
| Do not think it is a worthwhile exercise | 6      | 12       |
| Other (please specify)                   | 17     | 35       |

Base = 49 (multiple responses were possible)

The majority (71 per cent) of respondents had seen #FutureComms, the joint LGA, LGcommunications, Solace and Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) guide to strategic communications.

**Table 30: Whether respondents have seen the #FutureComms guide to strategic communication**

|            | Number | Per cent |
|------------|--------|----------|
| Yes        | 84     | 71       |
| No         | 32     | 27       |
| Don't know | 3      | 3        |

Base = 119

Of the 84 respondents who have seen #FutureComms, 76 per cent found the case studies among the most useful aspects of this resource, whilst 51 per cent found thought leadership among its most useful aspects. Four respondents selected

specific topics: these respondents specified strategic communications, the corporate narrative, evaluation and all specific topics as among the most useful aspects of #FutureComms. Two respondents selected “other”: these specified the general approach of the tool and its usefulness as an indicator of the importance of communications to use to promote their services to senior managers. One respondent selected “none”, and ten selected “don’t know”.

**Table 31: Aspects of #FutureComms which respondents found most useful**

|                                  | Number | Per cent |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Case studies                     | 43     | 76       |
| Thought leadership               | 64     | 51       |
| Specific topics (please specify) | 4      | 5        |
| Other (please specify)           | 2      | 2        |
| None                             | 1      | 1        |
| Don’t know                       | 10     | 12       |

Base = 84 (multiple responses were possible)

The majority (90 per cent) of respondents were aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils.

**Table 32: Whether respondents are aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils**

|            | Number | Per cent |
|------------|--------|----------|
| Yes        | 107    | 90       |
| No         | 9      | 8        |
| Don’t know | 3      | 3        |

Base = 119

A majority of the 107 respondents who were aware of the communications support offered by the LGA to its member councils (51 per cent) reported having used the LGA website for communication support in the last 12 months. This was followed by use of the CommsNet bulletin (47 per cent), #FutureComms (35 per cent), CommsHub communication resources (27 per cent) and workshops or events (25 per cent). Less common forms of support utilised were one day health checks (seven per cent), strategic support (six per cent), LGA improvement work (five per cent), media training (two per cent), two or three-day communications reviews (two per cent) and recruitment assistance (one per cent). Six respondents selected “other”. Of these, two mentioned the Future Leader programme, and one each mentioned Be A Councillor, the LGComms Conference, personal strategic advice, and support with a high-profile event taking place locally.

**Table 33: LGA communication support offers used in the last 12 months**

|                       | Number | Per cent |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| LGA website           | 55     | 51       |
| CommsNet bulletin     | 50     | 47       |
| #FutureComms resource | 37     | 35       |

|  |    |    |
|--|----|----|
| CommsHub communication resources       | 29 | 27 |
| Workshop or event                      | 25 | 25 |
| One day health check                   | 7  | 7  |
| Strategic support                      | 6  | 6  |
| Participation in LGA improvement work  | 5  | 5  |
| Media training                         | 2  | 2  |
| Two or three-day communications review | 2  | 2  |
| Recruitment assistance                 | 1  | 1  |
| Other (please specify)                 | 6  | 6  |
| None in the last 12 months             | 21 | 20 |

Base = 107 (multiple responses were possible)

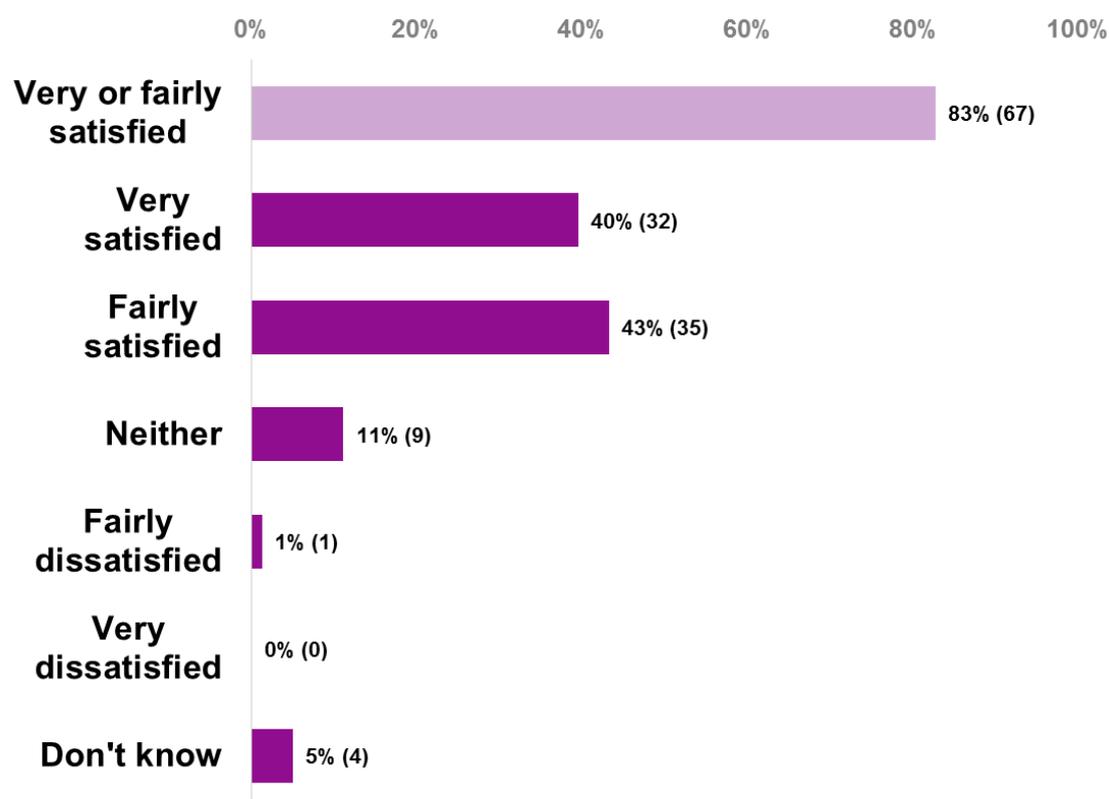
Of the respondents who reported using some form of LGA communication support in the last 12 months, the majority (83 per cent) were very or fairly satisfied with the support provided. Eleven per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, one respondent was fairly dissatisfied, and no respondents were very dissatisfied.

**Table 34: Satisfaction with LGA communications support**

|                                    | Number    | Per cent  |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Very or fairly satisfied</b>    | <b>67</b> | <b>83</b> |
| Very satisfied                     | 32        | 40        |
| Fairly satisfied                   | 35        | 43        |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 9         | 11        |
| Fairly dissatisfied                | 1         | 1         |
| Very dissatisfied                  | 0         | 0         |
| Don't know                         | 4         | 5         |

Base = 81

**Figure 4. Satisfaction with LGA communications support**



The aspect of LGA communication support that was rated most useful most often by respondents was the knowledge and expertise of LGA staff and peers (77 per cent). This was followed by ease of communication (61 per cent), professionalism (61 per cent), value for money (47 per cent) quality and detail of feedback (38 per cent), speed of response to enquiry (36 per cent) and bespoke support (24 per cent). One respondent selected another aspect as most useful, specifying the availability of campaign material that could be adapted for their own local campaigns.

**Table 35: Usefulness of aspects of LGA communication support**

|                                | Most useful (Number) | Most useful (Per cent) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Knowledge/expertise            | 47                   | 77                     |
| Ease of communication          | 34                   | 61                     |
| Professionalism                | 34                   | 61                     |
| Value for money                | 26                   | 47                     |
| Quality and detail of feedback | 20                   | 38                     |
| Speed of response to enquiry   | 19                   | 36                     |
| Bespoke support                | 12                   | 24                     |
| Other (please specify)         | 1                    | 5                      |

Base = 61, 56, 56, 55, 52, 53, 50 and 22 for the categories in order of percentage rated

The type of communications support that was felt to be most useful to most respondents over the next twelve months was workshops, events or seminars (63 per cent). Other forms of support that the majority of respondents valued most highly were case studies and online resources (55 per cent) and training or professional development (50 per cent). A significant minority would highly value networking and contact-building with other councils (47 per cent), new #FutureComms chapters (29 per cent) and one-day communications health checks (27 per cent). Less common forms of support selected were crisis communications support (15 per cent), two or three-day strategic reviews (13 per cent), a visit from a member of the LGA communications team (11 per cent), bespoke support via email or telephone (11 per cent) and recruitment support (10 per cent). Two respondents specified other forms of support: more local or online resources due to their lack of a travel budget, and evaluation and insight support. Two respondents selected “none of the above”.

**Table 36: Types of communications support that respondents would find most useful over the next 12 months**

|  | Number | Per cent |
|--|--------|----------|
| Workshops, events or seminars                                      | 74     | 63       |
| Case studies/online resources                                      | 65     | 55       |
| Training or professional development                               | 59     | 50       |
| Networking and contact-building with other councils                | 55     | 47       |
| New #FutureComms chapters  | 34     | 29       |
| One-day health check of your council's communications              | 32     | 27       |
| Crisis communications support                                      | 18     | 15       |
| Two or three-day strategic review of your council's communications | 15     | 13       |
| Visit from a member of the LGA communications team                 | 13     | 11       |
| Bespoke support via email/telephone                                | 13     | 11       |
| Recruitment support  | 12     | 10       |
| Other (please specify)   | 2      | 2        |
| None of the above  | 2      | 2        |

Base = 118 (multiple responses were possible)

Of the 59 respondents who reported that they would find training highly useful over the next twelve months, 66 per cent specified that evaluation and insight would be among the most useful areas of training to receive. This was followed by behaviour change (59 per cent), stakeholder engagement (42 per cent), strategic skills (41 per cent), campaign planning (39 per cent), leadership skills (34 per cent), political awareness (25 per cent), technical skills (25 per cent), personal impact (24 per cent), crisis communication (22 per cent), and policy skills (15 per cent). Two respondents selected “other”, and specified public affairs and lobbying.

**Table 37: Areas of training and professional development which would be most useful**

|                        | Number | Per cent |
|------------------------|--------|----------|
| Evaluation and insight | 39     | 66       |
| Behaviour change       | 35     | 59       |
| Stakeholder engagement | 25     | 42       |
| Strategic skills       | 24     | 41       |
| Campaign planning      | 23     | 39       |
| Leadership skills      | 20     | 34       |
| Political awareness    | 15     | 25       |
| Technical skills       | 15     | 25       |
| Personal impact        | 14     | 24       |
| Crisis communication   | 13     | 22       |
| Policy skills          | 9      | 15       |
| Other (please specify) | 2      | 3        |
| None of the above      | 0      | 0        |
| Don't know             | 0      | 0        |

Base = 59 (multiple responses were possible)

A majority of respondents (68 per cent) stated that they would be willing to be involved in the LGA's pool of communications professionals to support councils. A majority (61 per cent) also stated that they would be willing to join the LGA's crisis communications cohort to support councils at times of crisis or major incident. Most respondents (84 per cent) were happy for their response to this survey to be shared with other local authorities on request, including 22 per cent who are happy for their response to be shared on a named basis, and 62 per cent who are happy for their response to be shared, but only anonymously.

**Table 38: Willingness of respondents to engage further**

|   | Yes (Number) | Yes (Per cent) |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| Willing to be involved in the LGA's pool of communications professionals to support councils  | 80           | 68             |
| Willing to join the LGA crisis communications cohort and be contacted about availability to support councils in times of crisis or major incident | 69           | 61             |
| Happy for response to this survey to be shared with other local authorities on request – including both named and anonymous                       | 97           | 84             |
| Happy for response to this survey to be shared with other local authorities on request – named only   | 25           | 22             |
| Happy for response to this survey to be shared with other local authorities on request – anonymous only   | 72           | 62             |

Base = 117, 114 and 116 for pool of communications professionals, crisis communications cohort and sharing responses to this survey respectively

## Annex A

### Other line managers specified by respondents

| <b>Table A1: Heads of communications' line managers</b> |
|---|
| <b>Service heads/directors</b>                          |
| Director/Head of Service (x 62)                         |
| Assistant Director/Head of Service (x 8)                |
| Assistant/Deputy Chief Executive (x 6)                  |
| Chief Operating Officer (x 1)                           |
| Interim arrangements due to restructure (x 1)           |

## Annex B

### Survey form and notes of guidance

# HEADS OF COMMS SURVEY 2018

#### **i6 - LGA Heads of Communications Survey 2018**

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your responses will help us to provide a better service to Heads of Communications across local government.

Please note:

*You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. You can use the 'Previous' button if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.*

*A document listing all the questions is available for download [here](#). Please note you may not get asked all of these questions, as you will only be shown the questions which are relevant to your earlier responses.*

*If you stop before completing the survey, you can return by clicking again on the link you were sent by email. Your responses will have been saved and you will be able to continue from where you left off. Your answers for each page will only be saved once you have clicked on the 'Next' button for the page in question.*

*The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on the answers you provide.*

*Your survey link is unique to you and should only be used by you. Please do not pass it on to anyone else as each link is only good for one response.*

*All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our privacy statement. We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.*

*Please complete the survey by 23 November. If you have any queries about the survey, please contact James Harman at [james.Harman@local.gov.uk](mailto:james.Harman@local.gov.uk).*

#### **q7 - Contact details**

Please check that the following contact details are correct. If they are not correct, you can correct them by overwriting them.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_  
Your authority \_\_\_\_\_  
Your job title \_\_\_\_\_  
Your email address \_\_\_\_\_

**q8 - Time spent in local government**

How many years have you worked in local government?

*Please provide the total length of time across your career, not including any time spent working in other sectors.*

- 0 to 4 years
- 5 to 14 years
- 15 to 24 years
- 25 or more years

**q9 - Professional organisations**

Are you a member of a professional organisation?

*Please select all which apply.*

- LGcommunications
- PRCA
- CIPR
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- None

**q10 - Staff numbers**

How many staff were employed in your authority's corporate communications team performing core functions at 1 November 2018?

*Core functions are defined as media relations, crisis communications, campaigns, marketing, reputation management, internal communications, print/design, and web/digital/social media communications. Please enter the number in full-time equivalent terms. If you do not know, please enter DK*

**q13 - Other staff**

Are there other staff performing any of these core communications functions in other parts of your authority (e.g. web, marketing teams)?

- Yes (please specify where)\_\_\_\_\_ [Other]
- No
- Don't know

**q14 - Other numbers**

How many staff were performing these functions in other parts of the authority at 1 November 2018?

*Please enter the number in full-time equivalent terms. If you do not know, please enter DK.*

**q15 - Line manager**

Who is your line manager?

- Chief executive (or equivalent)
- Service head/director (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_ [Other]
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_ [Other]

**q16 - Senior management**

Do you sit on your council's corporate/senior management team or equivalent?

- Yes
- No

**q17 - Comms budget**

Do you have responsibility for managing your organisation's communications budget?

- Yes, all communications spending in my organisation is centralised
- I have a budget for communications activity but other parts of the organisation also fund specific projects
- No, communications activity is funded by other parts of the organisation when projects are commissioned
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**q18 - Budget change**

Will your authority's non-staffing communications budget increase, decrease, or remain the same between 2018/19 and 2019/20?

- Great increase
- Moderate increase
- Remain roughly the same
- Moderate decrease
- Great decrease
- Don't know

**q19 - Services**

Which services does your communications team(s) currently deliver?

*Please select all which apply.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media relations                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial marketing        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis/emergency communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications strategy     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campaigns and marketing                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Community engagement        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation management                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internal communications                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member briefings            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print/design                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications training     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web/digital/social media communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour change            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public affairs                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Income generation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Place marketing                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)_____ |

**q20 - Skills**

Which of the following best describes the skills distribution of your communications team?

- Retained specialists/subject matter experts working on one discipline or service area
- Mixture of multi-skilled and retained specialists
- Multi-skilled communicators able to work across communications disciplines and platforms
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**q21 - Priorities**

What are the top communications priorities for your authority over the next 12 months?

*Please select up to three priorities.*

- Partnership working
- Council reputation
- Crisis communication
- Resident engagement
- Public consultation
- Behaviour change
- Budget communications
- Place branding
- Economic development/regeneration
- Social care campaigns
- Internal change/transformation programmes
- Marketing income-generating services, for example leisure or tourism
- Achieving income targets
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None

**q22 - Confidence**

How confident are you that you have adequate resources to meet the communications priorities of your organisation?

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- Don't know

**q23 - Why Lack**

Why do you feel this lack of confidence?

*Please select all which apply.*

- Insufficient people resources
- Insufficient budget
- Unclear priorities/targets
- Unrealistic priorities/targets
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

**q24 - Meeting frequency**

How often, if at all, do you meet with the following personnel to discuss and plan communications strategy and activity?

|  | More often than weekly | Between weekly and monthly | Between monthly and quarterly | Between quarterly and yearly | Less often than yearly | Not on a regular basis |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Your authority's chief executive or equivalent | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Your authority's leader or equivalent          | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  |

|                                  | More often than weekly | Between weekly and monthly | Between monthly and quarterly | Between quarterly and yearly | Less often than yearly | Not on a regular basis |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Your authority's senior managers | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  |

**q25 - Close work**

Do you currently work closely with your communication counterparts in partner organisations (e.g. police/fire and rescue/clinical commissioning group)

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, sometimes
- Yes, when necessary
- Yes, infrequently
- No

**q26 - In what ways**

In what ways do you usually work together with these counterparts?

*Please select all which apply.*

- Joint campaigns
- Joint budgets
- Shared staff
- Shared resources
- Regular meetings
- Mutual aid during crisis
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**q27 - Relationship Change**

What do you expect to happen to your relationship with your partner organisations over the coming twelve months?

- Work more closely together
- Stay the same
- Work more separately
- Don't know
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**q28 - Strategy**

Does your organisation have a communications strategy aligned to your corporate priorities?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q29 - Narrative**

Does your organisation have a corporate narrative?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q31 - How used**

Please briefly describe in what ways the corporate narrative is used within your organisation.

**q32 - Campaign plan**

Does your organisation have an annual campaign plan signed off by your senior leadership?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q33 - Campaign Themes**

Please briefly provide details of your most recent or near future campaign themes (e.g. waste and recycling, social worker recruitment, etc)

**q34 - Channels**

Which of the following communication channels does your council use to share news and information with residents?

*Please select all which apply.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council magazine (print)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council magazine (digital) | <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stories in local media     | <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face meetings        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-bulletins/E-marketing    | <input type="checkbox"/> Website updates              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Messaging apps               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public consultations         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

**q35 - Evaluate**

To what extent do you regularly measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of your campaigns and channels?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

**q36 - Methods**

Which methods do you regularly use to carry out these evaluations?

*Please select all which apply.*

- Qualitative data
- Quantitative data
- Anecdotal/informal feedback
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

**q37 - Dashboard**

Do you produce a regular dashboard / report of your activities and evaluation?

*Regularly is defined as at least monthly.*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q38 - Sharing**

Who, if anyone, is this dashboard or report regularly shared with?

*Regular sharing is also defined as at least monthly. Please select all which apply.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chief executive                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Members                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leader                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> All staff                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers (across organisations)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers (within communications) | <input type="radio"/> No one                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications team                     | <input type="radio"/> Don't know                      |

**q39 - Survey**

Does your authority currently conduct a residents' or reputational survey to determine how your communities access news about your council and their satisfaction with it?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q40 - Survey frequency**

How often do you carry out the survey?

- Every year
- Every two years
- Every three years
- As required (no regular plan)
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**q41 - Survey administration**

Who carries out the survey?

- Independent polling company
- Your authority
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**q42 - Survey form(s)**

Please indicate what form(s) the survey takes.

*Please select all which apply.*

- Online
- Face-to-face
- Postal
- Citizens' jury/panel
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**q43 - Reasons not**

Please indicate why your authority does not carry out a residents' survey.

*Please select all which apply.*

- It is too expensive
- It would not be a worthwhile exercise
- No senior support within the council
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**q44 - FutureComms**

Have you seen #FutureComms - the LGA/ LGComms / Solace/ PRCA guide to strategic communication?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q45 - Find most useful**

Which aspects of #FutureComms, if any, did you find most useful?

*Please select all which apply.*

- Thought leadership
- Case studies
- Specific topics (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None
- Don't know

**q46 - Additional information**

What additional information, if any, would you find valuable in #FutureComms?

**q47 - Communications support**

Are you aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**q48 - Support offers**

Have you used any of the below communication support offers provided by the LGA in the last 12 months?

*Please select all which apply.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One day health check                | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic support                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-three day communications review | <input type="checkbox"/> Media training                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CommsHub communication resources    | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop or event                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #FutureComms resource               | <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in LGA improvement work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGA website                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CommsNet bulletin                   | <input type="radio"/> None in the last 12 months               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment assistance              |  |

**q49 - Satisfaction**

How satisfied were you with the support provided?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied

- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

**q50 - Most and least useful**

Please indicate which of the following aspects of the support were most useful and least useful.

*If an aspect was neither useful nor not useful, please leave it blank.*

|                                | Most useful           | Least useful          | Not applicable        | Don't know            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Speed of response to enquiry   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ease of communication          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Professionalism                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bespoke support                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Knowledge/expertise            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality and detail of feedback | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Value for money                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other (please specify)_____    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**q51 - Future support**

What types of communications support would you find most useful over the next twelve months?

*Please select all which apply.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke support via email/telephone                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Two or three day strategic review of your council's communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case studies/online resources                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops, events or seminars                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New #FutureComms chapters                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Training or professional development                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis communications support                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment support  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit from a member of the LGA communications team    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)_____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Networking and contact-building with other councils   | <input type="radio"/> None of the above   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-day health check of your council's communications |   |

**q52 - Training support**

Which particular areas of training and professional development would be most useful?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic skills       | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical skills            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Political awareness    | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis communication        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy skills          | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder engagement      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campaign planning      | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour change            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation and insight | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal impact        | <input type="radio"/> None of the above              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership skills      | <input type="radio"/> Don't know                     |

**q53 - Support pool**

Would you be willing to be involved in the LGA's pool of communications professionals to support councils?

*For example, by helping to carry out peer reviews.*

- Yes

No

**q54 - Crisis cohort**

Would you be willing to join the LGA crisis communications cohort and be contacted about your availability to support councils in times of crisis or major incident?

Yes

No

**q55 - Response shared**

Are you happy for your response to be shared with other local authorities on request?

*If you agree, your response will still not be shared outside of the local authority context.*

Yes, on a named basis

Yes, but only anonymously

No

**q65 - Other Comments**

Do you have any other comments?

**i56 - Demographics**

Finally, please take a moment to complete these basic demographic questions.

**q61 - Gender**

Please indicate your gender.

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

**q63 - Ethnic group**

Please indicate your ethnic group.

White British/English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish

White Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean Background
- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

**q64 - Age group**

Please indicate your age group.

- Under 25 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-49 years
- 50-64 years
- 65 years or over
- Prefer not to say

**i67**

Pressing "Next" below will submit your data. Please ensure that you have entered all of the data that you would like to provide before pressing the final submit button, as you will not be able access this form again once you have submitted.

To amend your response to an earlier question, press "Previous" now and do so before continuing. If you have any issues, please contact [james.harman@local.gov.uk](mailto:james.harman@local.gov.uk)

STOP

**Complete – End**

*Thank you very much for your assistance.*



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