

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

# Developing a public membership campaign



## Summary

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust has been working with Capita's membership services team on the development of a cost-effective, sustainable recruitment campaign that has ensured representation from a diverse socio-economic group.

## Background

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust serves a diverse population of around 500,000 people living in the south of west Kent and parts of north east Sussex. It also provides complex cancer services for 1.8 million people living in Kent and Medway and north East Sussex. The Trust decided to embark on a membership campaign and set itself a target of recruiting 10,000 members at a rate of 500 a month over 20 months.

The Trust went out to tender and chose to work with Capita's membership services team. Communications manager Darren Yates says: "It became obvious that it provided the best all round service and we were able to use the team's experience as a guide to better understanding how we could achieve and exceed our objectives."

## The challenge

In addition to the monthly membership target, the Trust also wanted the campaign to fulfill several other objectives. First, it wanted to ensure proportionate representation from a diverse socio-economic and geographically widespread population. Second, the Trust wanted to have a good insight into member concerns and preferences so it could engage in intelligent personalised communications and effective relationship management with its membership. "We also wanted to achieve

high rates of e-communication as an aid to real-time and cost-effective communications," says Darren. Although it had a clear idea of its objectives, the Trust also recognised that an element of flexibility was required. Darren says: "We realised that the project had to flex according to what we found was happening in practice."

## Meeting the challenge

A bespoke recruitment campaign was designed which centred on recruitment within the public (reception) areas of the Trust's hospitals and was supported by high street face-to-face recruitment. The campaign included a cost-effective green incentive (a tree planting scheme called Evergreen) to encourage members to sign-up to email communications.

The Trust also took advantage of Capita's membership services' existing relationships within the NHS to enter into partnership recruitment opportunities with neighbouring Trusts. Following initial sign up, membership packs were sent out and subsequent member surveys were then undertaken to create a unique pool of information about member perceptions, personal profiles, health status and key interests.



## The benefits of working with Capita

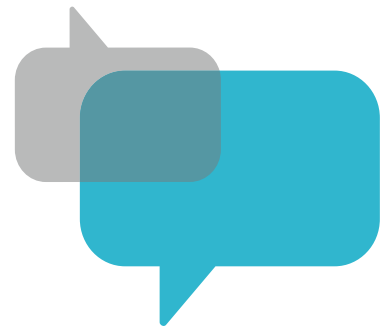
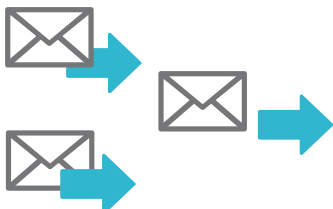
The Trust has achieved consistently high conversion rates, maximising time to cost ratios with no visible signs of audience saturation in eight months. The ongoing member analysis provided by Capita's membership services team includes daily, weekly and monthly recruitment trends. This has helped the Trust channel efforts in under-represented areas.

Information about members has been used to support the need for change. For example, the Trust used membership feedback

to support planning applications for additional car parking spaces. It has also enabled the Trust to target communication towards known areas of member interest and established levels at which members wish to be involved in local healthcare now and in the future.

Darren says: "The immediate benefit came from the membership surveys because this gave us a good idea about the most pressing concerns. The database gives us a rich information source on member views and individual interests."

To date, 40 per cent of members have signed up to receive communications by email. This represents a significant financial saving and also positively contributes to the Trust's corporate social responsibility credentials.



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**Darren Yates**, Communications Manager, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

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