

# PRide Awards 2014

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Entrant	Category entered	Project name
Anchor and scarlettabbott	Best Publication	<b>Purple</b> magazine

## Brief and objectives

How challenging can a job caring for older people be? Well, if you listen to the thousands of employees working for Anchor, you'll soon learn.

We're England's largest not-for-profit provider of care and housing for older people. Our 9,000 colleagues currently support 40,000 customers in 1,000 housing locations and care homes across the country.

They look after the day-to-day living needs of some of society's most vulnerable people, and many are with our customers until the end. It's a challenging, difficult, and rewarding work environment.

Communication is key.

**Purple** is a core internal communication channel for reaching colleagues – and for giving them a voice. Many of our colleagues are dispersed across care homes with limited access to our intranet. Our 20 page, A5, quarterly publication is delivered to locations and colleagues' homes to ensure that our activities, news, priorities, values and vision, are communicated in a meaningful way, giving colleagues a voice in the wider organisation, and enabling two-way feedback.

It aims to:

- engage colleagues with delivering quality day-to-day care and providing an excellent service for our customers
- build a sense of pride and community among colleagues and customers
- encourage honest and open discussions around older people's care to help overcome challenges and promote shared good practice.

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## Research, planning and evaluation

Our audience is 82 per cent female, and so **Purple's** look, feel and tone is intentionally women's magazine in style.

We regularly evaluate **Purple's** effectiveness. In August 2013:

- 79 per cent of colleagues said they found **Purple** interesting
- 73 per cent said it helped them understand Anchor's vision.

Of the 60 per cent (5,191) of colleagues who took part in 2013's annual colleague engagement survey, only 51 per cent 'believe it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done in Anchor'. A number of comments also suggested **Purple** too frequently represented manager views rather than those of customer-facing colleagues.

The Anchor Communications Team, Colleague Engagement Team and internal communications agency scarlettabbott (now writing and designing **Purple**), conducted a review.

Focus groups identified three main themes:

- a lack of structured sections made it harder for colleagues to spot key stories
- some stories were seen as 'old news' from the intranet
- a desire for 'gritty' issues to be discussed openly.

One colleague said: "Everyone quoted is so happy – and they never sound like quotes actual people would say."

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## Strategy, tactics and overall style (including innovation and creativity)

We created new objectives for **Purple**:

- improve readership levels of by showing colleagues it's aimed at all Anchor employees
- show colleagues that it is safe to speak up, as well as suggest improvements to the way we work



- feature 'gritty' topics to encourage conversations around real issues
- highlight how teams need to work together to improve outcomes for customers.

The team also identified the need to get behind the headlines, reflect the day-to-day achievements and challenges, and ask, and importantly answer, questions colleagues themselves would ask.

The team launched monthly face-to-face surveys with a random colleague sample in care homes and housing, asking where Anchor could improve engagement, and what they would like to see discussed openly. These themes – often centred on challenges and perceived barriers to excellent service – were then shared with our Executive Management Board together with a case for changing this crucial communication channel.

'Gritty' topics were identified for the centre pages of each edition:

- August: 'Handled with care' – we discussed how colleagues are helping customers to talk about and tackle sensitive money matters
- November: 'Sweet harmony?' – this recognised the antisocial behaviour colleagues and customers can face. We shared stories, encouraged people to speak up, and offered support channels.
- February: 'Take the next step' - we addressed what colleagues perceived as limited opportunities to progress in Anchor, with case studies and tips on how people could take control of their careers.

Each edition:

- a guest editor, (Anchor's Colleague Engagement Forum puts names forward) provides an authentic voice
- the '**Purple** Letters' pages encourage colleague comments
- news and features are written from a colleague perspective
- working with scarlettabbott, the design overhaul aligns it more closely to our vision the 'Anchor Way'. 'News' is snappier and more relevant, a two-page 'Roundup' is regionally inclusive, regular pages such as 'Wow' are revamped, and a '60 seconds with...' interview always features.

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## Demonstration of engagement of target readers

During February and March 2014, a colleague survey found:

- 70 per cent felt it was safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done in Anchor – up 19 per cent
- 90 per cent said they found **Purple** interesting – up 11 per cent
- 79 per cent said it helped them understand Anchor's vision – up six per cent
- 83 per cent said **Purple** was aimed at someone like them and asked the questions they would ask.

"**Purple** is very useful to me as a relatively new colleague. I get a lot of valuable info about what is happening in Anchor. It speaks to you like a friend, and includes plenty of tips."

"**Purple** used to be a 'nice to have'. Now it's more informative and relevant to me as a scheme manager. The topics covered are sensitive but pertinent. They're not topics we get to discuss often, it's good to know how other colleagues are dealing with them."

"I was moved and proud at the way colleagues talked about dealing with death in **Purple**. It was so refreshing to read that Uzma wasn't ashamed of feeling upset, as for too many people there's a feeling that you have to 'put a brave face on' when dealing with difficult situations. Thank you for bringing to life something which many of us shy away from."

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## Circulation, cost figures and budget and cost-effectiveness

We print 9,600 copies per issue, with 8,500 delivered to homes and the rest to offices and locations. Each issue costs between £16,000 and £18,000 to produce, with approximately 59 per cent on writing and design, 21 per cent on postage and 10 per cent on printing.

During 2013 we've reduced the spend per issue by about 35 per cent, by making better use of in-house photography, among other cost savings. At just over £1.50 per colleague **Purple**'s a cost effective and popular way for us to communicate with all Anchor colleagues.

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