Evidence communication tick-list

This is designed to help design trustworthy communications by identifying the key aim of the communication and the important information to communicate.

By completing each section in full, the idea is not to necessarily communicate all of it, but to consider it before writing/designing your communication.

SETTING THE SCENE	
Aims & Benefits *A key aspect of trustworthiness is the motivation of the communicator: 'what do they want me to do and why?'* *Communications that appear to be hiding their true motivations are less trustworthy than those which are clear about their intentions.* *In this section you are encouraged to be honest with yourself about the motivation behind your communication, and you then try to be equally honest with your audience.*	Why are you making this communication: what benefit does the *audience* gain from this information?
	Do individual members of the audience have a personal decision to make? Is there a policy decision to be made - or has a decision been made? Or are you providing information because an individual or policy decision might need to be made in the future?
	Where does the aim for this communication lie on the spectrum from purely informing the audience so that they can make up their own minds, to persuading them to change their behaviour or beliefs?
	Helping people decide themselves *Changing people's beliefs/behaviour* |---|
PRESENTING THE INFORMATION	
Address Concerns *To present the information the audience wants, you will need to have insights into the*	What outcomes are of concern to the audience on the topic you are communicating about? For example, might there be health, economic, environmental, business consequences which some of your audience will be listening out for or feel they should know

outcomes that are of concern and interest to them. Missing out information on an outcome of key concern could undermines trust.	about? What consequences might sound bad if they were only revealed later rather than discussed upfront?
	If there is a policy decision involved, who are the potential winners and potential losers? Who might be perceived to be winners or losers? Considering these upfront might aid your communication.
Balance *Trustworthy communications treats both the pros and the cons of a decision evenhandedly. This does not mean giving false balance.*	If there is a decision to be made, or that has been made, what are the reasonable options? The first option to be considered should always be 'do nothing'.
	Do nothing
Balance is not just achieved through content, but also through format. *Some formats are more persuasive than others (e.g. relative risks – 'double' or 'halve' - can make changes sound bigger than absolute risks – 'change from x% to y%'). Be careful in your choices to avoid unintentional bias.*	What information was weighed up, or does the audience need to weigh up, in making a decision? Considering the outcomes you have listed in the section above, and the decision options you have listed directly above, what are the key pieces of information your audience will want or need to hear about?
Detail and sources	Where did this key information come from? List your source for each piece.

Trustworthy information should be accessible and assessable. People should know where the information has come from, and be able to find out more detail and assess it for themselves.	
	Where can people go to find out more information?
Certainty *Key to trustworthy communication is being clear about the level of certainty in the current information.* *Presenting a range rather than a single number does not necessarily undermine people's trust.*	Is any of the information you are considering quantified (i.e. numerical)? For example, costs, timeframes, numbers of people? If so, for each of them, consider the precision you are presenting. How much uncertainty is there around the figures? State the ranges around each figure so that you can consider which might be better communicated as a range.
	Besides the numerical uncertainty, how much OTHER uncertainty is there around any information you are communicating? What is the quality of the evidence behind each key piece of information?
ALLOWING ROOM FOR FUTURE CHANGE	
Improvements and updates *In some cases, information may change in the future. In order to retain trust, the audience should be prepared for*	If any of the information had large uncertainties, or low quality of underlying evidence, what is the plan for improving the knowledge, and over what time frame?

how, when and why this might happen.	When and how will you update the audience on any changes to the information that you have presented in this communication?
	What should the audience do in the meantime? Do they need to make a decision now, should they make a decision based on current information and be prepared to change? Has a policy decision been made on the basis of current information but the audience should be prepared for potential change as the information changes?

PREVENTING MISUNDERSTANDINGS	

Pre-empt and pre-bunk *The best way to avoid misunderstandings or misinformation is to pre-empt them.* *Empower the audience by letting them be 'in the know' and on the alert for those who may be less trustworthy.*	Think hard about the worst possible misunderstandings (accidental or wilful) and headlines that could result from the communication, and state clearly what the information does NOT mean.
	Consider and consult about what misinformation and disinformation is likely to be spread about this topic and why/by whom. State their motivations and why people might believe them where possible. This should help you consider which you might want to fore-warn and fore-arm your audience about.