



Developing a Strategy for Moving to SharePoint Online

What does this guide cover?	This guide contains useful information on what needs consideration prior to moving to SharePoint Online
Who is it aimed at?	All current Site Collection Administrators (SCAs) and new Business Owners (BOs) and Site Network Administrators (SNAs)

Introduction

Before moving to SharePoint Online it is important to think about your strategy. By this we mean how your site is going to be structured. You don't want to simply move all your content from SharePoint on-premise over to SharePoint Online. There are several things you should consider first.

Review your current site collection

Look at the sites that you currently have in SharePoint on-premise. It is likely that some of them can be deleted or decommissioned – please see our [guide to decommissioning old SharePoint sites](#).

See also the [guidance on decommissioning sites in our FAQs](#).

Decide on SPO structure

Once you know what sites and information you want to move to SharePoint Online, and maybe what new sites you wish to create, the next step is to decide how you want to structure this.

[This Microsoft page](#) that gives an overview of important details you should consider when planning how to build your SharePoint environment.

It is worth putting in some work in prior to moving, as SharePoint Online is not just simply a new version of SharePoint. There are various things that you should consider in order to make the most out of SharePoint Online and create an intuitive and easy to use workspace for your users. Some of these considerations are explained below.

A flat structure is best

Traditionally SharePoint has used a hierarchical system of site collections with sub-sites that use inherited navigation and permissions. This type of structure is generally inflexible and hard to maintain. In SharePoint Online however, every site is a site collection and can be associated with a hub. This creates a flat collection of sites that share navigation and site design. This results in a structure that is much more flexible.

You can read more about flat structure in SharePoint Online here:

[Guide to SharePoint modern experience](#)

[Why flat SharePoint site architecture makes total sense](#) *[link to external blog]*

Hubs & Sites

SharePoint Online hub sites connect and organise sites based on attributes such as project, department or division, and make it easier to search and navigate across all associated sites.

You can find out more about hub sites in SharePoint Online here:

[What is a SharePoint Online hub site?](#)

[How to create hub sites in SharePoint Online](#) *[link to external blog]*

Site Types

There are two site types available in SharePoint Online, team sites and communication sites. Teams sites are similar to the traditional SharePoint sites and focused on collaboration, whereas communication sites are aimed more at broadcasting messages to a wide audience and can be a useful way of creating engaging content.

Deciding which site types to use will depend on your needs as both options have strengths and the best choice is dependent on the intended audience and the objectives of the site.

You can read more about site types in SharePoint Online here:

[Team site or communication site](#)

[What is a communication site in SharePoint Online and why might you need one?](#) *[link to external blog]*

Use of MS Teams v SharePoint

Another option that is worth considering is whether using MS Teams for certain objectives could be more suitable. Both MS Teams and SharePoint Online are both used for collaboration, but they are two different products within Office 365, with each having its value.

You can read more about MS Teams v SharePoint Online here:

[Microsoft Teams vs SharePoint](#) *[link to external blog]*

Examples of SharePoint Online Structures from our Early Adopters

Some of the SharePoint Online Early Adopters have already been through the process of planning their strategies. Some have found it useful to map these out visually which is something that we would certainly recommend.

We have included a couple of examples below that may help your planning activities.

New College

This shows the process that New College have gone through so far in refining their requirements for their new SharePoint Online sites.

In SharePoint on-premise New College have 67 sites. After reviewing these and looking at moving to a new structure in SharePoint Online they are envisaging having 12 SharePoint Online sites and 7 Microsoft Teams sites.

There are 3 versions of their SharePoint Online structure which have evolved after investigating current content, thinking about what should be moved or deleted/decommissioned, and what should be moved off SharePoint and what should be accessed via MS Teams.

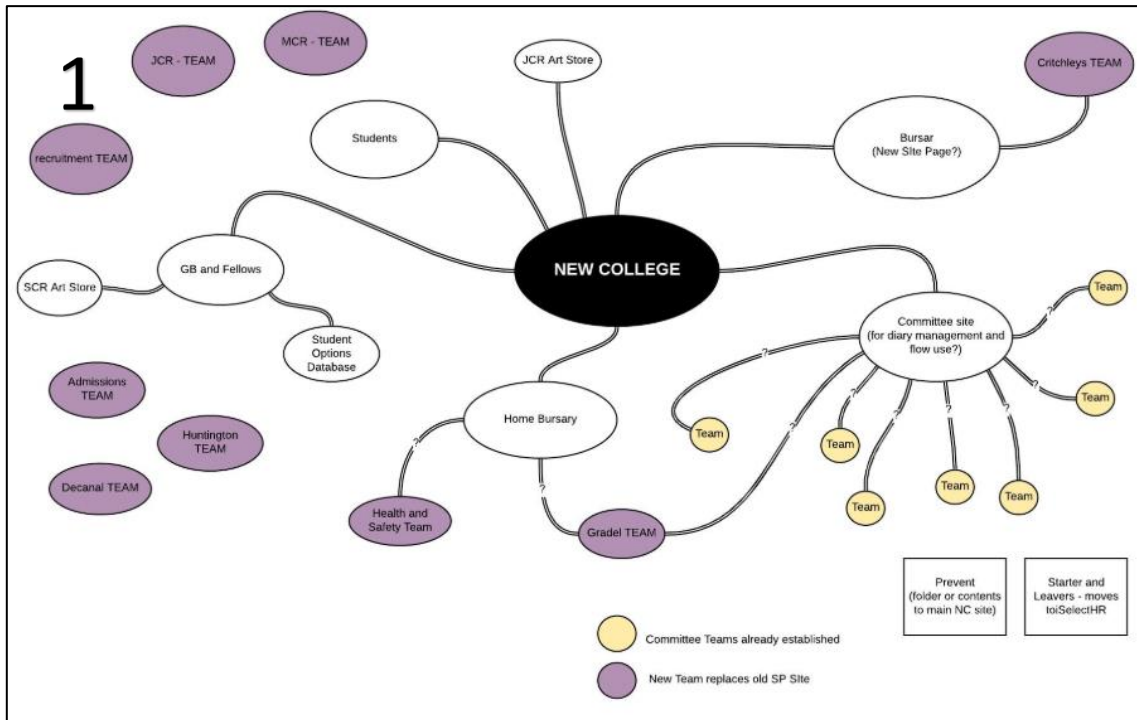


Figure 1. Image showing the first version of the New College SharePoint Online structure

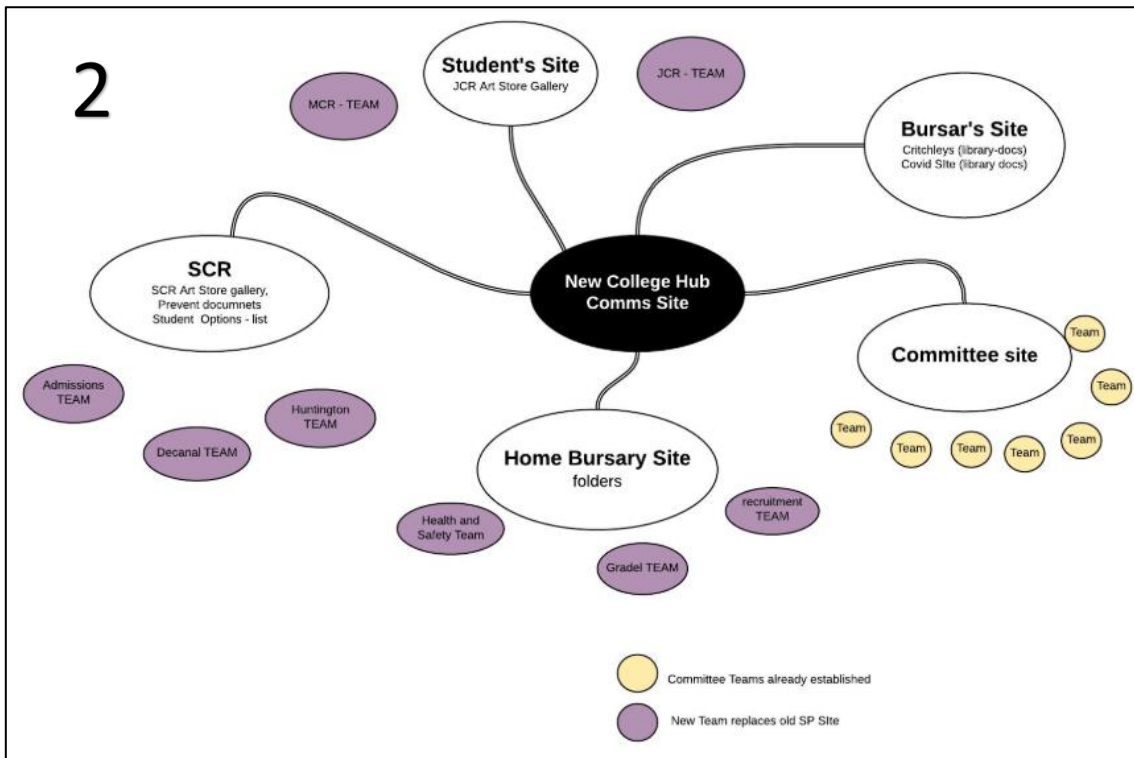


Figure 2. Image showing the second version of the New College SharePoint Online structure

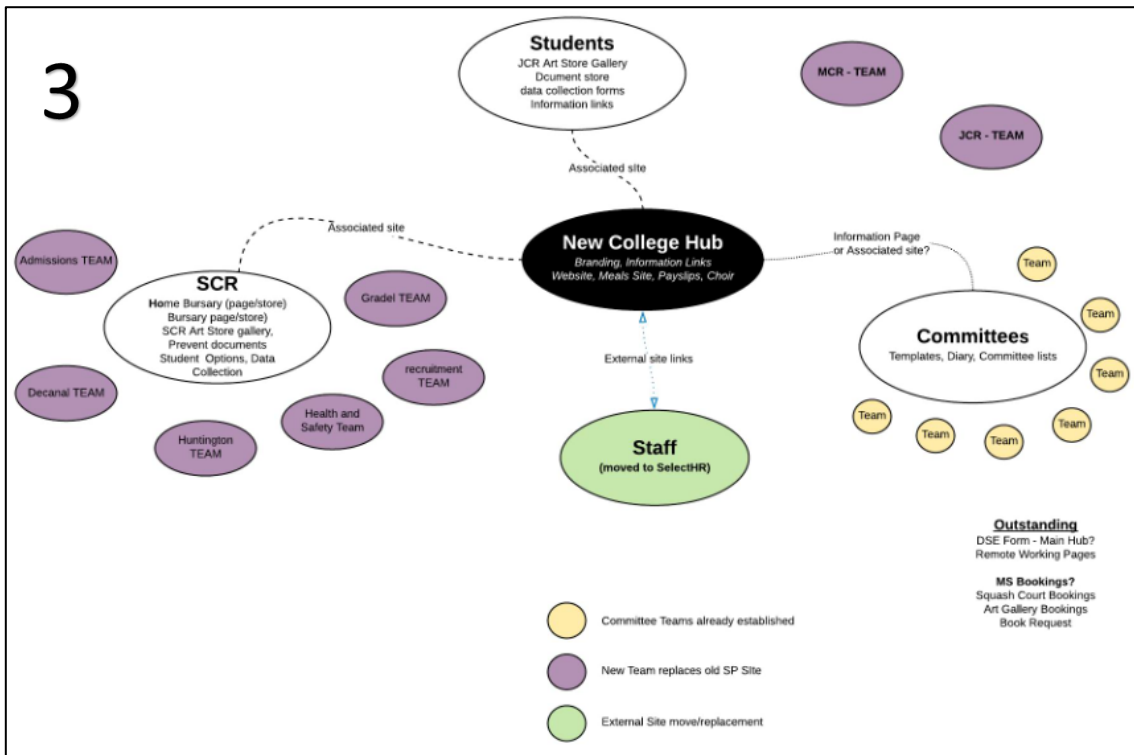


Figure 3. Image showing the third version of the New College SharePoint Online structure

Department of Psychiatry

This is another example of another of the Early Adopters, the Department of Psychiatry. They too have had a couple of versions of their structure as they worked through their strategy.

They have found thinking about the structure has made it far easier to plan, and they believe it will reduce the work involved in moving. They also think that copying the data over will be far easier using this diagram as a check list when each site is complete.

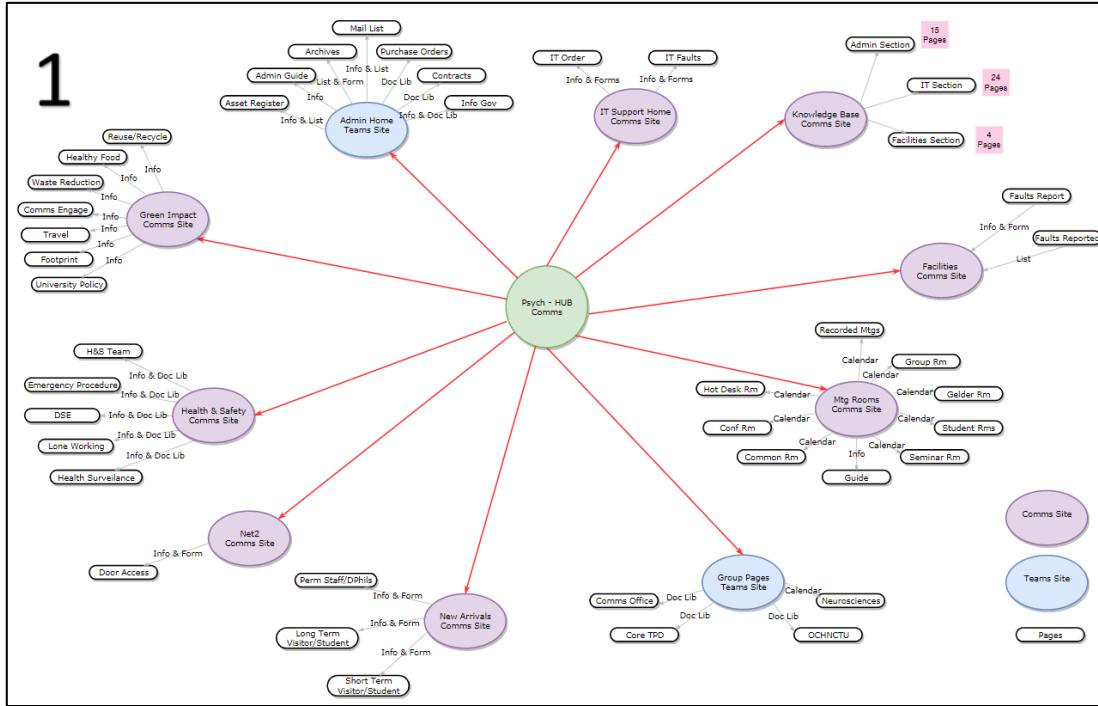


Figure 4. Image showing the first version of the Department of Psychiatry SharePoint Online structure

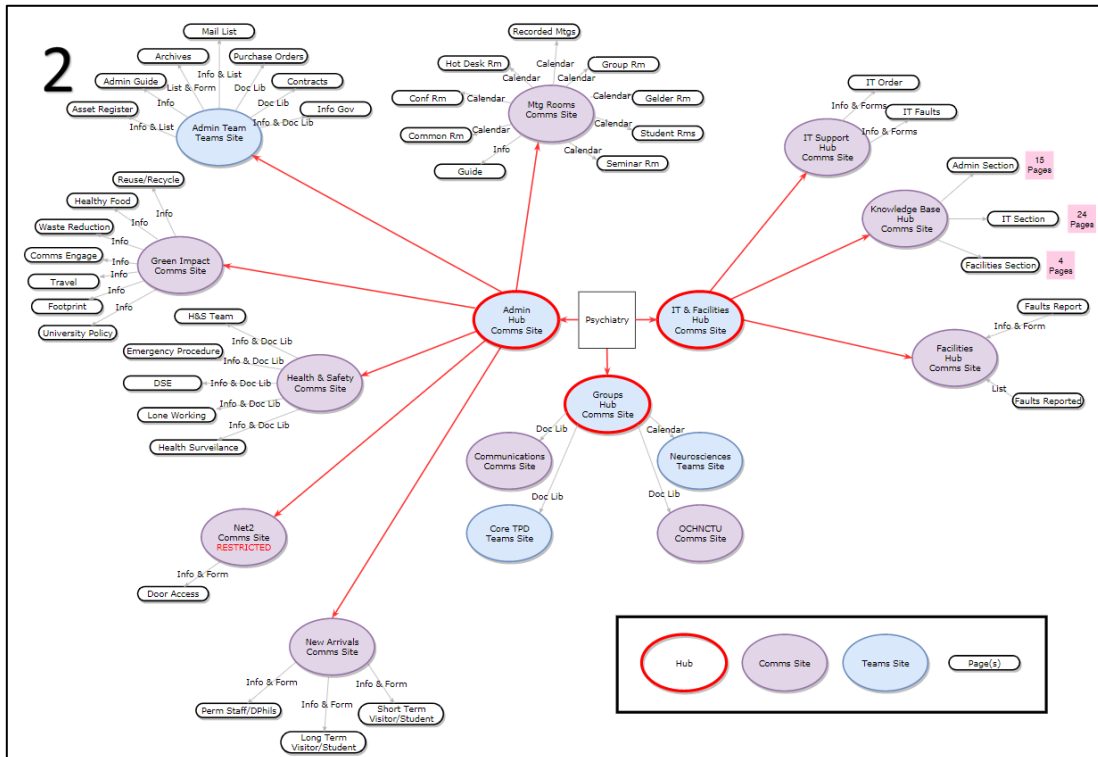


Figure 5. Image showing the second version of the Department of Psychiatry SharePoint Online structure