

Local Outbreak Engagement Board Paper

1. Reference Information

Paper tracking information	
Title:	Local Outbreak Control Communications Plan Update
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Sponsors:	Mr Tim Oliver - HWB Chairman and LOEB Chairman Joanna Killian - Chief Executive of Surrey County Council Ruth Hutchinson - Director of Public Health (SCC)
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Related Papers:	NHS Test and Trace Communications Plan for Surrey

2. Executive summary

A communications and engagement strategy has been in place and supporting the Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP) since its launch on 1 July 2020.

The key objectives of the plan, as previously outlined, are to:

1. Explain the National Test and Trace campaign, to motivate and encourage take up locally & motivate compliance
2. Ensure communications plans are in place to support the Local Outbreak Strategy and communicate key messages to our residents, making clear what action they need to take
3. Fast Track development of best practice communications strategies to support Local Outbreak Plans that can be deployed by local teams for maximum engagement

In the past couple of months the communications plan has evolved as we have learned more about our public health response to the virus.

Our communications approach can now be broadly split into three areas:

Phase 1 concentrating on amplification of national NHS Test and Trace and Public Health messaging and prevention.

Phase 2 informing residents of rising rates of infection and the need for extra vigilance.

Phase 3 alerting residents to high increases in infection rates, resulting in local interventions and restrictions in their area.

The plan is built on the premise of 'prevention is better than cure', so messages are targeted around residents 'playing their part' and 'keeping Surrey safe'. Using digital tactics as well as traditional methods we have been successful in reaching a wide audience across Surrey.

3. Detail

Communications Escalations in Surrey:

Research from central government partners, based on behavioural insights and pulse surveys, shows increasingly low compliance with social distancing and other preventative measures nationally, as the population relaxes about the threat of COVID-19.

As such, it has become increasingly clear that phase 2 – warning and informing residents of increasing COVID-19 cases – has a key role in encouraging behaviour change and controlling the spread of the virus. By being open and transparent about changes in the data we are empowering residents to take preventative action by following public health advice more closely in order to prevent a local lockdown.

The communications team is working closely with the public health data surveillance team, and the decision to escalate to the next phase is determined by a series of indicators, including the 7 day rate per 100,000 population, if there is widespread transmission rather than isolated clusters, and if the data for an area looks out of kilter with the wider picture across the county, regionally, or nationally.

So far, using these parameters, communications has been escalated to phase 2 in **Woking** in August and in several areas of **Elmbridge** in early September.

For Woking an external statement was prepared and cascaded via the LOEB to members, partners and the SLRF before being issued to the media and published online. A dashboard of all the activity (including community engagement with the Shah Jahan Mosque) will be prepared for the LOEB meeting but top line metrics for geo-targeted social media posts show wide reach to Woking residents.

- Enhanced phase 1 messaging reached **22,672** Woking residents on Facebook and Instagram (between 17th-23rd August)
- Bengali and Urdu phase 1 messaging reached a total **1,533** Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents in Woking on Facebook and Instagram (between 14th-19th August)
- Phase 2 messaging reached **33,955** Woking residents and had the highest engagement of any post in August (between 20th-28th August)

The learnings from Woking were to establish a communications protocol to clearly articulate how the decision to escalate communications is cascaded to colleagues, members, D&Bs and partners. This has been completed and was enacted successfully when Elmbridge was escalated to phase 2 communications.

Wider context /preparations:

- We continue to monitor developments in the national testing programme, which are having a significant local impact, working with partners in central government, regional LRFs and health to clarify a position
- The Director of Communications, Chair of the Multi-Agency Information Group (MIG), also works closely with the Emergency Management Team on the wider Winter Preparedness and the impact on public health
- In parallel the Director of Communications also Chairs the Health and Wellbeing Communications Board and is leading a piece of work around winter communications priorities

4. Recommendations

To note developments in the Communications Plan, and the resulting escalation activity.

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