

Surrey Local Outbreak Engagement Board

1. Reference Information

Paper tracking information	
Title:	COVID-19 Communications Plan Update
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Sponsors:	Sinead Mooney - LOEB Chairman (SCC) Joanna Killian - Chief Executive of Surrey County Council Ruth Hutchinson - Director of Public Health (SCC)
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Related papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrey Local Outbreak Control Plan • NHS Test and Trace Communications Plan for Surrey

2. Executive summary

A communications and engagement strategy has been developed to support the Surrey Local Outbreak Control Plan. The Communications Plan has evolved as more has been learnt about our public health response to the virus and this report provides the latest update on communications activity.

3. Recommendations

For Board members to take note of the activity outlined below.

4. Reason for Recommendations

The recommendations reflect the functions of the LOEB as set out in the Terms of Reference.

5. Detail

Winter Communications Plan

The Strategic Director of Communications, Public Affairs & Engagement (SCC), Andrea Newman, leads a sub-group of communications partners from across Surrey to ensure a coordinated approach to winter preparedness communications. Representatives from Surrey County Council, Surrey Heartlands, CHS Surrey,

Healthy Surrey, Acute trusts and other local organisations are in attendance. Priorities identified by the sub-group include:

- promotion of flu vaccination and Covid-19 boosters, building on national campaigns, delivering tailored content to Surrey residents.
- a focus on raising awareness of the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) which can cause bronchiolitis in young children.
- Coordinated approach to supporting wider system pressures, directing people to the most appropriate service for their needs alongside promoting self-care messages.
- Surrey-wide campaign for mental health and wellbeing campaign and wider messaging (launched 10 October on World Mental Health Day and still running across Surrey).
- Continuation of work to support our wider objective to tackle health inequalities and ensure no one is left behind – including digital inclusion work and support to the wider recovery agenda.
- As well as continuing to support Covid-19 response and recovery, winter health communications will span non-Covid messaging such as winter wellness and fuel poverty.

Building on the success of a Surrey County Council Winter mailout sent to residents last year, a joint SCC & NHS leaflet is being sent to all Surrey households from the end of November. This leaflet will include joint public health messaging on a range of subjects including COVID-19, flu jabs, booster jabs, signposting for help and information advice on hardship allowances and mental health services to name a few. A copy of the leaflet, which has only just gone to print so is not yet in the public domain has been sent to Board members for reference.

Communicating Covid Rates

The Communications team (SCC) continues to work hand-in-hand with the Public Health team, monitoring infection rates across Surrey and communicating changes to residents. Where rates have been higher, geo-targeted communications have been used to inform residents and advise what actions to take. Tailored design assets and messages have been developed to address common exposures, such as leisure centres and after-school clubs.

A 'back to basics' campaign has continued to remind residents of the all-important prevention behaviours in the Autumn/Winter plan - including masks, hand washing and symptom-free testing. Testing communications targeted to secondary school children and their families (age groups with higher infection rates) have been ongoing, including reminders to test over half term and before going back to school.

Vaccine Programme Support

To support NHS partners, Surrey County Council has developed an ongoing multi-channel engagement campaign on the latest stage of the vaccine rollout, aimed at 12-15 year olds and their parents. Research and focus groups were carried out within Surrey to inform the communications plan and build messaging to address any concerns that parents or young people may have. It has also provided evidence on

which channels to use to reach the right audience. As a result, the Communications team has worked with the Council Advertising Network (CAN) on a group buy-in TikTok influencer campaign. SCC Communications team has also collaborated with CAN and three other councils to develop www.everythingcovid.info – a microsite co-created with young people. 'Everything Covid' is now a successful national resource providing vaccine and testing information to young people. In addition, tailored assets have been developed and a comprehensive digital campaign across other relevant channels, including Snapchat and Instagram (SCC's youth-focused Instagram page 'Soon Surrey') is ongoing.

A fuller presentation on the youth engagement work will be given at the next LOEB meeting.

Schools Communications

A weekly operational bulletin is sent to all schools in Surrey that includes information on Covid rates and any changes in guidance. At the start of term an open video message from Rachael Wardell, Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (SCC), in preparation for the start of the academic year to encourage schools and parents to test regularly and follow guidelines to mitigate impact on children's education.

A letter from Liz Mills, Director of Education (SCC), and Ruth Hutchinson, Director of Public Health (SCC), to all parents of secondary age children in Surrey resulted in 2,300 12-15 vaccination bookings at Sandown vaccination centre during half term.

Schools have also been provided with resources, such as the Everything Covid microsite, to share with young people. Where necessary, support has been offered to schools following peaceful vaccination protests.

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