

Surrey Local Outbreak Engagement Board

1. Reference Information

Paper tracking information	
Title:	COVID-19 Communications Plan Update
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Related papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrey Local Outbreak Management 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 Management 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 in the report.

4. Reason for Recommendations

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

5. Detail

Guidance changes

The communications team has continued to use a mix of national and local assets to explain changes to the guidance on 24 February, after the publication of 'Living with Covid' by central government.

This has included asking people to do the right thing by continuing to wear face coverings and staying at home if they are unwell, despite the fact that it is no longer a legal requirement to do so. The 'back to basics' campaign reminds people of key safety measures that help to stop the spread of the virus as we learn to live with Covid, such as hand washing and ventilation.

On testing, the messaging in March was to thank people for continuing to test until 31 March, and a reminder that the universal provision was ending on that date. Messaging in April is focused on reminding the general public that free testing is only available to those at risk of serious illness, or NHS and social care staff. Information about how the general public can buy tests if they still want peace have mind has been provided.

We have continued to provide travel advice, explaining the changes to testing and other requirements on entry back into the UK, and reminders to make sure you are vaccinated and to check the requirements of the country you are travelling to. There has been a particular focus on this in the run up to the February half term and the Easter holidays.

Messaging in April will keep reminding residents that if they have symptoms of any respiratory virus they should stay at home and avoid contact with others, especially those at risk of serious illness.

Communicating Covid Rates

With the universal provision of free testing ending, the amount of local data available has decreased. The decision has been taken to end publication of the data dashboard on social media, with a view to keeping an eye on other data sources that may help tell the story. Messaging continues to remind residents that 'Covid hasn't gone away' as prevalence remains high in the general population.

Vaccine Programme Support

The communications team has continued to support central government and local NHS vaccination messaging in a localised, targeted way. This has included:

- 16+ booster;
- 12-15 at risk booster;
- 5-11s at risk vaccine;
- Pregnant women;

- Vaccine scams - the NHS never requires payment for Covid vaccines or boosters;
- Evergreen offer and myth busting – it is never too late;
- Spring booster;
- all 5-11s from 4 April.

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