

Overview

As society opens up from lock down we will proactively communicate and promote a two-way dialogue with communities, the public and other stakeholders in order to understand risk perceptions, behaviours and existing barriers, specific needs, knowledge gaps and provide the identified communities/groups with accurate information tailored to their circumstances. This will be even more important if we need to implement a local lockdown.

Locally, Sandwell Public Health's marketing team includes expertise on behavioural science, digital marketing, health promotion as well as extensive experience in running marketing and communication campaigns. Sandwell Council also has a highly efficient and effective corporate communications team that have extensive and strong links with local media outlets as well as having active and well subscribed social media channels.

At a regional and national level, Public Health England (PHE) have developed a range of marketing and communication material which we have used extensively. We have also, where needed, adapted these resources to meet the needs of our residents and developed our own, bespoke marketing and communications campaigns including:

- Social media campaign on keeping physically and mentally well during self isolation. This included a dedicated list of online resources on the Healthy Sandwell website. <https://www.healthysandwell.co.uk/self-isolation/>
- Created video content for advice for fasting during Ramadan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o9eZJG4WoE>
- Working in collaboration with key community influencers like "Blind" Dave Heeley <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvyFLmZy5Wc>
- Social media campaign promoting staying active in the home
- Advice leaflet clearly explaining shielding that was distributed to vulnerable groups
- Direct mail to faith leaders providing clear COVID-secure guidance on re-opening
- Four-page spread on COVID-19 related content in Council newspaper that is distributed to all Sandwell residents
- Regular and engaging social media content distributed via twitter and Facebook

Communications and Engagement objectives

1. *To ensure that our local population have the life-saving information needed to protect themselves and others (from the virus and to reduce its impact on health, social life and the economy)*
 - Continue to utilise, amplify and adapt existing PHE campaign material
 - Amplify and frequently push key communications on:
 - NHS Test and Trace service
 - Support contact tracing
 - Symptom awareness and key call to action (self-isolate)
 - Face coverings
 - Up to date social distancing guidance
 - Undertake frequent insight gathering to understand knowledge gaps, spread of misinformation, test different messaging with local audiences including specific settings and vulnerable groups
 - Based on local insight co-create specific resources to address our local population needs
 - Have localised communication that can be utilised and disseminated at speed to local media outlets
 - Ensure marketing campaigns are promoted via all communication channels and platforms including: out of home (billboards, bus shelters, local transport), press (local newspaper and periodicals), social media advertising and organic social media posts and search engine optimisation.
 - Working closely with community leaders and influencers

2. *To ensure effective feedback mechanisms are in place and used to ensure two-way communication between public health and local groups*
 - Continue to work closely with Sandwell Community Voluntary Organisation and Public Health Development officers to identify emerging issues and to ensure key information is cascaded in a timely manner.
 - Regular communication and meetings with faith group leaders
 - Co-creation work with BAME communities to produce and implement bespoke communication plan
 - Use social listening tools to identify perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around key messages. Use insight to adapt communication and tackle potential misinformation.
 - Use social media platforms as a way to engage with residents

3. *To ensure consistency in information and language from all partners and avoid misinformation/rumours*

- Ensure that all key communication is produced in formats that are easy to understand by all residents. This includes: changing format of material, translating, providing video or visual heavy guidance.
- Identify, monitor and provide tailored response to dissemination of mis-information

4. *To ensure participation of and engagement with relevant communities to work out barriers to the implementation and uptake of public health measures.*

- Undertake regular insight and intelligence work. This will include but not limited to: focus groups, interviews, online surveys, social media polls and social media engagement. We can also use digital measures such as how many people have clicked a link on key information, how long they have visited specific website pages and whether content has been shared.

Implementation of Communication and Engagement Plan

Audience/stakeholder/partner	Actions/activities	Implementation
All audiences	Raise awareness of COVID-19 signs, symptoms and severity	<p>Utilise and amplify PHE communication campaign via social media, outdoor media, local press.</p> <p>Adapt and provide printed material to community organisation and other settings where required</p> <p>Regular insight work via online surveys to see if messages are being understood and acted on by audience</p>
All audiences	Identify behaviours, perceptions and information needs	<p>Frequent insight and intelligence work to be undertaken with key target groups to ensure messages are being understood and to identify any barriers to behaviour.</p> <p>Work closely with community engagement colleagues (public health development officers) to gain real time insight into town based response and feedback insight into community understanding of key messages</p>
All audiences	Increase knowledge of steps to prevent COVID-19 infections	<p>Regular reinforcement and promotion of key prevention messages e.g. hand hygiene, actions to take if symptoms appear and face coverings.</p> <p>Adapt and provide key marketing collateral (posters, leaflets, videos) where required</p>

Sandwell COVID-19 Local Communications and Engagement Plan

All audiences	Local outbreak response	In the event of a local outbreak we will ensure a consistent approach by working closely with communication leads within the NHS, PHE and other councils across the Black Country and West Midlands.
BAME groups	Needs Assessment	Co-produced need assessment to identify barriers and requirements of information and other resources
BAME groups	Communications Plan	Devise communication plan with local partners
Vulnerable groups	Tailored communication for both clinical and functional vulnerable groups	Continued partnership working with voluntary sector and CCG to ensure marketing and communication material is cascaded in a timely manner. Where appropriate information will be tailored to meet needs of specific groups. Continued promotion of services and support for vulnerable groups via all media and communication channels
Faith groups	Ensure places of worship are COVID-secure	Direct communication clearly outlining key actions for ensuring COVID-secure environment. Regular meeting with faith leaders to understand barriers and opportunities to key messages
Schools	Ensure up to date and tailored communication for schools	Daily email to Head Teachers
Care Homes	Ensure cascading of specific and general communication messages and identify any additional marketing requirements	Regular calls/emails to care homes (daily for those with significant outbreaks)