

COVID-19 LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (SEPTEMBER 2020)

During the COVID-19 crisis, it has been essential that local authorities clearly communicate the impacts of the pandemic locally, provide frequent updates on the support and help available, and disseminate preventative messages and guidance to stop the spread. This applies to response and recovery communications.

On 22 May 2020, the Government announced that, as part of its national strategy to reduce infection from COVID-19, it would expect every area in England to create a Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP). The Local Outbreak Control Plan for Nottinghamshire, led by the Director of Public Health, was delivered by 30 June 2020.

The Local Outbreak Control Plan has been developed to ensure a 'whole place' approach, enabling agencies in Nottinghamshire to prevent, manage, reduce and suppress outbreaks of COVID-19 infection across the local area, with communities and settings working closely together.

This document sets out the strategic engagement and communications approach for Nottinghamshire. It is co-ordinated with the NHS and Local Resilience Forum partners, and designed to serve residents across the whole county. It also informs the Incident Management Plans in relation to specific areas, communities or settings affected by a local outbreak.

Communications activity will be informed by:

- The data
- Intelligence gathered from communities and notably the respective local authority including district / borough councils and other groups that are well connected, particularly for the areas impacted by an outbreak
- Guidance or instruction as set out by Government departments
- Direction from the COVID-19 Health Protection Board and COVID-19 Outbreak Control Engagement Board.

1. What is the objective?

Business objective

- To help prevent and / or contain local outbreaks.

Communication objectives

- Provide public confidence and reassurance through relevant, timely, accurate and accessible information and promote a sense of shared responsibility to prevent a local outbreak
- Increase awareness among local people / decision makers and stakeholders about how to receive services and the support they need, including test & trace, in Nottinghamshire
- Inform and explain to residents what they need to do to help prevent a local outbreak; in the event of a local outbreak what response they can expect from their local authority and partners; and what action they must take to respond to and mitigate the spread of infection.

Behaviour change objectives

Build trust, participation, consent and co-operation so that residents:

- Follow Government advice and support (e.g. social distancing, hand hygiene, wearing a mask / face covering)
- Recognise the main symptoms of coronavirus, stay at home (self-isolate) and get a test within 1-3 days of symptoms
- Follow the Hands, Face, Space principles and the Rule of Six
- Stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days if a test is positive
- Engage and co-operate with the NHS Test & Trace service.

2. What is the strategy and messaging?

The strategic communication and engagement plan offers a framework for activity using the OASIS Model (objectives, audience insight, strategy, implementation, scoring / evaluation).

The communications lead role will work closely with partner organisations and other agencies to co-ordinate activity and ensure consistent and timely communications to help **prevent** an outbreak; **explain** the plans in place including roles and responsibilities; and **respond** quickly and effectively in an outbreak—making it clear what people need to do. The Director of Public Health will be the lead spokesperson.

Prevent	Explain	Respond
<p>Amplify the national messages with a local focus, providing information and messaging to the public to promote awareness and adherence to the guidance and encourage the behaviours which will help to prevent and reduce / stop the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>Use of established channels and a media strategy will focus on working with the local media and applying more bespoke methods using community based relationships to reach high-risk groups and those communities where English is not the first language, or where there may be issues around access / trust / low contact with public services.</p> <p>Stay at home social distancing wear a mask / face covering wash hands for 20 seconds self-isolate get tested</p>	<p>Engagement and communications activity will be developed through ongoing stakeholder engagement with all parts of the governance structure, and operational / delivery structure. This will include local communities, Councillors, faith groups, and the community & voluntary sector to explain and help everyone understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What people need to do, and why, to prevent a local outbreak• What data is available and what it means• How we might announce sporadic cases, a cluster of cases, a surge which may lead to an outbreak, or an outbreak which may become a major incident• Media management – local first!	<p>Messages will be issued quickly, accurately and efficiently in the event of a local outbreak.</p> <p>A media strategy and communication plans pertinent to individual incident management plans (settings, communities, geographies) will be prepared.</p> <p>The communications response will be flexible and tailored depending on the type and location / setting of the outbreak.</p> <p>Channels and messaging will be adapted to the audience, with a particular focus on ensuring high-risk, vulnerable and diverse communities are communicated with using bespoke methods.</p> <p>Statements will be led by the Director of Public Health and made available quickly to the local media.</p>

Messaging will be built on the concept of a social contract: **‘People protecting people’**. It will **encourage** the need for personal responsibility, strong emotional connection and desired behaviours; and **raise awareness** of testing, symptoms and self-isolation.

Behaviours	Get tested if you have	Contact tracing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing guidelines • Washing hands regularly for 20 seconds • Wearing a face covering in public / enclosed spaces • Contact tracing – if you are told you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, you must isolate for 14 days to protect others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cough • Temperature • Loss / change in smell or taste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why give your contacts? • What do I have to do if contacted? • Why is self-isolation important? • Support available • How to spot scams
	Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why get tested? • Who can get tested? • How and where to get a test? • What is a test like? 	

Source: HM Government local communications planning guide (29 June 2020)

3. Audience and Channels

Audience	Channels and tools
<p>General public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residents, workers and visitors (settings) in Nottinghamshire <p>High risk groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic • Single mothers with children • 65+ year olds • 18-64 year-old workers • Clinically vulnerable • Gender <p>Key stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs, Leaders, Councillors • Faith or community leaders / influencers • Media • COVID-19 Health Protection Board • COVID-19 Outbreak Control Engagement Board (Incident Management Teams) • Government departments <p>Other sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Health sector • Justice organisations • Education sector • NHS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business owners / networks • Care Homes / networks • Clinical settings / hospitals / NHS assets • Community networks • Education providers • Faith networks • GPs bulletin • LEPs and local business networks • LA websites / social / other channels • Local Leaders, MPs, Councillors • Local media • Pharmacies networks • Police • Political networks • Trade bodies • Unions • Voluntary Groups (NCVS and others) • Notts Help Yourself website • Partnerships (including the Comms Cell) <p>Briefings webinars emails e-bulletins Interviews digital social content web intranet press releases and / or weekly media briefings Q&As Texts Videos of Director of Public Health / community influencers door knocking print signage out of home stakeholder letters radio</p>

4. What are the risks and mitigations?

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient capacity and budget to support effective, efficient, timely and co-ordinated communications	Ensure dedicated communications resources and an expenditure budget to support the implementation of engagement and communications activity as set out in the overall Local Outbreak Control Plan communications plan. Draw on the Local Resilience Forum Communications Cell if required.
Engagement levels with Test & Trace	Communicate why this is important and what we need people to do. Give reassurance that contact details are recorded as required and secured safely. Monitor this with settings as required.
Vulnerable citizens during an outbreak not being able to access available help and support (e.g. am I in a local lockdown area? how can I access a food parcel?)	A refreshed offer through the Golden Number.
Reaching those with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of English • Low literacy levels • Low trust in services • Low contact / access to services 	Bespoke engagement through trusted community contacts for communities of identity or geography, using the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust messages to overcome lack of trust • Translated materials (including sign language and pictograms where appropriate) • Community channels (these will be different for each community and can involve door knocking, WhatsApp groups and other community networks).
Timeliness of map publication / online postcode checker	Identify a solution locally, ideally from existing systems.
Fake news	Media monitoring, including social media and google alerts.
Community tensions / finger pointing	Close working with community leaders and lead organisations; targeted community intervention and engagement (e.g. shared responsibilities); valuing diverse communities; how to report hate crime; hate crime will not be tolerated; #NottinghamTogether.
Place reputation	Prepared key lines for everything that is great about our place. Prepared lines for anything in our place that might be blamed for a local outbreak.
Access to data to feed media appetite	Attendance by communications lead at daily Outbreak Control Cell; a weekly media briefing regarding data release and what the data means.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation will take place to review:

- The effectiveness of the communications, such as how messages are delivered and received
- The effectiveness of the channels
- Learning and feedback from other local authorities and Public Health England, particularly on the 'Respond' elements of the campaign.

This will include ongoing feedback from the COVID-19 Health Protection Board and the COVID-19 Outbreak Control Engagement Board.