

From: Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 17 January 2023

Subject: **Public Health Communications and Campaigns Update**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper reports on the campaigns and communications activity delivered through the KCC public health team in 2022 and outlines plans for the remainder of the financial year.

The report notes the ongoing winter pressures communications response and other public health priorities. An engagement programme - to measure the wellbeing of Kent residents as the county continues to recover from the pandemic is planned to help shape and inform the public health priorities due to be published in 2023.

Recommendation: The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to: **COMMENT** on and **ENDORSE** the progress and impact of public health communications and campaigns in 2022 and the need to continue to deliver throughout 2022/23.

1. Introduction

1.1 Marketing and Communications activity continues to play a critical role in supporting our residents and providing trusted, timely information throughout the year. Specifically reactive communications have been managing the impact of the recent severe weather, Covid-19 and other infectious outbreaks, the resurgence of Avian flu and the prevalence of Strep A in young people.

1.2 Our statutory warn-and-inform responsibilities, as lead for the Kent Resilience Forum Outbreak Control Management Plan, has seen Kent County Council's (KCC) Director of Public Health and the KCC communications team at the forefront of media and PR, social media and marketing, stakeholder, and partnership engagement. The profile of Public Health in the public consciousness has risen significantly because of the unprecedented last few

years. There is a renewed sense of personal and community responsibility and much more interest in public health issues from the media, across social media and directly from residents.

1.2 There are clear links between some health lifestyle issues and more severe symptoms of the virus, including smoking, obesity and mental health and wellbeing.

1.3 Marketing and Communication activity has continued to focus on three main drivers:

- Promoting healthier behaviours and self help
- Giving information and advice
- Promoting local services where available and also highlighting online and digital support.

1.4 This paper covers communications activity for 2022, along with key activities and plans for this financial year.

2. Winter Health Communications (including Covid-19 and flu)

2.1 The media spotlight on winter pressures across Kent continues and we lead proactive and reactive communications as the trusted source of public health information and advice for residents, along with supporting our NHS colleagues with specific vaccinations and healthcare focus areas.

2.2 Regular media interviews have been carried out recently regarding the latest Covid-19 and flu figures as we continue to promote the importance of the most effective ways to stay well during the winter months. Considerable communications activity continues with partners and stakeholders as part of our role on the Kent Resilience Forum.

2.3 Communications for any outbreaks are carefully co-ordinated with partners from Medway Council, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) (formerly Public Health England) the NHS, district and borough councils and central Government departments.

2.4 Health inequality research will form the basis of the next step for inclusive campaign and communications engagement, finding new innovative ways to reach people who are most at risk of serious illness.

3. Public Health Campaigns and Communications 2022/23

3.1 Overview of activity from April 2022:

- Mental health and wellbeing – promotion of Every Mind Matters online tool and Live Well Kent Services.
- Suicide prevention – ongoing targeted promotion of Release the Pressure helpline and text service.
- Children’s mental health and wellbeing - support and sharing of Headstart Kent, Kooth and partners’ campaigns and promotions.

- Alcohol awareness summer campaign – promoting the ‘Know Your Score’ online tool and local support services.
- Smoking cessation campaign – signposting to ‘One You Kent’ local support services for Stoptober.
- Child obesity - Change4Life Facebook 10 Minute Shake Up and Food Scanner App promotions.
- Severe weather communications – heatwave alerts during the summer and focus on cold weather public health communications (also includes the Covid and flu immunisation campaign).

3.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing – Release the Pressure, Live Well Kent & Every Mind Matters

- 3.2.1 Campaigns for Mental Health Awareness Week in May and World Mental Health Day in October signposted to local support services including Live Well Kent, One You Kent and Every Mind Matters at www.kent.gov.uk/everymindmatters
- 3.2.2 Themes have included tackling loneliness and finding tools and local support to empower people to find help with anxiety, stress, low mood and sleep issues, specifically identifying new mental health and wellbeing concerns which may have risen during and following the impact of Covid-19 and lockdowns/restrictions on people's lives.
- 3.2.3 Creative assets have been developed for different campaigns and themes and channels used which included Kent Online, Spotify, social media platforms.
- 3.2.4 There is an ‘always-on’ organic promotion of the NHS ‘Every Mind Matters’ online tool at www.kent.gov.uk/everymindmatters There have been 3745 page views between April and November this year – an increase of 200% on the previous year.
- 3.2.5 We also share promotion of partners’ campaigns such as Kooth mental wellbeing for children and young people.
- 3.2.6 KCC Public Health has ongoing promotion of the suicide prevention ‘Release the Pressure’ campaign through Google Adwords. Targeted mobile phone adverts were used in May, and organic social media, media and PR work for World Suicide Prevention Day in September. Further targeted paid-for promotion has been and is still taking place for December and January.
- 3.2.7 Paid-for promotions have always resulted in an increase to the numbers of people visiting www.releasepressure.uk for information on the text service and helpline.

3.3 Adult Obesity - One You Kent/Better Health (healthy weight services)

- 3.3.1 Further creative assets including videos have been developed with partners around the county and these are used as part of an always-on organic

promotion aimed at raising awareness of adult obesity and healthy weight lifestyles.

- 3.3.2 A countywide campaign is taking place in January with themes around physical activity and healthy eating including meals on a budget.
- 3.3.3 Partners are encouraged to share the campaign through their own channels to increase reach and engagement. A multi-agency communications group has been set up as subgroup workstream for the Whole Systems Obesity Approach.
- 3.3.5 Plans are also being developed with Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT) to promote NHS Health Checks in key under-represented communities including gypsy and traveller groups, and some BAME communities.

3.4 Alcohol Reduction – ‘Know Your Score’ online tool promotion app

- 3.4.1 The ‘Know Your Score’ Audit C online tool at www.kent.gov.uk/knowyourscore has been refreshed and new creative assets have been developed to support a summer awareness raising campaign. A further campaign burst is running in January, signposting to support services through commissioned providers Change Grow Live (cgl), Forward Trust and One You Kent.
- 3.4.2 Key messages continue to raise awareness among all drinkers about long term health messages including stroke and impacts on mental health, work and relationships. As with previous campaigns, content is targeted at key behaviours rather than specific age ranges. Channels for promotion include Kent Online, Heart and Smooth FM, Community Ad magazine, Facebook and Spotify adverts, geo-targeted mobile adverts and MTW Hospital magazine, along with media and PR opportunities plus encouraged sharing by partners across Kent.
- 3.4.3 Page views of www.kent.gov.uk/knowyourscore show it was the most visited One You Kent page during July. There were 4.1k page views with the spike corresponding with the paid-for promotion. For those clicking on the quiz and further information pages (where cookie consent has been given and Google Analytics can be tracked), this totals 281 for the campaign period, a 130% increase on the previous year.

3.5 Child Obesity - Change 4 Life/Better Health Families

- 3.5.1 We continue to support national campaigns locally – raising awareness of childhood obesity by focusing on primary school aged children. This includes local promotion of the ‘10 Minute Shake-up’ summer promotion and the ‘Food Scanner app’ in the winter.

- 3.5.2 Locally we continue to promote key messages around healthy eating, reducing sugar, being more active and awareness of dental/oral health care through the @BetterHealthFamiliesKent Facebook page.
- 3.5.3 We encourage KCC's Children's Centres, the Kelsi school bulletin and partners to share content through their own channels.

3.6 Smoking Cessation – One You Kent services promotion

- 3.6.1 We supported the national Stoptober campaign, signposting to One You Kent commissioned support services. Where paid-for channels allowed, audiences were further targeted in key geographical areas of Kent as identified by the public health specialist where smoking rates are high and above average.
- 3.6.2 Channels used included Facebook advertising, Spotify, Kent Online sponsored advertorial content,, Smooth and Heart FM adverts, and geo-targeted mobile adverts.
- 3.6.3 Key messages focused on the physical and mental health harms of smoking plus the financial impact and the quitting benefits to these. The call-to-action signposted people to www.kent.gov.uk/smokefree where there is information of One You Kent support services plus self-help tools including the NHS Quit Plan app.
- 3.6.4 Fone Media geographically targeted mobile adverts achieved 5.2million impressions, coupled with 436k impressions for Kent Online advertising and 125k Spotify advert impressions. There were 3226 page views of www.kent.gov.uk/smokefree during this period - the most visited of the One You Kent pages during October.

4.0 This Winter Campaign

- 4.1 KCC has a “warn and inform” responsibility during cold weather alerts and leads on the communications for public health messaging. We also support national government and NHS campaigns, providing partners with appropriate social media, marketing, and digital assets for Level 2 and 3 alerts in Kent during the winter cold weather periods, offering advice and signposting support to enable residents to manage their health during extreme weather conditions.
- 4.2 There are considerable and varied challenges facing our residents in the coming months, and KCC is taking a proactive role in helping people find the right information and support as and when they need it. Public Health plays a pivotal role in ensuring residents have access to timely and helpful information to keep them safe and well and is an integral part of the This Winter campaign.

- 4.3 There are 3 main themes to the campaign which brings together existing key public health advice along with new or emerging support schemes such as the Household Support Fund.
- 4.4 All KCC activity between December and March 2023 will incorporate the subtle winter branding – including social media posts, KCC newsletters and specific winter health marketing and communications activity.
- 4.5 Messaging this year will also incorporate reminders of Covid messaging and we continue to support the NHS ‘Stay Well This Winter’ and the national NHS flu and Covid vaccination campaign.
- 4.6 A severe Level 3 alert in early December prompted media releases and social media content (including new winter branding and video clips with elderly residents, a community warden, and a nurse) being shared by KCC and partners. The media release was viewed 12k times in the first two days of issue.

5. Integrated Care System

- 5.1 KCC plays an integral role in the planning of communications to residents as part of the health and care system. As the Integrated Care Strategy is developed an engagement programme is planned to support the development of the key themes and priorities.
- 5.2 The first piece of engagement planned is to engage with residents and understand more about how current factors are affecting their wellbeing. This engagement will help KCC to shape future Public Health priorities and will provide meaningful qualitative feedback to ensure that resident voice plays a critical role in decision making within the integrated care system. More information on the engagement programme will be provided in future reports.
- 5.3 KCC marketing and resident experience team is a key member of the communications and engagement board which reports directly to the Integrated Care Board and steering group.

6. Financial update

- 6.1 The allocated funding for campaign and marketing activity in 2022/23 is £110,000.

7. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 7.1 We continue to develop key Public Health campaigns based on priorities identified by the Director of Public Health. These include:
- Mental Health and Wellbeing – adults and children
 - Obesity – adult and children
 - Smoking
 - Alcohol

- Health Checks and high blood pressure
- Sexual Health
- Breastfeeding and infant feeding
- Seasonal health – heatwave and winter

7.2 Data, insight and localised information will be used to shape these campaigns.

7.3 Previous successes and learning will be integrated into future campaigns, focussing on the most effective communications methods and channels to target key groups and issue areas, as well as on the benefits of developing and utilising both social media and digital platforms.

7.4 It has long been recognised that for long-term change requires long-term, consistent messaging, and it is important to continue working with local partners and nationally with UK Health Security Health Agency (UKHSA) to create and deliver consistent Public Health campaigns and marketing activity.

8. Recommendation

Recommendation: The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to:

COMMENT on and **ENDORSE** the progress and impact of Public Health communications and campaigns in 2022 and the need to continue to deliver throughout 2022/23.

9. Contact details

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