

From: Dan Watkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 21 January 2025

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 provides an update on the campaigns and communications activity delivered through the Public Health Team from September – December 2024 and outlines priority areas for the remainder of 2024/25.

The report notes the ongoing health protection communications and other Public Health priorities in quarters 3 and 4 2024/2025

Recommendation: The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the progress of Public Health communications and campaigns in 2024 and the need to continue to deliver throughout 2025.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Marketing and Communications activity continues to play a critical role in supporting the people of Kent and providing trusted, timely information throughout the year. Proactive campaigns and marketing activity ensures that Kent residents regularly are encouraged to take positive steps to a healthier lifestyle, and are able to access support and services as they need to.
- 1.2 Our communications activity includes both reactive and proactive Public Relations (PR). Through reactive communications such as media opportunities and amplifying partner content we can inform the people of Kent on the impact of severe weather, Covid-19 and other infectious outbreaks. Between September 2024 – December 2024, Kent County Council (KCC)'s Marketing and Resident Experience team has shared 24 media releases and coordinated 9 media interviews across the health and wellbeing portfolio about the following topics: healthy lifestyles, winter and cold weather advice, winter vaccinations, Whooping cough and Mumps Measles and Rubella

(MMR) vaccinations, bird flu, stop smoking services, suicide prevention, mental health support and workplace cardio-vascular disease health checks.

- 1.3 Proactive campaign activity supports the public health division in reaching the people of Kent. KCC provides trusted information and signposting to preventative services including lifestyle services such as weight management, stop smoking services, sexual health, drugs and alcohol, children and family public health services (health visiting and school nursing).
- 1.4 We support the work to reduce health inequalities within Kent, using targeted communications methods to reach different geographical areas and groups of individuals across the county.
- 1.5 Our statutory warn-and-inform responsibilities, as lead for the Kent Resilience Forum Outbreak Control Management Plan, has seen the Public Health team at the forefront of media and Public Relations (PR), social media and marketing, stakeholder and partnership engagement. The Director and Deputy Director have taken part in nine media interviews and responded to 20 media enquiries September to December 2024. The Winter Health section of the Kent.gov.uk website was updated to include new information, signposting to new services and public health advice videos.
- 1.3 As we work across public health communications, we can identify opportunities to work more efficiently where we want to reach similar audiences. This also helps us purchase advertising space at more competitive rates.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 This paper covers communications and marketing activity for 2024, along with key activities and plans for this financial year.

2. Public Health Campaigns and Communications 2024/2025

- 2.1 Overview of activity from September 2024:
 - **Smoking Cessation** – Stoptober promotion and a boosted advertising campaign to support increased service capacity and offer
 - **Health Protection** – PR severe weather, infectious diseases and immunisations, air quality)
 - **Suicide Prevention & Mental Health** – (Release the Pressure including World Suicide Prevention Day)

2.2.1 **Smoking Cessation**

2.2.2 New creative content was developed and shared, including inspirational local case studies of people who have been successful in quitting with our support. Regional 'It's Well Worth It' branding developed and shared across all our content.

- Offline advertising through football stadiums and printed magazines in areas of deprivation to target routine and manual workers and older audiences who have a higher smoking prevalence. Football stadium advertising attracted local media interest and Dan Watkins, Cabinet Member, was interviewed about the campaign at Folkestone United FC.
- Digital advertising including audio and paid social media adverts were created to promote One You Kent Smokefree service and the new Allen Carr Easyway method
- Website visits significantly increased - 4,995 webpage views September – December 2024 compared to 3,806 in the same period in 2023
- Multiple media releases were issued to support increase in service offer and success stories

2.3 **Suicide prevention and mental health**

2.3.1 A powerful 'Living Warriors' follow up video was created alongside the company Living Words to share the stories of suicide survivors on World Suicide Prevention Day. The video was shared across all media outlets and continues to be used through all our suicide prevention activity.

2.3.2 Paid advertising of the Release the Pressure helpline continues to raise awareness of support available.

2.3.3 Wider signposting of mental health support such as Mind training, Kent & Medway Mental Wellbeing Information Hub, Better Health and Kooth services continues to remind Kent residents of how to find support.

2.3.4 Multiple media releases to raise awareness were issued between September to December 2024.

2.4 **Healthy Weight - One You Kent/Better Health**

2.4.1 New creative assets were developed with One You Kent partners to promote physical activity and healthy eating including meals on a budget.

2.4.2 Animated videos and images were shared in GP surgeries, through social media and selected paid for advertising screens in hospitals in Kent.

2.4.3 The One You Kent website section had an increase in web visits compared to this time last year, 5,528 webpage views in 2024 and 4,936 in 2023

2.4.4 KCC also continue to share promotion of partner campaigns around healthy weight and staying active for children and families through Better Health Families and KCC partners.

2.5 Looking ahead

There is a significant amount of campaigns and marketing activity planned and scheduled between December 2024 to March 2025. This includes:

- Winter Health – including UK HSA Cold Health Alert amplification as the winter weather develops throughout January to March.
- Smoking Cessation (LSSS Grant including 'No Smoking day' in March)
- Mental Health (Release the Pressure and 'Children's Mental Health Awareness Week')
- Alcohol Awareness (Know Your Score quiz and associated content in January)
- Start for Life (Infant feeding & Perinatal mental health)
- Health Checks (CVD workplace health checks)

3. Integrated Care System

3.1 KCC plays an integral role in how the health and care system communicates with the public. As the Integrated Care Board develops its delivery plans, an engagement programme is planned for 2025 to support the development of the key themes and priorities.

3.2 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 and continues to play an integral role in planning and delivering integrated communications activity to people across Kent.

4. Financial update

4.1 £110,000 has been allocated to campaign and marketing activity in 2024/25 which some additional funds available directly from service budgets. Up to November 2024 £51,437.88 has been allocated to the priority areas described above.

5. Conclusion and Next Steps

5.1 We continue to develop key Public Health campaigns based on priorities identified by the Director of Public Health. These include:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Start for Life (Family Hubs)
- Obesity – adult and children

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Breastfeeding and infant feeding
- Seasonal health – heatwave and winter
- Sexual health

- 5.2 Data, insight and localised information is used to shape these campaigns.
- 5.3 Previous successes and learning will be integrated in future campaigns, focusing on the most effective communications methods and channels to target key groups and issue areas, and on the benefits of developing and utilising social media and digital platforms.
- 5.4 It has long been recognised that 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.

6. Recommendation

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

NOTE the progress of Public Health communications and campaigns in 2024 and the need to continue to deliver throughout 2024/25.

7. Report Author

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