

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

Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health

To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee

10th March 2021

Subject: Public Health Communications and Campaigns Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Previous Pathway: This is the first committee to consider this report

Future Pathway: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper reports on the campaigns and communications delivered through the KCC public health team in 2020 and outlines plans for the remainder of the financial year. Plans for 2021/22 are currently being drawn up.

The report notes the Covid-19 pandemic communications response which has dominated activity and resourcing by the KCC Communications Team including the Public Health Campaigns Manager and Social Media Marketing Officer since February 2020. Funding for the Covid-19 pandemic communications and marketing came from the Contain Outbreak management fund allocation from central Government.

We have focussed on some key health issues which have been linked to and affected by Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions including mental health and wellbeing, obesity and smoking.

The short and long-term impacts of the pandemic will form part of future Public Health campaign and communications activity.

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 2020/21.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Marketing and Communications have been a crucial part of the KCC led response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our statutory warn-and-inform responsibilities, as lead of the Kent Resilience Forum Outbreak Control Management Plan, has seen KCC's Director of Public Health and the KCC communications team at the forefront of media and PR, social media and

marketing, stakeholder and partnership engagement.

- 1.2 While many KCC commissioned public health services have been affected by the pandemic and restrictions on interactions, links have also been shown between some health lifestyle issues and more severe symptoms of the virus, including smoking, obesity and mental health and wellbeing.

The Public Health Marketing and Communication 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.

- 1.3 This paper covers communications activity for 20/21, along with key activities and plans for the remainder of this financial year.

2.0 Covid-19 Communications

- 2.1 The media spotlight on Kent and KCC's Director of Public Health has been considerable since March 2020.

We have organised numerous media briefings and interview opportunities over the past year alongside reactive media statements, proactive media releases and considerable social media content and communications activity with partners and stakeholders as part of our role on the Kent Resilience Forum.

KCC comms team have also led and represented for all Kent comms at the Covid TCG and SCG along with Health and Social Care cell, Testing cell, Enforcement cell and symptom-free testing cell.

Communications have been carefully co-ordinated with partners from Medway Council, Public Health England, the NHS, district and borough councils, and central Government including the Department of Health and Social Care.

- 2.2 The launch of symptom-free test sites in December followed by further sites being rolled out across the county received local, regional and national attention. A webpage was designed to allowing for residents to book tests at www.kent.gov.uk/symptonfreetest

We have facilitated numerous photo and filming opportunities as part of ongoing promotion of the sites and encouraging residents to book a test. The Kent Local Tracing Partnership received media coverage in December 2020.

Surge testing in the ME15 area received a national media focus and we worked with colleagues from Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service among others to respond to and manage the intense media interest while communicating with residents and other local stakeholders.

- 2.3 The 'Don't Be The Reason' campaign was launched to encourage public adherence to the rules following the end of the first lockdown, and the lead up to Christmas where case numbers were increasing – before the variant was discovered. An online survey was introduced on Kent.gov.uk and collated public

opinion around the rules of lockdown and how people felt they were able/not able to comply with them. The second iteration of the survey also explored public feedback about the symptom-free testing that had been launched. Over 12,000 people filled in the survey over a period of 6 weeks and the invaluable insight into people's opinions and behaviours was used to adapt campaigns activity further.

Creative assets have been designed, developed and shared with partners across Kent for use across social media and digital channels. They have focussed on different rules and different audiences and themes such as Christmas, young people and university students. Alongside traditional organic marketing channels, a 'Don't be the Reason' campaign advert was played across digital and local radio channels over a period of 6 weeks to encourage uptake of testing, and reinforce the importance of social distancing, good hygiene and wearing face coverings.

Relationships with supermarkets were also established and Morrisons supermarket offered (for free) the inclusion of leaflets in every home delivery from February 2021. The subject of the leaflet was symptom-free testing and Kent Together, following Government advice for more people than ever to shield.

Advertising screens at Bluewater and Ashford shopping outlets were secured for free, but the national lockdown came into force just before we were able to use them.

Targeted paid for social media advertising was carried out for each district to invite people to come forward for symptom-free testing.

We hired Digi-vans in 4 different districts to promote symptom free testing in local areas. These vans displaying digital adverts were very successful and recognition rates across those attending symptom free tests in some areas was as high as 5% (usually it is around 1%).

- 2.4 The 'Protect Kent and Medway' campaign was launched to guide residents at different stages of tiers, to deliver lockdown restrictions and rules and to communicate the part residents should play in helping to stop transmission of the virus. The Protect Kent umbrella brand is the basis of all communications and marketing activity for Covid-19 and represents the whole system response to Covid, including partners across NHS, Police, and other public sector partners. Localised tiering information was available at district and 'town' level before the third national lockdown.
- 2.5 A webpage at www.kent.gov.uk/covidcases was created to show the daily case numbers and positivity rates for each district in Kent.
- 2.6 Health inequalities have been a priority for the Covid-19 communication, and the Covid Champions have been the connection to specific communities via outreach engagement activity.

Protect Kent materials have been available on Kent.gov.uk in several languages, taking into account the diversity of languages spoken across Kent. We also used the translated national materials from central government websites.

Health inequality research will form the basis of the next step of BAME campaign and communications engagement, finding new innovative ways to reach people who are most at risk of serious illness from Covid-19.

3.0 Public Health Campaigns and Communications 2020/21

Overview of activity:

- **Mental health and wellbeing** - creation, development and promotion of multi-agency pages, signposting to local support services across Kent and Medway, and linking to national online sites.
- **Suicide prevention** - ongoing promotion of Release the Pressure helpline and text service.
- **Children mental health wellbeing** - support and sharing of Headstart Kent, Kooth and partners' campaigns and promotions.
- **Adult obesity** - One You Kent 'New Year, New You' healthy weight campaign
- **Alcohol awareness** campaign – promoting the 'Lower My Drinking' app and local support services.
- **Smoking cessation** campaign – signposting to 'My Quit Route' app and local support services.
- **Child obesity** - Change4Life Facebook promotion planned for March 2021
- **Sexual Health** – encouraging uptake of home testing kits.
- **Severe weather** communications – heatwave alerts during the summer and recent focus on cold weather public health communications (also includes the flu immunisation campaign).
- **Pregnancy and breastfeeding** - Support 'Get Ready for Pregnancy' campaign and signposting to Beside You.

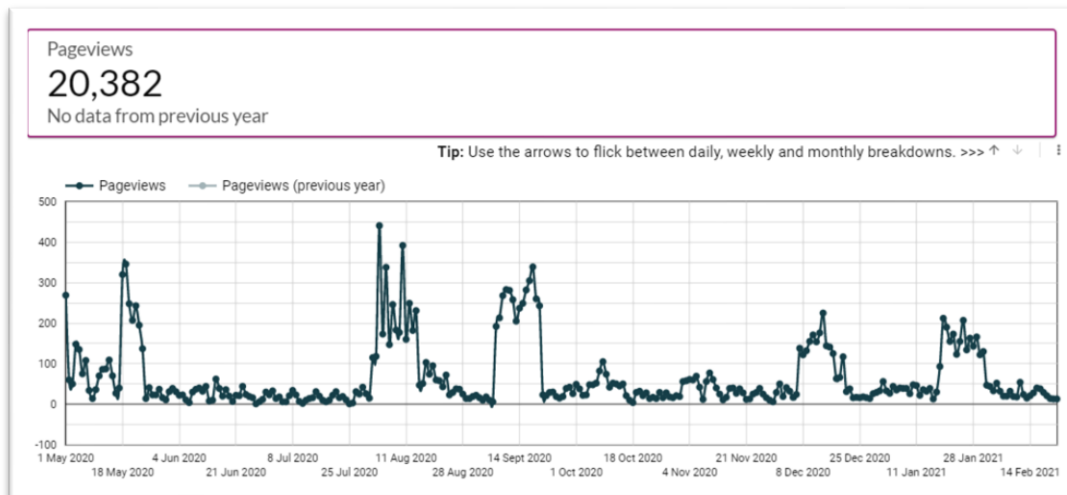
3.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing

A multi-agency communications group was established in April 2020, leading to the creation and development of the mental health and wellbeing pages at www.kent.gov.uk/wellbeing - signposting to local support services including Live Well Kent, Release the Pressure and Every Mind Matters.

There has been regular organic promotion of this page alongside media and PR activity for World Mental Health Day in May, Suicide Prevention Day in September and World Mental Health Day in October.

Paid-for promotion in August 2020 and from December 2020 to February 2021. Channels included Kent Online sponsored content, adverts on Heart FM radio, Facebook, Spotify and Community Ad magazine. Engagement through digital channels have resulted in a reach of over 1.1million (number of people seeing the content) and nearly 4 million impressions (number of times content is displayed).

Since the page was launched in May 2020, it has had 20,382 page views including spikes during the two bursts of paid-for promotion.



We have continued to support promotion of the national NHS/PHE ‘Every Mind Matters’ mental wellbeing awareness campaign – this online tool can also be found at www.kent.gov.uk/wellbeing

Partners have also shared promotion of Headstart Kent and Kooth mental wellbeing campaigns for children and young people including for Children’s Mental Health Week in February 2021.

KCC Public Health has ongoing promotion of the suicide prevention ‘Release the Pressure’ campaign through Google Adwords and featured in Kent Online sponsored editorial content for World Suicide Prevention Day in September 2020. Adverts have also been placed on the Gladiator Kent Football website and through Facebook.

Further promotion has been boosted by Kent and Medway CCG funding of adverts on Heart FM, Smooth FM and KMFM between December 2020 and February 2021.

Our campaigns and communications team are participating in the development of a multi-agency mental health and wellbeing support leaflet for adults and children. This Kent and Medway CCG funded leaflet will be delivered to homes across the county.

3.2 **Adult Obesity - One You Kent (healthy weight services)**

Some One You Kent services have been affected by Covid-19 social distancing restrictions and so we have continued to promote www.oneyoukent.org.uk with an emphasis on the online and digital apps, information and self-help available. This has been promoted through organic social media content including partnership promotion with providers through the One You Kent Facebook and Twitter channels.

A paid-for promotion - aimed at raising awareness of adult obesity and healthier lifestyles, especially for adults aged 40 to 60 - was launched in January 2021 under the ‘New Year, New You’ banner, using a range of media, digital and social media channels including: Kent Online; Heart FM radio adverts; Facebook; Google Adwords; online sites for Kent Football league clubs and Kent

Cricket Club; Spotify and geo targeted mobile ads. This has been complimented with adverts in print and online publications including Community Ad magazine.

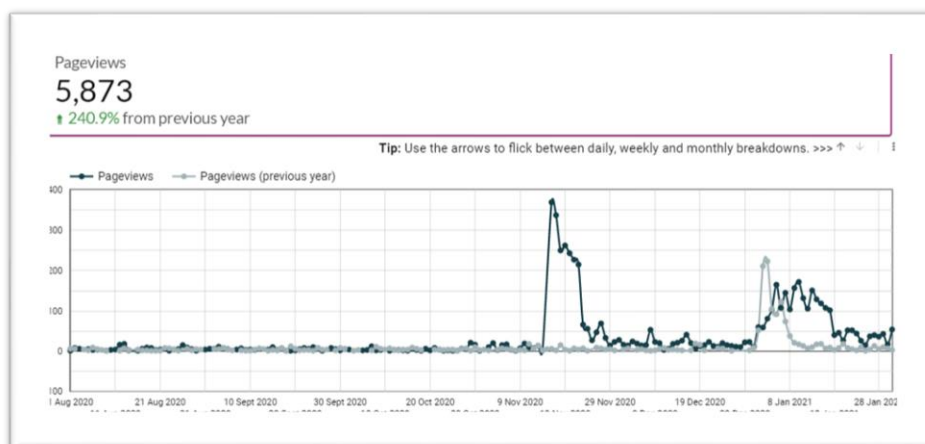
Key messages continue to raise awareness of health issues including obesity, heart disease and stroke; and signpost to support services and online assets. Reach and engagement of channels used, along with visits to www.oneyoukent.org.uk will be analysed when the campaign concludes in March 2021.

3.3 Alcohol Reduction – ‘Lower My Drinking’ app

The Lower My Drinking app was launched by the Public Health commissioners in August 2020. Provided by Breaking Free Online and is available now on the Google and Apple stores, plus also at www.kent.gov.uk/lowermydrinking

It helps Kent residents to self-assess their drinking using a simple questionnaire which then either directs people to the app which can track their alcohol consumption and provides tips to help them cut down, or signposts those who require professional help to their local support services.

To end of January, there have been 307 app downloads and 230 completions of this digital tool. There have been 5873 page views of www.kent.gov.uk/lowermydrinking between August 2020 and January 2021, which is up by 240.9% visits to the six month period in the previous year.



PR, media and marketing opportunities have mainly centred on sharing of organic content but there was a paid for promotion for Alcohol Awareness Week in November and this was repeated in Dry January, including signposting to support services through commissioned providers CGL, Forward Trust and One You Kent.

Key messages continue to raise awareness among drinkers below the high-risk groups about long term health messages including stroke and impacts on mental health. As with previous campaigns, social media content is targeted at key behaviours.

During Alcohol Awareness Week (AAW) in November 2020 and Dry January 2021, we promoted the ‘Lower My Drinking’ app and local support services with paid-for adverts on Facebook, Spotify, Heart FM and Kent Online. The targeted

digital promotions of Facebook, Kent Online and Spotify achieved a reach of 228k and 677K impressions for AAW, and the Dry January burst led to a reach of 385K and 1.2million impressions.

3.4 **Child Obesity - Change 4 Life Kent**

The Change4Life campaign was launched nationally to raise awareness of childhood obesity, focusing on primary school aged children.

Previous activities have included 'Sugar Swaps' and the '10 Minute Summer Shake-ups'. However Public Health England campaigns including Change4Life have been paused over the past year and no new campaign or creatives have been developed.

Locally we continue to promote key messages around healthy eating, reducing sugar, being more active and awareness of dental/oral health care through the @Change4LifeKent Facebook page which will see a small paid-for promotion during March 2021 to increase the number of page followers and likes, currently 2880 and 2814.

We will be encouraging KCC's Children's Centres and partners to share content through their own social media platforms and channels.

3.5 **Smoking Cessation – My Quite Route app**

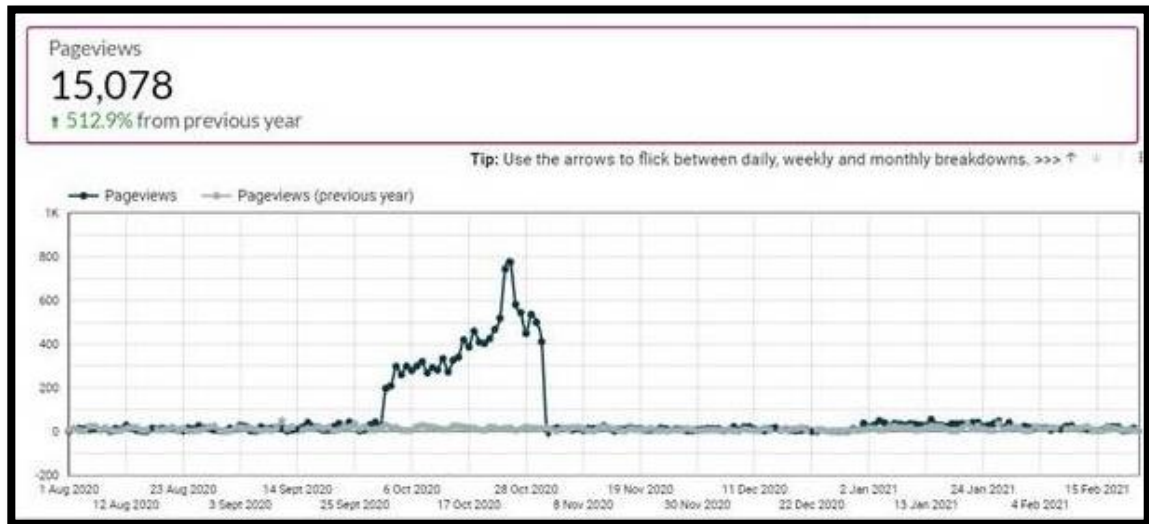
KCC and One You Kent communications have used #QuitforCovid as part of adapted messaging during promotion of smoking cessation support over the past year.

The 'My Quit Route' app was launched by Public Health commissioners in August 2020. Provided by Breaking Free Online – 'My Quit Route' is available now on the Google and Apple stores, plus also at www.oneyoukent.org.uk

It provides Kent residents with personalised support to help them quit smoking with motivational tools and evidence-based behaviour change techniques including a money saving calculator to help them prepare to quit, and then stay smoke free in the long-term. It also signposts those who require professional help to their local support services.

Paid for promotion of the national campaign Stoptober was carried out in Kent, signposting to the app and commissioned support services. During the period August 2020 to January 2021, there were 241 app downloads and 212 people committed to a quite date.

There were also 12,307 page views to the One You Kent 'Quit Smoking' pages at kent.gov, during the campaign duration. This is a 2,381% per cent increase on the same period in 2019.



Channels used included Facebook advertising, Spotify, Kent Online sponsored advertorial content, Google Adwords and Heart FM adverts. Engagement through the channels of Facebook, Spotify, Kent Online and Google Adwords have resulted in a reach of 680K (number of people seeing the content) and 2.8million impressions (number of times content is displayed).

Further marketing support and digital promotion is planned for No Smoking Day in March alongside sharing of the national and local NHS assets from the Lung Cancer Alliance.

The KCC PH Campaigns team are also working with colleagues from Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust and Medway Council on the development of a Smokefree Homes campaign in 2021/22.

3.6 Sexual Health

Key national opportunities such as HIV Testing Week in February led to sharing of national campaign materials and organic promotions to raise awareness of late diagnosis rates and encouraged people to apply for the free home testing kits.

We will be working with commissioned providers including KCHFT and the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust for further campaign opportunities in 2021/22.

3.7 Winter Campaign

We have a “warn and inform” responsibility during cold weather alerts and lead on the communications for public health messaging. We also support national PHE and NHS campaigns, providing partners with appropriate social media, marketing and digital asset support for level two and three 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.

Messaging this year has had to incorporate reminders of social distancing restrictions.

We also continue to support the 'Stay Well This Winter' national campaign, sharing organic NHS and extending promotion of the national NHS flu campaign – budget was contributed to radio advertising in October and November 2020 alongside the Kent and Medway CCG and Medway Council.

3.8 Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

The 'Get Ready for Pregnancy' campaign has been rolled out by sharing materials from KCHFT, which has also established an appropriate webpage for support.

A small Facebook promotion for World Breastfeeding Week in August 2020 resulted in a reach of 179,860 and 190,063 impressions, signposting people to the Beside You website and social media channels – an ongoing partnership between KCHFT, Medway Council and KCC.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The public health grant has not yet been agreed and therefore the budget cannot yet be confirmed. The 2021/22 core campaigns' budget is yet to be determined but will be aligned to public health priorities. Additional funding allocated via The Contain Outbreak Management Fund will ensure COVID-19 messages can continue as required.

5.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

5.1 It is anticipated that campaigns and communications will continue to focus on Covid-19 for the next 6 to 12 months, with resources needed for ongoing media and PR impacts due to new and emerging responsibilities for the KCC Public Health Director and team.

5.2 We will also be looking to develop key Public Health campaigns based on priorities identified by the Director of Public Health. These include:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Adult obesity
- Child Obesity
- Seasonal health – heatwave and winter

Data, insight and localised information will be needed to shape these campaigns in light of Covid-19 impacts.

5.3 Our websites support marketing and communications campaigns while also providing an online access route through to our commissioned services and those of our partners.

Targeted digital marketing activity underpins each campaign and we will continue to work with local partners to extend the reach and effectiveness of core campaigns.

Other engagement channels should also be explored for those who are without digital access.

- 5.4 Previous successes and learning will be integrated in future campaigns, focussing 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.

It has also been recognised that long-term change requires long term, consistent messaging, and it is important to continue working with local partners and nationally with Public Health England.

6.0 Recommendation

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

COMMENT and **ENDORSE** the progress and impact of Public Health communications and campaigns in 2020/21

7.0 Contact Details

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