

Agenda Item:

Joint Public Health Board

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Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset councils working together to improve and protect health

Date of Meeting	17 July 2014
Officer	Director of Public Health
Subject of Report	Communications Strategy 2014/15
Executive Summary	<p>The communications strategy sets out the plans for supporting the work of Public Health Dorset through communications, marketing and engagement in 2014/15</p> <p>It highlights the need to make sure all communications work is properly researched and has sound evidence to back it up while also stressing the importance of evaluation to prove effectiveness.</p> <p>The strategy also stresses the importance of partnership work between public health, local authorities, commissioned services and other partners.</p> <p>The strategy has the full support of each council's communications lead.</p>
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: Equality screening completed.
	Use of Evidence: National guidance on communications and marketing best practice.
	Budget: No specific budget for communications

	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as: Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk LOW</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p> <p>None</p>
Recommendation	To agree content of communications strategy
Reason for Recommendation	<p>Protect and enrich the health and wellbeing of Dorset's most vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Provide innovative and value for money services.</p>
Appendices	Appendix 1: Public Health Dorset Communications Strategy 2014/15
Background Papers	
Report Originator and Contact	<p>Name: Paul Compton, Senior Public Relations Officer Tel: 01305 225896 Email: paul.compton@dorsetcc.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 Communications is an important part of public health. There are many audiences to communicate with on both professional and personal levels.
- 1.2 The communications function aims to support the work of programme teams within Public Health Dorset and partners to improve awareness and effectiveness of services.
- 1.3 Public Health Dorset has a dedicated communications function, made up of one senior communications officer and one communications and marketing officer, to carry out this work.

2. Development of strategy

- 2.1 The strategy is an update of the one produced for 2013/14. The principles remain the same but priorities have been updated to reflect the next stage of work.
- 2.2 The key communications priorities for 2014/15 were identified using the plans for Public Health Dorset for the coming year and looking at where communications can support this work to make it more effective.
- 2.3 After identifying initial priorities, the communications lead for Public Health Dorset worked with colleagues in public health, partners and communication leads from each authority to further develop these priorities.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Once the priorities had been produced, it was shared with communications leads for each of the three top-tier local authorities, colleagues in public health, partner organisations, and lead members from each of the partner councils.

Public Health Dorset
Communications strategy 2014/15

Communicating to improve and protect health

1. Who and what
2. Objectives and principles
3. Responsibility for communications
4. Priorities for 2014/15
5. Who we communicate with
6. Standing out
7. Methods of communication
8. Emergency communications
9. Measuring performance

Appendix 1: Communications protocol

1. Who and what

Public Health Dorset is a partnership of Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole Council and Dorset County Council.

We work in partnership with organisations locally and nationally to help people make better choices about their lifestyle and health while also protecting people from infectious diseases and harmful materials in the environment.

2. Objectives and principles

Communications is a huge part of public health. To achieve the best results we will:

- use a wide range of evidence to plan campaigns so that they are tailored to influence the right people in the right way
- evaluate every campaign to prove effectiveness
- educate people to achieve behaviour change; never coerce or patronise
- use hard-hitting messages when appropriate and when there is clear evidence they will work
- encourage participation and interaction with campaigns
- complement and support national campaigns locally
- use every communications tool to its full potential and seek new and alternative ways to communicate, embracing new technologies and techniques
- recognise that communications isn't just 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- develop strong links with partners through regular communications
- work in partnership with other organisations to develop greater impact for campaigns and provide value for money
- increase the profile of Public Health Dorset and its work both locally and nationally.

3. Responsibility for communications

Public Health Dorset's senior management team and the lead members for public health in each of the three partner councils have overall responsibility for communications.

Communications is planned and carried out by Public Health Dorset's communications team who cover the three council areas.

Everyone connected to Public Health Dorset, including staff and partners, are advocates for the main principles of public health and have a responsibility to share messages about the practices and values of public health.

The communications team works with colleagues in each council to communicate with the public, partners, and staff.

The communications protocol for Public Health Dorset can be found in the appendix.

4. Priorities for 2014/15

- Communication and engagement to support commissioning. Particularly around health improvement and sexual health.

- Working with services on campaigns to increase uptake, using behaviour change principles.
- Develop an online presence to aid the work of programmes and partners.
- Support national campaigns locally.
- Inform, educate and involve members and partners in the work of public health.
- Work with Public Health England to manage communications for emergency situations, including viral or disease outbreaks, and contributing as appropriate to extreme weather events and other warning and informing situations.

5. Who we communicate with

The main people we will engage with regularly are:

- All local residents
- Bournemouth Borough Council
- Borough of Poole Council
- Dorset County Council
- Councillors
- The seven district councils in the Dorset county area
- Parish and town councils
- Public Health England
- NHS England
- NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch NHS Foundation Trust
- Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Dorset Police
- Dorset Fire and Rescue Service
- Third sector health organisations
- Businesses
- Local media
- Regional and national stakeholders, including MPs, government organisations and neighbouring areas

6. Standing out

Everything that is produced by Public Health Dorset should follow agreed branding principles. These clearly define one single body for the whole of Dorset and will be instrumental in building the integrity of Public Health Dorset.

The branding will give members of the public and partners immediate recognition of the skills and expertise of Public Health Dorset, building trust, confidence and credibility.

Information on how the branding should be used can be found in the separate document 'Public Health Dorset – branding and identity'.

7. Methods of communication

Internal communications:

- Communications between public health staff is done through a regular update e-bulletin and a monthly team meeting.
- Each council's, and other partners', internal communications tools are used to spread messages about Public Health Dorset and its work.

External communications:

Local media

- Local media can be used to target health stories to people, particularly using local statistics and case studies.
- Commenting locally about national stories is a good way of raising the profile of Public Health Dorset.
- Media protocols can be found as part of the appendices below.

Publications

- Partner publications are used to spread the word about our work.

Exhibitions and events

- Events can be used to engage with local people and stakeholders. Events can be set up as part of campaigns, or the partnership can be represented at events held by stakeholders, such as councils, the NHS, third sector partners etc.

Advertising

- Advertising, whether print, broadcast, or online, can be a good way of targeting specific audiences in a different way to printed materials. Public Health Dorset can use advertising, alongside other communication tools, for campaigns.

Online

- It is vital that the partnership makes good use of online tools. Webpages should be an online resource to which people are directed from other forms of communication. Use of social media and other online tools is crucial in driving traffic to the website and spreading the word of Public Health Dorset's work and ethos.

Partners

- A quarterly e-bulletin is sent to partner organisations to give an update on the work of public health.
- Partner internal communications to be used to update on particular campaigns, projects, areas of cross working etc.

8. Emergency communications

The public health remit for health protection means that there are huge implications in emergency situations, particularly around the spread of communicable disease, contaminants and other hazardous materials.

In these situations, the communications team will work with Public Health England to communicate messages to the public and work with other partner organisations as part of the Dorset Warning and Informing Group, which is a subgroup of the Dorset Local Resilience Forum.

It is also the responsibility of the senior public relations officer to make sure members and council chief executives are briefed in good time.

9. Measuring performance

A range of tools can be used to measure performance of communications:

- Citizens' / e-Panel surveys
- Local and specific surveys
- Reports from the county council's media management system
- National and local research data
- Website statistics
- Social media interactions
- Interactions with services and campaign tools
- User sign up to schemes or campaigns
- User testing and qualitative research

Evidence from these sources will be used to help monitor reach and performance of communications.

Evidence will be based on effectiveness of communications in influencing behaviour change.

Appendix 1

Public Health Dorset

Communications protocols

Background

Public Health Dorset covers the top-tier councils of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset. It is hosted and administered by Dorset County Council.

A director of public health, who is supported by four assistant directors of public health, heads up the service. Each assistant director covers a locality area – one each for Bournemouth and Poole and two for the Dorset county area – as well as having individual specialities.

A cross-council committee will be responsible for the governance of the service. There will also be input from two health and wellbeing boards – one for Dorset and one for Bournemouth and Poole – as well as health overview and scrutiny committees for each of the councils.

Communications staff

Two members of staff make up the Public Health Dorset communications team.

A senior communications officer (SCO) and a communications and marketing officer (CMO) are permanently based within Public Health Dorset with responsibility for delivering communications.

The SCO is line-managed by Dorset County Council's corporate communications manager and the CMO is line-managed by the SCO.

A communications working group is chaired by Dorset Council Council's corporate communications manager with input from communications colleagues from all three councils and representatives from Public Health Dorset.

Key principles

The Public Health Dorset communications team will:

- lead on proactive and reactive communications relating to Public Health Dorset.
- keep partner communications teams regularly updated about developments, especially those linked to locality areas.

- share relevant information with individual or all partner communications teams as appropriate and in a timely fashion by email (eg communications plans, draft news releases, reactive statements).
- work with partner communications teams to disseminate public health messages through internal and external channels.
- make communications plans setting out key messages for the public health function, for key workstreams and for health advice.
- will be the main communications contact for other health bodies, locally and nationally, and will work to build relationships with stakeholder communications leads.

Partner communications teams should highlight opportunities for relevant public health news and messages.

Media relations

Proactive (news releases)

The SCO will lead on strategic, proactive communications for Public Health Dorset.

- The communications team will draft proactive news releases and share them in good time with input from the specialist lead in Public Health Dorset.
- The communications team will incorporate comments made by partners into news releases where appropriate. However, final approval of public health news releases rests with the assistant directors of public health.
- News releases that are locality-focused will include a quote from the lead member for that locality. Pan-Dorset releases will quote the director of public health or the assistant director for Public Health Dorset with the relevant speciality.
- The communications may contact partners to request quotes for inclusion in news releases that relate to partner councils. These quotes will be provided from the lead member for public health in the relevant council.

Reactive (responding to media enquiries)

- The communications team will receive and respond to media enquiries in relation to Public Health Dorset, the services it provides, and the issues connected with it, such as communicable diseases.
- Partner communications teams should direct any media enquiries relating to public health to the Public Health Dorset communications team. In the absence of the SCO or CMO, media enquiries should be directed to the communications team at Dorset County Council, who will follow the principles of these guidelines to liaise with partners.
- Where communications issues arise specific to locality areas in the absence of the SCO or CMO, then these will be picked up by the relevant local authority communications team for that area.
- Official comments or statements in response to media enquiries relating to Public Health Dorset will be provided by either the director of public health or the lead assistant director with the relevant speciality.
- General comments about the work of Public Health Dorset in localities will be provided by locality lead members unless it is particularly specialist in which

case either the assistant director with the relevant speciality or the locality assistant director will be quoted.

Internal communications

- The communications team will develop channels for internal communications with members of Public Health Dorset staff.
- Internal communications from Public Health Dorset towards staff in partner councils will be done in partnership with the relevant local authority communications team.
- Any internal messages from partner councils for public health staff should be directed to the SCO for dissemination.

Online and social media

- The communications team will work with colleagues in Public Health Dorset to develop webpages
- Partner organisations will direct traffic to these webpages.
- The communications team will manage a presence for Public Health Dorset on social media.
- This will provide members of the public with local and national health messages and advice and work to raise the profile of pan-Dorset public health service.
- It will also share messages from partners and national organisations, such as Public Health England and NHS England, that are relevant.
- Partner organisations will support this by retweeting and sharing the public health service's messages with their own online networks.

Member liaison

- The partner communications teams will maintain a key member liaison role, keeping their members informed of developments and responding to their queries.
- The communications team will develop communications mechanisms for members, which will be sent to the partner communications teams to cascade to members.
- Partner communications teams should inform the Public Health Dorset communications team of any member issues that arise relating to Public Health Dorset, such as complaints or comments to the media.