

Draft Birmingham COVID-19 Test and Trace Communications and Engagement Plan

Test and Trace is an important part of the local control of the COVID-19 outbreak and a key aspect of this programme is engaging with communities and promoting awareness and understanding of the programme.

This approach builds on the existing engagement and communication approach during the COVID-19 outbreak working across the city with communities of geography and identity through multiple different methods of communication both directly and through partners to spread messages and increase engagement.

Please note that the focus of this plan is Test and Trace communications and engagement as part of the wider suite of communications intentions both by Public Health and Corporate Communications Teams. Should they be necessary, any outbreak response communications will be managed through a separate plan.

Aims and key objectives

This communication and engagement plan is designed to support implementation of Test and Trace at a local level in Birmingham and support the national programme delivery through local engagement.

The key aims of this plan are to:

- Increase awareness of how individuals who have symptoms can access rapid testing
- Increase awareness and understanding of the process of contact tracing and encourage engagement with this process
- Increase awareness and understanding of national guidelines relating to test and trace e.g. self-isolation of contacts
- Provide an opportunity for feedback from communities to inform the local, regional and national Test and Trace programme

To support achievement of these aims our approaches will have the following objectives:

- Drive and support open and transparent, timely and effective communication;
- Localise national COVID-19 guidance especially for Birmingham's diverse community;
- Support engagement and communication to ensure all communities in Birmingham access Test and Trace support if needed in a timely and effective way to protect themselves, their communities and the city
- Ensure Citizens, Elected Members, Staff and Partners understand the Birmingham Test and Trace approach
- Change behaviour and perceptions where necessary

Threads of Activity

We will implement this plan through a series of core threads of activity which will be expanded on in more detail through the detailed action plan in the appendix of this document.

These strands include:

Communities of place

This strand focuses approaches linked to communities of place such as wards. Birmingham has 69 Wards as well as other potential geographical communities recognised by citizens. This will include work with elected members and Ward Forums as well as other placed based community forums for engagement.

Communities of identity

This strand focuses approaches linked to communities of identity such as ethnic communities, faith communities, LGBT+ communities, homeless communities, disabled communities, etc. This work will include work with commissioned community engagement partners to engage with specific communities of identity. This strand will also include work to increase the access to translated materials to increase understanding and engagement for individuals whose first language is not English.

Communities of interest

This strand focuses on approaches linked to a range of different communities of interest, this will include professional interests such as businesses and business sectors, and there is potential to also expand other communities of interest such as Friends of Parks and the Future Parks Accelerator partners for example to reach other audiences and communities.

Elected Members and Key Stakeholders

This strand focuses on approaches to inform elected members and key stakeholders, this will include regular briefing patterns as well as outbreak specific communication approaches.

Outbreak Response Communication

This stand sets out our planned approach for communication in response to outbreaks which may be specific to settings or geographical areas.

Methods of Engagement

The reality of the COVID-19 situation limits the potential for face-to-face engagement, but we are conscious of the risk of digital exclusion further increasing the inequalities of the outbreak. Methods of communication and engagement we plan to use include:

- Digital engagement forums
- Social media
- Radio promotion (including promotion for those first language is not English)
- Teleconferences and telephone-based engagement
- Engagement through existing community networks e.g. WhatsApp groups
- Working through front line staff who are engaging face to face to share information and raise awareness
- Specific written and verbal briefings

Resources

This plan will be delivered through the Public Health Division Communications Cell which has led on public health engagement with communities during the outbreak working with and through other partners within the Council and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Senior Responsible Officer for the Test and Trace Programme is the Director of Public Health and delivery of this Programme will be led by the two Service Leads within the Public Health Division Communications Cell.

The programme delivery is funded through the dedicated Test and Trace Programme budget and a provisional budget of £1.4M has been set for this programme in 2020/21.

Measuring Success

The success of this plan will ultimately be measured through the level of local engagement with the Test and Trace programme and we hope to be able to monitor this through regular review of the demographic and geographical data on uptake of testing, participation in the tracing programme and new cases of COVID-19. This will be dependent on releasing of national data to support local measurement of impact. If this is not possible, we will explore other options for measuring success.

Activity and progress will be measured through monthly reports on activity to the Local COVID Outbreak Engagement Board through the Senior Responsible Officer.

Appendix A: Draft Test and Trace Communications and Engagement Action Plan

Cross Cutting Activities - below are a list of activities that have been undertaken and those which are planned, we will expand the focus to ensure that repeated and consistent messages are incorporated regarding Test and Trace

Method of Engagement	Activity	Led by	Date	RAG
National, Regional and Local Radio	Dr Justin Varney takes part in a weekly interview segment on BBC WM which includes opportunities for callers to ask questions regarding the latest COVID-19 guidance. Interview on Switch Radio to discuss a potential timeline for a COVID-19 vaccine. Going forward we will expand to include other radio stations and to ensure focus on Test and Trace.	Public Health Communications Cell.	Ongoing.	
Regional and Local Print/Online Media	Public Health provides comments and quotes to Birmingham Live, Birmingham Updates, Birmingham Press and Birmingham Mail on the latest coronavirus news – including a feature which reflects on Birmingham City Council's efforts to combat the virus. Dr Justin Varney takes part several Facebook Live Q&A sessions with Birmingham Live to answer reader queries on COVID-19. Going forward we will expand this to ensure focus on Test and Trace.	Public Health Communications Cell.	Ongoing.	
BCC Staff Awareness Training	Weekly internal question and answer sessions for staff. Going forward we will expand this to ensure focus on Test and Trace.	Director of Public Health.	Ongoing.	
HWB Partner Awareness Training	To be arranged	Public Health Division.	To be arranged.	TBC
Local COVID-19 Outbreak Engagement Board	Presentation to Board to be scheduled for 24 th June 2020 and subsequent meetings.	Public Health Division.	24 th June 2020 and subsequent meetings.	
Health Protection Forum	Updates provided to Forum members at fortnightly meetings, membership includes NHS, Public Health England and Local Authority NHS England and NHS E/I.	Public Health Division.	Fortnightly meetings.	
Public Council meetings	Available online and will be promoted through usual channels. Going forward we will use this space to amplify Test and Trace messages.	Public Health Division.	Ongoing.	

Theme 1: Communities of Place

We will use existing communications channels as detailed below and expand the communications to include Test and Trace messages.

Community Focus	Method of Engagement	Activity	Date	Expected Participation	Participation Actual	RAG
Locality	Digital Ward Forums	Presentations to be delivered to Ward Forums and sharing of information as required.	From July 2020	Ward leaders and citizens attending meetings.	Contact to be made with leaders to arrange dates to fit into their agendas as online meetings are being established	TBC
	Neighbourhood Network Schemes	Presentations to Neighbourhood Network Schemes to be shared through the Community Engagement Group and sharing of information as required.	From July 2020	Integrated Services Heads – Neighbourhoods.	Contact to be made with leaders to arrange dates to fit into their agendas as online meetings are being established	TBC
	Local Partnership Development Groups (LPDG)	Share presentations and information to Safer Neighbourhood Officers to share information with members.	From June 2020	Partner organisations for the LPDG specific areas including community-based organisations, police, fire etc.	Contact to be made with LPDG leads to arrange dates to fit into their agendas as online meetings are being established	TBC
	Linking with local Councillors to support engagement	Support local councillors to provide support to Birmingham Citizens.	Ongoing	Support local councillors to provide support to Birmingham Citizens.	Support has been provided to local councillors and this will continue over the coming months to ensure current messages relating to COVID-19 are shared with Birmingham citizens.	
Care Homes	Care Home outbreak working group	Engagement with care homes and other residential settings.	Ongoing	Engagement with care homes and other residential settings.	Engagement with care homes and residential settings will continue over	

					the coming months to ensure current messages relating to COVID-19 are shared with staff, residents and families.	
Education	Education outbreak working group	Engagement with education settings.	Ongoing	Engagement with education settings.	Messages have been sent throughout the pandemic as required through the Schools Bulletin. This will continue and we will seek to present to online Head Teachers forums as agenda availability allows.	
Other	Other settings outbreak working group	Engagement with various settings that form part of this group.	Ongoing	Engagement with various settings.	We have sought to engage with many varied settings through online platforms. This work will continue and be enhanced over the coming months.	

Theme 2: Communities of Identity

We will use existing communications channels as detailed below and expand the communications to include Test and Trace messages.

Community Focus	Method of Engagement	Activity	Date	Expected Participation	Participation Actual	RAG
Ethnicity	Community Partners	Commissioned 6 organisations to provide COVID-19 related online and non-media related support in community languages relevant to their communities.	26 th May 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	<p>To seek to ensure difficult to reach communities are informed of issues affecting them relating to COVID-19; feedback has been received from each provider relating to how COVID-19 has affected their individual community.</p> <p>Additionally, the community organisations have sent questionnaires to their communities and will share responses with BCC.</p> <p>The providers will arrange online community workshops to further assess the impact of COVID-19 on their community and provide myth busting sessions.</p> <p>Social media messages will continue to be provided in community languages around Test and Trace and PHE messages.</p>	
	Community Radio and TV	<p>So far, Public Health have been committed to reaching out to communities across Birmingham during the pandemic through community radio stations, TV and other outreach methods. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sikh Channel TV - Brit Asia TV - First Class Legacy - Unity FM 	Ongoing	Adverts and interviews/live Q&A sessions.	Community radio and TV have proven popular methods of providing COVID-19 information to difficult to reach communities. We aim to continue and enhance these resources over the coming months through producing adverts on Test and Trace, in addition to continued interviews and live Q&A sessions.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Style Radio - China Daily - Live Ape Podcast 				
	Digital Q&A Forum	Dr Justin Varney has taken part in regular Q&A sessions and forum debates with the likes of First Class Legacy to answer specific queries regarding ethnicity and COVID-19.	Ongoing	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and answer specific concerns regarding ethnicity and COVID-19.	Dr Justin Varney has participated in several digital Q&A sessions and forum debates. Citizens have been encouraged to share their concerns around COVID-19 which Dr Justin Varney has responded to live online. This has helped in sharing COVID-19 related information and guidance and in myth busting within certain communities.	
LGBT+	Community Partners	Commissioned provider to supply COVID-19 related online and non-media related support relevant to the LGBT community in Birmingham.	26 th May 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	<p>To seek to ensure the LGBT community in Birmingham is informed of issues affecting them relating to COVID-19 feedback has been received from LGBT Birmingham relating to how COVID-19 has affected the LGBT Birmingham community.</p> <p>Additionally, they have sent a questionnaire to their community and will share responses with BCC.</p> <p>LGBT Birmingham will arrange online community workshops to further assess the impact of COVID-19 on their community and provide myth busting sessions.</p> <p>Social media messages will continue to be provided around Test and Trace and PHE messages.</p>	
Faith	Mosque Leaders Forum	Public Health and Dr Justin Varney have regular meetings with the Mosque Leaders Forum to ensure all information is shared regularly and consistently throughout the Muslim community.	Ongoing	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	Regular meetings with the Mosque Leaders Forum for Birmingham ensure relevant advice and guidance around COVID-19, including Test and Trace, is shared with their communities in appropriate formats.	
	Black Churches Forum	Information has been shared with the Black Led churches through the Birmingham interfaith Forum.	Ongoing	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	<p>Information shared through Birmingham Interfaith Forum with the Black Led churches for Birmingham ensure relevant advice and guidance around COVID-19, including Test and Trace, is shared with their communities in appropriate formats.</p> <p>In addition to sharing information we will participate in workshops around COVID-19 led by Black Led churches.</p>	

	Interfaith Forum	Information shared with the Interfaith forum to be shared with members.	Ongoing	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	To continue to share information with Birmingham Interfaith Forum for dissemination to their members. If the Forum decides to host an online Interfaith event for Birmingham during Interfaith Week we will seek to present at that meeting and include a Q&A session.	
Young People	Young people awareness around COVID-19	To enhance current partnerships with organisations supporting young people (such as Beatfrecks) to raise awareness and knowledge.	March 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	Young people are affected by COVID-19 through lack of social contact, home schooling and concerns about COVID-19. We contracted Beatfrecks to undertake an initial piece of online work to inform young people about COVID-19 using games. This contract has proven successful and we will be seeking to re commission a service for Young People building on the success of this service.	
	Care leavers	To commission a service to support this vulnerable group of people.	September2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	To commission a service to provide a service to inform this community of Test and Trace in Birmingham. We will also host online workshops for Care Leavers and another for BCC Staff supporting care leavers to update and inform on Test and Trace.	TBC
	Mental health	To commission a service to support this vulnerable group of people.	September2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	To commission a service to provide a service to inform this community of Test and Trace in Birmingham. We will also host an online workshop for those working with people suffering from poor Mental health to update and inform on Test and Trace so they can share information.	TBC
Vulnerable Adults	Carers	Seeking to commission a service to support this group of people who support vulnerable people.	September2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	To commission a service to provide a service to inform this community of Test and Trace in Birmingham. We will also host an online workshop to update and inform on Test and Trace so they can share information.	TBC
	Offender and Ex-offenders	Intention to link with West Midlands Police Force to promote messages to this vulnerable group.	September2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	To commission a service to provide a service to inform this community of Test and Trace in Birmingham. We will also ask for information of how this community has been affected during COVID-19.	TBC

					In addition, we will host an online workshop for those working with people from this community to update and inform on Test and Trace so they can share information.	
	Domestic Abuse	To commission a service to support this vulnerable group of people.	September 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	<p>To commission a service to provide a service to inform this community on Test and Trace in Birmingham.</p> <p>We will also host an online workshop for Domestic Abuse hostel staff to update and inform on Test and Trace so they can share information with people using the hostel services.</p>	TBC
	Homeless	To commission a service to support this vulnerable group of people.	September 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	<p>To commission a service to provide a service to inform this community of Test and Trace in Birmingham.</p> <p>We will also host an online workshop for Homeless hostel staff to update and inform on Test and Trace so they can share information with people using the hostel services.</p>	TBC
Disabilities	Sensory disabilities	Commissioned organisations to provide COVID-19 related online and non-media related support in accessible formats relevant to their communities.	26 th May 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	<p>To seek to ensure difficult to reach communities are informed of issues affecting them relating to COVID-19 feedback has been received from each provider relating to how COVID-19 has affected their individual community.</p> <p>Additionally, the community organisations have sent questionnaires to their communities and will share responses with BCC.</p> <p>The providers will arrange online community workshops to further assess the impact of COVID-19 on their community and provide myth busting sessions.</p> <p>Social media messages will continue to be provided in community languages around Test and Trace and PHE messages.</p>	
	Learning disabilities	Commissioned organisations to provide COVID related online and non-media related support in accessible formats relevant to their communities.	26 th May 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	To seek to ensure difficult to reach communities are informed of issues affecting them relating to COVID-19 feedback has been received from the provider relating to how COVID-19 has affected their community.	

					<p>Additionally, the community organisation will arrange workshops with people with learning difficulties and their carers to gather more information about how COVID-19 has affected this community, sharing responses with BCC.</p> <p>Social media messages will continue to be provided in community languages around Test and Trace and PHE messages.</p>	
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Theme 3: Communities of Interest

Community Focus	Method of Engagement	Activity Undertaken	Date	Expected Participation	Participation Actual	RAG
Business Sectors	Chamber of Commerce	Intention to share information and digital Q&A sessions.	July 2020	Local Businesses and hospitality organisations.	<p>To share information with Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to share with members. This will support Test and Trace information being shared through the business community in Birmingham.</p> <p>If they decide to hold online meetings we will seek to present at one of those meetings when the agenda allows.</p>	TBC
	Employers	Intention to share information and digital Q&A sessions.	July 2020	Birmingham City Council Employment Access Team Primes employment providers, iSE CIC for Social Enterprise business support.	<p>To share information with Birmingham Employment Access Team and their Primes employment providers and iSE CIC to share with members. This will support Test and Trace information being shared through the business community in Birmingham.</p> <p>If they decide to hold online meetings with partner organisations, we will seek to present at one of those meetings when the agenda allows. This will support Test and Trace information sharing in the business community in Birmingham.</p>	TBC
Voluntary sector	BVSC and voluntary sector	Intention to share information and digital Q&A sessions.	Ongoing	To provide information to services supporting the communities of Birmingham.	<p>To provide information updates for inclusion in the weekly BVSC Update online newsletter which is shared throughout the voluntary sector in Birmingham.</p> <p>Dr Justin Varney to present at third sector online event 'Times Like These':</p>	TBC

					Researching civil society responses to and recovery from COVID-19, the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research e-Conference 2020 on 8-9th September 2020.	
Statutory	Birmingham City Council Benefits Services	Intention to share information and digital Q&A sessions.	July 2020	To provide information to services supporting the communities of Birmingham.	Online workshops to be arranged for Benefits staff on Test and Trace service in Birmingham. It's recognised that not all staff will be able to attend one workshop due to work commitments so a series of workshops will be arranged. Benefit staff will be able to inform citizens they support and their carers of Test and Trace.	TBC
	Adults Social Care	To use staff training to inform Adult Social Care staff of Test and Trace service in Birmingham.	July 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	Online workshops to be arranged for Adult Social Care Staff on Test and Trace service in Birmingham. It's recognised that not all staff will be able to attend one workshop due to work commitments so a series of workshops will be arranged. The Adult Social Care staff will be able to inform citizens they support and their carers of Test and Trace.	TBC
	Housing staff (internal and Housing Association)	To use staff training to inform Housing staff of Test and Trace service in Birmingham	July 2020	To share information with communities in appropriate formats and languages, including online workshops.	Online workshops to be arranged for Housing staff (internal and Housing Association) on Test and Trace service in Birmingham. It's recognised that not all staff will be able to attend one workshop due to work commitments so a series of workshops will be arranged. Housing staff will be able to inform citizens of Test and Trace.	TBC

Theme 4: Elected Members and Key Stakeholders

These highlight the additional communication with elected members and politicians outside of the specific Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

Community Focus	Method of Engagement	Activity Undertaken	Date	Expected Participation	Participation Actual	RAG
Elected Member	Written Member & Politician Briefing	Weekly COVID-19 summary report	Ongoing	Dr Justin Varney to provide weekly COVID-19 summary report for Councillors	Dr Justin Varney provides weekly COVID-19 summary report for Councillors	
Board members	Verbal Update to Cabinet and Health and Wellbeing Board	Standing item	Ongoing	To provide verbal report at each Health and Wellbeing Board meeting	Dr Justin Varney provides a verbal update on COVID-19 at each Health and Wellbeing Board meeting	
Local MPs	Written Member & Politician Briefing	Weekly COVID-19 summary report	Ongoing	To provide weekly COVID-19 summary report	Weekly COVID-19 summary report shared with members and politicians	
Leader and MPs	Fortnightly Leader & MP Briefing Teleconference	Verbal briefing as required	Ongoing	Participation in fortnightly Leader and MP briefing teleconference	Participation in fortnightly Leader and MP briefing teleconference	

Theme 5: Outbreak Response Communication

The communication in relation to an outbreak will be tailored to the setting and may involve specific conversation with national, regional and local partners and the approach will be driven by risk reduction to limit further spread and will protect individual and organisational confidentiality.

The decision about the information shared about a specific outbreak rests with the Director of Public Health in discussion with Public Health England and the setting involved.

Communication responses to an outbreak will focus on:

- Supporting organisational communication to staff/volunteers and customers/clients/pupils/residents focused on risk reduction and appropriate messaging on self-isolation and testing
- Briefing to Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet member is significant outbreak or high-risk setting
- Media briefing will be based on discussion with the setting and PHE
- If geographical outbreak then may consider local communications including direct mail-drops, localised billboard media, and targeted community engagement

	Method of Engagement	Activity	Date	Expected Participation	Participation Actual	RAG
Outbreak response communication	Reactive outbreak response communication	Targeted response to hotspots of COVID-19 outbreaks including high intensity comms	Ongoing	<p>To develop a plan to bring together all partners supporting in the hotspot area and through a cohesive approach seek to get relevant and timely information to the community most at need. We will co-ordinate the approach of the community providers.</p> <p>Management of intense communication during an outbreak including media and social media.</p> <p>Manage information sharing with staff through Yammer, Leader and CEO updates.</p> <p>Ensure all partner organisations are informed and updated throughout the outbreak to ensure clarity.</p>	<p>To develop a Comms and Engagement Plan for a COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <p>Working with communities to ensure they can provide effective support during a COVID –19 outbreak. This is to be built into providers Communications/Engagement Plans. Providers are aware of the need for a flexible approach during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure relevant and timely information is shared with communities.</p>	TBC