

CWM TAF MORGANNWG (CTM) REGION

Risk Communication and Community Engagement Plan to support local implementation of the Public Health Protection Response Plan and wider COVID 19 related messaging

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Public Health Protection Response Plan developed by Public Health Wales (PHW) on behalf of Welsh Government proposes three key elements:
 - preventing the spread of disease through contact tracing and case management,
 - population surveillance
 - sampling and testing different people in Wales
- 1.2 The Response Plan identifies the need for a comprehensive, high level campaign that:
 - Helps people feel confident in the exit/recovery phase approach
 - Helps people understand what they need to do.
 - Reinforces public health messages such as handwashing or when to self-isolate
- 1.3 The plan identifies four audiences: mass population, vulnerable groups, closed settings (including nursing homes and prisons) and stakeholders and partners.
- 1.4 The approach is in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and global partners [Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Guidance](#). This guidance has already been used as a basis for initial work around general risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) related to COVID-19 within CTM.

2. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT POSITION AND PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1 The scale of the current COVID-19 pandemic means we are in a unique position where all statutory, community and voluntary organisations on a national and local basis are focussed on the same agenda and in turn, developing their communication and engagement approaches. Although this provides consistent resource, there is a real danger of duplication of effort, inconsistent messages and gaps in provision, particularly against a background of regularly changing guidance. The success of the Response Plan is predominately dependant on widespread public understanding and acceptance, hence facilitating the need for a comprehensive, multiagency approach to local communication and engagement planning.
- 2.2 To date, the communication teams of CTM UHB, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend Local Authorities have undertaken a range of communications related to COVID-19. This has complemented work undertaken nationally by

Public Health Wales and Welsh Government. Numerous other local organisations have produced information for their client groups.

The Local Public Health Team has undertaken initial engagement work across CTM, linking with the voluntary and community sector with particular focus on identifying local communication networks, identifying provision for certain vulnerable groups and exploring the utilisation of national work on public perception and behavioural insights to inform local RCCE approaches.

- 2.3 An initial meeting of leads from the Health Board and three Local Authority Communication teams together with Local Public Health Team took place on 11th May. There was agreement to form a CTM Multiagency Communication and Engagement Working Group, drawing in wider local and national partners as appropriate. The group will develop and deliver a joint operational plan utilising the OASIS model campaign planning template recommended by Welsh Government (APPENDIX 1)

3. SCOPE OF THIS WORKSTREAM

- 3.1 In addition to supporting communication and engagement around the Response plan there are a number of other key areas related to COVID 19 that would benefit from a similar approach, including the need to provide the public with information and reassurance in regard to reopening health services. Although it is hoped to use the same partnership approach to take these forward, due to the timescales and need for an immediate focus on the Response plan, the initial accompanying action plan will focus on this element alone.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The overarching strategic aim of the Response Plan is to reduce the risk of transmission and infection with COVID-19 in Wales.

- 4.2 The initial aim of the RCCE work stream is:

To provide the public and partners with clear messages and practical information which will encourage and enable them to follow any current guidance related to reducing the spread of COVID 19 and participate as appropriate in any associated testing or contact tracing programmes.

- 4.3 To achieve this aim, the work stream objectives (which will be further detailed in the action plan) include:

- Effectively tailoring messages by utilising a behavioural insights approach and the information provided by current work being undertaken into public perceptions and understanding of COVID -19
- Identifying and targeting vulnerable/hard to risk groups and their supporting organisations that may need additional consideration and support

- Working in collaboration to maximise resource and ensure consistent approaches to accessing and disseminating information.
- Exploring opportunities to use local data/stories as a means of communicating risk in a more meaningful context
- Developing processes to evaluate approach and monitor feedback

5. RESOURCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & INTERDEPENDENCIES

- 5.1 The main staffing resource to take forward the RCCE plan will come from existing Health Board and Local Authorities' Communication Teams supported by the Local Public Health Team.
- 5.2 Leads from these teams will come together as the RCCE work stream for the CTM area, meeting on a weekly basis.
- 5.3 The RCCE work stream will need to establish strong links and clear communication channels with communication leads responsible for the Response Plan in Public Health Wales and Welsh Government as well as other local organisations.
- 5.4 Effective delivery will be dependent on establishing and maintaining clear channels of communication with the leads for the testing and contact tracing/ case management work streams. Clear practical information regarding the pathways into and through these programme will be needed which in turn can be translated into tailored messages targeting all identified population groups and partners in a timely manner.

6 GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 The RCCE work stream will link closely with the three work streams that deliver the response plan (testing, Contact Tracing and Surveillance) and as they do, will be accountable to the Regional Oversight Group. This will be in addition to normal lines of accountability and management within each members' own organisation.
- 6.2 The Regional Oversight Group will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the delivery of the Response Plan and will be chaired by the UHB Executive Director of Public Health and/or Director of Public Health, protection & Community Services who will both report to weekly Local Authority & UHB CEOs/Council Leaders meetings.

7. TIMESCALES

- 7.1 Any communication and engagement activity will need to complement the roll out of the Public Health Protection Response Plan with the initial focus centred on the proposed 1st June launch date for the Contract Tracing Programme.
- 7.2 An initial, draft action plan outlining the key milestones and deadlines is included in APPENDIX 1.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Currently staff resource will be drawn from existing resource to undertake this communication and engagement work. In the longer term this could create an opportunity cost as services gradually return to normal. Depending on the approaches used to engage with the different audience groups costs may be incurred related to for example promotional materials and will need further consideration in course.

REFERENCES

Public Health Protection Response Plan (5th May 2020) Public Health Wales

Covid-19 Preparedness and Response: RCCE Action Plan Guidance (2020) World Health Organisation

Accessed via: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/risk-communication-and-community-engagement>

APPENDIX 1:

OASIS Powerpoint slides