

North Yorkshire Outbreak Management Advisory Board

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Communications Update – written report

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As set out at the previous meeting, our communications approach over recent weeks has been based around a campaign called Respect and Protect. This sets out a range of public health behaviours that support our people and businesses through the next stage of the pandemic.

This is a challenging time for communications. The end of the government roadmap means the responsibility for decisions around mask wearing and social distancing become a personal choice. Whereas businesses continue to have a duty to protect their staff, which means mask wearing is often encouraged in shops and cafes.

Respect and Protect sets out our story for North Yorkshire: what are the public health behaviours we want people to support here in our county? The campaign is presented as part of our existing Team North Yorkshire brand. This is a visual way of moving the story away from the LRF-led emergency response communications into a space where we're asking people to make decisions for themselves that respect and protect the people and places around them.

The campaign has initially been digital-only, as Covid numbers were falling across North Yorkshire, albeit still at a high rate compared to previous points in the pandemic. At the time of writing, we are now starting to see evidence of an increase in cases. With the potential impact of schools returning and people going back to work after a summer break, we are planning to increase campaign visibility during September. This will include, for example, sharing material in which people from our community tell the story of the key campaign messages.

Work is underway to review where the impact of the campaign would be most effective. This is likely to include offering campaign material to businesses to help reach customers and staff. Other activity may include more presence in town centres, such as the branding of pavements or banners, as we had in place for the recent Unlock Summer campaign. Details are to be confirmed.

The Respect and Protect North Yorkshire brand enables us to adapt our messages based on the latest public health needs. We are building on our experience and contacts from the recent Unlock Summer campaign to maximise the reach of these messages.

Alongside the wider marketing work, we continue to host regular Covid press conferences. These are the most effective way of ensuring a consistent and far-reaching message to local and regional media. These conferences continue to be well-attended, with very positive feedback from media colleagues.

For any follow-up questions, please contact Mike James: michael.james@northyorks.gov.uk.