

Basic Information

Region (Check Region):

Anglia, Thames and Chiltern

Category:

22. Best COVID response

Entry Information

Entrant company name:

Norfolk County Council & partners as part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum

Entry title:

Protect ourselves. Protect others. Protect Norfolk.

Entry

Brief, objectives and budget:

Background

The Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) brings together multi-agency co-operation under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (legislative framework for civil protection.) Its membership comprises of all the county's civil protection responders: all three NHS hospitals; NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group; district, borough and county councils; police; fire and rescue; ambulance; and other vital agencies and organisations.

NCC co-ordinated the comms response, working with all partner agencies, so have submitted the application on behalf of the NRF.

Brief

Deliver multi-agency communications throughout the pandemic to keep Norfolk residents safe and stop the spread of coronavirus.

Objectives

1. Slow and contain the spread of COVID by adopting prevention behaviours, getting vaccinated and adhering to government regulations
2. Lessen the pressure on NHS by minimising the number of COVID-related hospital admissions
3. Maintain residents' health and wellbeing during lockdown

Budget

£332,000 spent 01/04/2020 – 31/05/2021

The idea, research and planning:

The Idea

NCC created an umbrella brand for NRF COVID communications. Designed to reinforce local pride and highlight that all individual choices are part of a bigger picture, to make people feel they're part of the solution and give everyday actions context. Also used as a call to action for local leaders and media to rally around.

'Protect ourselves. Protect Others. Protect Norfolk.' (POPOP)

It was the golden thread in our COVID response, running through all communications including media and through-the-line campaigns.

Research & Planning

- Behavioural science was an integral part of all communications, leaning heavily on the EAST framework and COM-B approach guided by in-house health psychologist
 - Created a digital dashboard to provide real-time COVID data including infection & mortality rates, outbreaks and hospitalisations to help inform decisions and message direction
 - Monitored traffic levels and Google mobility reports to identify issues and target messaging
 - Introduced a social listening tool to monitor local sentiment and trends, enabling us to address and respond to emerging issues quickly
 - Established a dedicated team to engage with vulnerable/high-risk communities to co-create content and deliver it at a local level via trusted channels. Toolkits developed to help the voluntary and community sector to support these groups and businesses.
 - Built a database of 75 community-based publications/newsletters to deliver hyper-local comms
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Strategy, creativity and innovation:

Strategy

Engage – work with stakeholders, high risk communities and vulnerable people to co-produce content that meets their needs

Educate – ensure people understand symptoms and how to test & isolate. Provide clarity on new regulations (interpreting vague national guidelines)

Persuade – encourage people to adopt prevention behaviours and adhere to regulations

Contain – warn and inform when outbreaks occur (community and settings) to limit the spread

Creativity and innovation

Arranged weekly virtual press conference with the Director of Public Health, to provide regular updates on the Norfolk situation and address key concerns. Representatives from NRF joined to discuss relevant topics and areas of expertise e.g. Police to talk rule enforcement. Praised by regional broadcast health correspondent at a CIPR webinar.

Social listening frequently showed aversion to national campaigns so we launched our own campaign assets every 10-12 weeks to avoid wear-out and address changes to regulations.

Implemented innovative ways to target hard to reach / high risk audiences:

- Messaging on food takeaway bags to reach blue collar working males
- COVID street kits for homeless people, including masks, hand sanitiser and targeted messaging
- Developed Community Champion training course to enlist and train people within communities to disseminate messaging and tackle misinformation.

Our work was adopted by other local authorities. We were one of 12 organisations invited to the national Good Practice Network, to provide ideas and feedback during the planning stages of central government campaigns.

Delivery/implementation of tactics:

Delivery

- Established communications cell with NRF representatives to ensure consistent messages and local delivery
- Daily cell meetings to discuss individual plans and local issues
- Co-ordinated daily comms plan of partners to ensure continuity of messaging

Implementation of tactics

- Created and delivered nine public health through-the-line campaigns (informed by behavioural insights) under POPOP
 - Co-created campaign assets specifically for different audience groups e.g. young people, homeless.
 - Focused on delivery of campaigns at a hyper-local level, to plug gaps where national messaging couldn't reach
 - Focused on clear targets and expressed needs e.g. taxi-cleaning leaflet including translations
 - Joint community support campaign with regional media title EDP
 - Following government announcements, aimed for 24 hour turnaround of new assets to minimise information-voids that could be filled with misinformation
 - Directly responsive to resident concerns – Halloween poster created in direct request to resident feedback
 - Worked with local influencers to co-create content
 - Direct mail to 400,000 households to provide everyone access to accurate information on testing and isolating
 - Translated comms into most commonly used languages in Norfolk and delivered via digital ads to people who speak those languages. Also reproduced info into Easy Read, BSL and Braille.
 - Developed bespoke toolkits for different businesses sectors to enable safe reopening – included info on keeping staff/customers safe, tips for speaking to staff about vaccines plus a range of posters/assets to use
 - Created a series of online toolkits to share assets with partners and other organisations
 - Created and delivered 16 supporting campaigns to address issues exacerbated by COVID/lockdown including mental health, domestic abuse, home learning, scams, and safeguarding children
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Measurement, evaluation and impact:

Top line outputs/outtakes (01/04/2020 – 31/05/2021):

2,980 pieces of media coverage (179 broadcast) - 92% key message penetration

1,456,547 engagements on social media

600 advertorials/ads in local press and community publications

400 out-of-home ad sites placed

321,276 pageviews of COVID section pages

20,968 pageviews to Comms COVID toolkit

Impact:

Objective 1

- Total cases rate per 100,000: 4,721 (3rd lowest in East of England and 34% lower than England)

- 75% reduction in road traffic

- 64.8% of target population came forward for surge testing – surpassing government target

- 84% adults received first dose, compared to 79% in England - fifth out of the 42 English health and care systems

- 66% adults received second dose, compared to 58% in England - fourth out of the 42 English health and care systems.

Objective 2

- Even at the pandemic peak, hospital bed occupation at Norfolk's three hospitals never exceeded 40%

Objective 3

- Figures available in 2023 via Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):

Provided
