

**Gloucestershire's Local Outbreak
Management Plan (LOMP):
Communications Strategy**

June 2020

Version 1.

Aim

The aim of this strategy is to continue to effectively communicate with the population of Gloucestershire during the COVID-19 pandemic to maximise safety and minimise spread of the virus and, in the event of the need to put any local restrictions in place, ensure people are clear on what steps they must take.

This will be done through approaches including:

- Improving awareness and take up of **testing**;
- Raising awareness of how and why **tracing** works, providing reassurance to residents, helping them to feel safe and get their lives back to normal, as well as explaining how sharing contacts will prevent the spread of the virus and save lives;
- Building understanding of the importance of isolation, encouraging individuals with symptoms to help **contain** the virus, securing buy-in from communities and employers, signposting those affected to available support and ensuring preparedness for potential sectoral or local restrictions;
- Supporting the NHS test and trace scheme to help control and reduce the infection (or 'R') rate of the coronavirus to **enable** the recovery of the county's economy, health, and wellbeing.

The tactical aims of this strategy are to:

- Through the established Warning and Informing Group, supported by additional membership from the Engagement Board, build on existing co-ordinated countywide approaches to communications and engagement during an emergency response/recovery;
- Ensure consistency of messaging and complement national guidance, activity and materials so people are reassured with information they trust through channels they trust;
- Use established local channels, networks, and resources wherever possible;

- Enable a rapid, co-ordinated, effective, and dynamic response, particularly during periods of local outbreak

Given the wide-ranging scope of the national campaign and the likelihood it will reach many residents, local activity should focus on complementing (rather than duplicating) national activity.

Audiences

Our audiences and key stakeholders are:

- Media
- Communities
- Businesses
- Staff
- County Councillors
- Borough/district/town/parish councillors
- Government - particularly Secretaries of States for Communities (Robert Jenrick) and Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock), other ministries, and at Civil Servant level.
- Local MPs
- Local Resilience Forum (LFR) partners
- GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership
- Community organisations

Key Channels

- Websites
- Social media
- Media releases
- Know your Patch
- Schools
- MPs
- County Councillors
- Borough and district councils
- Churches
- LRF partners
- Staffnet
- Talksmart
- Posters

- Flyers

This strategy proposes a three-phase approach:

Phase 1 (before a local outbreak):

This is the 'default' that applies where there is no specific outbreak or targeted restrictions. The specific aims of this phase are to:

- Raise awareness of the symptoms of COVID-19;
- Encourage people to play their part but following all official guidance and advice
- Encourage those with symptoms and aged 5+ to 'play their part' by self-isolating and to get tested;
- Explain how the tracing system works to individuals and employers and how it will help to reduce the spread of the virus;
- Encourage people to 'play their part' by using the tracing system if testing positive and addressing any barriers to participation;
- Raise awareness that individuals may be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and should self-isolate to 'play their part';
- Encourage individuals to prepare in advance for self-isolation by understanding what support is available and consider how they would get food, medicine, etc;
- Encourage individuals to 'play their part' by supporting their friends, family and neighbours in isolation.
- Encourage employers to 'play their part' by preparing in advance for employees self-isolating by clarifying policies, processes and support available;

- Explain how COVID-19 is being monitored in Gloucestershire, what the monitoring shows, and what local measures may be introduced to control the virus;
- Thank everyone participating in NHS Test and Trace for 'playing their part'
- Ensure an accurate picture of how COVID-19 is impacting the county through a daily update on confirmed cases and deaths in the county, supported by a more detailed weekly dashboard which provides an broader overview – age, ethnicity, job role, geographical profile

It will be important to use local cases studies and examples to make the messaging 'real' and relatable for people across the county.

Phase 2 (during a local outbreak):

This phase will apply where there a specific local outbreak has been identified, in which additional restrictions apply. Data and insight will be used to ensure messages are targeted and delivered in formats and via channels appropriate to the specific communities impacted. This could be via targeted social media, leaflet drops, door to door, virtual face to face briefings, and electronic road signs. Ensuring messages and information are available in the language/s spoken in specific communities or settings will be important.

The specific aims of this phase are to:

- Raise awareness of any changes to the guidelines or restrictions; to whom or where they apply. Encourage those shielding to be extra cautious;
- Educate about the potential consequences of not complying. Thank residents who are doing the right thing;
- Explain why changes are being made and what conditions will need to be met for them to be eased;
- Raise awareness of the local and national support available;
- Explain how COVID-19 is being monitored in the specific area (and what this monitoring shows);

- Encourage employers and community influencers to 'play their part' by sharing messaging with their own contacts. Thank employers who are doing the right thing;

Phase 3 (after a local outbreak)

This phase will apply for a temporary period where there has been a specific local outbreak and the 'easing' of restrictions or guidance is recommended by the county's Health Protection Board. This phase will support the 'recovery' of a particular area.

The specific aims of this phase are to:

- Raise awareness of any changes to the guidelines or restrictions;
- Explain the public health reasons behind why restrictions are being eased;
- Encourage residents to 'play their part' by supporting and engage with local businesses and neighbours that may have been affected by restrictions;
- Explain how COVID-19 is being monitored across the specific area and Gloucestershire-wide to protect public health;

Action cards

A series of actions cards will be developed to provide a template response for higher risk settings and scenarios e.g. an outbreak in a care home, school or across a whole area/community.

Key messages

A 'longlist' of draft key messages for different audiences is attached in appendix 1

Advertising and Marketing

For phase 1 messaging, it is recommended to only run limited paid for marketing to spend money wisely and avoid duplicating the national campaign. However, there are two uses that are potentially recommended:

We should consider using paid for marketing to focus on raising awareness of the support available to those self-isolating and to encourage residents to support their friends, family and neighbours who are self-isolating and to target specific groups or areas that may be of higher risk or where evidence suggest less compliance with guidelines. This could include paid social media and radio advertising.

For phases 2 and 3, we should use paid for marketing that can be rapidly deployed to target specific communities affected by an outbreak. This could include paid social, targeted mail drops.

Digital engagement

Our website will be the 'one stop shop' for all COVID-19 advice and guidance – helping residents and businesses easily find what they need.

Our social media channels will be used to promote information about the Local Outbreak management Plan (LOMP) and associated advice and guidance as well as supporting other relevant local and national messages as appropriate.

Because of its potential to reach individuals wherever they are (including those who are staying at home or self-isolating), the ability to be rapidly deployed, and potential to be targeted at specific audiences and geographies, there should be a strong emphasis on digital engagement.

This approach will be complimented with more traditional routes to support those that do not have access to or choose not to use on line services. As an overview we should:

1. Share key messages through the council's and key partners social media channels. These are trusted channels and have large established followings. We should also encourage the sharing of similar or shared key messages from national bodies such as NHS England, Public Health England, Department for Health and Social Care and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
2. We should use images, infographics, animations and videos as much as possible.

3. Amplify the reach of these messages by encouraging all corporate accounts, partners, members, and local MPs to re-share a selection of these posts.
4. Share our key messages via our regular e-newsletter , that has around 10,000 subscribers and ask them to share these messages via channels available to them too
5. Promote announcements and media releases across all relevant digital channels.
6. Gloucestershire has published and regularly updates, specific webpages with relevant information about advice and support for residents, businesses/ employers, and those shielding. The pages signpost to the national nhs.uk and gov.uk pages where appropriate.

Press and media

There will continue to be significant media interest in how coronavirus will impact the county. The media can play a key role in sharing our communications to a broader audience. Community and local media can also be used to reach priority audiences.

As an overview we should:

- Regularly promote the work of the Health Protection Board. These should include mainstream, regional, and community or hyperlocal media as appropriate, particularly around local outbreaks.
- Continue to use trusted local voices for quotes and interviews, especially the chairs of the Health Protection Board and Outbreak Engagement Board
- Media work to be underpinned by regularly sharing and signposting of as much local public health data as possible.

Internal Communications

It is important to retain the trust and loyalty of our colleagues and service providers, many of whom continue to work in extremely challenging circumstances.

- Our internal communications will provide colleagues with timely, consistent, concise and honest information.

- We will help them understand, easily and quickly, policy and procedural changes and provide reassurance of our commitment to help keep them as safe and well as possible.

Activity Plan

An activity plan will be developed to ensure ongoing, coordinated activity of key messaging, via the channels highlighted above.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement will be critical for successful delivery of this strategy, given the large number of distinct settings and audiences who may be difficult to engage with otherwise. Regular engagement will also help ensure stakeholders are sharing the most recent versions of messaging which is likely to evolve over time.

Members of the two Boards have a key role to play in cascading feedback and information both to and from the Boards.

Additionally, Gloucestershire has senior officers and councillors from all councils, the health and care system, emergency services, Local Economic Partnership and others who should also be actively sharing key messages.

Behavioural insight

To make sure approaches and message are as effective as possible and bring about the required action or in action the planning of communications activity will be supported through the engagement of a behavioural insight specialist - helping to ensure the target behaviours are identified and that approach, language and imagery supports compliance.

Evaluation

Members of the Outbreak Engagement Board will evaluate the effectiveness of whether this communications activity is succeeding in persuading people and organisations to adopt appropriate behaviour to aid the pandemic management across the county.

To inform this, regular evaluation will be measured and shared with the Board. This will include:

- A summary of communications activity.
- Estimated reach of communications activity.
- Traffic for key webpages.
- Sentiment of related coverage and conversations
- Any feedback from stakeholders and residents on key messages
- How do we know if this results in action by a community?

Appendix 1. Longlist of draft key messages

It is expected that any communications we share will focus on the following draft longlist of key messages which complement existing national and local activity:

Symptoms, testing and self-isolating:

- To stop the spread of coronavirus, everyone has to play their part by isolating if symptomatic, booking a test as soon as possible and if asked to, identifying their close contacts. Find out more: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- Got symptoms? Get tested. High temperature or new continuous cough or loss of taste or smell? No one in your household should leave home if any one person has symptoms. Find out how to get a test and how long to isolate, at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus). Play your part.
- If you have symptoms, you should stay as far away from other members of your household as possible to protect them. It is especially important to stay away from anyone who is clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable with whom you continue to share a household. Play your part. Find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, use the NHS 111 online coronavirus (COVID-19) service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999. Find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

- Self-isolate when alerted. If you're told you have been exposed to an infected person you must self-isolate for 14 days. Play your part. Protect your friends and family. Find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- Be prepared. If you're told you have been exposed to an infected person you must self-isolate for 14 days. Play your part. Protect your friends and family.
- If you need to self-isolate, you can get an isolation note to send to your employer as proof you need to be off work. You do not need to get a note from a GP. Find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- Thank you to everyone helping to stop the spread by staying at home and booking a test if experiencing symptoms of coronavirus. Play your part. Find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- Thank you to everyone helping to stop the spread of coronavirus by self-isolating when contacted by NHS Test and Trace. Play your part. Find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- Before a vaccine can be found to beat coronavirus, contact tracing is the most effective way of controlling the spread of the virus and is being used around the world alongside social distancing and hygiene measures. Find out more: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)
- *Additional key messages will be developed as required*

Employers and businesses:

- Employers and businesses can play their part in the NHS Test and Trace programme to slow the spread of the virus and save lives by following the latest Government advice on working safely during coronavirus. Find out more: [gov.uk/workingsafely](https://www.gov.uk/workingsafely)
- By following the latest Government advice, employers can play their part and reduce the risk of employees having to self-isolate if a member of staff tests positive for COVID-19. Find out more: [gov.uk/workingsafely](https://www.gov.uk/workingsafely).
- Employers should play their part by encouraging workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate if they have coronavirus symptoms or have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace. Employees can find out more at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

- To stop the spread of coronavirus, employers should play their part by supporting workers who need to self-isolate. Employers must not ask those in isolation to attend the workplace. Staff can work from home if they feel able. Read the Government's advice for employers at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance#guidance-for-employers>
- Employees in self-isolation are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day they are in self-isolation, or can choose to use paid annual leave if they wish. Read the Government's advice for employers at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance#guidance-for-employers>
- Employers should remind staff of their sickness policies and procedures in case employees ever need to self-isolate. Read the Government's advice for employers at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance#guidance-for-employers>
- Thank you to employers in Gloucestershire who are playing their part to stop the spread of coronavirus by supporting employees who need to self-isolate. Read the Government's advice for employers at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance#guidance-for-employers>
- Thank you to employers in Gloucestershire who are playing their part to stop the spread of coronavirus by following the latest Government advice on working safely. Find out more: [gov.uk/workingsafely](https://www.gov.uk/workingsafely).

Outbreak control (phase 1):

- Keeping you safe. We're working jointly as part of the Gloucestershire Health Protection Board to reduce the spread of coronavirus in the county. Find out more: [weblink](#)
- We're working closely with partners across the county to ensure a safe, sustainable and inclusive recovery from coronavirus. Find out more: [weblink](#)

Outbreak control (phase 2):

- Stay safe. Testing shows an outbreak of coronavirus in [your area]. [Some businesses] should [close] temporarily to stop the spread and save lives. Find out more about coronavirus in Gloucestershire: [ADD LINK](#) #StaySafeSaveLives
- Stay safe. Testing shows an outbreak of coronavirus in [your area]. You [should] [stay home] temporarily to stop the spread and save lives. Find out more about coronavirus in Gloucestershire: #StaySafeSaveLives
- Stop the spread. Testing shows local outbreaks of coronavirus in [your sector]. [Your sector] should [do X] temporarily to help protect their staff and communities. Play your part. Find out more about coronavirus in Gloucestershire:
- Stop the spread. Testing shows local outbreaks of coronavirus in [your area]. Employers should [do X] temporarily to help protect their staff and communities. Play your part. Find out more about coronavirus in Gloucestershire:
- Additional and more specific outbreak control messages to be drafted when likely interventions are confirmed.

Outbreak recovery (phase 3):

- To be developed to reflect the specifics of the situation.