

Case study: Joint Winter Communications Planning



**Purpose:**

To ensure that the population of Morecambe Bay receive coordinated messages to help everyone have a happy and healthy winter, rather than different messages from different organisations.

All NHS and social care organisations face additional pressures during the winter period and as a result each organisation releases their own winter messages. We wanted to maximise our efforts and time our messages to help our local communities prepare for winter.

Following a meeting of the Bay Health and Care Partners strategic communications and engagement group, it was agreed that a joint approach would produce better results and a 12 week themed plan was then developed.

<p><b>Context (processes and conversations)</b></p>	<p>An initial meeting of communications representatives from Bay Health and Care Partners was held in October. It was led by an external facilitator – and was designed to promote closer working and better use of resources.</p> <p>From the meeting partners agreed to develop the framework for a 12 week plan, with a different winter theme promoted each week.</p> <p>The BHCP operational group then agreed a telecom each week to ensure each organisation is on track with requirements – social media schedule; filming schedule; media interviews; posters / campaign literature. This allows for additional support to be allocated when required, ensures everyone has the same materials to work with and makes the most of each other’s skill areas.</p>
<p><b>How it works, setting out the steps:</b></p>	<p>At a meeting of the partners a series of co-ordinated steps were agreed, to ensure an overall systematic approach was taken for winter, as follows:</p> <p>Step 1: Identify key messages from partners. - We requested the current or previous year winter plans from each organisation and amalgamated into a workable single plan.</p> <p>Step 2: Each organisation nominated which week(s) they would lead on and request support from other partners, eg filming support; retweeting key messages; distributing materials etc.</p> <p>Step 3: Arranged a weekly teleconference to highlight any last minute issues or requests for additional support. This also helped to co-ordinate overall messages. This was also an opportunity for the lead organisation to share the resources for the following week in advance (e.g. tweet schedule, YouTube links, radio advertisement schedule).</p> <p>Step 4: We repeated the process for the 12 week period, ensuring that support is available to cover for unexpected periods of absence (e.g. bereavement, illness)</p> <p>Step 5: Allow for the unexpected, i.e. outbreak of norovirus, A&amp;E becoming overwhelmed etc.</p> <p>The weekly themes are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ‘Perfect Week’: A&amp;E and discharge from hospital initiative</li> <li>2. Self – Care: tips and hints to help with common conditions</li> <li>3. Flu Vaccination</li> <li>4. Stay well and repeat prescriptions</li> <li>5. Medicine cabinet</li> <li>6. Loneliness</li> <li>7. Alcohol Awareness</li> <li>8. Look after your mental health</li> <li>9. New Year resolutions</li> <li>10. Nutrition and physical activity</li> <li>11. Mental Health</li> <li>12. Primary Care</li> </ol>

<p><b>Change elements</b></p>	<p><b>1) Collaborative working</b>  This approach builds closer working relationships between the various teams involved. For example, one team may have a social media expert, another may have a particularly engaging spokesperson – this approach brings those team members together, allowing for a new approach which individually may not have been possible.  Organisation’s involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS FT</li> <li>• Cumbria Partnership NHS FT</li> <li>• Lancashire Care NHS FT</li> <li>• NHS Lancashire North CCG</li> <li>• NHS Cumbria CCG</li> <li>• Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS FT</li> <li>• North West Ambulance Service</li> <li>• Lancashire County Council</li> <li>• Cumbria County Council</li> <li>• South Cumbria Primary Care Collaborative - GP Fed</li> <li>• North Lancashire Medical Services - GP Fed</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Engagement</b>  This approach means that the local population receive coordinated messages, with all organisations ‘singing from the same hymn sheet’. By providing a ‘core’ NHS message, <u>we ensure that as many people as possible receive the same advice.</u></p>
<p><b>Success so far:</b></p>	<p>To date the campaign has been successful in bringing colleagues together to agree a single plan for winter communications.</p> <p>Week 1 of the winter plan got over 70,000 impressions (views) on twitter for key messages. The BCT twitter account has 181,000 views between 7<sup>th</sup> November and 16<sup>th</sup> December, these statistics do not include our 11 partner organisations so the overall figure is higher</p>
<p><b>Lessons learnt:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to build relationships early. Using an external facilitator can help to keep discussions on track and avoid ‘silo thinking’.</li> <li>• It is vital to ensure that social media accounts are linked (e.g. following on twitter)</li> <li>• Use your experts: GPs, Paramedics, Nurses and Consultants are excellent spokespeople – making films of these people giving key messages, which can then be retweeted are very popular</li> <li>• Each partner organisation will have different strengths and it’s important to choose themes with this in mind e.g. mental health organisation leading on themes such as social isolation and loneliness</li> </ul>
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