

Message

From: Simon Ridley [simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
on behalf of Simon Ridley <simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> [simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
Sent: 26/07/2020 4:23:30 PM
To: Simon Case [SCase@no10.gov.uk]
CC: Kate Josephs [kate.josephs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; [redacted] NR [redacted]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk; [redacted] NR [redacted]@no10.gov.uk; Imran Shafi [IShafi@no10.gov.uk]
Subject: Re: Covid Comms

A few quick thoughts:

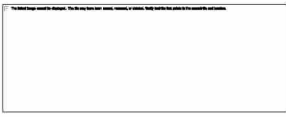
- I agree with the thrust of this, but wonder about a slightly more differentiated strategy. I'd suggest:

- (i) as per para 2, much clearer national messages based on key behaviours whether through mnemonic or equivalent. I'd add that I think the core of the message about adherence to behaviours should be for the benefit of community/country/economy/whatever works more than for personal reasons. Teenagers may rightly feel reasonably medically safe, but they need to know the risks to others and their jobs etc
- (ii) coupling this with increased channeling to key communities as suggested, but also using non government people/institutions to do this. The Pakistan cricket team type idea. From Chris's data we have to get through to key asian communities more successfully
- (iii) most differently, I think we can use the data we have much more. For example, should we get the local authority infection rates out publicly, updated weekly? Ask all councils to put their key data on front page of website? Ask some of local papers? Info at train stations?

In addition:

- i'm not sure what the proposal is on 'stay alert'. I'd dump it for the core behaviours as I think it is part of the complexity of our messages overall as people don't really know what it means
- it's a judgement call, but I worry whether some of the very stark messaging would scare too many people too much. We don't want everyone back inside worrying about sending their kids to school.

Best wishes
Simon



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On Sun, 26 Jul 2020 at 10:59, Simon Case <SCase@no10.gov.uk> wrote:
Views..?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alex Aiken <alex.aiken@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Date: 26 July 2020 at 10:53:07 BST
To: Simon Case <SCase@no10.gov.uk>
Cc: Lee Cain <LCain@no10.gov.uk>, "Mullally, Gerald - Cabinet Office (OFF-SEN)" <gerald.mullally@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: Covid Comms

SIMON CASE

Cc Lee Cain

FROM: ALEX AIKEN, CONRAD BIRD, HELEN HAMPTON, MATTHEW WALMSLEY, MARTIN FRIAR & GERALD MULLALLY

GRIP, IDEAS AND ACTION ON COVID COMMUNICATION

1. You know that the Covid team in 70 Whitehall co-ordinates cross government activity and run the main elements of the Covid campaigns. co-ordinates. We've met this morning and discussed how best to respond to the serious issues you raised yesterday. In summary our advice is to simplify and dramatize the fight against Covid to provide clarity and greater impact.
2. We need to unite behind a single objective which is to strip the re-emergence of the virus by consistently following understandable and actionable behaviours, which if not followed will have serious consequences for our friends, family and fellow citizens.
3. We think that there are three strands to this. First, clarity of overall objective and message, second very specific audience targeting (par 6), third, a strengthened local response.
4. Our assessment is that the 'Stay Alert' message has been undermined by the complexity of guidance, competing messages – go out and enjoy yourself - and the near impossibility of acting as the government recommends.
5. Our analysis suggests that in the public mind the message has morphed into 'stay safe' but groups of people interpret this in different ways given the complexity of guidance and specific groups believe that the threat is exaggerated. This undermines the required behaviour, particularly as now Covid feels like a more theoretical risk for many people.
6. We believe that the target audiences for this work include BME communities, young people who are in contact with older people and "White Van Man". Essentially these are groups who have a reduced fear of the virus.
7. A renewed campaign will need to simplify the required behaviours and also show what actions follow from them and the consequences of not complying. This is the work underway with the four behaviours, but we will need to show the consequences of not doing them.
8. We favour a much starker approach of warning of the risks of non-compliance – a 'stark realities' strand to the work showing the recovery from Covid, the impact of surgery and

ongoing health issues (similar to the anti-smoking campaigns). This would have to be shocking and real.

9. There are some immediate actions we want to pursue from this strategy
 - (i) Upweight the existing Stay Alert campaign from c£1m to c£2m a week, reducing other activity,, eg economic recovery work.
 - (ii) Immediately start the proposed partnership with 13 BME radio stations – this is a similar initiative to the press partnership.
 - (iii) Approach the FA to ask for a minute silence ahead of the cup final next week to remember those who have died.
 - (iv) Approach the BBC with the intention of producing some public information films to show the risks and consequences of not complying, set out in par 8.
 - (v) Approach the main digital platforms (Netflix, Amazon) with a view to finding ways to better use their media to reach specific audiences. We should bring all the broadcast and newspaper editors in to brief them on the response and ongoing challenge.
 - (i) Increase the use of BAME medics within our media medics initiative. We can increase the case studies, advocates and ‘media medics’ but there are plenty out there every week.
 - (vi) We will put in place much stronger local response teams on communication to directly advise and action with budgets attached.

10. There are other tactics that we think you should consider.
 - (ii) A daily online science briefing led by Government Office for Science to help people understand the risk and using PHE, NHS staff to answer public questions.
 - (iii) Consider a PM press conference later this week, perhaps aligned to the Test and Trace campaign to warn people of the re-emergent threat.
 - (iv) A much bolder approach on telling people what they are doing wrong, which might be best led by scientists and medics.
 - (v) A unified approach across the UK would help. If we could achieve political and medical unity it would be a powerful signal to the population.
 - (vi) A national day to remember those who have died, with suitable coverage would focus people on the problem of living with Covid but it would need the equivalent of the Remembrance Sunday 11am point in every town and village to work. The first Covid death in U.K. was around 28.2, perhaps slightly later, so the end of August marks six months on.
 - (vii) As a last resort we should consider appointing street or local wardens to monitor compliance.

11. There are an organisational change that will help as well. We have struggled with SPI-B and the BIT to get a coherent and single view of the best behavioural science. It is also difficult to share fully with SPI-B given the media profile of key players and the publication of all papers. BIT advise government in a variety of ways and sometimes replicate work that has already been done. We would favour a single source of behavioural advice convened through No10 and using our research experts and including James Rubin and David Halpern to directly advise on the best approach.

12. The team will be in the office from around 8am tomorrow and have their daily meeting at 9am chaired by: NR They will consider what else can be done and what can be most effectively delivered. Gerald Mullally is co-ordinating work today. It would be helpful for them to brief you directly tomorrow – particularly on the ‘key drivers’ analysis of people’s behaviour.

13. I’m happy to discuss the ideas set out in this note which are to the credit of my colleagues.

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