

COVID-19: A Framework for Scottish Government Communications

Phase 1 - The Pandemic, Restrictions and Avoiding a Second Peak

Purpose

On the 23 April, the First Minister presented **COVID-19 A Framework for Decision Making** to the people of Scotland, recognising that this pandemic is the biggest global challenge humanity has faced for generations, and confirming the Scottish Government's determination to stand in solidarity with the global effort to address the threat of COVID-19.

The briefing and Framework documents outlined the Scottish Government's commitment to be guided by the values of 'kindness, compassion, openness and transparency,' and recognised the diligence of the Scottish people to date in following public health advice to stay home. The First Minister paid tribute to the ongoing role which they will have to play not only in adapting how we live our lives, but in shaping how we 'recover to a new normal' and 'renew our country, building a fairer and more sustainable economy and society'.

This document sets out how Communications can help to deliver this purpose.

Future Phases

This is the first of three strategic communication documents. Additional papers will be developed to look at Phase Two – **Adjusting to the New Normal** and Phase Three – **Recover and Renew** in due course. Phases two and three will look at Covid 19 and key government priorities, including climate change, equality, population, and international reputation.

These documents build on the Communications Plan for Coronavirus (4 April), which set out our overarching goals throughout the pandemic - to inform, support and involve in a timely manner, through communications which are clear, consistent, evidence based and audience focused.

Section One

A Living Framework – what will communications deliver?

Like the First Minister's Framework, this must be a living document. It requires investment in a continuous programme of fast paced, responsive, joined up insight gathering among the general public – both qualitative and quantitative, polling and in-depth.

We have the opportunity, while current activity is live, to develop strategy and communications for the next phase. It is an opportunity to review, develop and test, and track.

But future strategy also requires dialogue, not just research, with the citizens of Scotland. Like the First Minister's Framework, the ensuing communications strategy should not run the risk of being viewed as prescriptive nor top down – 'scientists behind closed doors.' Only by opening the door to the people and actively seeking their views and opinions, their hopes and fears, their needs and struggles - can we begin to build a shared vision for a renewed Scotland.

There are currently two delivery systems to achieve this which we would propose are upgraded to deliver against the current challenge:

The Polling Tracker: a swift, topline sample of 1,000 adults is already in place. We must ensure it is carefully honed on a weekly basis to provide a 'topline' picture of attitudes, views and concerns regarding the current situation, plus broad brush exploration of potential developments and options under consideration. We should also recognise the limitations of such research. It works well at a whole population level, however its online nature and sample size mean it cannot give a complete picture of certain demographics and ages. It is difficult to drill down into this data with reliability.

We are working to bolster this with other research in the field, both Scottish Government and UK Government, and through methods that allow us to quickly 'top up' as and when we require more specific information. We are collaborating with Social Policy and Strategic Analysis colleagues to answer questions of mutual interest relating to COVID-19 by sharing insights and working jointly on questionnaires. Their telephone poll on COVID-19 will go live shortly and will give us better access to sub groups of the population that are less likely to be online.

Qualitative Research: Fast turnaround, qualitative feedback, both in-depth interviews and groups, are currently employed on an ad hoc, topic by topic basis with a range of demographics to inform communications. We propose a more cohesive, regular framework of qualitative research – timed to dovetail with issues raised by the polling tracker and by Government; for example before major announcements and to

inform campaigns. This may take the form of panels. However, we are also aware that panels can quickly become ‘sensitised’ to issues and are therefore less reliable in the long term as representative of the country’s opinions and attitudes. We are therefore exploring other options. In addition to these delivery systems, all Scottish Government communications activity is informed by evidenced insights from a range of disciplines, including behavioural science. We will continue to use these in the development of our work and the delivery systems themselves.

The new Dialogue Platform

In addition to these two sources of research we will be able to add the new Dialogue platform which has been welcomed by Ministers.

The *Framework for Decision Making* was updated on 5 May and was accompanied by the launch of a new online platform inviting the public to have their say. The platform will run for a week, supported by the Digital Engagement team and a team of moderators. Responses will be put into a summary report to be shared with Ministers and policy makers within a few days of the close of the forum to inform their judgement on proposals for change.

This will provide a doorway to open dialogue with the people of Scotland.

The creation of dialogue is in itself an act of hope, reassuring the public not just of a direction of travel in terms of lifting restrictions or requiring them to undertake certain behaviours – but where we, as a people, want to go. How we want to be. Different, yes – but the opportunity to be better and outward looking.

As the First Minister set out: A fairer, more sustainable economy. A kinder society that cares and addresses inequalities. These outcomes are referenced in the National Performance Framework and informs our ‘Business As Usual’ communications work, but they have come into even greater focus at this time.

Developing the Core Communications Proposition

As we move towards a new phase of potentially easing restrictions we have indications, based on quantitative and qualitative research, initiated in advance of the publication of the First Minister’s Framework, to inform this paper and help guide our communications approach.

Where are we now?

To date the core Covid communications strategy for ‘lockdown’ has been a tripartite message:

'Stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.'

Its delivery is carefully modulated to balance between public information and behaviour change. In this way it seeks to avoid frightening the public, (referenced in our mental health qualitative research as a source of distress for many, with some now 'backing off' from watching).

There are many behavioural studies (Road Safety Scotland, the effect of the historical Aids tombstone commercial) which would guide us strongly away from using more fear-inducing messaging unless absolutely necessary.

But we should never detract from the seriousness of the message, nor should it be sugar coated. Again, qualitative research shows that the public welcome a recognition that times are difficult and stressful and that it's okay to be worried.

We need to be honest and straight-talking, without using alarmist approaches which could add to high levels of anxiety many are experiencing at present.

We know that two thirds of the tracking sample are worried about the coronavirus situation, and although anxiety has declined since our tracking began towards the end of March, it is still at 35% (high level of anxiety) and 24% (medium) of adults¹.

While three quarters agree at least to some extent that they feel they are coping okay, those less likely to feel they are coping include 18-44s, those in the DE socio-economic groups, those who are separated/divorced, those who are unemployed/not working for another reason, those with two or more children in the household and those who have/had symptoms in the household.

We have launched a Mental Health campaign and resources (including three 15 minute daily Mon-Fri mini programmes on local radio encouraging healthy 'routines') to offer practical guidance and support to cope better, but we know that this can only offer supportive guidance, not long term solutions.

Behaviours generally are changing in line with guidance – overall compliance is good – and specific messaging has been undertaken to tackle specific confusions. The extension to the lockdown was broadly welcomed and now stands at 88% endorsement.

There is widespread buy-in to the stay at home restrictions due to the immediacy and relevance of the proposition, but qualitative research indicates that even those who may say they are strongly supportive, and very angry about those who break them, are often themselves cutting corners.

¹ Based on a YouGov poll carried out for SG on 28 and 29 April – an online survey with 1011 adults 18+ across Scotland. This data relates to that point in time.

We know there are many reasons why reported behaviour doesn't always match with actual behaviour but nonetheless all evidence (even the quantitative data) points to high levels of compliance but some deviance – especially among particular groups.

The balancing of the Scottish Government offering honest and transparent information, and thereby creating positive motivation, is holding.

We are carrying the majority of the public with us: 70% of the public agree: 'I trust the Scottish Government to decide when and how it's best to lift the restrictions,' (though this is notably lower for men than women 63%:76%).

Only 22% of adults agree that: 'I think the Government should start to reduce the restrictions now'.

But there have been unintended consequences such as agreement with statements about avoiding going to A&E or GPs for non Covid medical concerns, even if the concern is immediate, being around 35% (polling tracker). This has declined (from 45%) since we launched a new campaign to address this, with a call to action by Dr Carey Lunan, recognising that 'invitations' to action from an identifiable medical professional are more motivating than standard public information approaches.

Many of those with an underlying health condition, but no symptoms, are wrongly self-isolating and we have implemented additional health messaging to address this.

Of some concern are the figures in Scottish Government polling over time indicating a significant drop in the proportion of people who agree strongly 'the best thing to do in the current situation is to follow the Government's advice' (from 56% strongly agree in 31st March-1st April wave to 44% for the period 28-29 April). This reflects similar findings in the UK Government polling.

However it should also be noted that the overall level of adult agreement remains high at 85%.

We will continue to monitor this closely, especially among the male, C2DE sample. We would hypothesise that this response is likely to be a reflection of those who are experiencing more worries and stress around 'lockdown', particularly household finances, employment and inequalities.

The need to expand the proposition

The reasons for worry and concern are expanding – and with considerable coverage of the expected impact on the economy we are now seeing 74% of our tracker agreeing: 'I am worried about the long lasting effect of the restrictions on jobs and our economy'.

Immediate social damage through behaviours such as alcohol, drug dependency, the distressing need for more foodbanks, and domestic abuse is also widely recorded in news reports. We know that lives will be lost due to the wide reaching impact on the economy, delays to routine operations and scans, the reduction in people presenting early to healthcare practitioners, and to social harms.

As the First Minister said: “We need to find a way to live with this virus and minimise its harms. We need to ensure that as far as we can, our children are educated, that businesses can reopen and that society can function. But we must ensure that those things happen while we continue to suppress the virus... Every individual member of Scottish society matters and our entire strategy is focused on preventing every avoidable death. There is no such thing as a level of ‘acceptable loss’”.

The Framework document further outlines the impacts on: health and social care services (including non Covid health harms), future health arising from greater inequalities and wellbeing, as well as the impact of isolation and the potential harm to the economy, including the forecasting of a 33% fall in GDP.

As the Framework states: ‘The damaging effect on poverty and inequality may be profound’.

The public message focus that began as health is now expanding to include the economy and social concerns. We have already activated activity around domestic abuse, volunteering, community and financial stability, but there is more to be done.

Just as the First Minister describes, our communications strategy must seek to deliver this more expanded message, seeking to communicate that the Scottish Government will be ‘taking difficult decisions that seek to balance these inter-related harms so as to minimise overall harm’.

This strategy will build on a foundation of trust, with a recent survey indicating that people trust the Scottish Government to provide them with information about COVID-19 at a higher level than the UK Government, their employer or the media.²

Where does the public currently stand on the proposition?

At this moment, the public strongly favours the proposition: **‘Decisions on when and how to lift restrictions must be based on saving lives and protecting our NHS.’** Eight-nine per cent of adults agree with this statement.

Qualitative research shows that among DE respondents too there is support for the Scottish Government approach – open and honest – and while concern about the economy and jobs is rising, the priority remains health: **save lives, avoid a second peak and help the NHS cope.**

² <https://www.survation.com/survation-COVID-19-public-attitude-tracker/>

In second place these respondents would prioritise the economy, getting things moving so that people can get back to work and household finances eased.

A long way further back they list 'personal freedoms; in particular a desire for non-essential contact with friends and family' to be allowed and this is something that will have to be managed.

These responses are largely to be expected because they have been the focus of strong communications from both Scottish and UK Governments, consistent across News, Social Content and Marketing.

The NHS is probably the single most powerful and resonant brand in the UK. And 'saving lives' as well as the NHS is an almost universal motivation. It is now time to harness that powerful endorsement and compliance, and explore how we can take it forward to deliver the same when decisions are made to lift/phase restrictions.

Recommendation for Developing and Testing Core Communication Proposition

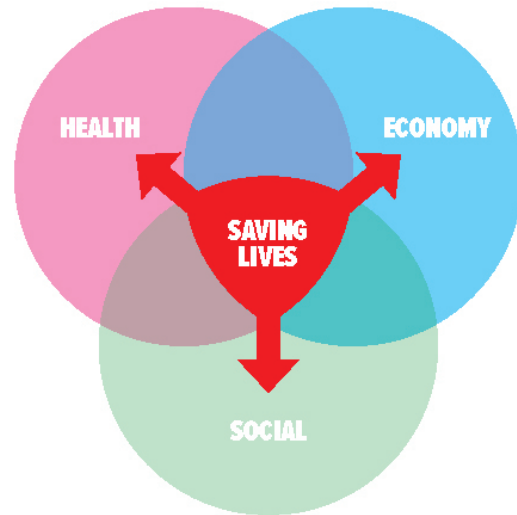
Communications must seek ways to maintain the strong core agreement to the current proposition and the FM's declared intention, and make it work across all of the interrelated sectors of health, social issues, and the economy.

And take the public with us through informed endorsement and compliance.

We would recommend therefore that '**saving lives**' becomes the core proposition and that we test the stretch and applicability of creating other tripartite statements or broader campaign propositions across key audiences. It may require to become more granular, even localised or sector specific; it may at times be weighted differently in terms of 'support' information, for example economic or social imperatives; it may require specific messaging and careful media targeting to reach vulnerable groups, those most at risk, addressing inequalities, businesses and the self-employed.

We would express this as:

Figure 1



Potential unintended consequences

There may be unintended consequences which should be explored. The current conviction that 'stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives' is the prime determinant for all decisions on restrictions may lead to a reluctance to 'come back out' again amid certain groups, unless we can guarantee there is no risk to them from COVID-19. It could underpin a risk aversion for some to going back to work (a classic cost/benefit analysis) or out into the streets or shops, or sending children to school. We know some parents removed their children from school even before the restrictions; some with underlying health conditions but no symptoms have voluntarily escalated their stay at home to unnecessary isolation.

There may be some groups – the 18-24s are likely candidates – who may lift all restrictions on themselves at the very hint of a relaxation.

There is every indication that families with children with no access to outside space are already 'stretching' the guidance. Those groups who are currently stretching or cutting corners on the restrictions may choose to reduce their compliance further, once restrictions are lifted for

some. There is anecdotal evidence in the media – Sky interviews with police on the beat, reported house parties, press coverage regarding non-compliance in parks (often England) and the response by Mayors/UK Home Secretary/Councils (often England).

These suggest there is already growing restlessness.

Instances such as the reopening of B&Q are raising questions as to whether there are ‘mixed messages’ – and where these arise whether this encourages some to abandon compliance

On the other hand, some who are adhering rigidly to the restrictions may be reporting on their neighbours who are not.³

How do we communicate and calibrate risk?

Determining how we communicate risk – and the basis on which such decisions are made – will be crucial.

And without frightening the public.

The importance of testing language, tone of voice and key messages will be critical. We propose testing language for use by all areas of communications, and seek input from colleagues to inform discussion guides for use with audiences.

We must be clear that without a reliable vaccine, we cannot offer a no risk strategy in the foreseeable future.

What we can all do is reduce risk and thereby save lives through following public health guidelines. That is a highly nuanced proposition and we should test whether it complies fully with a transparent approach.

But for some, the unintended consequences of the focus on saving lives, are ones of hardship and growing inequality and poverty, which is a dismal prospect. Without the motivation to maintain restrictions some vulnerable groups may break the restrictions entirely e.g. elderly people facing the prospect of a long, continued parting from their loved ones, those in abusive relationships. Additionally, those who are young and fit, and perceive themselves as benefitting less from the restrictions, seeing them as there to protect more vulnerable groups.

³ Between Friday, 27 March, and 7am on Thursday, 23 April, Police Scotland issued 1,637 fixed penalty notices and made 78 arrests across the whole of Scotland.

Again, it would be possible for the Communications Division to conduct research into whether specific restriction easing will be viewed as an acceptable risk and worth supporting (i.e. what it means to quality of life and wellbeing) and how we might also build compliance for continued stay at home restrictions for some but not others.

Communications could also offer behavioural guidance in the later stages of the Scottish Government preparing new guidelines. We can help to fine tune the communication and 'acceptability' of Scottish Government decisions before these are communicated to the public.

Communicating benefits of participation in Test, Trace, Isolate, Support (TTIS) is key

The TTIS strategy⁴ will be activated to "disrupt community transmission" when levels of coronavirus are lower than at present. Effective uptake of TTIS is essential to help protect others when we move out of lockdown. This will require new behaviours from the general public – clear communications will be key to driving these. They include:

- Calling (phone no. tbc) at the onset of coronavirus symptoms, rather than if these fail to resolve, as at present
- Contact tracing – preparedness to share details of recent contacts via web tool
- Isolating – preparedness to self-isolate for 14 days when advised someone you have been in contact with has symptoms
- Supporting others – for example assisting with access to food and medicine for those self-isolating.

The Importance of Clarifying the Vision in Early Communications

We would reiterate that to achieve the best behavioural outcomes - where we are asking the public to change long standing, human social norms, possibly even to go back into 'lockdown' if the need arises - we must always 'frame' our communications with the hope and intention that decisions are not only based on sound science and judgement, but a determination that together we can make **a better, fairer society and economy**; that we have a direction of travel; that Government is listening – and responsive – not simply reacting to circumstances. Only this way can we help deliver the commitment to 'respond, recover and renew.'

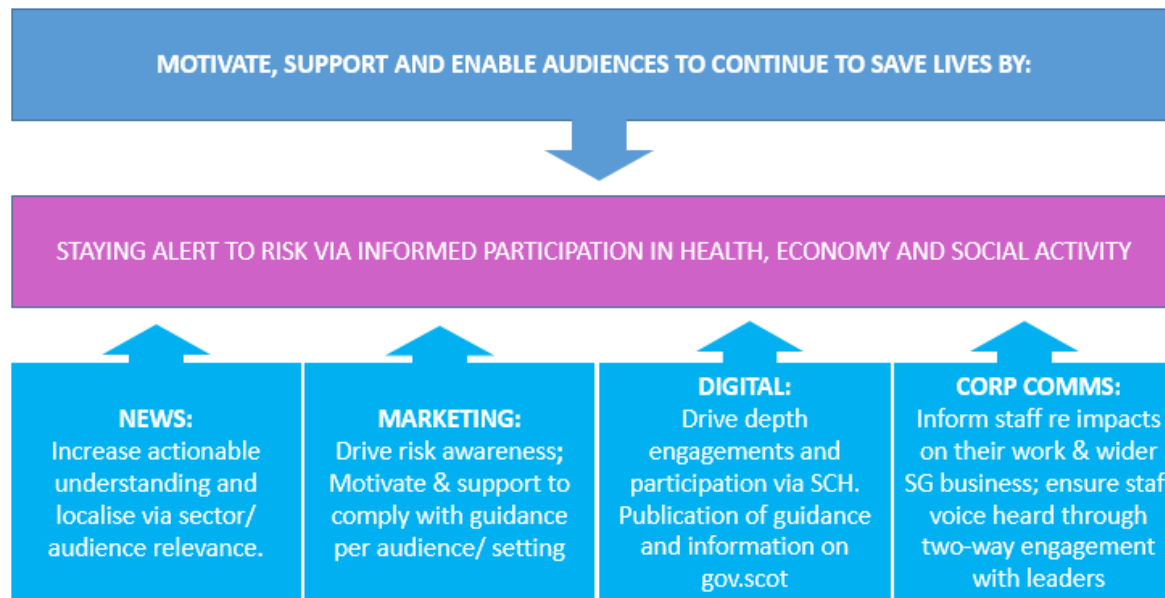
We would recommend that once the conversation with the public through Dialogue has provided feedback and insight, we begin to make the vision more tangible through public information and behaviour change campaigns. A clear vision of the future will help greatly to support compliance and wellbeing and give people hope and understanding of what they are working towards.

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-test-trace-isolate-support/>

It will also help to put risk in perspective and allow us to demonstrate new policies as being part of that purpose.

We hesitate at this stage to 'brand' the vision – though it does, as so many of the economic forecasts indicate, have broad similarities to Roosevelt's New Deal – but it is likely that very quickly this vision will require to have a name and we should be on the lookout for what comes back in consumer terminology. As a strand it does have potential to fit within the 'We Are Scotland' domestic strategy. However, although it may build on the recognition that 'we are a country that looks out for each other', we suspect it is too big an idea to be squeezed in there.

Pulling together these strands, our communications strategy in short can be represented as:



Section Two

Marketing - to date, we have seen our public health campaigns achieve 86-90% claimed action taken by campaign recognisers. The National Helpline campaign reached 98% of adults 70+ and drove 14,000 calls to the helpline. 'Scotland Cares' campaign generated 70,000+ volunteers and First Minister Q&A with children achieved a reach of 2,020,813.

A full list of campaigns can be viewed here with interim results - full evaluation, including changes in attitudes and behaviours against objectives, is underway: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1toBRSLwft1amcEi8-iDJBijDCW-hbYEd_Kx_9NekkYk/edit?usp=sharing

News – the reactive phase of the past eight weeks has meant no opportunity for channel-specific evaluation. We expect this to change as we move into the next phase and can then assess risks/tactics and positioning.

Digital - when the Framework for Decision Making paper was published on 23 April, it attracted more than 200,000 views on the first day, a huge rate of engagement for a government document.

In the week 27 April – 3 May, we saw 461,000 users viewing 1.2 million pages on gov.scot. Top searches included: *coronavirus*, *testing*, *facemasks and shielding*. The most viewed content included the daily data updates, testing for key workers, and advice on the use of face coverings.

A recent Facebook post thanking students and health care workers for joining the NHS reached more than three million overnight. A video posted on 4 May, with ideas for how people can help in their community, reached more than 10 million overnight. Both were organic reach – no money was spent to boost these figures – these are unprecedented levels of engagement with our social media channels.

Corporate Communications - we've seen unprecedented readership of Saltire News and Saltire guidance. In our recent poll 55% of Scottish Government employees told us that Saltire News was the most effective channel for receiving information about coronavirus. Our first article about the coronavirus outbreak had more than 20,000 hits – more than five times the norm.

The Ask ET session on 19 March - responded to more than 170 questions from staff. We've seen a rise of activity on Yammer, with groups offering support to staff on caring for others during coronavirus, remote working tips and more. And we've seen hundreds of people reach out and share their stories in blogs and Saltire News comments.

Current Communications Activity

Our communications over this period can be grid as follows.

TOPIC	TARGET AUDIENCE	AIM	COMMUNICATION VEHICLES, CHANNELS, STRATEGIES etc	CORE MESSAGE/S
Core Covid Health	General population	<p>Increase/maintain awareness of the actions required of individuals to reduce the spread of coronavirus.</p> <p>Increase awareness of why the actions are required</p> <p>Actions are across handwashing, physical distancing, household isolation and symptom awareness and a range of activity across a variety of channels has been developed and deployed</p> <p>Highlight where support or further information is available: NHS Inform; NHS 24; Ready Scotland; Local Authorities; Stakeholders</p>	<p>Core covid strategy</p> <p>Paid for: TV, Radio, Digital, Press, Out of Home, Door Drop, Influencers</p> <p>Earned: Media Relations, Social Media</p> <p>News</p> <p>Corporate Comms</p>	By doing <<insert behaviour>> you are protecting yourself, others, the NHS and saving lives.
National Helpline	Over 70s, those with UHC/social needs with no other support	To promote the new national assistance helpline and service	<p>Paid for: TV, press, radio, digital</p> <p>Earned: social media</p> <p>News</p>	If you can't get online and have no other support, call the national helpline.

Mental Health and Wellbeing	General population, targeting over 70s, / vulnerable groups, people with underlying health conditions and mental health problems or conditions, LGBT audiences, parents and young people	<p>To encourage people to recognise signs of stress and anxiety and enable them to cope better while they stay at home and physically distance.</p> <p>Further phases 2&3 are planned; resilience (potentially dealing with loneliness and emotions) and re-emergence (potentially dealing with supporting people when they leave the house).</p> <p>As part of phase 3, there's likely to be particular merit in signposting support services for those most struggling.</p>	<p>TV, radio, digital, PR, partnerships</p> <p>Bauer media partnership (3 x 15 min daily slots) running for six weeks from 27/04.</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>News</p>	<p>There are things you can do (moving more, doing things you enjoy, creating routine) to help you cope while restrictions are in place.</p> <p>Signposting support from NHS Inform, Breathing Space, Samaritans and SAMH.</p> <p>Phases 2&3 TBC.</p>
Non Covid Health				
The NHS is Open Presenting to GPs and Emergencies	General population	<p>Encourage those with urgent non-covid health conditions to continue to seek medical advice.</p> <p>Likely to add mental dimension to this.</p>	TV; Radio; Digital; Press, news and social media	If it's urgent, it's urgent. Do not put off seeking medical advice
Community				
Shielding	Shielding (156,000)	Direct communications to shielded group	Policy, NHS, Marketing	TBC
Communitarianism	General population	To encourage communities to look out for each other	'We Are Scotland' strategy TV, radio, press, digital, social, news	Find out how to help safely at readyscotland.org

BAME	BAME living in Scotland	Encourage BAME audiences in Scotland to continue to Stay at Home and comply with social distancing measures.	Digital, social, news	Stay at home and follow the guidance.
Volunteering	General population	To sign up to volunteer	'We Are Scotland' strategy TV, radio, press, digital, social, news	Sign up to volunteer at readyscotland.org
Revenge Porn	18-40	To reinforce the legal implications of sharing, or threatening to share intimate images without consent	Digital, press, radio, news	Up to 5 yrs in prison if you share without consent.
Domestic Abuse	Women 18-54	To reassure victims that support is still available during COVID-19	TV, radio, digital, social, news	Don't delay in seeking help during the current coronavirus situation.
Parental Audience				
Symptoms/Isolation	Parents & carers of children in Scotland	<p>Empathise with parents and reassure them that they are not alone in this.</p> <p>Support parents and carers with official advice, ideas and tips across a range of challenges including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and wellbeing • Child behaviour • Keeping active • Learning at home • Eating well • Breastfeeding/safe feeding of baby • Child safety (online and in the home) <p>Direct parents to parentclub.scot/coronavirus signposting to further sources where appropriate:</p>	<p>Parent Club strategy</p> <p>Paid for: TV; Radio; Digital; Influencers</p> <p>Earned: Media Relations; Partnerships; Social Media</p> <p>Owned: Parent Club website, Parent Club social media channels, eCRM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's tough being a parent / carer right now. • We understand the huge effort parents are putting in as you juggle this new routine. Please - don't be hard on yourself when things don't go to plan. • Just being there for your family is all that really matters, just take each day as it comes and enjoy the little moments. • It's important to acknowledge the pressure you're under and to make time for yourself.

		NHS Inform; Local Authorities; Stakeholders		Parent Club is here to help make things a little easier with tips and ideas to help keep the kids busy, keep everyone calm and try to make the most of the time together
Financial				
Financial Support	General population	Signposting people who may be struggling with their finances due to coronavirus (bills, rent, benefits, etc.) to help and support.	TV, radio, digital, news	For free, confidential, financial support, please visit cas.org.uk or call 0800 028 1456.
Tenancy Rights	Tenants in Scotland	Raising awareness of the new tenant rights following the passing of new legislation.	Digital, news, social	Find out about your rights and support at mygov.scot/tenants
Youth Audience				
Credible Coronavirus Information	Young people (11-22 year olds)	Provide access to support on a range of issues related to the coronavirus, including activities to do in lockdown, advice about health, education, finance, jobs and helping in their community.	Digital, social, news	Coping with Coronavirus and lockdown.
18+ Stay At Home	Young people (18-26)	Encouraging young people 18 and over to comply with guidance on staying at home by providing distractions / activities they can do at home.	Digital, social, news	Stay at home and follow the guidelines.
Young people and mental health	Young people (11-26)	Help young people deal with any anxiety or stress related to coronavirus and being in lockdown, by offering them ideas for daily activities and motivating them to participate.	Partnership w/ Young Scot	Take part in the Clear Your Head Challenge, with an activity idea every day, and share on social media.
Business Audience				
Businesses in Scotland		In development by Scottish Enterprise in partnership with Scottish Government Communications (see later).		

Possible Refinement of Current Communications to bridge into Changing Restrictions

- The core Covid-19 communications have been created to support the reasons for Scottish Government's continued restrictions and to motivate/reinforce the behaviours that will continue to save lives. By also beginning to provide the supporting 'science' ('the rate of infection' if not the actual reproduction (R) number, and the 'flattening of the curve' objective behind stay at home) we are further providing sound and demonstrable reasons to motivate people to stay home. In this way the public are already understanding of the contribution their behaviour can make to saving lives.
- Other COVID-19 marketing campaigns have been created to offer specific messages of support tailored to discrete audiences or as a response to tackling areas requiring clarification/reinforcement as identified by the tracking study. Most therefore expand key messages by topic to motivate compliance by overcoming reported confusion or reinforce the ongoing habit of good health hygiene. All should be tracked during the next few weeks to ascertain if they have provided clarification and uptake of the behaviours.
- Going forward, it may be possible to combine some of these messages, for example: handwashing and physical distancing; what to do regarding isolation for those with symptoms while clarifying that those who have an underlying health condition but no symptoms need not isolate. However, as it is more likely that some restrictions will be changed in the foreseeable future, we would recommend that we use tracking analysis alongside qualitative research to determine where we have got to in terms of understanding/compliance of these issues and to inform new adaptive strategies regarding who should stay at home/go back to work/ public places etc., as well as the need to continue good hygiene habits / physical distancing. There may be new requirements e.g. masks, use of public transport / active travel.

Potential New Routes to Current Activity as bridge into Changing Restrictions

TARGET AUDIENCE	INFORMATION	BEHAVIOUR	SUPPORT/MOTIVATION	EXPANSION ON SAVING LIVES PROPOSITION
Update Announcements: Bulletin format/Public Briefing	Progress on decision making re changing restrictions	To encourage continued compliance	To engage with decision making honest and transparent	Clarifies how lives are being saved now and will be saved by decisions on easing restrictions
Dialogue Platform	Opportunity to input into national discussion	To invite dialogue	Being part of preparing for the renewed future	How lives will be lived

Section Three

Towards the Changing of Restrictions – What we know from research to date

As outlined earlier, questions were included in our YouGov polling tracker and qualitative mini groups conducted prior to the First Minister's Press Conference and Framework document, to inform the Marketing and Insight Unit's response and provide a potential baseline for future work.

These results were therefore compiled **before** any Government advice, guidance or rationale was provided and should be considered within the overwhelming agreement that 'decisions on when and how to lift restrictions must be based on saving lives and protecting our NHS.'

It is most important therefore that we read between the lines. Respondents were basing their comfort levels on saving lives, perceived low risk and high safety.

Within some socio-economic groups – particularly DE males – there may be lower endorsement levels for continuing the lockdown due to financial concerns and a desire to return to work.

The key findings are:

Polling Tracker

- Comfort levels are highest for 'phased lifting of restrictions with those most at risk continuing to stay at home' - 27% very comfortable +52% fairly;
- 'phased lifting of restrictions based on testing so that those who have had coronavirus can return to work - 24% very + 46% fairly [note: this carries an inbuilt assumption that having had coronavirus delivers a degree of immunity as well as widespread testing];
- 'a phased lifting of restrictions with businesses re-opening according to how essential the Government considers different industries/sectors to be' -18% very + 60% fairly
- a phased lifting of restrictions with physical distancing measures maintained -17% very + 52% fairly;
- different areas of the UK lifting restrictions at different times according to when the Government thinks it safe -16% very + 41% fairly

Interestingly, despite considerable news coverage of other European countries announcing timings for the return to school, the comfort levels for 'a phased lifting of restrictions with children returning to school first' is only 9% very + 34% fairly.

A further question showed this to be important in terms of priority – potentially a contradiction with the above - but qualitative research explained the reasons. Essentially, there are a number of reasons why parents want their children to go back to school:

- they see the logic in it from the point of view of enabling parents to get back to work
- they believe that children are less likely to catch coronavirus
- they feel that children 'need it'.

However, overall their main concern is that whatever is done, it is done SAFELY – using science as the basis for it. Yes, it is important for school to reopen – but when it is safe.

For example, there is a lack of understanding of how physical distancing would be practised in schools and therefore how it could be done safely at the moment.

The only exception to those who felt it was important for children to get back to school sooner (which again ties in with the YouGov poll) was among parents of exam-aged kids. This is because they have been told that schools wouldn't go back in time for exams and they would have less trust in the government if that was now not the case. There is an expectation that because such a major step was taken that schools won't go back this school year, and in fact schools going back is also less critical for them to go back to work - because these older children are more independent.

We would note that the above represent a range of statements tested in research, not all policy options nor the eventual direction for Scottish Government in terms of approach to changing restrictions.

We also have IPSOS Mori data to a much smaller base (658 in Scotland) which indicates that:

- 76% think the Scottish Government is doing a good/very good job to contain the virus
- 64% who trust the Scottish Government to deliver information on coronavirus
- 43% who agree/agree strongly 'the restrictions on travel and mandates of self-isolation will not actually stop the spread of the virus.'
- 61% who think lifting restrictions for the less vulnerable is a poor/very poor idea

- 73% who disagree that we should restart the economy and allow businesses to open even if the virus is still not fully contained.

Qualitative Research

A recent small scale piece of qualitative research among lower socio-economic groups also indicated that there may be a 'risk assessment' building among some sections of the community – currently voiced as 'nervousness.' While concerns were growing about how long the pandemic would last and how the economy would recover (particularly 'will we struggle financially after this is over.. will there be jobs after furlough') there are strong fears that any suggestion that we are 'on the final straight' will lead to many who are already bending the rules starting to simply ignore them.

The priority here was very similar to the polling, with the addition of concerns about a second spike. This was expressed as: 'Health – save lives, avoid a second peak and help the NHS cope'.

The priority 'The economy/getting things moving/people back to work to ease household finances in the short term' came second.

There were concerns that any suggestions about lifting restrictions must come with a warning that any remaining restrictions are still very important to avoid a 'second spike'. There is a sense that most are happy for workplaces to be opened up (once it is safe) and based on economic priority, and for schools to be opened to help kids and allow parents back to work - when it is safe.

Most agreed that priorities should be based on a sensible balance between safety and economic recovery.

They expressed the need for Government to be "open and honest".

- These findings illustrate the need for clarity and straight talking when the Scottish Government provides the rationale for changing/phasing restrictions particularly around saving lives and the potential risks if we don't all follow the guidance/continued restrictions.

We must be clear that not all risk has been eliminated.

Key insights/ Future considerations

As we move towards the phased changing of restrictions we have identified several key insights which should be taken into account and possibly explored through research.

- **The Deepening and Widening of Inequalities:** if, as is likely, the Government is slower to change restrictions for certain sectors of the economy, and faced with a severe worldwide and national downturn, those living with existing inequalities are likely to be hardest hit. Already the UK Food Foundation reports: '6% of surveyed adults, the equivalent of 3 million people, live in a household where someone has gone hungry since the lockdown.' UKGov qualitative research indicates that there is a gap emerging between those who are experiencing a more comfortable lockdown versus those who are struggling. Such experiences, left unsupported, are likely to cause ongoing personal trauma and social division.
- **New inequalities** may emerge. Scotland's Chief Economic Adviser reports that there is likely to be a 33% drop in output with young people disproportionately affected as they tend to work in the worst affected sectors: retail, hospitality and tourism. Even as the job market spikes again, it is likely that the opportunities will not be well matched with the skills of those made unemployed. Consumer confidence may change drastically and spending patterns alter with a knock-on effect on the broader retail sector. The impact on lower skilled workers is likely to be greatest, especially those unable to work at home. Once secure, even affluent workers, may find that there are no longer sufficient businesses with jobs to fill. Many new start-ups may not get through the lockdown and self-employed and freelance/gig economy workers will struggle to find equivalent, secure employment. Many citizens may find that they have slipped down the socio economic scale, with all the resentment and deprivations- even hardship – that comes with it.
- **Youth: under achievement of potential and disaffection.** Sadly the disruption to education at all levels for young people is likely to cause immediate difficulties and if not addressed, longer term damage. Many infants in those vital early years will be missing out on relationships with grandparents, the external stimulus of outings, or simply the structured learning environments of nurseries. Many young people may have been waiting for exams to give their work a final push, particularly those in lower socio-economic households not always able to support home schooling, personal study or continuous assessment. In conjunction with the economic and employment assessment set out above, the long term consequences would be severe. We know from our own research that at the present time the restrictions are felt most keenly by young people who rely strongly on social interaction at this stage of their life. Just as being excluded from social media or friendship groups can have a deleterious effect on young people's health and wellbeing, so too are likely to be the effects of enforced 'isolation' as they see it, in their home.
- **Parents and Carers: Competing priorities, multiple challenges and conflicting/changing messages.** Parents are struggling to cope with the additional roles they are having to play in this situation. The level of support, advice and empathy differs across local authorities, schools and employers. Communications from parents to the Scottish Government, through channels including Parent Club and third sector support organisations, suggest that many are not being supported by employers to manage their increased childcare

responsibilities. Some educational establishments are contributing to parents' pressure and stress, expecting them to continue their children's academic learning at home and bridge the 'gap' in their formal learning. So while the Government is advocating employers to be flexible and supportive of their employees' family situations, and providing reassurance that time spent talking, playing, engaging with their children is equally important, if not more so, than enforcing home schooling, this is not necessarily reflected in the communications from other employers and educational establishments. This disconnect in advice/positioning versus reality is an issue to be addressed as restrictions are lifted.

- **'Long lasting scarring effects'** are forecasted by the Chief Economic Adviser, due to loss of businesses and unemployment. Opportunities will be lessened and narrowed even in a V shaped economic forecast – even more so if a second surge results in a double W dip.
- **'Closer, but further apart'** In some ways society is becoming closer and kinder as a result of coronavirus, but only in attitude and action and only in pockets. In parallel as the impact of coronavirus is felt disproportionately by those in the lower social demographics and the under 25s the inequalities gap will continue to grow. The divide between young and old, and the more affluent and less prosperous communities could become a challenge as we look to pull the country together.
- **'Deprived communities disengaged and desperate'** those living in the more deprived communities who were already struggling are most likely to be impacted by coronavirus. They are most likely to lose employment, fall deeper into debt and contend with exaggerated mental and physical health issues. They are also most likely to die from coronavirus if contracted. In most cases their already chaotic lifestyles will be pushed to the limit. Their prospects and optimism levels will be at an all-time low. Feelings of desperation and hopelessness could lead to erratic, rebellious behaviours as they lash out at government for imposing strict restrictions, which are 'causing' more problems. This audience understandably will be less receptive to a positive rally call about the future. In order to engage this cohort practical and tangible support and reassurances must be provided in the first instance.
- **'Dwindling levels of engagement and empathy'** Citizens are going through ups and downs as they deal with the trauma of coronavirus. They are human and can only take so much for a period of time. Empathy for the situation and challenge we face will decline. This in turn is likely to lead to less belief, trust and engagement in government. The long term health and societal impacts of coronavirus will be greater than the pandemic itself and we know the impact on Scotland's economy will have a detrimental effect on our people over a number of years. To take the public with us it will be key to set out 'our' achievable goals and outline the stages of changes required to reach the common target. We must manage expectations while retaining momentum.

- **'The NHS can cope'** To date 'protecting our NHS' has worked well in encouraging compliance/empathy and compassion. Flattening the curve is understood by the majority. However levels of complacency and confidence are growing as the public see the NHS coping and government keeping things under control. We must continue to hold the NHS in high regard and praise the work that is being done, but at the same time bring to life the reality of a sudden surge in cases and transmission. This will support compliance and encourage citizens to follow government advice.
- **'Apprehension around the new normal'** The majority of the public appreciate that things will not go back to the same as they were when restrictions are lifted. There is some awareness that physical distancing will remain longer term, masks/face coverings might be required when leaving home and those most at risk will need to adjust their way of living. The initial fear of leaving lockdown and increasing their exposure to coronavirus will need to be managed. Those with poor mental health may not cope well, people living in dense areas of deprivation and population will struggle to maintain physical distancing due to their environment. At risk groups will be required to limit contact for longer, which could lead to higher levels of poor mental health and even in some cases agoraphobia. And key workers will continue to need mental and physical support to sustain their roles. It will be key to provide clear, detailed information and tangible support during these phased changes.
- **'Relaxing measures means we're back to normal'** Countries where restrictions have been relaxed have found that the public interpret this as a signal that things are going back to normal. This can and has impacted on compliance. The language we use during the 'coming out phase' should be carefully considered with detailed instructions delivered with a serious undertone. For example words like 'relaxing', 'reducing' and 'alleviating' should be replaced by 'permitted', 'authorised', 'consent to'. Critical to success during this phase will also be the need for advice and support around how people should and can implement these changes.

But with these negatives may also come the potential for positive change

- **Harnessing Altruism, A Youth Movement for Change**
There is an opportunity right now to harness the inbuilt altruism of youth, as has happened in so many crises in history, into a force for change. This could begin now with encouraging young people to engage with the Dialogue platform as described earlier, but also into a more formal structure: a new community that is central to the Renew Strategy.
- **Neighbours have finally met and communities have shared experiences and values:** it began with small acts of kindness, maybe just saying hello as we all came out to Clap for Carers, or just remembered there was someone elderly and alone in street/block of flats

or a mum on her own with the children. Connections have been made and there is an opportunity to recognise these and to help support them as growing networks for the future. There is increasing evidence of a recognition that we are all connected.

- **Renewed focus on the environment** Communities have reclaimed road space for walking and enjoyed reduced pollution, quieter roads and resurgent biodiversity. There is greater focus on the 'local', due to people avoiding unnecessary travel. There is the potential to highlight these unintended gains and work towards intentionally retaining them in the interests of the environment, community assets and enjoyment.
- **A social reset?** As the 'lockdown' continues, more and more people – as evidenced in the Clap for Carers and the growing support for Essential Workers through the media (plus our own media relations campaign) – are likely to be re-evaluating just what is important to them in life – and those who have 'gone out to work, so we can stay safe at home' - often those people in low paid jobs with little job security. The growing public concern and re-evaluation of the importance of care home staff is well documented. There have sadly been cases of abuse by some members of the public against food retail staff, but there are also many instances of 'local heroes' being celebrated: bin collectors, posties, delivery workers, volunteers, neighbours, faith groups, the 'hidden workers' who keep our lights on, and homes clean and warm, foodstuffs grown and packaged. It may be that with a return to the new normal such gratitude fades – or it may also be that more members of the public having benefitted from a new found solidarity with essential workers, will see this as a chance to recalibrate and look to Government to effect change.

Section Four

An outline communication grid for Changing Restrictions

The purpose of this grid is to begin to set down and test where future communications will be required and in what form:

TARGET AUDIENCE	INFORMATION	BEHAVIOUR	SUPPORT/MOTIVATION	EXPANSION ON 'SAVING LIVES' PROPOSITION
General Public	1 Announcement bulletins 2. Campaign setting out specific changing of restrictions and clarification on why decisions made, start date, details, sectors, location 3. Clarification on who should remain at home and shielded (and if some are returning to work) 4 Clarification of advice for those with/or who develop symptoms 5. Specific announcements filmed for broadcast 6. Potential for there to be variance across the Four Nations	Support the continuance of good hygiene habits and safe practices: physical distancing, handwashing, rotas if required, public transport, shopping for essential items, shopping for non-essentials and how to behave if returning to work Need for continued messaging around non-Covid-related health e.g. NHS open, going to GP to mitigate longer term health impacts Need to clear messaging for vulnerable/shielding population, particularly if guidance is, as it's expected to be, very different from other population e.g. can see grandparents?	How decisions made as per Framework What we can do to make it work, better.	Make links across health, economy and social issues

		Clarify how to reduce risk.		
BAME	Clarification of guidelines for multigenerational households where applicable	Advice as to how to self-isolate within a household if required via contact tracing (see TTIS)	Protect each other	All BAME: Links across health, economy and social issues Muslim audiences: Prepare to celebrate Eid at home
Business Campaign by Scottish Enterprise: General Population and by relevant sector, employers Recognition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS • Carers • Essential Workers 	Clarification of which business may open, which in pipeline and why Continued signposting to available support (this in collaboration with Scottish Enterprise and other business stakeholders)	Engage with sector-specific messages on how to open up the economy, in line with government advice. Follow new workplace models.	Support on to how to conduct business for safety of workers and customers if public facing (risk mitigation)	Personal motivation to support economy/wages and recognition of business role in saving lives
Parents and carers (and children), pregnant women	Schools / ELC - Advice on when schools will re-open and safe Employee legal rights of working parents with childcare responsibilities Financial support inc food poverty Mental health support for parents Advice and reassurance around changing restrictions for pregnancy	Reassurance and guidance on learning at home and promoting consistent messages across SG and LG Support and advice for parents to help their children readjust to life back at school and a 'new' routine Reassurance and guidance on learning at home and juggling work commitments	Reducing feeling of isolation and guilt via "You are not alone, we're here to help" messaging Support and reassurance in regards to parental worry and guilt of exposing child/ren to health risks should they return to school	Celebration of families and the sacrifices being made to save lives

Young people	<p>Restrictions – Clarity on what the new guidance is and what restrictions are in place. Can I see my friends?</p> <p>Education – Guidance on when schools / college / universities will re-open and what will happen with exams, qualifications, etc.</p> <p>Mental health – Dealing with anxiety or depression as a consequence of Coronavirus and lockdown.</p> <p>Money & Finance – Support on finding / returning to jobs, paying bills / rent, benefits, etc.</p>	<p>Follow the guidance on restrictions.</p> <p>Returning to education, studying at home, etc.</p> <p>Keeping busy and productive, accessing support if required</p> <p>Accessing entitlements, budgeting, planning effectively, accessing support, understanding rights</p>	The more compliance with the guidance, the sooner we can start lifting restrictions.	This is your future. Let's rebuild it together.
<p>Social Support</p> <p>Mental health</p> <p>Domestic Abuse</p> <p>Loneliness/isolation</p> <p>Substance Misuse</p> <p>Homelessness</p> <p>Community cohesion</p>	<p>Mental & Physical health Support for forthcoming scenarios that people will need to cope with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staying at home for longer - going to work (while others remain at home) - reacting to pressure (due to mental 	<p>Recognise the signs of poor mental health and feelings of fear and loneliness. Use coping techniques, (using Psychological first aid frameworks), signpost to support.</p> <p>Seek immediate help if you are in danger/an abusive household –</p>	<p>Reassure 'at this time, many are feeling afraid or unsure, reinforce good habits, encourage healthy new ones. Reassure that support is available.</p> <p>Reduce feeling of isolation and signpost support services</p>	<p>Underlying purpose of restrictions is to save lives, worth the sacrifice / will have an end point.</p> <p>Everyone matters and people want to help.</p>

	<p>entrapment / lack of usual coping strategies) - society re-emerging but remaining physically distanced - ultimately lifting of restrictions</p> <p>Domestic abuse Reassurance of support service, Police will take action</p> <p>Loneliness/isolation (may come under Mental Health) Older/at risk/shielded population likely to have stricter restrictions/not going out for longer – social impacts of this</p> <p>Also potential links to digital connectivity /exclusion for this audience</p> <p>Substance misuse</p>	<p>support line, PS, safe space initiative</p> <p>Helpline, support services, mental health support</p> <p>Joins with community/look out for neighbours approach</p> <p>Continue to help safely, look out for those most vulnerable in your communities</p>	<p>Support is still available and accessible whatever your circumstances</p>	
<p>Test Trace Isolate Launch and Uptake of App</p>	<p>New guidance on what to do if you have symptoms – call tel no</p>	<p>Call when have coronavirus symptoms</p> <p>Self-isolate if you receive notification from contact tracing</p>	<p>Protect others</p>	<p>We all have a part to play</p>

Seasonal Flu: recognising there will be vastly increased demand and considering different methods of delivery/those who receive free				
CODE RED Preparation of Immediate Return of Restrictions information campaign (just in case)	<p>Revert to simple, national messaging focused on critical need to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.</p> <p>Subsidiary campaigns emphasising various forms of support available to vulnerable</p>	<p>Follow the new guidance on restrictions</p> <p>Help others in a safe way</p> <p>Increasing uptake of mental health and other support services</p>	<p>By staying at home we are saving lives</p> <p>Do you bit and we'll all get through it</p> <p>The more compliance with the guidance, the sooner we can start lifting restrictions again</p>	<p>We have done this before, we can do it again</p> <p>This is no less important now than it was in March</p>

Detail on the specific roles for each of our communication disciplines, with one common goal: to save lives.

News

The First Minister's Daily Press Briefings continue to be the most direct way to communicate with the public and therefore should be the first point of engagement when setting out thinking and ultimately giving direction if and when restrictions are eased.

Core messaging will continue to focus on the "new normal", compliance and progress so far but also the four harms and their consequences.

Broadcast and radio are central to the communications handling and bids by the First Minister, Health Secretary and CMO will reinforce consistent messaging from the peak point of delivery through to action by Government and beyond.

Print media – which is experiencing plummeting sales because of lockdown and has significant numbers of journalists on furlough - is still playing role in being active and visible around the briefings and also contributing to the debate via social media. News releases have a role in putting actions on record but the human voice via bids is necessary to cut through directly to the public.

Social media clips reinforcing messaging are essential in securing demographic reach.

Blogs and placed articles will also be used to further explain thinking and provoke engagement through the portal.

Marketing

As we move towards a new phase of potentially changing restrictions we have indications based on quantitative and qualitative research – initiated in advance of the First Minister’s Framework to inform this paper – to help guide our marketing approach.

More broadly however, we would, based on traditional advertising metrics, hypothesise that our marketing should also look and feel different for the next phase. It is likely that due to high recall, coverage and frequency there will have been wear out of the current advertising template. It has worked – no question – the tracking results are powerful.

But a downside of reaching 93% prompted awareness of the need to ‘stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives’ and strong compliance and recall of messages – especially as restrictions are starting to chafe, and the news is getting a bit better and the sun’s out – is that motivation falls and that people believe (correctly), ‘I’ve seen this before’. And begin to tune out.

The TV advertisements are likely to be associated with lockdown, not necessarily the door opening. The more time we all spend at home with our screens, the more we need to ‘connect’ with others and never more so as the discussion turns to ‘lockdown’ easing. We would therefore recommend that this new template looks to move away from the locked down camera in a closed room and changes the colour of graphics to signify a change in times. It should look brighter, letting the light in,

All underpinned by the opportunity to open up dialogue with the portal. This portal is not to exclude or expose to query the fundamental proposition of Scottish Government decisions being informed by scientific analysis and sound judgement – but given that these decisions are made with the wellbeing and indeed lives of the people of Scotland uppermost (and can only succeed with the support of its people) - it should also we believe, be ‘demonstrated’ in the communications.

Social/Digital

Our digital and social channels are a fundamental and far-reaching channel of communication with the people of Scotland and beyond. Our focus is to create highly accessible and engaging content that informs, reassures and empowers citizens.

Gov.scot is the main source of official guidance and policy, and we are updating materials on that site every day. We refer to user insight and best practice to ensure this information is accessible, and we closely monitor the analytics to inform decisions about how we present key information, also gathering feedback via the pages to help Policy areas further develop guidance.

Our social media channels are reaching more people than ever before, with record levels of engagement reaching millions every week. Our output features a mix of key announcements, inspirational messages, behaviour change campaigns and myth-busters. We aim for highly visual content; using imagery and video, animations and graphics to catch people's attention and get our messages across quickly and clearly. We closely monitor the discussions and trends on social media to inform priorities for content development, such as identifying potential misinformation and posting factual updates to counter this.

We support the daily press briefings by sharing the videos online to be accessible by all, also streaming via Twitter wherever possible, and adding the video to the written statement published online each day. Feedback has been very positive about the openness and availability of this information.

Our Digital Engagement team are advising on the best use of online channels to meaningfully engage the public and stakeholders. On 5 May we launched a new online platform, ideas.gov.scot, inviting ideas and comments as part of our commitment to involving the people of Scotland.

Internal Communications

Key messages and specific communications products for internal staff will be informed by the Corporate Continuity Hub as part of their 'building reinstatement action plan' and wider recovery planning. Themes will include latest coronavirus developments (external), ways of working (HR, IT and Facilities), support for staff and recognition, and coronavirus recovery.

We will work with the Corporate Continuity Hub to update our internal [core script](#), which will be used to support the delivery of clear and consistent staff communications throughout the recovery phase.

Corporate Communications will continue to use a range of corporate channels as we move the focus of our communications response to support a potential gradual return to Scottish Government workplaces and the wider recovery phase. We will need to be ready to respond at

short notice if, for example, measures need to be re-imposed if, after easing any restrictions, the evidence signals that is necessary, seeking input from our trade unions, networks, and all staff.

Pauline Aylesbury, Head of Marketing and Insight | Aileen Easton, Head of News | Scottish Government Communications