

Communications Update

Purpose

For information.

Summary

This report summarises communications activity between April and June 2015.

Since 2013, and following the publication of our communications plan and strategy, a monitoring and evaluation system has been developed to allow tracking and recording of our main communications activity. As well as volume of media activity, it also allows the tone of coverage (positive or negative) and ratio of proactive and reactive coverage to be measured. We also record and measure activity across digital, parliament and a range of other channels used to influence the political agenda and to ensure local government's voice is heard.

Recommendation

That the LGA Leadership Board notes the communications activity for the period April to September 2015.

Action

As directed by Members.

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Communications Update

1. The main results for April to June 2015 are:
 - 1.1. National media coverage down 12 per cent year-on-year from **295** in the same period for 2014 to **264** in the first quarter of 2015. This is mainly attributable to purdah restrictions from March 30 up to the General Election on May 7.
 - 1.2. **84 per cent** of coverage was through pro-active media work against our target of 75 per cent.
 - 1.3. **89 per cent** of our national coverage was positive, a year-on-year increase of 10 per cent compared to 79 per cent in the same period last year.
 - 1.4. The LGA secured positive commitments from the political parties in their General Election manifestos.
 - 1.5. The LGA was mentioned **51 times** in Parliament between in this period.
 - 1.6. 932,501 website page views by more than 238,800 unique users.
 - 1.7. 11,952 twitter followers with 9.5 million potential impressions.
2. The main results for July to September 2015 are:
 - 2.1. National media coverage up by nearly a quarter year-on-year from **438** in the same period for 2014 to **544** in 2015. **This period saw us exceed our highest ever number of media mentions for a single calendar month, in September.**
 - 2.2. **84 per cent** of coverage was through pro-active media work against our target of 75 per cent.
 - 2.3. **86 per cent** of our national coverage was positive.
 - 2.4. The LGA has been mentioned **139 times** in Parliament between July and September.
 - 2.5. The LGA has submitted formal written evidence to **15 Select Committee inquiries.**
 - 2.6. The LGA hosted debates on devolution across the party conferences and our councillors spoke at a wide range of events hosted by over **40 stakeholders.**
 - 2.7. The 'Better Devolution for the whole of the UK' inquiry which the LGA is providing the secretariat for took evidence from the former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.
 - 2.8. 836,887 website page views by more than 201,242 unique users.
 - 2.9. 12,834 twitter followers with 19.3 million potential impressions.

Other key activity

Campaigns

Be a Councillor

3. In July, we launched a localised Be a Councillor campaign, working with Rotherham Council. As part of the campaign, a new website was developed; marketing materials – including leaflets, detailed guides and animations – were produced.
4. To date, the Rotherham pages on the new website have had 1,933 page views against a target of 2,000 and almost one in four visitors (483) took a ‘quiz’ designed to give an overview of the role of a councillor in the council against a target of 250.

Future Funding

5. The Future Funding campaign, launched ahead of the General Election focuses on securing sustainable funding for local government ahead of the Spending Review in November.
6. ‘A Shared Commitment: Local government and the Spending Review’, was launched at Annual Conference and has been downloaded 4,788 times in addition to 2,000 hard copies which were distributed to members, officers and stakeholders. In addition, our Future Funding Outlook has been downloaded 9,983 times from the LGA website.
7. ‘Spending Smarter: A Shared Commitment’ which formed the technical Spending Review submission to the Treasury has been downloaded 11,524 times whilst 700 hard copies have been distributed.

DevoNext

8. DevoNext was launched ahead of the General Election. Our main campaign document has been downloaded 25,666 times to date and 1,660 hard copies have been given out to delegates, members and stakeholders. In addition, a public health focused publication – ‘English devolution: local solutions for a healthy nation’ – was produced and has been downloaded 12,430 times to date, with 500 publications printed and distributed.
9. To accompany the publications, a DevoNext hub was created on our website. This hub pulls together information and tools for councils that are building devolution deals and is regularly updated. Over Q1 and Q2, the hub received 9,693 page views from 1,792 unique visitors.

Refugees

10. In response to the Syrian refugee situation in addition to our negotiation, media and public affairs work, we created an online hub, pulling together frequently asked questions along with guidance for councils. The web page has been well received, with 8,343 page views (average views for pages on the website are around 2,000), 4960 unique visitors and 1,116 returning visitors which indicate that the page is being well-used as a reference resource.

11. Those visiting the site included councils, central government and the media. In addition, 'single-issue' bulletins have been sent to leaders and group leaders; chief executives; and heads of communications. These have had a positive response with good open rates.

Further information

12. A full report outlining the quarterly results from April to June 2015 in more detail can be viewed [here](#) if Members would like further information.