

Title of Report:	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: NORTHERN IRELAND DISTANCE AWARENESS SCHEME
Committee Report Submitted To:	ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9th March 2021
For Decision or For Information	FOR INFORMATION

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy, Active and Engaged communities
Outcome	Compliance with Health Restrictions/Guidance
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	NIL
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to members attention of the Department of Health initiative Distance Awareness Scheme with a scheduled launch by the Minister of Health on the 24th February 2021, #BeDistanceAware

2.0 Background

2.1 The Scheme is designed to promote and reinforce the message amongst the general public of the need to continue to maintain social distancing for the foreseeable future.

2.2 The scheme involves the manufacture and distribution of 400,000 badges with a motif designed to promote this message. The badge looks like this.



2.2 Lapel badges are to be distributed to members of the public through:

- Community Pharmacies when filling prescriptions;
- The seven Trust Regional Covid-19 Vaccination Centres;
- Primary Care as part of the vaccination programme; and
- ASDA have agreed to make a version of the badge available at information points across their 17 NI stores.

This means that there will be around 900 distribution points.

2.3 A number of posters have also been produced with examples below.



2.4 The messaging around this scheme is very simple:

- Please give other people space.
- Please keep your distance.
- Keep safe. Keep other people safe.
- Feel safe. Help other people feel safe.
- Respect other people's space.
- Have other people respect your space.

2.5 The Department of Health is engaging with a range of organisations including local Councils to ask for their assistance in promoting the scheme.

2.6 To that end, a supply of lapel badges has been requested for use by elected members and will be made available to the public at each of the civic buildings and high footfall buildings (once restrictions are eased), together with the display of posters to promote the scheme. The scheme will also be promoted through the Councils website, Social media pages, ezines where appropriate and staff Newsletter.

2.7 A copy of the Briefing Newsletter is provided at Appendix 1.

3.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that committee note the above and support the promotion of the scheme.

Distance Aware

Social distancing campaign

Briefing newsletter

February 2021

In the fight against coronavirus, maintaining social distancing is everyone's responsibility. While the general public has made a conscious effort to abide by the social distancing guidance, as with anything fatigue sets in. And with the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme well underway there are fresh concerns around complacency.

These concerns coupled with the increased anxiety of many, especially those in vulnerable groups, around contracting the virus is where the ability to offer a polite prompt to maintain distance has been welcomed*.

The Distance Aware campaign aims to address this through use of a consistent and instantly recognisable symbol, the Distance Aware Shield. The visual icon can be displayed on a poster or worn as a badge.

The Distance Aware campaign is fully operational in Wales, endorsed by the Welsh Government and the National Health Service (NHS). It was recently adapted for use in Northern Ireland and launched by the Health Minister. The initiative is supported by the Department of Health (DoH), the Public Health Agency (PHA), and the Patient and Client Council (PCC).

The campaign will be promoted through community pharmacies, general practices (GPs), Health and Social Care Trusts, and in the voluntary and community sector through the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA). Northern Ireland sporting bodies and Supermarket retailer Asda are also backing the campaign. Distance Aware badges will be available from information points in all Asda stores.

*Based on research conducted in Northern Ireland with the Patient and Client Council's membership and the general public.

Campaign audience

The campaign is applicable to everyone. The badge can be worn by anyone to signify that they wish to maintain social distancing.

There is a particular focus on distributing the campaign badge to those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and those who work with vulnerable people, including carers, and health and social care workers.

It is, however, not meant to be an identifier of someone who has been shielding or may have any specific health condition/s.

Posters featuring the Distance Aware Shield can be displayed by organisations and businesses to signal that they are a stockist of the badge or to simply show that they support the initiative.



Campaign objectives

- Show support for social distancing.
- Remind the general public to maintain distance.
- Promote the Distance Aware message via distribution of the campaign badge and/or by displaying campaign posters.
- Help reduce anxiety in the public around contracting the virus.

Distance Aware campaign messages

The Distance Aware Shield, whether worn or displayed, is an indicator to others that the wearer/organisation would like others to maintain a respectful distance where possible.

When promoting the use of the Shield or explaining what it means, whether in printed material, on your website, on social media, or in person, you should reference the name of the initiative, Distance Aware, wherever possible.

Suggested language/statements you could use include:

- Are you distance aware?
- Thank you for being distance aware.
- Please be distance aware.
- I am distance aware.
- We are distance aware.
- Our employees are distance aware.
- Be distance aware. Keep people safe.
- Keep others safe by being distance aware.

To help people to understand the purpose of the symbol and the request to be distance aware, you could use these simple explanatory messages, tailoring them to your audience:

- Please give other people space.
- Please keep your distance.
- Keep safe. Keep other people safe.
- Feel safe. Help other people feel safe.

- Respect other people's space.
- Have other people respect your space.

Resources

Help us promote the Distance Aware social distancing campaign by displaying the posters and by using the social media assets, which will be available to download and share from

www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-19-distance-aware



Please follow our social media accounts:

Twitter: @publichealthni @ healthdpt @PatientClient

Facebook: @publichealthagency

Instagram: @publichealthni