

## **Behavioural insights project: using behavioural insights and experimentation to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Sandwell**

### **1) What is the behavioural insights project about?**

Sandwell Council is working with The Behaviouralist to design and test behavioural interventions that reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in Sandwell. We expect the interventions to be rolled out via one (or more) workplaces in Sandwell, and we are looking for partners who can help develop and implement the interventions. Finally, we hope to evaluate these interventions using what is known as a randomised controlled trial.

### **2) What is a 'behavioural intervention'?**

A behavioural intervention is a low-cost and non-intrusive solution that aims to change how individuals make decisions. An example of a behavioural intervention is a flyer that emphasises that most people think it is important that you wash your hands multiple items per day (utilising 'social norms'), or a text message asking individuals to publicly commit to taking a vaccine (utilising 'social recognition').

### **3) What is a Randomised Controlled Trial?**

Randomised controlled trials involve assigning individuals (or places and objects) to a control group and one or more treatment groups. Those in the control group go about their business as usual, and those in the treatment groups receive a behavioural intervention (e.g., an email). After sufficient time has passed, we measure our outcomes of interest, and make comparisons between the control and treatment groups. This type of evaluation is superior to other methods, such as focus groups or pre-post analyses, and it lets us establish the precise causal effect of an intervention.

### **4) How could we work together to develop and test behavioural interventions?**

#### **Step 1**

Our public health team and staff from The Behaviouralist would schedule a meeting with a representative of your organisation to learn more about the specific challenges that you have been facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, it might be that your organisation would benefit most from interventions that increase adherence to personal protective behaviours, encourage participation in lateral flow testing, or promote vaccinations.

#### **Step 2**

If your organisation would like to participate in this initiative, we would then work collaboratively to develop one or more behavioural interventions that are tailored to your context and to design a randomised controlled trial. We would support you with the resources necessary to roll out the intervention in your organisation. This might include providing you with material such as posters, letters, and email templates, or training your staff in how to collect data to ensure the success of the trial.

**We kindly ask you for your support with this initiative. Please let us know if you would like any further information; we would be happy to schedule a meeting or to provide you with any further details.**