



Public Health
England

Draft: Results removed
pending peer review



Department
of Health

NHS Health Check National Conference 2016

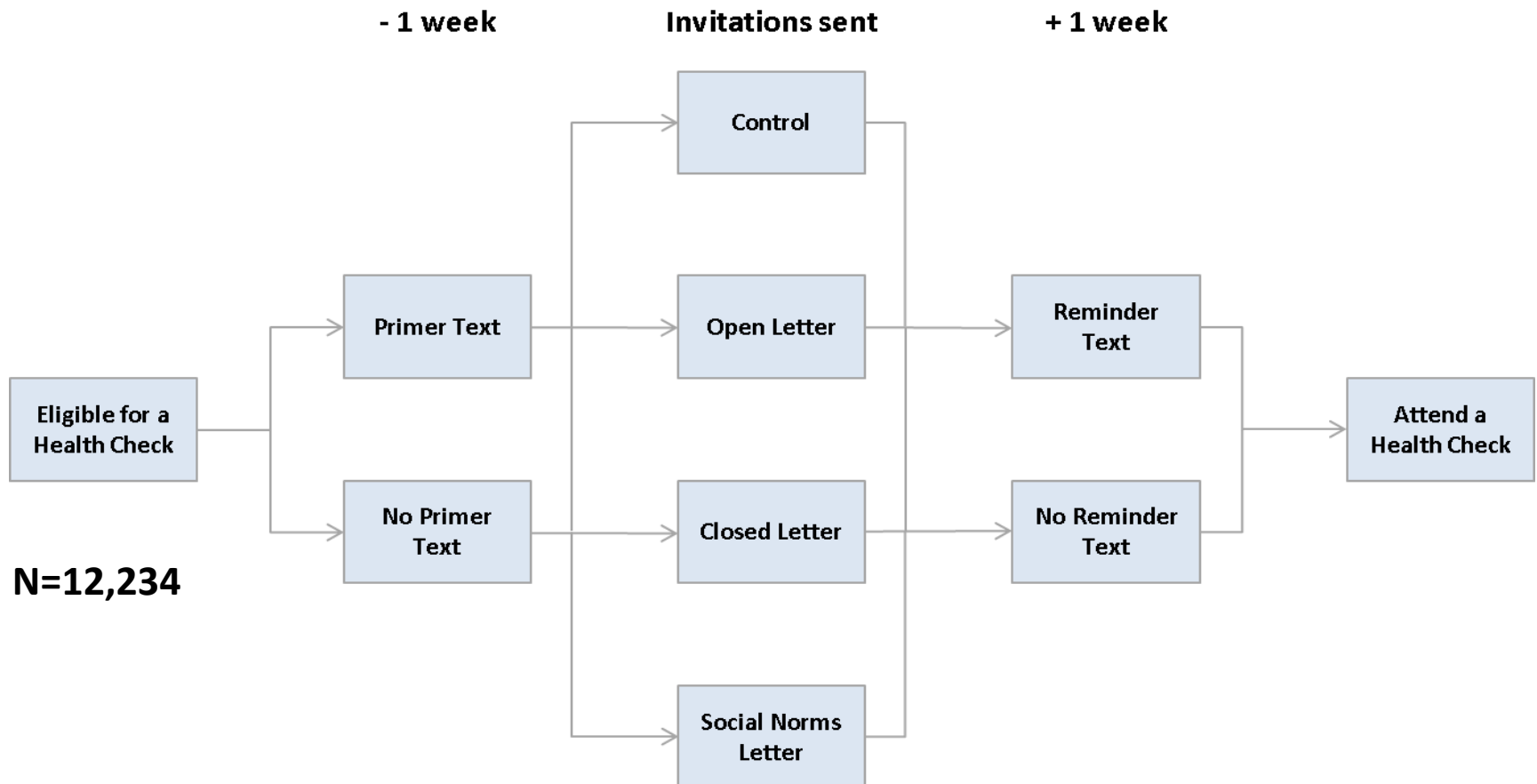
Increasing uptake of NHS Health Checks – A behavioural insights approach to invitation letters and text messages

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Factorial randomised controlled trial

Southwark have a centralised system that sends invites on a monthly basis.
Trial ran between November 2013 and December 2014.





Randomised to receive one of 4 letters

1.

Original letter as control

Ref: 123456
NHS NO: 1234567890
20 September 2013

Ref: CHD
Mr Test Patient
1st Line
2nd Line
3rd Line
4th Line
POST CODE

On behalf of
Sample Surgery

NHS England
Screening Services
South London PCSS
1st floor, Cantilever House
Eltham Road
London
SE12 8RN

Dear Mr Test Patient

Invitation to a free health check

We are inviting you to have a free NHS Health Check. NHS Health Check is a national programme for people between 40 and 74.

The aim of the check is to assess your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, kidney disease or diabetes and then to work with you to reduce that risk. If we find any problems with your health we can also prescribe treatment.

The check should take about 20-30 minutes and is based on straightforward questions and measurements such as age, sex, family history, height, weight and blood pressure. We will also take a simple blood test to measure your cholesterol and glucose levels, in some cases.

Following the check, you will receive free personalised advice about what you can do to stay healthy, as well as treatment if this is necessary. There is good evidence that by taking early action, you can improve your health and reduce your likelihood of developing these conditions.

You can have your health check at a local pharmacy listed in the enclosed leaflet, or at your surgery (Sample Surgery). To book your check please ring 0203 4039 9999 and quote "NHS Health Check".

If you are unable to make it to the surgery you can also have your check done by the Southwark's Health Check Outreach Team. Please go to www.southwarkopt.nhs.uk and click on Healthy Living for information on outreach session in Southwark.

Take a look at the enclosed leaflet for more information about the NHS Health Check and how it could benefit you.

Yours sincerely
Dr Doctor

High quality care for all, now and for future generations

2.

Simplified
Open invite
Tear off slip

NHS

Dear <to be inserted by mail merge>

Your NHS Health Check is now due.

Please call <to be inserted by mail merge> to book your appointment at your GP's surgery and record this on the tear off slip below.

You can also have your health check at your local pharmacy listed in the enclosed leaflet. To book, please ring 0203 4039 9999 and quote 'NHS Health Check'.

Yours sincerely

Dr <to be inserted by mail merge>

Please record the date and time of your appointment and stick it on your fridge.

Name: <to be inserted by mail merge>
GP practice: <to be inserted by mail merge>

I am going to my NHS Health Check on __/__/13 at ____ am/pm
Practice address: <to be inserted by mail merge>

3.

Simplified
Closed invite
Tear off slip

NHS

Dear <to be inserted by mail merge>

Your NHS Health Check is due in August.

Please call <to be inserted by mail merge> as soon as possible to make sure you get your appointment at your GP's surgery and record this on the tear off slip below.

You can also have your health check at your local pharmacy listed in the enclosed leaflet. To book, please ring 0203 4039 9999 and quote 'NHS Health Check'.

Yours sincerely

Dr <to be inserted by mail merge>

Please record the date and time of your appointment and stick it on your fridge.

Name: <to be inserted by mail merge>
GP practice: <to be inserted by mail merge>

I am going to my NHS Health Check on __/__/13 at ____ am/pm
Practice address: <to be inserted by mail merge>

4.

Simplified
Social norms
Testimonials

NHS

Dear <to be inserted by mail merge>

Your NHS Health Check is now due.

In Southwark, thousands of people like you have attended their health check and benefited from personalised health advice.

Please call <to be inserted by mail merge> to book your appointment at your GP's surgery.

You can also have your health check at your local pharmacy listed in the enclosed leaflet. To book, please ring 0203 4039 9999 and quote 'NHS Health Check'.

Yours sincerely

Dr <to be inserted by mail merge>

How an NHS Health Check helped me

"My cholesterol was a little high, so I got a piece of mind regarding my state of health generally. Since the health check, I've cut down on alcohol and made some small changes to my diet" Mr RK, Southwark

"I already knew I was a bit overweight and a health check was a wake-up call which helped me understand the risks of developing diabetes and heart disease. I've changed my eating habits, am being more active, less sugar and oily food, and more salad and vegetables. I exercise a lot more." I've joined an exercise class and really enjoy going for brisk walks. I've already lost nearly half a stone and we all definitely realise it's time to go for it!" Ms CD, Southwark



Personalised planning prompt



Dear <to be inserted by mail merge>

Your NHS Health Check is now due.

Please record the date and time of your appointment and stick it on your fridge.

Name: <to be inserted by mail merge>

GP practice: <to be inserted by mail merge>

I am going to my NHS Health Check on __/__/13 at ____ am/pm

Practice address: <to be inserted by mail merge>



Limited appointment slot planning prompt letter



Dear <to be inserted by mail merge>

Your NHS Health Check is due in August.

Please call <to be inserted by mail merge> as soon as possible to make sure you get your appointment at your GP's surgery and record this on the tear off slip below.

You can also have your health check at your local pharmacy listed in the enclosed leaflet. To book, please ring 0203 4039 9999 and quote 'NHS Health Check'.

Please record the date and time of your appointment and stick it on your fridge.

Name: <to be inserted by mail merge>

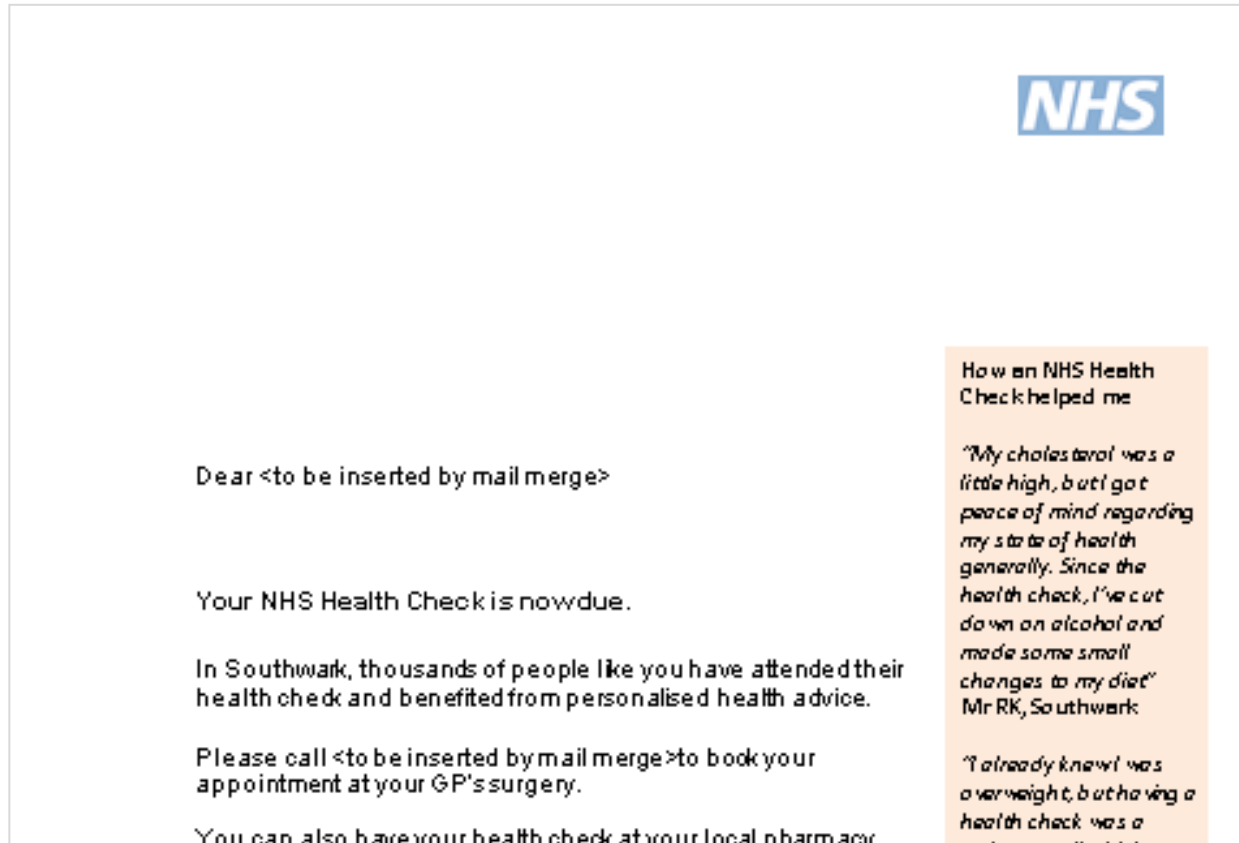
GP practice: <to be inserted by mail merge>

I am going to my NHS Health Check on __/__/13 at ____am/pm

Practice address: <to be inserted by mail merge>



Testimonial Letter



How an NHS Health Check helped me

"My cholesterol was a little high, but I got peace of mind regarding my state of health generally. Since the health check, I've cut down on alcohol and made some small changes to my diet"
Mr RK, Southwark

"I already knew I was overweight, but having a health check was a wake-up call which helped me understand the risks of developing diabetes and heart disease. I've changed my eating habits, eating smaller portions, less sugar and oily food, and more salad and vegetables. I exercise a lot more - I've joined an aerobics class and really enjoy going for brisk walks. I've already lost nearly half a stone and would definitely advise others to go for it"
Ms CD, Southwark

How an NHS Health Check helped me

"My cholesterol was a little high, but I got peace of mind regarding my state of health generally. Since the health check, I've cut down on alcohol and made some small changes to my diet"
Mr RK, Southwark

"I already knew I was overweight, but having a health check was a wake-up call which helped me understand the risks of developing diabetes and heart disease. I've changed my eating habits, eating smaller portions, less sugar and oily food, and more salad and vegetables. I exercise a lot more - I've joined an aerobics class and really enjoy going for brisk walks. I've already lost nearly half a stone and would definitely advise others to go for it"
Ms CD, Southwark



Randomised to 1 of 4 text message conditions:

Primer

One week before letter



“Dear NAME, your NHS Health Check is due at your GP practice. We will post you a letter soon with info about how to book your appointment”

Reminder

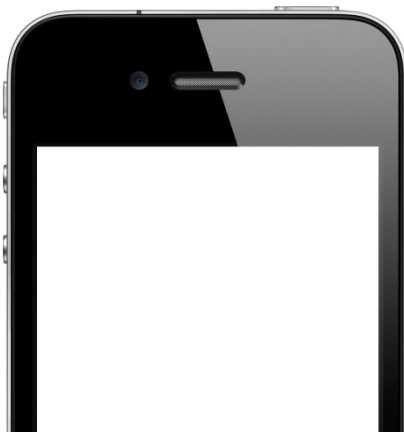
One week after letter



“Dear NAME, Your GP recently sent you a letter inviting you to attend your NHS Health Check. Call PHONE NUMBER to book an appointment.”

1.

No text message



2.

Primer and reminder



3.

Primer only



4.

Reminder only





	Control	Treatment Letter 1	Treatment Letter 2	Treatment Letter 3
No Text	1	2	3	4
Primer Text	5	6	7	8
Reminder Text	9	10	11	12
Primer and Reminder Text	13	14	15	16

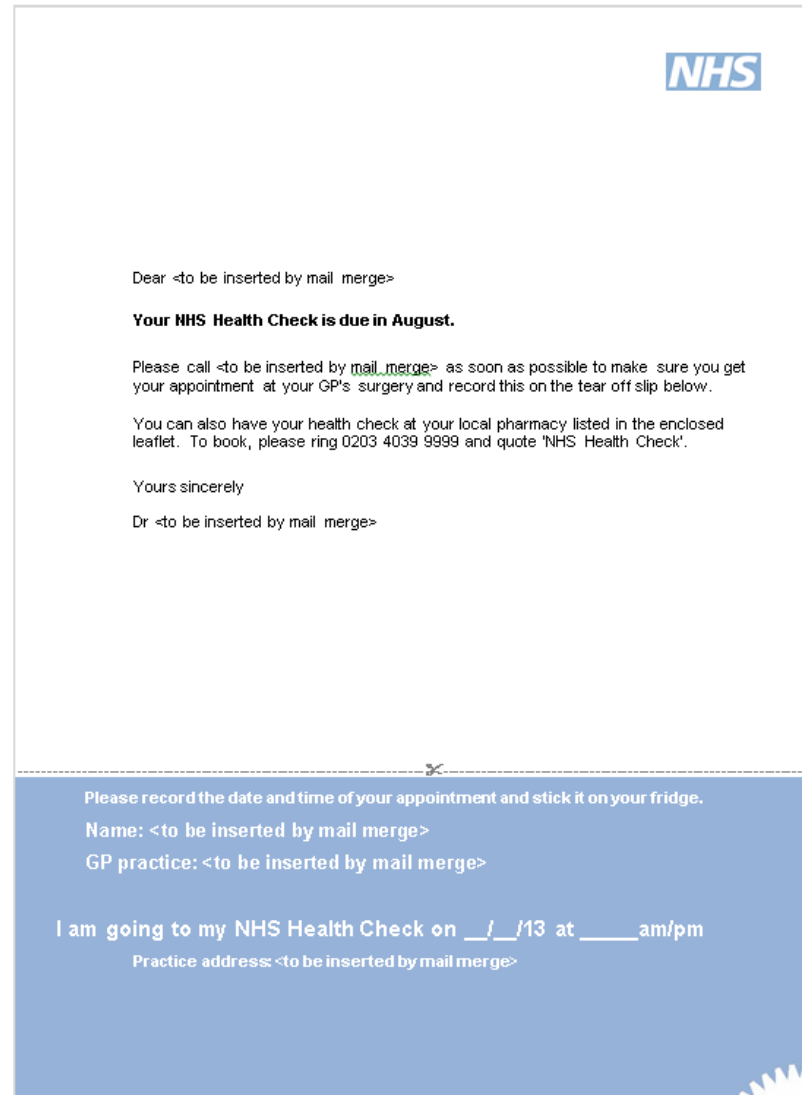


Behavioural Insights Applied

Active ingredients - SMS

(1) **Priming:** your letter is due

(2) **Prompting:** reminder to book



The image shows a template for an NHS Health Check reminder letter. It features the NHS logo in the top right corner. The letter is addressed to a recipient whose name is to be inserted by mail merge. The text of the letter includes a greeting, a statement that the recipient's NHS Health Check is due in August, and instructions on how to book the appointment, either by calling or visiting a local pharmacy. The letter is signed by the GP. Below the letter, there is a blue section with a white border containing a reminder to record the appointment date and time on a fridge, followed by fields for the recipient's name and GP practice, also to be filled by mail merge. At the bottom, there are two lines for the recipient to fill in: the date and time of their appointment, and their practice address, both to be filled by mail merge.

NHS

Dear <to be inserted by mail merge>

Your NHS Health Check is due in August.

Please call <to be inserted by mail merge> as soon as possible to make sure you get your appointment at your GP's surgery and record this on the tear off slip below.

You can also have your health check at your local pharmacy listed in the enclosed leaflet. To book, please ring 0203 4039 9999 and quote 'NHS Health Check'.

Yours sincerely

Dr <to be inserted by mail merge>

Please record the date and time of your appointment and stick it on your fridge.

Name: <to be inserted by mail merge>

GP practice: <to be inserted by mail merge>

I am going to my NHS Health Check on __/__/13 at ____am/pm

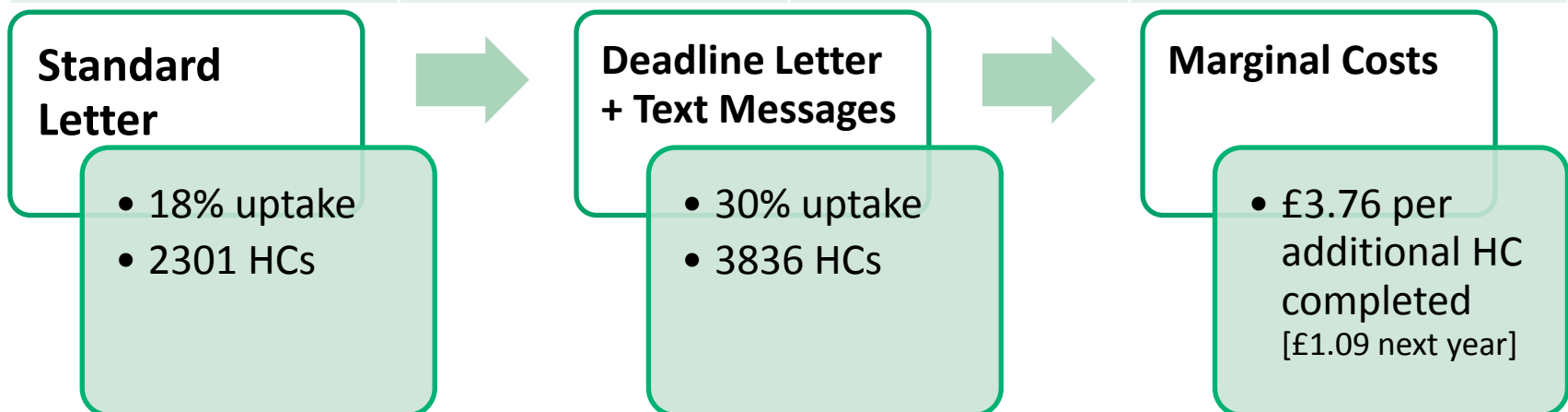
Practice address: <to be inserted by mail merge>

Active ingredients - letters

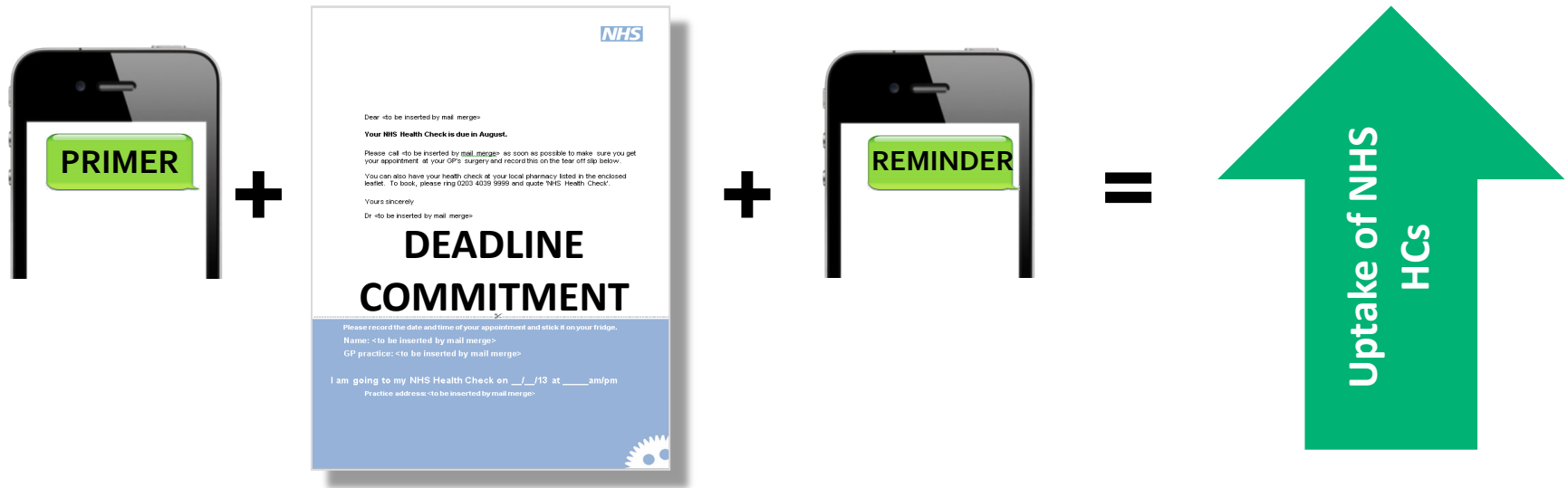
- (1) **Simplification:** The letter was shortened for less effortful processing
- (2) **Behavioural instruction:** Action focused – what to do.
- (3) **Implementation intentions:** Planning prompts
- (4) **Scarcity and personal relevance:** “Your NHS Health Check is due in August.”

Costs

Description	Unit(s)	Price per unit	Total
Communication Hub Set-up	1	£2,000	£2000
Communication Hub Subscription	Per year	£545	£545
Connector Set-up	28 practices	£75	£2100
Connector Subscription	Per year	£100	£100
SMS	25576 messages (2 per eligible patient)	£0.04	£1023
Total			£5768



Conclusions



- ✓ Send a good letter (no additional cost)
 - ✓ The use of the current national template letter (personalised commitment) was the most effective letter without text messages.
- ✓ Text messages can be a cost effective means of increasing uptake
 - ✓ Text messages were most effective when used with the deadline commitment letter (approximately £3.76 per additional HC completed)



Authors & Acknowledgements

Authors

- Anna Sallis
- Joseph Sherlock
- Sarah Williams
- Laura Freeman
- Annabelle Bonus
- Tim Chadborn

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Thanks

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