



Top Tips for NHS Health Check patient information leaflets and media campaigns

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In 2017 and 2018, Public Health England ran two trials to explore different ways of communicating with patients about the NHS Health Check. One trial explored the impact of a pilot media campaign (posting NHS Health Check adverts in local newspapers, on social media and on local billboards) on awareness and attitudes to the NHS Health Check in Plymouth and Southampton.¹

Another trial investigated whether improving the national patient information leaflet using techniques from behavioural science (e.g., shortened leaflets with content framed in terms of potential losses – “don’t miss out!” – or potential gains – “make the most of life!”) could improve uptake of the NHS Health Check programme in Lewisham and North East Lincolnshire.²

This “top tips” document makes recommendations for commissioners and service providers based on the findings from these trials

Don't allocate resources to enhancing the NHS Health Check patient information leaflet.

Compared to the standard leaflet, enhancing patient information leaflets using techniques from behavioural science was NOT effective at increasing NHS Health Check uptake.² See PHE's advice for increasing take up [here](#).

Do use media campaigns to enhance patients' awareness of the NHS Health Check

The pilot media campaign increased awareness of the NHS Health Check programme and increased patients' recall of receiving a patient information leaflet with their invitation letter.¹

Don't assume media campaigns will increase uptake

The trial found that intentions to attend a NHS Health Check were not affected by the campaign. Actual uptake rates were not investigated in this study.¹

Do evaluate local media campaigns

Despite the positive finding of the pilot media campaign increasing awareness of the NHS Health Check, the evaluation also found that people who had already known about the programme were more likely to report barriers to attendance (for example, lack of time, feeling well and not needing a check) as the campaign progressed.¹ The reasons for this were not explored, but a possibility is that increased awareness may have increased people's need to justify not attending a check. This highlights the need for evaluation and careful design of information campaigns.

References

- 1 Blue Marble (2018). NHS Health Check Pilot Campaign – Plymouth; Campaign Evaluation Report
- 2 Gold, N., Durlak, C., Sanders, J. G., Thompson, K. & Chadborn, T. (2019). Applying behavioural science to increase uptake of the NHS Health Check: a randomised controlled trial of gain- and loss-framed messaging in the national patient information leaflet. *BMC Public Health* (19) 1519. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7754-5>