

# Public Health England NHS Health Check Marketing Advice and Ideas



**NHS  
HEALTH  
CHECK**

Helping you prevent

diabetes

heart disease

kidney disease

stroke & dementia

# Introduction

This short document has been created to assist in promoting the NHS Health Check to those eligible residents in your area.

It is a step-by-step guide to simple but effective marketing and is based upon research undertaken by Public Health England (PHE) to review the NHS Health Check identity and better understand the combination of messaging, imagery and branding that best communicate with the NHS Health Check audience.

This document should be used alongside the Identity Guidelines which provide you with a core set of materials, including advertising and stationery templates, photography and research to aid you in your marketing of NHS Health Check.

If you require any additional support or advice, or have any examples of effective, measurable marketing activity you would be happy for us to share, please contact us at [alisa.janmohamed@phe.gov.uk](mailto:alisa.janmohamed@phe.gov.uk)

## The NHS Health Check brand identity and materials

Before you start planning your marketing, take some time to look through the Identity Guidelines which can be found on the resources area of the NHS Health Checks website [healthcheck.nhs.uk](http://healthcheck.nhs.uk)

This will provide you with a flavour of the type of materials available to use – a small selection of which is illustrated here.

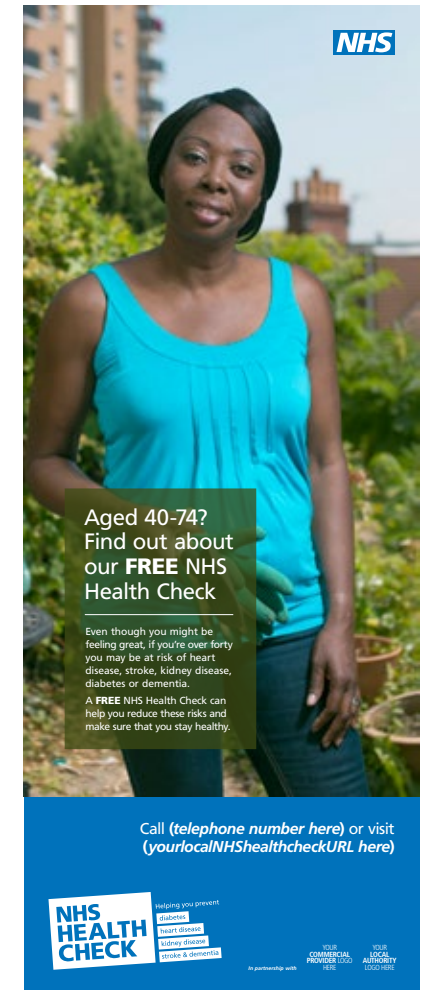
A4 Ad



A3 Poster



Pop-up roller banner



## Before you start

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Before you begin your plan you should take stock of your current situation. It may help to answer the following questions:

1. Do you have a list of communication or public health priorities?
2. Are you aware of what marketing or promotion has been done before?
  - a) Did it work?
  - b) Is it worth repeating?
  - c) How would you do it differently?
3. Is there commercial, or other public health marketing activity, happening in your area?
4. Are there complementary campaigns taking place?
5. Do you need to alter your approach to make allowances for these?
6. What do you know about your audience?
  - a) How can you best reach them?
  - b) What kind of messaging would appeal to them?
7. What are the key factors affecting/influencing your environment?
  - Perhaps carry out a SWOT analysis of your position (SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
8. Think about what marketing channels are open to you and what may be appropriate bearing in mind the above questions.

[See the following pages for more details.](#)

## Preparing a marketing plan

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Before you commit to anything, it is worthwhile creating a simple marketing plan which will ensure that everyone remains focussed on the core objectives for your area.

You can also use this plan to keep all of the relevant stakeholders in your area aware of the marketing you're planning to undertake.

Your marketing plan should cover the following six headings, each of which are covered in more detail within these guidelines:

1. What are my objectives?
2. Who am I targeting?
3. How much do I spend, and what channels should I use?
  - What time of year should I run a campaign?
  - What will be most effective?
4. What materials do I need to market NHS Health Checks – and how do I access them?
5. Are there local opportunities to partner schemes/initiatives or organisations to promote the message of NHS Health Check?
6. How effective was this activity?  
What would I change next time?

[See the following pages for more details.](#)

# 1. Objectives

## Setting your objectives

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Whether you are a commissioner or provider; you will have an overall objective centred upon the number of eligible residents who take up the offer of an invitation to receive a NHS Health Check.

But invariably there are other supplementary objectives that you could consider setting to help achieve your overall objective.

Think about measurement methods that help inform the overall marketing effort e.g. visits to your website, volume of telephone calls, click-throughs from your online activity, number of Facebook likes, number of tweets, numbers of email enquiries or requests for further information.

Look at how the media owners can assist you; ask them for statistics based on your chosen media and your campaign. Also, look at using free analytical tools such as Google Analytics. These tools will provide you with a picture of how well your chosen media is working and also allowing you to analyse numerous elements including engagement, traffic and conversion.

Whatever measurement methods you select, remember they should always contribute to the overall number of eligible residents taking a NHS Health Check.

Once you have decided on the most effective response mechanism for your campaign you need to ensure that the call to action you use is clearly shown on the marketing materials. A strong prompt as close as possible to 'book a check now' is more likely to result in a positive action.

Some marketing channels are more effective at delivering direct response. Large format outdoor billboards for instance, are more effective at building general awareness whereas a well timed mail-drop of leaflets or even an online advertising campaign to the target audience will tend to prompt more direct action.

## 2. Who am I targeting?

There are just over 15 million people in England aged 40 -74 years old and therefore eligible to receive a NHS Health Check.

At a local level you will probably have identified some specific local intelligence or local priorities (see 'Before you start' section), which will help shape your marketing plan and inform on your local target audiences.

To supplement this, PHE have undertaken a piece of research to segment those eligible into targetable groups.

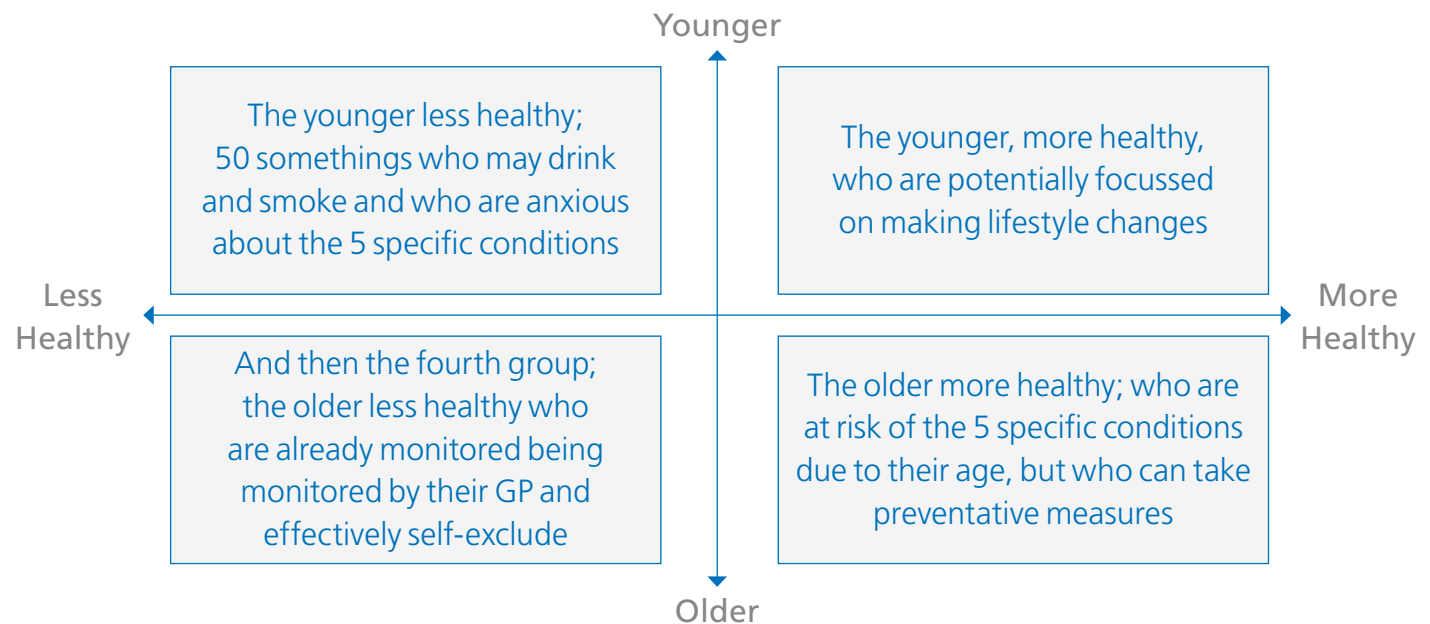
The research has identified four distinct groupings based on lifestyle, age and health status:

It is the first two groups in their 50s and 60s for whom the NHS Health Check as a general concept lands most easily.

For people in their 50s, those who considered themselves less healthy tended to be more interested in a NHS check - homing in on the conditions referenced in the promotion materials.

For those people in their 60s, the relevance of NHS Health Checks increased as they were perceived to be appropriate for anyone over the age of 60.

So, when thinking about your marketing activity, you might want to think about these two groups in particular, and how, when and where you plan to target them.



### 3. How much do I spend, and what channels should I use?

The budget required will depend upon a number of different factors including the numbers of eligible residents in your area, the density of population, the size of your area and the availability of suitable media.

Value for money will also be an important consideration. Using effective channels, thinking about how your marketing connects with eligible residents, using targeted media rather than mass media, and helping residents find out more specific information with a call to action is key.

You will have identified other complementary or competitor campaigns running in your area eg: January stop smoking, alcohol awareness or Change4Life campaigns. You should bear these in mind when planning campaigns even down to the spots you request in your local radio campaign or the position of your local press advertising.

And why not try to find some case study examples of people who have had a NHS Health Check and benefited from it. With the relevant permissions, you can use these in your communications activity.

PHE has consulted with a selection of some of the Local Authorities (LAs) from across the country, and has identified a number of different marketing approaches that have proved effective.

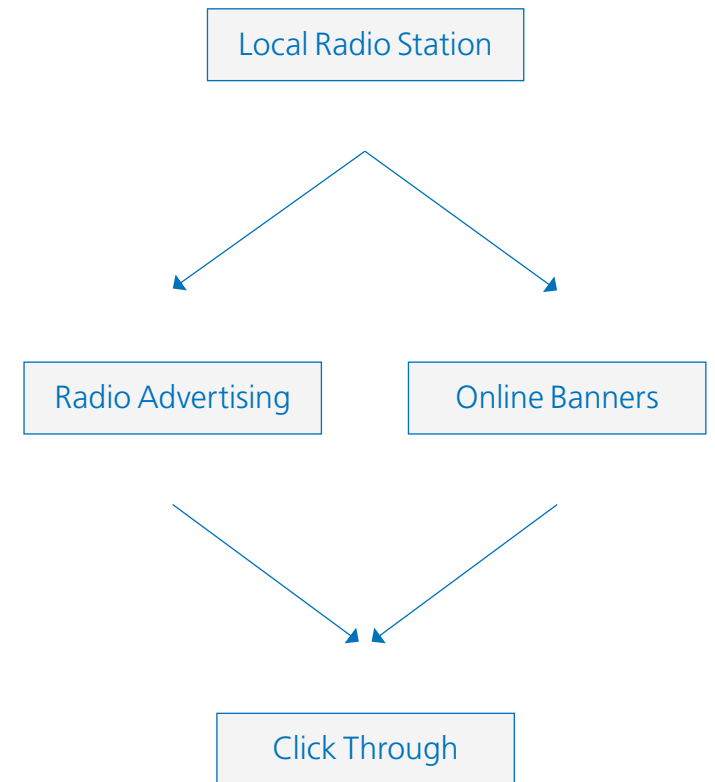
These strategies have been illustrated below as simple customer journeys, helping to create a level of awareness of NHS Health Checks amongst those who are eligible, and then engaging with them at a more personal level.

#### Example #1

The LA ran a two week campaign on local radio – being careful to select a station with a slightly older listenership.

Working in conjunction with the station they were able to negotiate some online banner advertising on the station's website for the length of the campaign.

These banners advertisements had a simple click through to the relevant NHS Health Check page on the LA's website where the customer could register for more information.



*This enabled the LA to then maintain a dialogue with the customer via email, including helpful tips, information and advice.*



## Example #2

Some LAs cover large areas with a mix of rural and more dispersed urban conurbations that can be either difficult or inefficient to use mainstream advertising to communicate with their residents.

One LA therefore decided on a much more targeted approach.

Working with their network of pharmacies and a number of major out of town grocery retailers, they took the NHS Health Check message out into the communities.

In partnership with the pharmacies they were able to arrange for leaflets and posters to be used carrying the NHS Health Check message.

This proved a relatively inexpensive but highly effective way of directly delivering the NHS Health Check message.



Working with the grocery retailers, the LA commissioned a mobile unit, complete with the NHS Health Check branding which was then placed in the car parks of the retailer where they could have a check there-and-then.

As part of the agreement the retailers placed the NHS Health Check message on their website publicising when and where the mobile unit would be located.

This proved a highly effective way of enabling the outreach team to engage directly with members of the public to discuss health and wellbeing in general.

## Example #3

A number of LAs have identified the important role that employers can play in delivering the NHS Health Check message, as well the benefits that checks can bring to the employers and their employees.

In one specific instance a simple information pack was sent to businesses in their area which had a high proportion of employees in the eligible age bracket.

They would then follow this up with a telephone call to make an appointment to meet with one of the relevant managers – normally the HR Manager or Managing Director – to make a short presentation on how having a NHS Health Check can mean a healthier relationship between employer and employee.

Employers will also be encouraged with the potential cost and production benefits to their businesses as a result of a healthier workforce.

This proved to be simple to sell-in to the employer. The next stage would be to agree a time for a mobile unit to come in to the business and for employees to receive their free NHS Health Check.

To help publicise the date, the LA would provide the employer with a simple staff information pack – comprising a small number of posters for the staff noticeboard, a handful of leaflets for circulation, and an email template for the manager to send to all eligible members of staff providing more detail on the NHS Health Check.



Alternatively, for those businesses unable to host the mobile unit or engage in health checks on their premises, the packs are a useful informative tool to disseminate information to elements of the target audience.



## 4. What materials do I need to market NHS Health Check – and how do I access them?

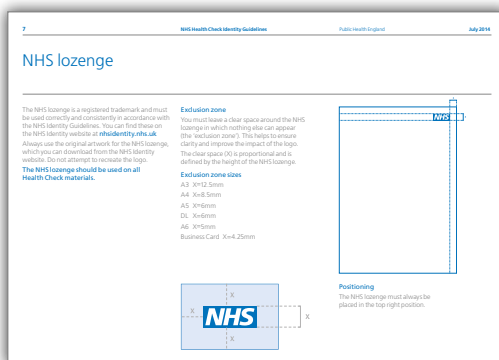
### NHS brand

Public Health England has undertaken a review of the way NHS Health Check is branded and communicated.

The review included some in-depth research amongst a significant number of eligible members of the general public and local authority NHS Health Check leads.

This research included pre-testing a variety of creative and communication concepts, to establish the extent to which they resonated with the target audience.

The first thing that was reviewed was the importance of the NHS brand.



It became quickly apparent that the NHS brand was a critical component in the communications. It is highly regarded and trusted, and it distinguishes the NHS Health Check from other commercially available offers.

It concluded that there is a strong and compelling case to continue to use the NHS brand in any marketing materials for NHS Health Checks. See Brand Guidelines document for further guidance on how the brand should be used

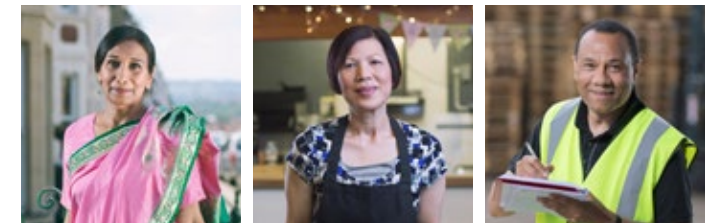
In addition, highlighting the specific conditions (diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease, stroke and dementia), within the creative is important, as is a strong call to action.

The combination of these things led to a consistent branded strip in all the communications.



### Imagery

The second thing to be tested was the relative importance of imagery. A variety of images were tested and the research concluded that images of 'people-like-me' were most effective.



## Imagery (continued)

The findings were distilled into a 'recipe' for the NHS Health Check images. The recipe uses people who are showing some signs of ageing but are healthy looking. In terms of age the ideal should be in the mid-range; 50s to 60s.

The face should be close-up and the person shown in context, perhaps at their place of work or another suitable setting.

Importantly the images we use should show people who are smiling, content and satisfied.

Each Local Authority should also be careful to reflect the mix of ethnicity in their area.

We have created a bespoke, royalty free set of photographs which follow the 'recipe' above and can be found at:

[www.healthcheck.nhs.uk](http://www.healthcheck.nhs.uk) under  
Commissioners and healthcare professionals  
> Marketing and Branding > Image Bank

## Messaging

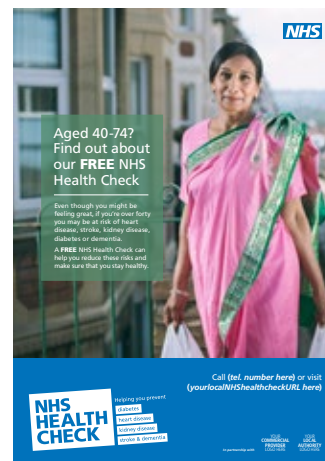
As awareness of the specific NHS Health Check offer is not always high, it is important to communicate these three points:

- **If you are aged between 40 and 74 years**  
This immediately establishes relevance and immediately engages that target audience
- **NHS Health Checks are available**  
The official title 'NHS Health Check' needs to be consistent to avoid confusion with other types of health checks
- **Free of charge**  
Addresses one of the key barrier to engaging with NHS Health Checks

Depending on your audience, and the level of awareness of NHS Health Checks in your area you can also use more motivational text in your communications. For example:

**'Even though you might be feeling great, if you're over 40 you might be at risk of kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes and stroke or dementia. A FREE NHS Health Check can help you reduce these risks and make sure that you stay healthy.'**

Pulling all of these points together gives us a series of templates as illustrated below.



Once you have prepared your marketing activity plan, to find the best marketing templates to fulfil your plan visit:  
[healthcheck.nhs.uk/commissioners\\_and\\_healthcare\\_professionals/marketing\\_and\\_branding/branding\\_and\\_marketing\\_guidelines/](http://healthcheck.nhs.uk/commissioners_and_healthcare_professionals/marketing_and_branding/branding_and_marketing_guidelines/)

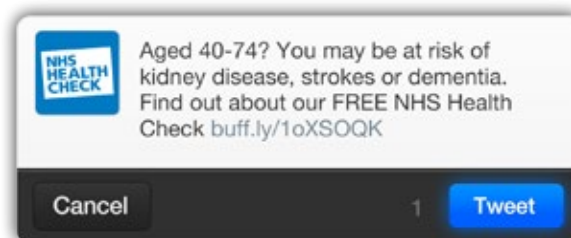
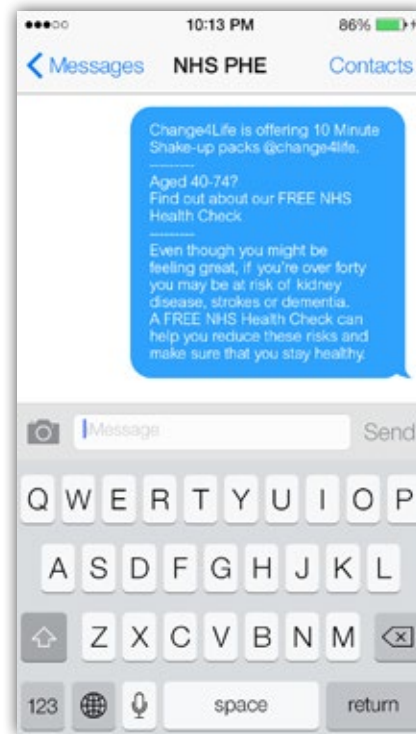
## 5. Are there local opportunities to partner schemes/initiatives or organisations to promote the NHS Health Check?

Could partnership working help you keep engaged with your audience? Use of key themes for messaging eg: walking, healthy eating, etc.

Opportunities to engage in partnership working will vary by locality and some areas are already using this to great success.

### Partnerships may benefit the delivery of a campaign in several ways:

1. Media - a stronger media campaign, eg: a partnership of two neighbouring local authorities may benefit from savings on media costs such as bus side advertising where bus routes move between areas.
2. Budget and messaging – piggy backing on a strong local message eg: healthy eating or physical activity, may help deliver a complementary message and save on media and creative/production costs.
3. More effective delivery - aligning the campaign with local healthcare initiatives or local/national events may give the message a greater coverage and deeper penetration eg: National Cholesterol Week.



4. Internal partnership working- other departments or teams may also be planning or running health related programmes which may present opportunities for joint working to present NHS Health Check.
5. Partnering with a leisure or sports facility i.e. a local football or rugby club, can be beneficial as a good number of users generally fall within the target age group for NHS Health Check.

You'll see from the brand guidelines document that there is a well developed look and feel for the communications, developed specifically for the promotion of NHS Health Check. This brand should be adhered to at all times. If used effectively, over time this will become recognised and contribute to the strength of the campaign.

Once you have engaged with the customer, there's no better way of remaining engaged than continuing to talk to them.

Using methods of communicating including email, text and social media are simple, cheap and effective.

These forms of communication can also be based solely on NHS Health Check or can sit with other promotions.

## 6. How effective was this activity? What would I change next time?

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As mentioned previously, evaluation and measurement is an essential part of any marketing plan and campaign.

Use the tools mentioned in this document, ie Google Analytics or ask your web-team to assist you in your monitoring and evaluation process. This will ensure that you can effectively continue to evaluate how your campaign has delivered and how this may effect what and how it is delivered in future.

In some instances you may have a new initiative or a new way of delivering the message. This test campaign can be effective if you learn from the results and use them to shape the way the next campaign is delivered.

## Summary

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Hopefully this guidance has provided some useful pointers on how best to promote NHS Health Check to the eligible residents in your area and to keep them engaged.

If you require any further help or guidance, or if you would like to tell us about an initiative, incentive or piece of work that you successfully carried out around NHS Health Check then please contact: [alisa.janmohamed@phe.gov.uk](mailto:alisa.janmohamed@phe.gov.uk)