



ARCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

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Telephone outreach to increase NHS Health Checks among deprived and ethnic minority communities



NHS Health Checks provide a health check-up for adults in England aged 40-74. They're designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes and dementia. They also provide support to help people reduce their risk of developing these diseases.

These diseases are more common in more deprived communities and some minority ethnic groups. However, critics say that those who could benefit most from an NHS Health Check are least likely to attend.

GP practices are the main provider of NHS Health Checks, usually inviting patients by

letter. In Bristol, telephone outreach has been used to encourage people in more deprived communities and minority ethnic groups to attend NHS Health Checks, with community outreach workers based in GP practices phoning patients.

Where possible, people were called by an outreach worker with a similar cultural background who spoke their language. During the call, patients were:

- invited to book an NHS Health Check
- asked lifestyle questions
- directed to healthy lifestyle services, such as support to stop smoking

What was the aim of the project?

We wanted to find out how the intervention was delivered by the outreach workers, how the patients found it and the impact it had.



What did we do?

We interviewed 24 patients who were called about an NHS Health Check. We also interviewed 10 outreach workers who made the calls and five GP practice staff who helped deliver the service. The practices we worked with were all in more deprived areas.

What we found and what this means

Patients liked getting a phone invitation to an NHS Health Check. They also liked being able to book an appointment during the call. They said it made them more likely to have an NHS Health Check than if they had only been sent a letter.

Being called by someone from a similar background who spoke their language was important for some people.

Some patients said that answering questions and being directed to healthy lifestyle services had prompted them to make lifestyle changes.



The telephone outreach worked particularly well when the outreach workers were well-matched to the people they were calling. When recruiting, Bristol City Council looked for people with:

- a range of cultural backgrounds
- good local knowledge and connections
- language skills
- experience working in supporting patients or healthy lifestyle services

The outreach workers and GP practice staff we interviewed saw telephone outreach as a good way to engage patients in NHS Health Checks. Practice staff particularly valued the community outreach workers' skills in communicating with patients. It could also reduce the administration GP practices needed to do to invite patients to NHS Health Checks.

For telephone outreach to reach its full potential, clear objectives for recruiting and training outreach workers are vital, along with support to set up and embed the service in GP practices.

What next?

Bristol City Council and Public Health England are using the findings to help improve uptake and effectiveness of the NHS Health Checks programme in communities with greater health needs.

Read the papers

'Telephone outreach by community workers to improve uptake of NHS Health Checks in more deprived localities and minority ethnic groups: a qualitative investigation of implementation.'

Tracey Stone, Emer Brangan, Amanda Chappell, Vivienne Harrison, Jeremy Horwood
Journal of Public Health

bit.ly/CommunityWorkers

'Patient experiences of telephone outreach to enhance uptake of NHS Health Checks in more deprived communities and minority ethnic groups: A qualitative interview study.'
Emer Brangan, Tracey Stone, Amanda Chappell, Vivienne Harrison, Jeremy Horwood.
Health Expectations

bit.ly/TelephoneOutreach

Find out more

arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/telephone-outreach/