

“Check you out!” Chlamydia testing campaign (NHS)

Summary

NHS Birmingham East and North commissioned Uscreates in 2010 to develop and pilot a programme to increase awareness and rates of Chlamydia testing among this age group in Birmingham. At this time, one in ten of 15 to 24 year olds in the UK were infected with Chlamydia.

Past programmes had not been successful. Many of these programmes consisted of monetary incentive schemes and awareness campaigns, devised and implemented through a top-down approach. Uscreates wanted to pursue an innovative and collaborative approach to tackle the complex social and cultural issues surrounding the topic and produce meaningful outcomes.

The team at Uscreates collaborated with 30 young ambassadors during the scoping, development, and trial phase of the programme.

Researching the main barriers to Chlamydia testing

The scoping phase involved a national literature review and insight workshops with 68 young people aged between 15 and 24. The young people were asked to capture and record their day-to-day lives with photographs and videos in the lead up to the workshop. This gave the team at Uscreates a better understanding of how Chlamydia testing could form a seamless and effective part of young people’s lives. On the basis of this information and that gathered in the insight workshops, the team put together a behavioural journey map to highlight the barriers, triggers and opportunities for young people to get tested. This work revealed that the main barriers to getting tested were embarrassment and stigma and lack of knowledge about the accessibility of the test and the testing procedure.

Co-designing solutions to tackle the poor awareness and testing rates for Chlamydia



The team reconvened the young people for a co-design workshop to identify and design solutions to increase awareness of Chlamydia and testing, and support them to carry out a test. The young people were asked to identify activities that could enhance the triggers and mitigate the barriers to Chlamydia testing. They were armed with prompts to help them innovate solutions, including: plasticine, fake money and 2-D mobile phones amongst others.

By the end of the workshop, the team had an overall strategy for raising awareness of Chlamydia and testing. Their next challenge was to implement it. Uscreates asked the young people for their tips for implementation. This discussion made clear that young people had to be involved in promoting the activities if they were to succeed. A number of the participants volunteered to act as Ambassadors to help Uscreates implement the strategy that they had co-designed.

Co-producing solutions to deliver results

The co-production approach led to a number of successful activities:

- The ambassadors helped build a Facebook hub that enabled health professionals to communicate to nearly 6,000 young people who joined the page, from their locality.



- They helped promote and run the 'screening for a screening' cinema night. The feature film was preceded by a Quick Facts Chlamydia film designed by the young people, and the staff provided young people with a Chlamydia test in return for a £5 popcorn and soft drink voucher. The testing rate on the night was 100%.



- Young people actively engaged with the film competition to produce films about their experience of getting tested for Chlamydia. Five of the films were shortlisted and screened at the 'screening for a screening' cinema event. The audience voted for their favourite film and the winners were invited to produce their film with a professional production house.



- 4,000 self-test kits were delivered to homes in key areas of East and North Birmingham. This was supported by an advertising campaign in local bus shelters and billboards. A peer-to-peer postcard including photos of the ambassadors was sent with the self-test kits to increase the rate of testing and return.

Lessons learned

- **The setting is critical for innovation.** Uscreates held the workshops in a theatre in Birmingham, taking the young people out of their day-to-day environment. The team knew from experience that doing this helps participants open up and be more creative.
- **Open and collaborative working can be daunting, but it is worthwhile.** Co-designing solutions with young people enabled Uscreates to harness the insight and knowledge necessary to devise activities that could work for the target group and their peers. The success of the Facebook Hub and the cinema night was a testament to the co-production approach. The team acknowledges that it was at times daunting for the NHS given that Uscreates could not give them certainty as to the final outputs. They tried to mitigate this uncertainty by putting the NHS team in touch with other groups for which they had followed a similar approach.
- **Expectations must be managed and the public's input respected.** It is important to ensure that there is ongoing support and resources when working with the public in an open and collaborative way. Although the young people were not formally contracted for their role, it was important to the team to involve them beyond the initial workshops and ensure that they did not feel 'used'. This paid off as the ambassadors played a critical role in making the implementation of the strategy a success.

- **Make evaluation a key objective of the work.** The team found it difficult to allocate enough resources from its limited budget to really understand and quality the impact on the individuals involved. They know that ten of the ambassadors who were not in education, employment or training believed that their involvement in the programme enriched their CVs and boosted their chances of finding work. Many others mentioned that it increased their confidence and pride in their skills. This type of information can help understand the value and the best format for co-producing solutions.

Find out more

Uscreates is a strategic consultancy with a social focus, led by researchers and designers with expertise in communication and service design. They can be contacted for more information about this case study at [via their website](#). Or, you can contact Mary Cook, the author of this case study, directly at mary@uscreates.com.