



NHS Choices | Annual report 2012/13



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Highlights of the year

2012/13 was an active year for NHS Choices. Five new releases took place over the course of the year which saw the addition of new commenting and comparative data functionality. Hundreds of new pages were added to the site with thousands more being refreshed and reviewed.

1

Content

Over 50 new conditions, from red eye to Rett syndrome, were added to Health A-Z.

In Live Well, which aims to provide easy-to-read lifestyle advice, improved stop-smoking content was added, along with new areas addressing topics such as cancer, skin problems, and fertility.

The summer of sport was reflected with inspiring stories from Olympians and ideas on choosing healthier snacks.

2

Apps

We were commissioned by Change4Life to develop two successful smartphone applications, The Fun Generator for families, and the Change4Life Drinks Tracker.

We helped Blackberry and Microsoft develop lifestyle and services-finder apps using our content.

New interactive tools and self-assessments were developed tackling topics ranging from child illness to sexual health, to carers benefits.

3

User engagement

With around 100,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter, we have demonstrated our growing popularity among the public. Lifestyle advice is available on a daily basis via these forums and we have also introduced our content on emerging platforms including Google+.

'Open clinics' were held in partnership with HealthUnlocked for a range of conditions this year and patient feedback for local NHS services continued to be provided by users on the site.

4

Find services

Our directories provided over 600 measures of indicators to millions of users on everything from hospitals and GPs to care services, gyms and addiction support.

The team refreshed over six million data-points over the course of the year. New indicators were added, including outpatient procedure volumes, social care performance information, and A&E, ambulance and trauma unit information.

5

Usability

NHS Choices continued to deliver a user-centred approach in web development. Our user testing programme, involving face-to-face interaction with members of the public, provided a wealth of insight to inform new releases.

Quarterly user surveys helped the NHS Choices team improve the site in line with user feedback. Product-specific research activity was delivered looking at the Information Service for Parents.

6

Syndication

Syndication allows organisations to take content from NHS Choices and embed it into their own website or application, providing up-to-date, trusted health information, free of charge. This year the syndication team continued to support over 400 partners.

The public sector benefited from new content widgets that made it easier for them to add lifestyle and services content to their sites.

NHS Choices in numbers

52,000
followers on Facebook



65,000
Twitter followers



390,000
downloads



NHS CHOICES
QUIT SMOKING,
DRINKS TRACKER
AND BMI APPS



890
VIDEOS NOW
ON THE SITE

150,000
EMAIL
subscribers



265%

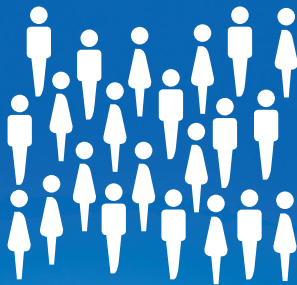
increase in the
number of site
visits from mobile
and tablet users
since 2011



X20

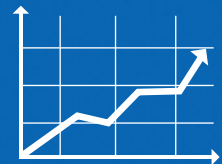
mobile apps currently on the market
using NHS Choices syndicated content

400
LIVE
PARTNERS



using our content across multiple platforms

650



measures of clinical performance
given on the site

27 MILLION
visits per month

March 2013 figures



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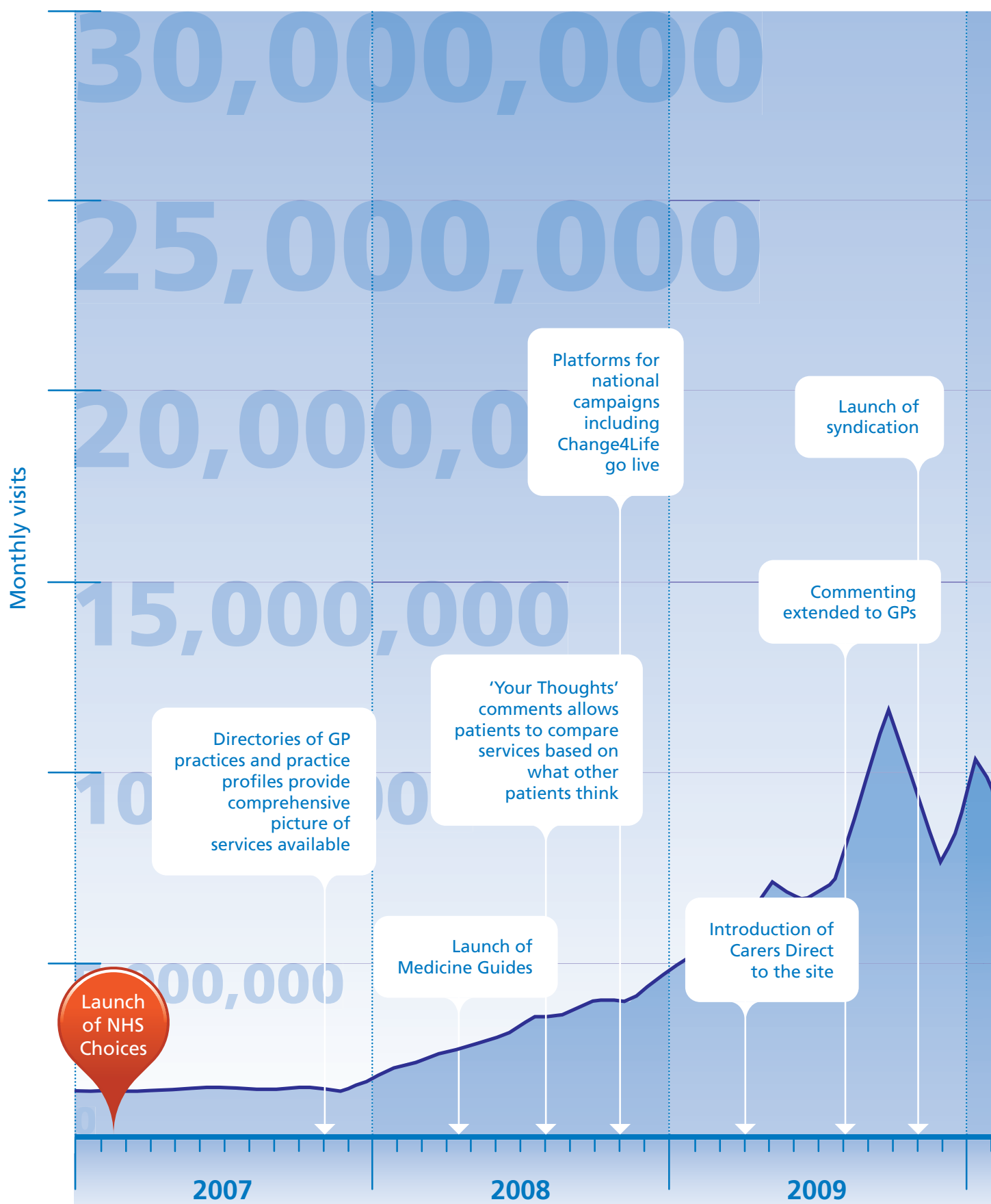
3 Supporting professionals

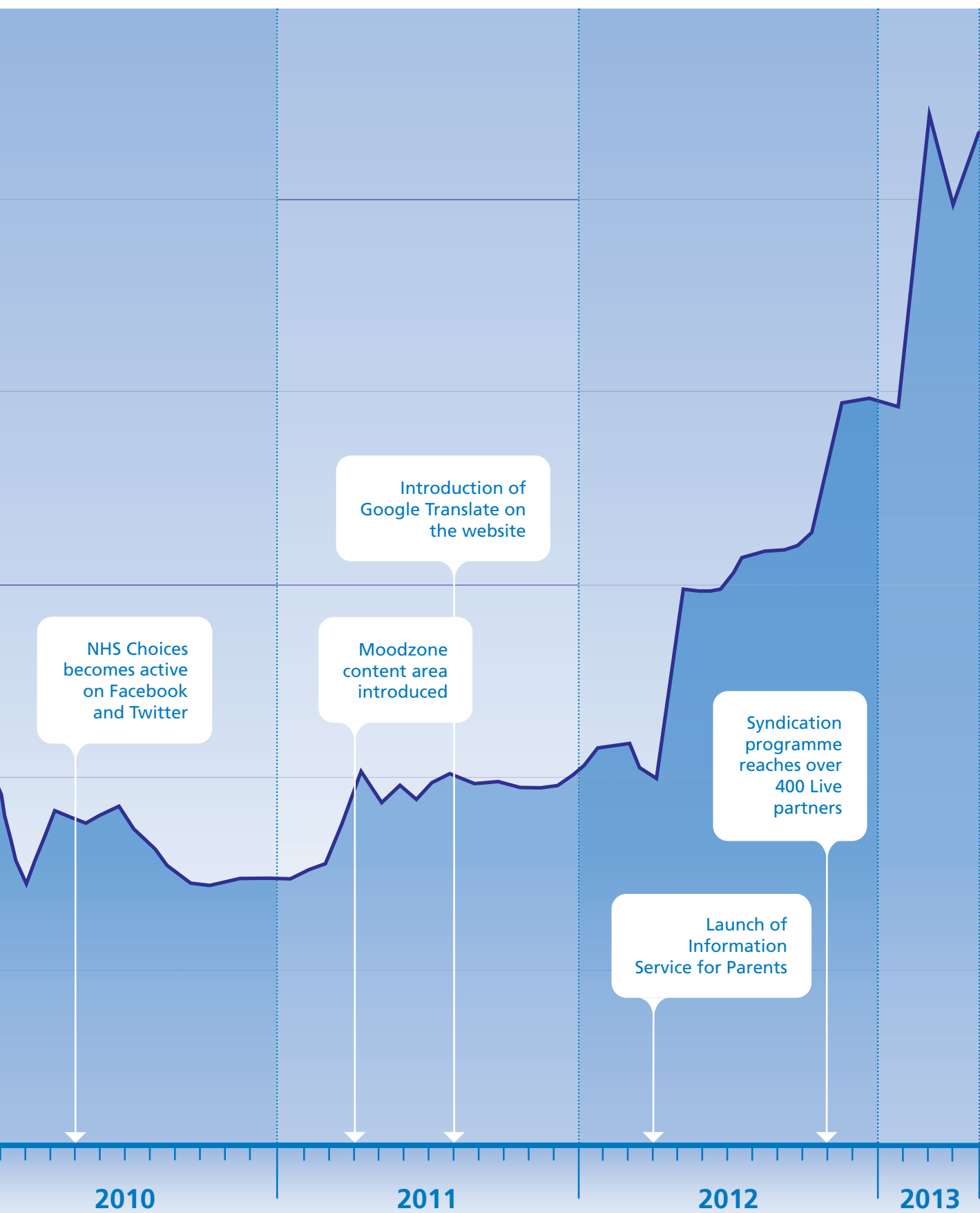
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NHS Choices milestones 2007-2013





1 Key Trends



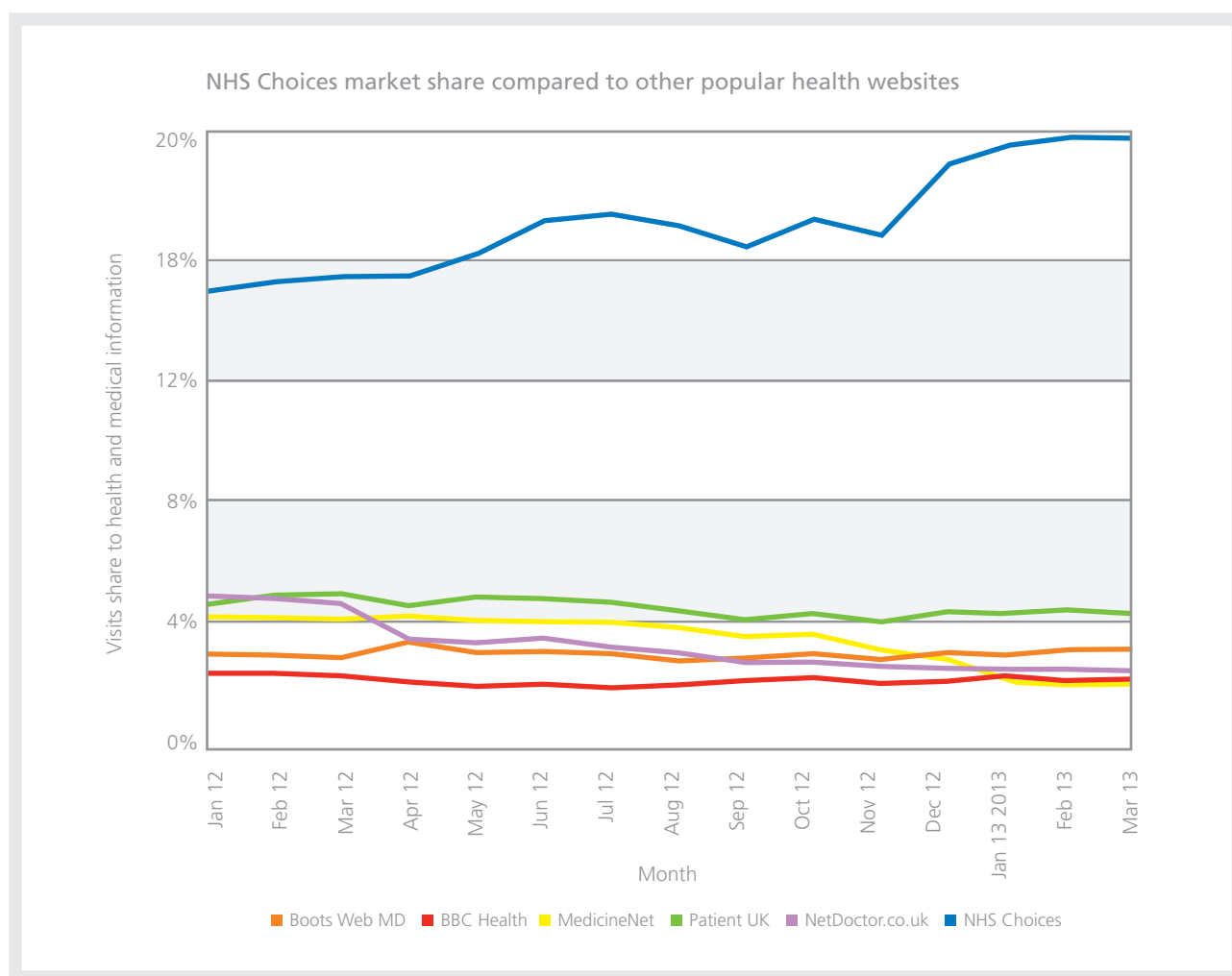
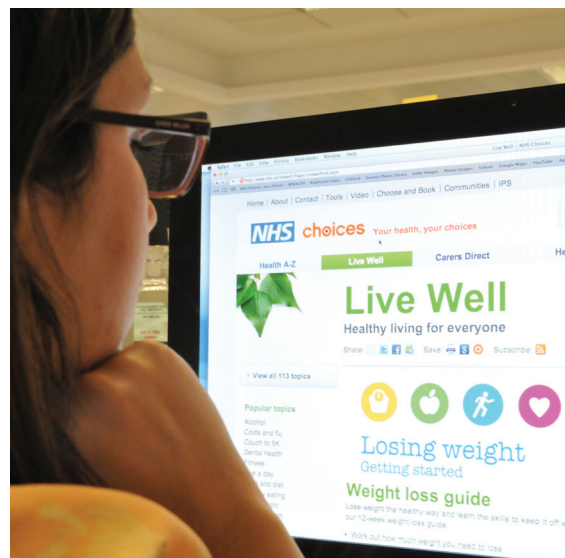
Growth

Serving an increasingly 'digital' society

Growth in traffic can be linked to an increase in the number of people browsing the internet using mobile devices and tablet computers. Likewise, we have seen growth in the number of users hitting the site by way of Google, or other search engines.

Europe's most popular health website

NHS Choices remains Europe's most popular health website and the UK's third biggest government website - and traffic is continuing to grow. The site now receives more than 27 million visits per month. On average, monthly visits to NHS Choices are 76 per cent higher this year compared to 2011 figures.

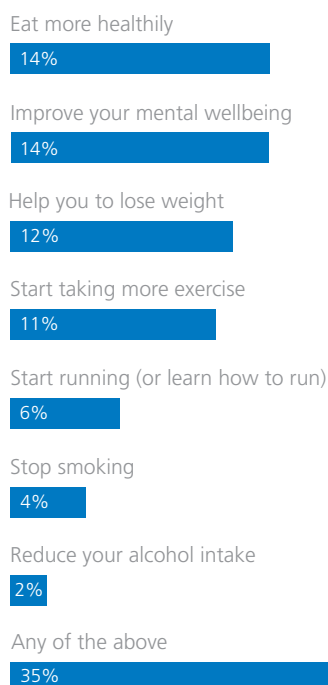


Hitwise reference table. Figures March 2013

Usage trends

- NHS Choices users are most likely to visit the site for medical information (39%) and to check symptoms (26%)
- There has been an increase in the proportion of users who have used the site to reduce health risks and improve lifestyle (35% vs 26% in December 2011)
- Losing weight, eating more healthily and improving mental wellbeing are some of the most popular reasons for visiting the NHS Choices site
- Half of NHS Choices users agree that the site helps them manage their symptoms and appropriately visit their GP

Usage of NHS Choices for lifestyle improvements



NHS Choices User Survey Aug 2012

Feedback from users remains overwhelmingly positive:

- Three-quarters of users would recommend NHS Choices to others
- Around nine in 10 users would use NHS Choices again (85% personal, 90% professional)
- 31% of visitors use the site at least once a month (68% among professionals)
- Overall people feel that NHS Choices is user-friendly, and liked that the information is accurate, factual and trustworthy
- Some respondents also liked that users can post their own feedback and experiences on NHS Choices
- Around six in 10 NHS Choices users found everything or most of what they wanted
(NHS Choices user surveys Jan - Dec 2012)

"It is easy to use, clear, concise, relevant, up to date and very accessible. Useful for both professionals and non healthcare workers"

"I like that it is run by the NHS, so it can be trusted ... it's run by people who want to put accurate, helpful information online"

Quotes from NHS Choices user satisfaction surveys

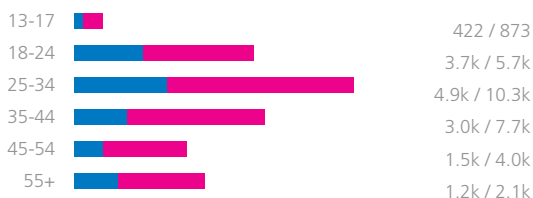
Social media activity

Facebook has become one of the top referral sites driving traffic to NHS Choices. In 2012/13 we continued to promote our content using Facebook and Twitter. We have also used social media to support partner organisations, such as local authorities and primary care trusts, to promote health and wellbeing at a local or regional level.

We've introduced enhanced functionality and tools for Facebook users, who can now check their drinking levels, find sports that suit their personality, and sign up for NHS Choices emails without leaving Facebook.

At the time of writing, we have over 50,000 'likes' on Facebook and over 40,000 on Twitter, as well as managing separate social media profiles for the Information Service for Parents and Change4Life.

NHS Choices Facebook users
Breakdown by age and gender



Sprout Social March 2013

NHS Choices videos have been viewed several millions of times on our Youtube channel and new videos continue to be added to the platform. This yearw we also refreshed the look and feel of our YouTube channel to engage better with consumers.

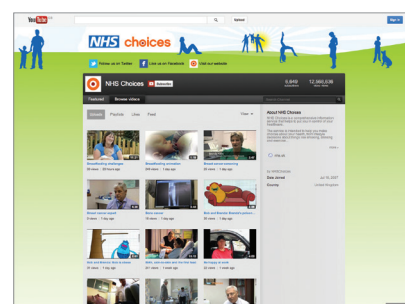
In the Autumn of 2012 we added Google+ to our portfolio of social platforms and we are gearing up to provide content through several other channels in 2013.



NHC Choices Facebook home page

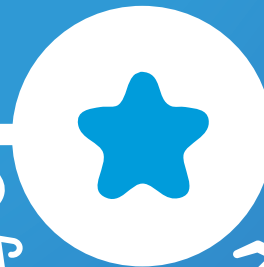


NHC Choices Twitter home page



NHC Choices youtube home page





Providing the tools for effective decision making

As the population is becoming more digitally minded, NHS Choices has seen a step-change in the ways that people use the internet to make the most of health services.

- Four in 10 (41%) of NHS Choices users agree that the website helps them to manage their own symptoms
- Half of NHS Choices users agree that in the last 12 months, using the NHS Choices website has helped them be more confident when seeing a doctor or other health professional

Patient feedback

NHS Choices continues to lead the way in giving patients their say on health services. Users can leave feedback on the majority of NHS services; this year we have published more than 32,000 user reviews, bringing the total number on the site to almost 95,000.

To make it even easier for users to leave their ratings and reviews of services such as GPs, hospitals and dentists, we have now introduced a 'five star' rating system for local health services, based on whether users would recommend services to friends and family. As well as providing an easy way to give feedback, this system also helps users to decide on the best service for them.

Finally, NHS Choices is extending the feedback service into social care by introducing commenting for England's 24,000 registered adult social care centres.

"It gives me confidence in managing my health without having to waste my doctor's time"

"It puts my mind at rest if I'm unsure about symptoms and advises me of treatments, so I avoid worrying over minor ailments and understand clearly what my options are"

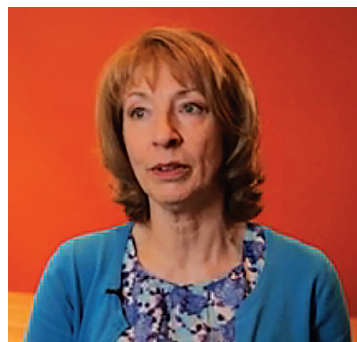
Quotes from NHS Choices user satisfaction surveys

Case study

Jean had a good experience at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Disease:

"My main intention was to leave a really positive comment about the excellent service I'd had from the doctors and therapists at the hospital. And when I looked on the website, it then invited you to say what you didn't quite like as much, so I gave some feedback about the hospital food.

It was great that there was a reply to all the comments I'd made, both about the food and the excellent service I'd had in treatment."



Innovation for Open Data

By opening up information about what we do, we give the public the tools to hold services to account. This is at the heart of the government's transparency agenda (also known as Open Data).

Improving Find and Compare

NHS Choices is completely reviewing the ways that people can search for information about local services. The revisions will allow users with varying degrees of knowledge about their condition to navigate to information that will allow them to choose the service that is right for them.

In addition the presentations of information on organisational performance and what facilities are available is being improved on the site to improve user experience.

Considerable effort is being put into search engine optimisation (SEO) to ensure that users of search engines, such as Google, are able to find information on the site quickly and easily.

What type of people use doctor-rating websites?

Research by the University of London in November 2012 found that people from a non-white British background and those with lower incomes are more likely to use doctor-rating websites.

Interestingly, they also found that people who were the same sex as their GP are more likely to make comments and read the feedback of others.

GALIZZI et al, Nov 2012

Topics	Key Facts	NHS Choices users rating	Responding to patient safety alerts	Recommended by staff	Mortality rate	MRSA	Registration with Care Quality Commission
Results for Hospital in London							
Showing 1-10 of 147 results Results per page: 10 Update See results on a map							
Guy's Hospital Tel: 020 7188 7188 Great Maze Pond London Greater London SE1 9RT 6.50 miles away Get directions							
22 ratings	Rate it yourself	Good - All alerts signed off within deadline has passed	In the best 20% of trusts	Better than expected in hospital and up to 30 days after discharge (0.8748)	12+ weeks MRSA free	Licensed More information about this licence	
St Bartholomew's Hospital Tel: 020 3416 5000 West Smithfield London EC1A 7BE 0.81 miles away Get directions							
16 ratings	Rate it yourself	Data not available	Data not available	Better than expected in hospital and up to 30 days after discharge (0.8371)	8 weeks MRSA free	Data not available	
Moorfields Eye Hospital (City Road) Tel: 020 7253 3411 162 City Road London Greater London EC1V 2PD 1.11 miles away Get directions							
13 ratings	Rate it yourself	Poor - Some alerts not signed off after deadline	Within expected range	Data not available	12+ weeks MRSA free	Licensed More information about this licence	
The Royal London Hospital Tel: 020 3416 5000 Whitechapel London E1 1BB 1.24 miles away Get directions							
45 ratings	Rate it yourself	Data not available	Data not available	Better than expected in hospital and up to 30 days after discharge (0.8371)	12+ weeks MRSA free	Data not available	

Comparative data for hospitals presented on NHS Choices

“Transparency, rather than targets, will help to improve our healthcare system – and people’s trust in the NHS will soar”

Jeremy Hunt
Health Secretary



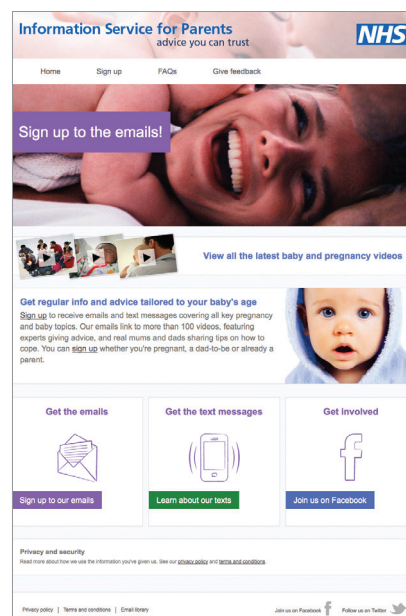
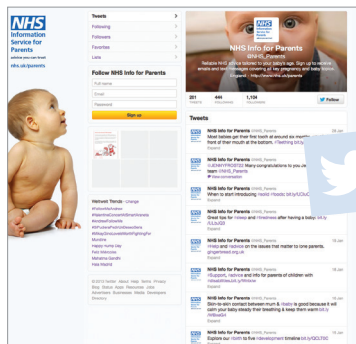
NHS Information Service for Parents

www.nhs.uk/parents

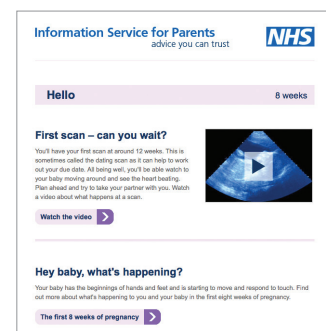
Trusted and informative resources for parents

The Information Service for Parents was launched on the site this year. It allows parents and expectant parents to receive regular information and advice tailored to their baby's age. Users can sign up to receive emails and text messages covering all key pregnancy and baby topics.

Our emails link to more than 100 videos featuring expert advice and real mums and dads sharing tips on how to cope. Users can sign up whether they're pregnant, a parent-to-be or already a parent. More than 100,000 users signed up to the service in the first eight months and many more are expected to sign up in 2013. Over 1,000 are staying in touch via our social media channels, Twitter and Facebook.



ISP website homepage



ISP email example

Supporting NHS professionals

The Information Service for Parents complements health professionals' face-to-face consultations and helps to reinforce positive health messages. It gives parents regular, concise information on issues that they may want to discuss in more depth at face to face appointments. It also offers an alternative way of providing advice to disadvantaged parents and minority groups, directing them to information in accessible formats including SMS messages and video.

"There is so much variety in the information presented, regular updates and information relevant to the particular stage in my wife's pregnancy"

"All in all this has given me more information than other services"

Quotes from ISP users

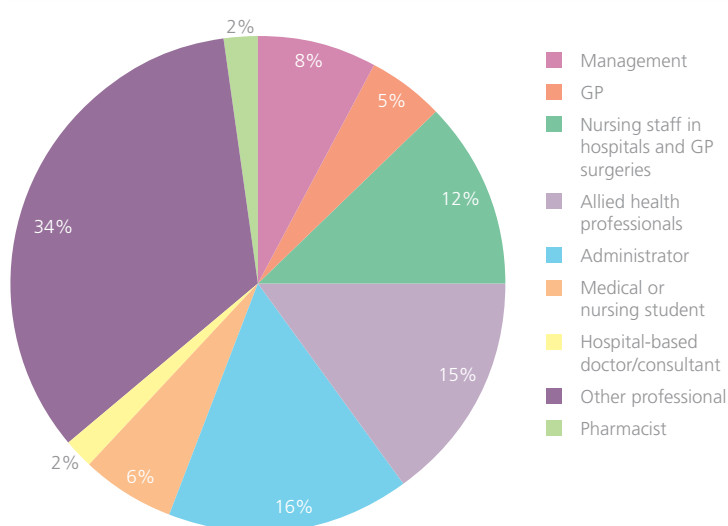
③ Supporting professionals



Professional users

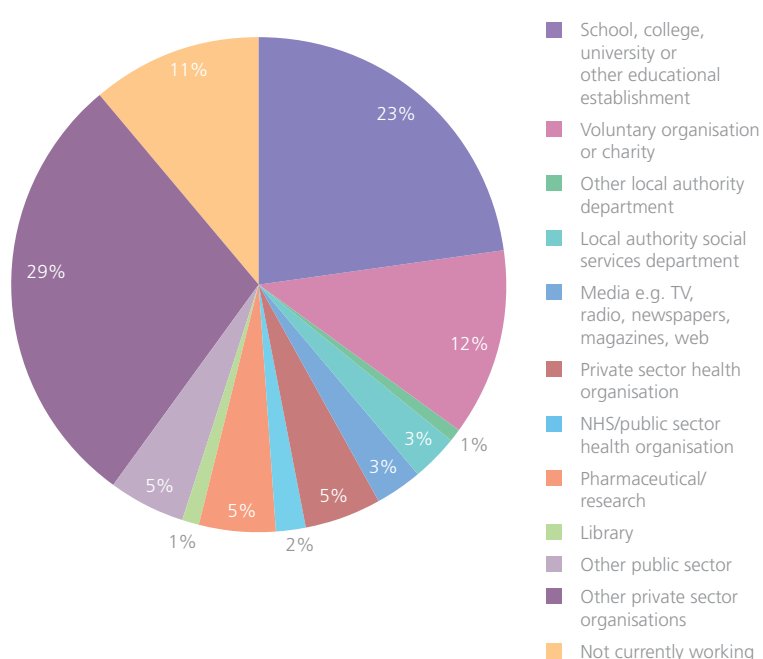
Through user surveys, we have been able to build a picture of typical professional users:

Health professionals using NHS Choices



NHS Choices on-site survey, August 2012

Other professionals using NHS Choices



NHS Choices on-site survey, August 2012

Case study

Why do professionals use NHS Choices?

In a recent NHS Choices study, more than half of professional users said they also come to NHS Choices for their own personal health 'needs. One of them, Reema Ruparelia, a physiotherapist from Leicester, said:'

"NHS Choices has become an essential part of my everyday resource tool kit. I often use the site as a reference point during my practice as a way of explaining conditions to patients.

"On a more personal level, having recently moved to a different area, I accessed the NHS Choices website to help me locate a good GP practice close to my new home.

"By using the scorecard system on the website I was then able to compare GP practices according to a range of performance measures and facilities.

This really helped me as a service-user to choose the GP practice I felt most comfortable registering with".

NHS Choices syndication programme

Trusted content for partner sites

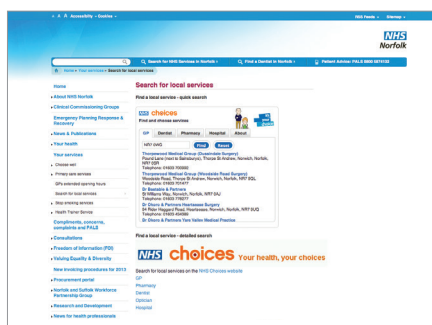
Our syndication programme allows partners to embed NHS Choices content (including multimedia tools and more than 700 videos) within their websites or applications negating the need for in-house development or external signposting.

In 2012/13, millions of people viewed our content on more than 100 partner websites, including NHS organisations across England, GP practices and local authorities, charities including MIND and the MS Society, Microsoft, Mumsnet and Boots.

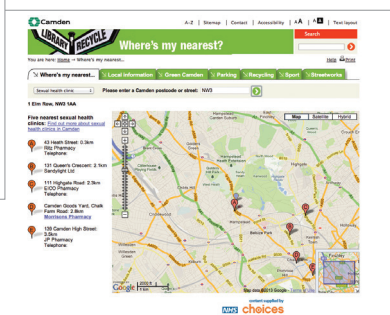
Organisations can choose content from different sections of the site including Live Well, Health A-Z, Carers Direct and Behind the Headlines.

Popular functions on the site, including NHS Choices videos, multimedia tools and commenting functionality have also been made available through the syndication platform.

To make it even easier for organisations to utilise NHS Choices content, we have worked with developers to build widgets which are easily embeddable by website managers and present the information in a standardised, attractive manner.



Find services widget on NHS Norfolk website



NHS Choices sexual health data syndicated to Camden local authority website

Case study

"NHS Choices is a treasure chest of information. My GP clients are absolutely delighted with the depth of information provided for patients on their practice websites.

"NHS Choices is colourful, easy to read, well illustrated and jam-packed with useful resources.

"The new customisable syndication widgets are perfect for targeted content pages."

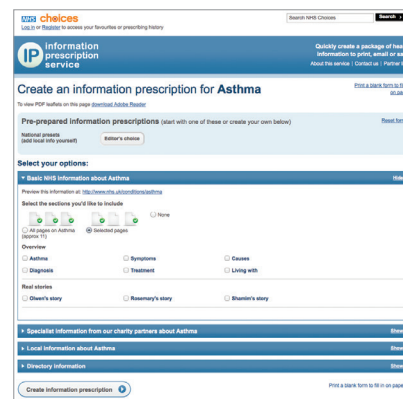
John Maffin,
Practice Manager and Director
of Media Fizz DIGITAL

Other ways NHS Choices supports professionals

Information prescription service

The IPS now receives over 25,000 page views a month and use of the service continues to grow, as more conditions are added to the programme. The service supports health and care professionals offering them a tool to quickly and easily provide information for the people that they care for. It lets them tailor the amount of information provided at any one time around what the patient wants – from a comprehensive package of information to a number of bite-sized pieces.

Having this service in place is helping clinicians to ensure that patients are getting high-quality, current information to support the verbal information that they receive. It allows clinicians to focus on empowering patients and carers to identify their own information needs.



Information prescription hub on NHS Choices

Behind the Headlines

Behind the Headlines provides an unbiased and evidence-based analysis of health stories that make the news.

2012/13 saw NHS Choices providing clarity and balanced evidence around some of the most widely-read health stories in the media, including the PIP breast implants scandal, vaccination guidance for pregnant women, and an explanation of the controversial Liverpool Care Pathway. Moreover, GP practices and health services across England used Behind the Headlines content on their websites via the syndication programme.

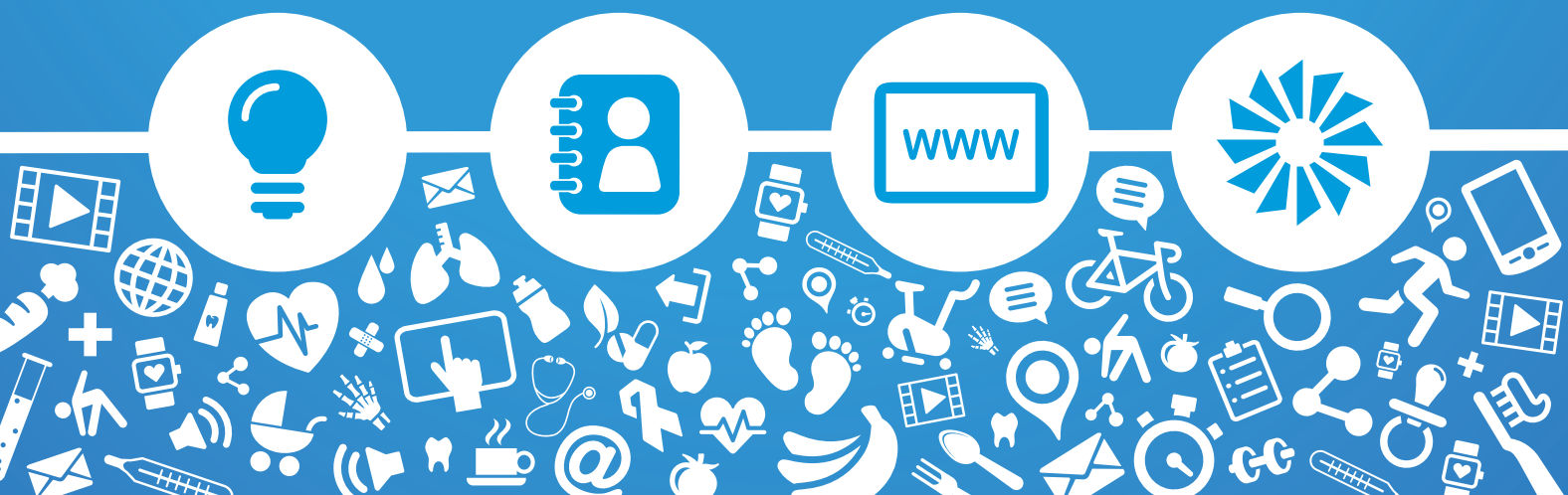
Patient feedback

This year over 100 services responded to comments left on the site by patients, with many making positive changes to their service as a result of the feedback. A service provider interviewed by NHS Choices this year told us: "There are real benefits with patient feedback. It's an opportunity to show that you are a caring, concerned and listening professional. We are not only replying to comments; we're also showing how we are improving our service as result."

"I become very annoyed with newspaper headlines along the lines of "get fit in just two minutes a day" or "running is more dangerous than sitting on a couch. "Behind the Headlines gives the detail, rather than just concentrating on gimmick"

Behind the Headlines reader

4 The NHS online



Delivering innovation

NHS Choices is working with the mobile industry to develop high-quality health apps using NHS Choices content. We've seen the market rapidly move from top-down, information-based products, to a more user-centred focus on conditions and transactions.

In 2012/13 we also delivered three successful healthy lifestyle apps focusing on healthy eating and alcohol reduction in partnership with the Change4Life team, including the Fun Generator app, which was recognised by The Independent this year as one of the 'most useful apps for families'.



Case study

BlackBerry

BlackBerry, a global leader in wireless innovation, worked with NHS Choices and developers Codeten in 2012 to develop two mobile applications for BlackBerry users. 'Healthy Living' offers lifestyle articles, interactive tools such as a BMI calculator, and integration with BlackBerry Messenger and Facebook.

'Health Companion' provides comprehensive health and service information. Users can read the latest health news, access condition information, find NHS services and search the entire NHS Choices catalogue. The app is also linked up to Twitter and Facebook.



Case study

IXONOS

Ixonos is an international mobile solutions company employing over 1,000 people internationally. They told NHS Choices: "We see significant market potential in bringing NHS Choices syndicated content to a number of smartphone and feature phone platforms.

"New channels can be created to increase users' access to health service and wellbeing information. Patients are benefiting from the convenience and reliability of up-to-date NHS Choices information through native apps on their handset. The NHS Choices team have allowed us to concentrate on creating an exceptional user experience without having to worry about the clinical accuracy of the content."





Microsoft worked with NHS Choices to develop 'Health Choices', an app which was launched initially on Windows Phones and then rolled to iOS and Android platforms. Later in the year, the app was migrated to the new Windows 8 operating system and was available for download in the Windows Store on launch day.

The application allows users to browse conditions using NHS Choices Health A-Z content. The Find Services section uses geo-location to allow users to locate services in their local area. Behind the Headlines is used to refresh the home page of the app on a daily basis with new content.



Following on from a highly successful cognitive behavioural therapy pilot in 2011, NHS Choices has created Moodzone, a digital hub designed to help people with stress, anxiety or depression to learn to cope with or improve their overall emotional wellbeing. The hub includes a mood assessment quiz and podcasts that talk users through positive mental techniques they can use in day-to-day life.



A healthy London 2012 Olympics

In anticipation of the huge influx of visitors for the London 2012 Olympics and the impact this would have on frontline services, NHS Choices worked with NHS London to develop a mobile-enabled website for visitors.

Incorporating Google Translate, the site was promoted to all overseas and domestic ticket holders. It provided essential health service information enabling visitors with urgent healthcare needs to get the most efficient treatment in pharmacies, online or at accident and emergency departments.

The site was central to LOCOG and NHS London's strategy to reduce the impact of the Olympics on NHS services over the summer period.



Your views

NHS Choices is successful because users' views are listened to. In 2012/13 we ran 28 surveys that resulted in over 26,000 completed questionnaires. These were completed by a cross section of our users, members of the public and both health and other non- health professionals.

We also ran eight website testing sessions in which we spoke to another 55 members of the general public in person, observing how they were using areas of the site that were under development.

Tell us what you think

How can NHS Choices continue to help NHS organisations and the public sector to deliver a modern health service? How can digital technology be used to improve health?

If you have an idea or an opinion about NHS Choices which you would like to share, email thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk





