NHS Teen LifeCheck guide to marketing and communications
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Welcome to the Department of Health NHS Teen LifeCheck marketing and communications toolkit.

The aim of this guide is to help you develop and implement marketing and communications activity around NHS Teen LifeCheck.

Throughout the guide we will provide you with as many creative ideas as possible including posters, roadshows, press releases and give-aways. We will also tell you where and how you can make use of free NHS LifeCheck resources.
What is NHS Teen LifeCheck?

NHS Teen LifeCheck is a free, easy-to-use, interactive online questionnaire offering lifestyle advice to 12–15 year olds. To use NHS Teen LifeCheck go to www.teenlifecheck.co.uk

It guides young people through a set of simple multiple-choice questions and then gives them tailored advice on how they can take small steps to improve their lifestyles by setting goals and signposting to national and local services for further support.

NHS Teen LifeCheck covers a range of issues including physical activity; nutrition; solvents and illegal drugs, sexual health, alcohol and smoking. It also focuses on young people’s emotional wellbeing – with advice and top tips about stress, bullying, relationships, personal safety and self-esteem.

Where did NHS Teen LifeCheck come from?

NHS Teen LifeCheck is one of the initiatives that supports the children and young people’s public health programme which came from ‘Healthy lives, brighter futures: A strategy for children and young people’s health’ (published in February 2009).

This joint Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families strategy outlines the Government’s vision for improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all children and young people and supporting a reduction in health inequalities.

Who is NHS Teen LifeCheck for?

NHS Teen LifeCheck is aimed at 12–15 year olds and is designed to educate and empower young people to make healthy choices.

NHS Teen LifeCheck has been developed in consultation with a wide range of health professionals and research experts, as well as being tested by young people themselves. It is non-judgmental, totally confidential and no identifying data is kept.

How can NHS Teen LifeCheck help you?

NHS Teen LifeCheck provides a means of ‘reaching out’ to young people who might not otherwise engage with local services, thereby helping to address health inequalities.

It also provides a focal point for all of the issues that you may be trying to tackle in your area. Encouraging young people to take an NHS Teen LifeCheck is a great way of stimulating discussion on a broad range of health and emotional wellbeing issues.

NHS Teen LifeCheck is a great way to bring together local partners who work on the multiple issues that NHS Teen LifeCheck covers. In addition, it can help you deliver public health priorities for young people such as raising educational achievement and reducing child poverty. Details of how NHS Teen LifeCheck can support these targets can be found in the publication ‘Developing the NHS LifeCheck’, a summary of the evidence base. Furthermore, it provides a way of introducing pupils to all of the issues covered by the PSHE curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4.
SECTION TWO
PLANNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Now that you have decided to use NHS Teen LifeCheck in your work, it's a good idea to plan ahead and ensure that you have a marketing and communications strategy in place that will support your work and help you achieve your goals.

There are five simple steps to planning and implementing any marketing communications activity:

Scoping
Implementing
Evaluating
Follow-up

Here are further details on all of these steps.

Phase One: Scoping

Setting Objectives

Spending time upfront planning your campaign will increase your chances of success in the long run.

The aim of NHS Teen LifeCheck nationally is to provide a means for local professionals to engage teens and help them make decisions about their future health. It also helps teens understand how they can use local services more effectively, which will help address health inequalities.

When using NHS Teen LifeCheck, you might want to consider developing your own set of aims. One of which is likely to be engaging with young people in your area about NHS Teen LifeCheck.

Setting clear objectives will help you show the success of your campaign. You might want to consider the following example objectives when developing your plans:

• For NHS Teen LifeCheck to be used in all schools by the end of the summer term.
• To run a health event for teens in three local shopping centres and aim for 100 young people to undertake an NHS Teen LifeCheck at each event over a three-week period in the summer holidays.
• To ensure 5,000 NHS Teen LifeCheck leaflets are handed out by all youth workers across ten different schools or organisations over a six month period after the start of the new academic year.
• To establish a steering group with five different local partners to meet in the first week of your planning process and then every six weeks.
• To visit one school or pupil referral unit each month of the academic year to guide PSHE teachers on how to use NHS Teen LifeCheck as part of a roadshow, with the aim of presenting to ten different groups and distributing 1,000 leaflets.

Top Tip
Ask yourself, are your objectives SMART - Specific, measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely? Breaking them down into these 5 areas will help you when it comes to evaluation.
Case study

One element of Sunderland City Council’s strategy has been to develop a series of adverts aimed at teenagers and their parents to be aired on local radio station Sun FM. The council aims to reach its 14,400 teenagers and their parents, informing them about NHS Teen LifeCheck over a 12-month period. These goals are achievable and measurable given the listenership of the radio station, which is 66,000 each week. The council has ensured the content of the adverts is relevant to teenagers through involvement in its development. So far the advert has aired 96 times in August with the potential of being heard 536,000 times – this information will allow the council to evaluate the campaign once complete. Further adverts are scheduled for December 2009 and March 2010. The council’s Families Information Service has been briefed on directing callers to information about NHS Teen LifeCheck.

Ask yourself the following questions to build up a picture of how to tackle the campaign and start developing plans that will help you reach your targets.

• What are your timings?
• Who are your audiences?
• What do you want to achieve?
• What resources will you need to deliver the campaign?
• Are there any existing resources you can use?
• Who are the local partners you already work with?
• Who are the new local partners you could involve?
• What local media is there that you could approach?
Audiences

Understanding your audience is vital to the success of your campaign. Here we have an example of two teens, Chantal and Jamey along with their worries and the media and local services they use.

Chantal (12)
Barrow-in-Furness
Reads mizz and Sugar
Likes clothes and make-up

A girl at school keeps on picking on me but my mates will think I’m well sad if I say something...

Jamey (13)
Hackney
Likes computer games
Listens to Kiss FM

My brother and mates smoke - and I don’t want to stick out and not do it...
Stakeholder Audiences

Local stakeholders may include a range of different people and organisations such as:

- Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs).
- Looked after children teams.
- Community police managers.
- Connexions managers.
- Youth workers.
- Pupil referral units (PRUs).
- Directors of Children’s Services.
- Extended schools co-ordinators.
- Healthy Schools managers.
- Local governors.
- Local headteachers or local head's association representative.
- PCT commissioning managers.
- PSHE Association representatives.
- Teenage pregnancy managers.
- Youth club managers.
- Youth Justice Board representatives.
- Local retailers – especially clothing stores, food outlets, sweet shops etc.
- Public transport, including school bus providers.

To ensure teens are encouraged to use NHS Teen LifeCheck in schools and other settings you should communicate with managers and leaders in these organisations from the outset. They can advise you on the best way to speak to teens and front-line workers.

You may find that there are already some steering groups that you can get involved with around issues like teen pregnancy, reducing alcohol abuse or drug use.

Case study

Mrs Weaver (teacher)
- Lives in Derby
- Is keen to understand how to kick-start difficult conversations in PSHE lessons
- Reads local paper and union publication
- Listens to Radio 4
- Has regular contact with local Healthy Schools co-ordinators at local meetings

“Having a way to talk about sex and drugs in PSHE lessons without the class becoming embarrassed would be great.”
By working with local stakeholder groups, you can:

- Build NHS Teen LifeCheck into the curriculum in schools and pupil referral units.
- Link with the National Healthy Schools Programme.
- Develop NHS Teen LifeCheck introduction packs for pupils entering secondary schools.
- Promote NHS Teen LifeCheck at other big community events.

Case studies

Working with local stakeholders

Sheffield began promoting NHS Teen LifeCheck at face-to-face briefings with local stakeholder organisations. The team invited secondary school co-ordinators across the area to briefing events where they had the opportunity to discuss the tool and provide feedback. Local relationships were used to prompt each school into thinking of ways they could encourage young people to complete an NHS Teen LifeCheck.

Camden’s lead officer arranged a meeting with local stakeholder organisations to ask for their advice and brainstorm how funding would be invested in communications. This group included Connexions teams, the local Healthy Schools team and the PCT commissioning manager. They acted as a steering group to help develop and review plans while advising on implementation.
Timings

Keeping your campaign on track and running smoothly means having a timings plan that tells you when things need to be done and who needs to do it.

It is always worth looking at existing calendar events that you can piggyback – such as partner activity or school holidays, Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day etc.

It’s important to ensure that any activity that you plan is achievable based on the level of capacity that you can dedicate to it and how long it will take to set the activity up and then implement – you should also factor in time for evaluation and feedback.

A good way to develop a timings plan is by using a spreadsheet like the one on the next page. This can then act as your central source of information about the campaign.

Costs

Your activity needn’t be expensive.

You can minimise costs by:

- Partnering with places that already have computers and internet access such as schools and libraries.
- Downloading free marketing materials from the stakeholder website: www.lifecheckers.co.uk
- Piggybacking on existing projects and campaigns within your own or a partner organisation.

If you do have a budget, consider the return on investment (ROI). Spending lots of money on a big event may not help you meet your objectives, while encouraging local youth clubs to use the NHS Teen LifeCheck may give you a far greater return.
# Stakeholder Activity Table

This is an example of a timeline that may help you. A blank version for you to fill in is at the back of this guide.

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Phase Two: Developing

Stakeholder resources and events

> Resources

Using literature such as leaflets, posters, give-aways and other promotional items is a great way to communicate with front-line stakeholders.

Below are some ideas for how this type of literature can be used with stakeholders:

- Leaflets to distribute to front-line worker’s offices introducing NHS Teen LifeCheck and the benefits it can offer.
- Letters and emails to heads and centre managers introducing NHS Teen LifeCheck (potentially via Healthy Schools Teams).
- USB sticks distributed to schools and centres containing materials such as:
  - Lesson plans showing how NHS Teen LifeCheck can be used in PSHE lessons.
  - Artwork for posters aimed at teens that can be printed out by schools and other organisations to be put up around their sites.
  - Pop-up web pages that link to the NHS Teen LifeCheck site.

There are existing materials available for you at [www.lifecheckers.co.uk](http://www.lifecheckers.co.uk)

It is also worth speaking to local partners about any materials that they may have that you can use to develop a bigger NHS Teen LifeCheck pack – for example local teen pregnancy co-ordinators may have ‘r u thinking’ resources, or DAATs may have FRANK collateral. Local police often have materials that they have developed for young people too.

> Events

You may also want to consider holding face-to-face events for teachers and other front-line workers. This will allow you to demonstrate what NHS Teen LifeCheck looks like and how it works. This is also an opportunity to talk through the tool and leave attendees with materials to take away and share with other colleagues.
Case study

Stakeholders are the key for NHS LifeCheck in Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke kick-started their activity by focussing on stakeholders for their joint teen and baby launch, and gave young people themselves the job of facilitating. Around 70 professionals attended four events at the city’s Community Learning Centres. The choice of venues was key to being able to demonstrate NHS LifeCheck using a suite of computers.

“Most of the people who came hadn’t heard of NHS LifeCheck before and at the end of the day they all saw value in it. We had health visitors, school nurses, youth workers, and librarians all looking at how they could embed it, what support they needed and what the issues were. Using young people to demonstrate the website worked really well and they were able to answer questions and give their opinions.”

Co-ordinator Judy Kurth said the day was a great success.
Teen resources and events

> Resources

Below are some tried and tested ideas that you may want to consider when creating resources for teen communications.

These include:
- Pop-up stands for schools, youth clubs and Connexions Centres.
- Stickers, leaflets and posters.
- Branded items such as healthy smoothies or USB sticks containing pop-up NHS Teen LifeCheck pages.

You may also want to work with local commercial radio stations to communicate with teens. A good place to start is by speaking to their sales teams about the following possibilities.

These will have cost implications:
- Pre-recorded radio adverts that feature case-study teens talking about the benefits of using NHS Teen LifeCheck and directing listeners to the website.
- Website advertising: most radio stations will have a website where you can place advertising.

> Events

Creating and hosting interactive events is an effective way of engaging with young people. This might include an assembly or a play shown in school.

For example, you may want to consider:
- Booking a local theatre group that can act out issues relating to NHS LifeCheck and then directing young people to the website.
- Arranging partnerships with organisations – such as QUIT (the anti-smoking group) for assemblies.
- Forming youth clubs which promote healthy living and then directing young people to NHS Teen LifeCheck.
- Booking health buses to attend schools with NHS Teen LifeCheck resources onboard.
- Hosting an NHS Teen LifeCheck information stall in local shopping centres.

Case study

Corby gets off to a ‘Blazing’ start

Corby Borough Council developed a youth club called Blazers to get youth off the streets and into an environment where they could meet friends while learning about healthy issues and having the chance to use NHS Teen LifeCheck. Young club-goers enjoy alcohol-free cocktails, learn how to scratch and mix records and join in with some street dancing, Wii exercises and games.
Most local authorities have publications and newsletters that are sent to the local children's workforce, which is a good way to contact partners. Find out what these titles are by asking your partner groups and then approach the editors with copy which they can include or a relevant local case study. You should also contact your own communications team or press office for advice and support writing these articles.

Media relations is also a great way to reach a large number of young people and their parents. If you haven’t already, you might want to send a press release about launching NHS LifeCheck locally. There are template press releases and copy for newsletters / partners available for you to use. Please see the useful resources section of this guide.

Alternatively, you could create some news. For example, you may approach a journalist about a group of young people who have vowed to live healthily having been inspired by NHS Teen LifeCheck.

Whatever the story, your press office can help as they will already have a good relationship with your local media.

Below are a few ideas to help:

- Look for calendar hooks: e.g. New Year resolutions (you could call upon teens to use NHS Teen LifeCheck to help keep their resolutions).
- Human interest stories: a success story of a group of teens or a school that has boosted health.
- Local events: publicise your teen-focussed events.
- Celebrity endorsement: a local celebrity/sporting hero may want to help your cause.
- Respond to the news: write letters about NHS LifeCheck in response to teen health stories.
- Surveys: if you have local survey results, use them to prove a positive point and call upon teens to use NHS Teen LifeCheck.

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When talking to your local media about a story consider the following:

- **Interviewee**: who will be your spokesperson (ask your press office) and are they briefed about the story and ready to talk if required?
- **Case studies**: are there teens who can talk about their experiences of using NHS Teen LifeCheck?
- **Photography**: do you have a striking image to support the story?
- **Partners**: will your partner organisations back you up and provide supporting statements and interviews?
- **Celebrities**: do you have any contacts with local celebrities that could bring a newsworthy element to your story?
- **Facts and figures**: have stats to hand – the media love these. How many teens in the region are there who could use NHS Teen LifeCheck? How many have you reached with your campaign? How many have pledged to improve their lifestyle? How do these figures look now compared to before the campaign?
- **Approval**: who has seen your press releases? Is your press office happy and have you informed the appropriate people at the local authority or PCT?
- **Who, what, where, why, when and how**: make sure all these elements are included in the first couple of paragraphs of any press release. Make your story stand out from the crowd.

You may also consider going to the local radio news desks with your stories. It is a good way to reach teens, who will often listen to music and are more likely to hear news bulletins than read the paper.
Partnerships

Partnership activity is another way of reaching teens. In addition to asking for their advice on the best way to communicate the young people, local partners such as schools and Connexions teams can offer you a direct route to your target audience.

For example, they can offer free advertising space in places used by teens and also access to free space for events that engage teens. In return, they can learn more about how NHS Teen LifeCheck can help them in their work and benefit from the results.

Top tip

When communicating with media or teens directly use the URL www.teenlifecheck.co.uk instead of NHS Teen LifeCheck to drive more traffic to the site.

Case study

In promoting NHS Teen LifeCheck, Sandwell contacted every school in the area to see if they could include the www.teenlifecheck.co.uk address on their website. All secondary schools have received a pack of resources, including letters explaining what NHS Teen LifeCheck is and how it can be used.
Phase Three: Implementing

You’ve done your planning – now you can start doing!

When it comes to implementing your plans, stay focussed and make sure you get the most out of your activity. Remember your objectives, timings and any costs that may vary. And keep local partners up-to-date with progress and successes to ensure they remain engaged.

Phase Four: Evaluation

Evaluation will help you assess and judge the value of your activity. There are three areas of campaign effectiveness which you could measure: Output, Out-take and Outcome.

Output

This is the simplest form of evaluation and is usually focussed on quantitative results.

For example, the number of teens in your area who completed NHS Teen LifeCheck, the number of partner organisations with which you engaged with about NHS Teen LifeCheck, the amount of teens who received marketing information through schools or the number of media events / stories you carried out and the resulting media coverage.

Out-take

This looks at the degree to which your target audience is aware of the key messages and how much they have retained and understood them.

You can measure this by asking teens in schools and stakeholders attending meetings to fill in evaluation forms – are they aware of NHS Teen LifeCheck and how it can help them? Do they know where to go to access the site? Do they feel there is enough information on NHS Teen LifeCheck, are there enough access points to this information and is it written and presented in the right way?

Learning from any feedback you get will ensure that any future campaigns you carry out will be more effective.

Outcome

This is the measurement of the degree to which your activity has changed people’s opinions, attitudes and behaviour. It would be a good idea to find out what people know about NHS Teen LifeCheck before you start your campaign so that you can measure what change there has been.

Successful outcomes to capture would be schools which have integrated NHS Teen LifeCheck into their PSHE lessons, positive media coverage where journalists are encouraging about NHS Teen LifeCheck and understand its purpose, partner organisations which have implemented NHS Teen LifeCheck into their working practices.

Phase Five: Follow-up

Learning from your campaign is key because it will help you achieve higher targets the next time. Look at your objectives and see if they have been met. Be honest and look to see how you can build on the findings of your evaluation.
Case study

Wakefield makes the grade

In feedback from PSHE school lessons in the Wakefield district, 83% of teens agreed that they would recommend NHS Teen LifeCheck to their friends and 82% said they may use the tool again. Furthermore, staff have found it very useful, allowing them to break the ice with embarrassed teens, while saving them hours in preparation time by providing a resource that fits simply into their lessons.
SECTION THREE
PRESS RELEASES

Template press releases and media Q&A

If you would like to launch NHS Teen LifeCheck locally and want to tell the local press and radio all about it, you can use the template press release available in this document. A media Q&A document is available at www.lifecheckers.co.uk

SECTION FOUR
USEFUL RESOURCES

You will find a range of useful resources at the NHS LifeCheck stakeholder website: www.lifecheckers.co.uk
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TEENAGERS – FIND OUT IF YOU’RE HEALTHY
www.teenlifecheck.co.uk

A free, online lifestyle self-assessment service to help teenagers improve their health and wellbeing is being rolled out in [INSERT REGION/CITY] today.

NHS Teen LifeCheck uses an engaging and interactive quiz to offer health and lifestyle information to 12-15 year olds. Hosted entirely online, it guides young people through a set of completely confidential, simple multiple-choice questions and then gives them tailored advice on how they can set goals to improve their lifestyles.

Gillian Merron, Public Health Minister, said:

“Teenage years can be a difficult enough time without having to worry about your health. NHS Teen LifeCheck is a quick and easy way of checking your health which gives simple advice on how to be healthier. We’ve worked with young people to develop an effective and accessible service which is completely confidential.”

The online tool offers information on a range of issues including physical activity, nutrition, solvents and illegal drugs, sexual health, alcohol and smoking. NHS Teen LifeCheck also covers emotional wellbeing – with advice and top tips about stress, bullying, relationships and self-esteem as well as providing links to support services.

The advice given includes ‘how to’ videos with lifestyle tips from other teenagers who have taken an NHS LifeCheck themselves. NHS Teen LifeCheck has been developed in consultation with a wide range of health professionals and research experts, as well as being tested by young people themselves. It is non-judgmental, totally confidential and no identifying data is kept.

Primarily aimed at 12-15 year olds, it has already been successfully promoted in 83 local areas across the country.

Jessica Aspey, 13, a year nine pupil at Highfields School in Matlock, Derbyshire said, “I didn’t used to eat a lot of fruit and vegetables because I preferred chocolate and crisps. I went on the NHS Teen LifeCheck website and really liked it. I learned how to be healthy, and stay healthy.”

The national roll-out of NHS Teen LifeCheck is supported by an integrated marketing campaign to raise awareness of the service amongst young people. Advertising features the faces of four teenagers each asking the question ‘Am I Normal?’.

NHS Teen LifeCheck can be accessed by teenagers in their own homes and may also be available through PHSE or ICT lessons in schools.

NHS Teen LifeCheck is one of three NHS LifeCheck services. NHS Baby LifeCheck, aimed at parents and carers of five - eight month old babies and NHS MidLifeCheck, aimed at 40+ year-olds, are being rolled out nationally later this year.

----- Ends -----

For more information about Teen LifeCheck please contact:

[ENTER LOCAL CONTACT DETAILS]

Notes to Editors

About NHS LifeCheck

- NHS LifeCheck informs, empowers and supports people in leading healthier lives. It helps them to understand how their current lifestyle choices may affect their long-term wellbeing and offers guidance in making small but effective changes.

- In the public consultation ‘Your Health, Your Care, Your Say’ people clearly expressed an interest in taking more responsibility for their health and wellbeing. Three quarters of participants identified regular health checks as a top priority to help them do this.

- In response, the 2006 Government White Paper ‘Our Health, Our Care, Our Say’ announced the development of three initial NHS LifeChecks:
  - one for young people aged 12 - 15
  - one for parents and carers with babies five - eight months old and
  - one for the 40+ years age group.

- Jessica Aspey's quote was provided as an NHS Teen LifeCheck case study thanks to Derbyshire County Council.
For more information about NHS Teen LifeCheck please visit the stakeholder website www.lifecheckers.co.uk