

CAG briefing on sending specific letters to sub groups

Introduction

One of the key benefits of using the NHS Digital trials service is the ability to test different letter content and to identify whether, and which formats deliver the best outcomes.

Our Future Health has taken a deliberately phased approach to utilising this capability.

This paper sets out the approach to testing, the results of key test phases, and the plans for further segmented analysis.

Phase 1

Initial invitation issue via NHS Digital trials started in July 2022 and ran for circa 3 months.

The Digital trials pipeline enabled 12 variations to be tested, across 3 different variables:

- a) 3 versions of the letter
- b) 3 types of insert (Full PIS, A5 leaflet and no insert)
- c) QR code or Web link as the route for accessing the on line portal

For every batch issued to a geographic area, one third received each of 3 types of letter. Within that the variants for QR Code/Web Link and Insert type were split equally.

This Phase concluded that:

- inserts did not radically increase uptake – there was no significant benefit for the additional cost. In fact, the best performing condition was the letter with no insert, presumably as this drove people to the web portal to find more information.
- QR codes performed much better than web links for access to the portal.

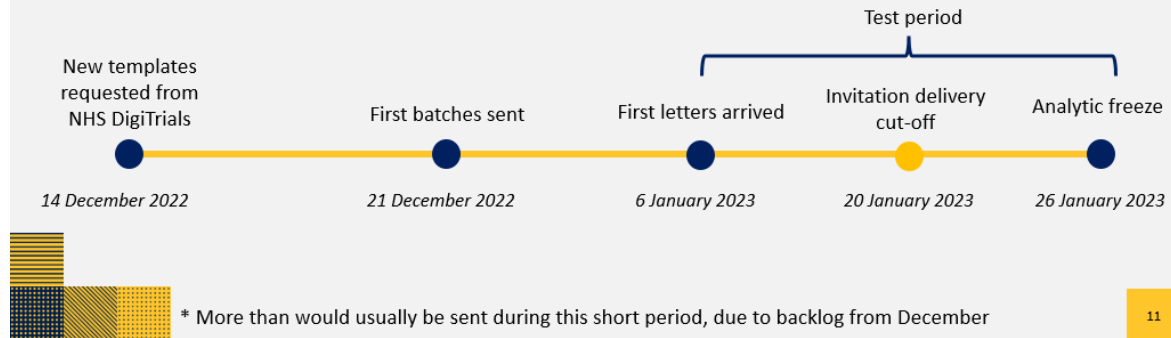
Phase 2

In December 2022/January 2023, a more detailed testing framework for letter content was implemented, covering 6 specific variants (and 2 versions of the control) (see appendix for letter variation):

- Control (altruism)
- Control with minor edits
- Anticipated regret
- Disease risk feedback
- Enhanced health and disease risk feedback
- Enhanced health and measurement feedback
- Low cognitive load

Background How we tested it

- Total invites sent during the testing period (arriving between 06 January & 20 January)
- 2,204,253*
- ~367,375 per letter condition



Results

a) High level metrics:

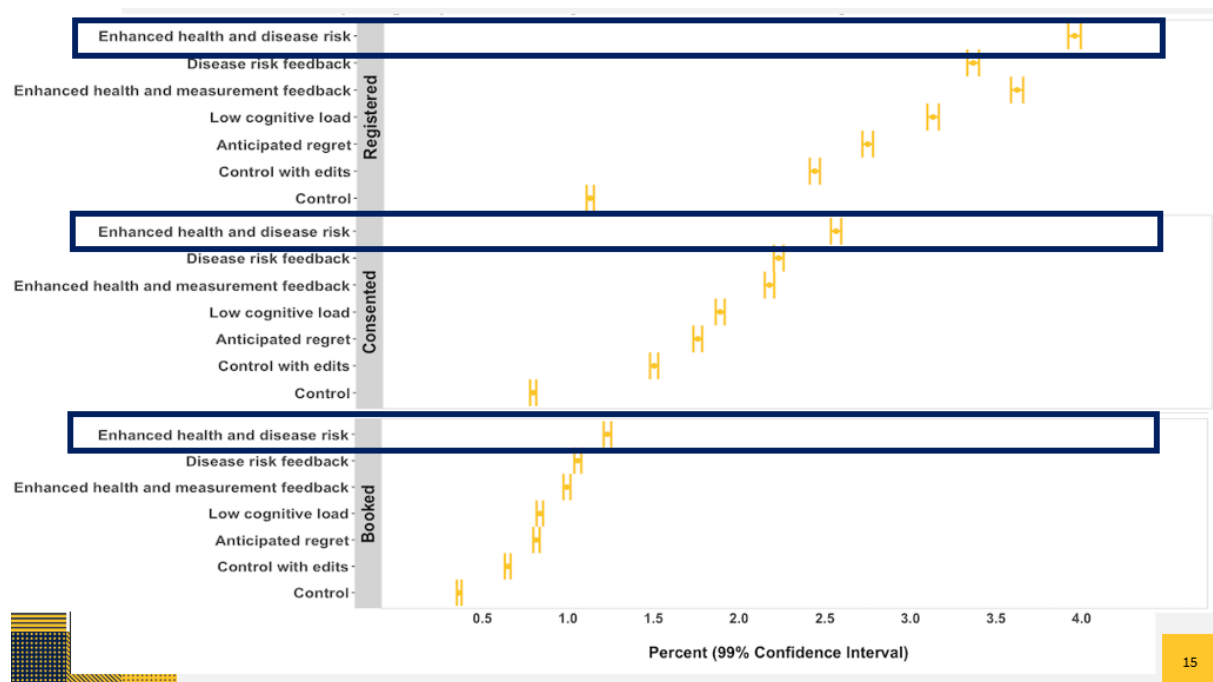
- 70,708 people registered during the testing period in response to one of the 6 invites
- 46,675* of those went on to consent
- 24,230* booked an appointment
- 24384* completed the questionnaire

(*Others may have completed these steps outside of the analytic freeze)

Note that the role of the letter issued via DigiTrials is to encourage individuals to open the web portal and register. Completion of additional stages is a function of the materials provided on the website and the overall participant experience as they navigate the journey, post consent.

Our Future Health has a dedicated team reviewing all metrics and learning from use of the system and the supporting information to ensure the highest rates of conversion at each stage of the participant journey. For example, in March, reporting was completed on a series of one hour interviews with 21 members of the public, completed by a 3rd party agency. The interviews sought feedback on a prototype new version of the web portal, offering enhancements to the way the participant navigates the wealth of information available to inform their consent. This work is a key part of optimising the overall consent rate.

b) *Detailed letter performance:*



The high performance of the letter option covering Enhanced Health and Disease risk in all sectors is clear. While the letter’s primary role is to drive individuals to log on and register, it is clear that the Enhanced Health and Disease Risk letter provided a greater impetus at all stages of the journey and this has been the preferred letter template for most (but not all) cohorts since.

Phase 3

As of February, based on these previous phases, the programme has focused on issue of letters across a range of regions. Testing at sub level began in March, with the introduction of a specific pilot in Greater Manchester, which includes a range of deprivation areas, using a letter which offered reimbursement of costs incurred. While this was impacted by a serious postal delay in letter delivery, and other varying confounding factors (e.g. Ramadan, school strikes) the initial conclusion seems to indicate a positive impact on rates of individuals consenting into the study and booking an appointment – both globally and in our subgroups of interest.

The confounding factors make it difficult to determine the exact percentage increase with confidence compared to:

- preceding weeks in Greater Manchester where no reimbursement was offered,
- regions where no reimbursement was offered,

However, the overall impact was positive in terms of booking rates and further exploration of this is now under design.

Phase 4

Our Future Health has always had the capability to analyse the sign-up rates of participants based on the invite code they use to register. It has also been possible to use output data from NHS

Digitrials to identify the numbers we have invited by specific characteristics (age/sex). In parallel we have been able to segment invitation cohorts by inferring ethnicity and IMD using population data. Phase 1 (a little) and Phase 2 (much more) demonstrated high level variation in the response rates from different groups by key characteristics. For example, when compared to the census data for a particular area, our response rate typically shows increases in response rates from certain groups, compared to others. We don't know how much of this variation is down to the letter and how much is down to the sub-group being interested/not, and how much is down to other variables yet to be accounted for.

To examine this, Our Future Health has developed the capability to analyse the sign-up rate segmented by specific characteristics and linked to the invite code showing which letter version they received.

This means it is now possible to commence detailed analysis of the invitation letter performance by the more detailed characteristics. This work is underway and will inform future plans for targeted letters to specific groups to maximise uptake from, particularly, the traditionally underrepresented groups and those that are harder to reach. This work will include PPIE work with groups to develop materials that may be more effective for particular sub groups, and which can be issued to people in those specific sub groups via NHS Digitrials.

Appendix A - Letter Templates

+
Our
Future
Health

Control (altruism)

“An invitation to help future generations live healthier lives for longer”



4

+
Our
Future
Health

Control (minor edits)

“An opportunity to take part in research to help people live healthier lives for longer”

1. Answering some online questions about yourself
2. Giving our future health permission to securely link to your health records
3. Providing a blood sample... etc



5

Anticipated regret

“Taking part is an opportunity to one day look back and see how you had a role in beating diseases like cancer and heart disease.

The local clinics will only be in your area for a limited period of time, so be sure to sign up so you don't miss out”



Disease risk feedback

“An opportunity to take part in research and learn new information about your health and future risk of disease.

In the future you will have the option to receive information on your risk of some diseases including diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. This will be calculated using the information you provide and analysis of the DNA in your blood sample.”



Enhanced health measurement & disease risk feedback

“An opportunity to take part in research and learn new information about **your blood pressure, cholesterol** and future risk of disease.”



In partnership with 



Address
Address
Address

Dear (First name),

An opportunity to take part in research and learn new information about your blood pressure, cholesterol and future risk of disease.

You are invited to take part in a new research programme called Our Future Health. If you take part, you will have the chance to find out more about your health, including your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. In the future you will also be offered information on your risk of some diseases.

Today, too many people spend many years of their life in poor health. Our Future Health aims to help prevent, detect and treat diseases earlier. Diseases like dementia, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Our Future Health will be the UK's largest ever health research programme, with up to five million volunteers. Everyone over the age of 18 living in the UK is eligible to take part.

Taking part includes answering some online questions about yourself, providing a blood sample and having your blood pressure and cholesterol levels measured at a local clinic.

In the future you will have the option to receive information on your risk of some diseases including diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. This will be calculated using the information you provide and analysis of the DNA in your blood sample.

 Scan this QR code for more info and to sign up
Or visit ourfuturehealth.org.uk/join/0434
Your invite code is 0434

You can also share this invitation with your friends and family.

If you have any questions, please call 0808 501 5634 or email support@ourfuturehealth.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Dr Andrew Rodham DMSc
Joint Chief Investigator
Our Future Health


Dr Ralph AI OBE MD FRCP(AM)
Chief Medical Officer & Joint Chief Investigator
Our Future Health, NHS Consultant in Acute Medicine, Oxford

Chair of Trustees Professor Sir John Bell OBE FRCR FRCS FRCS(Plastic), Chief Executive Officer; Dr Andrew Rodham DMSc Joint Chief Investigator Our Future Health is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales number 22219460 and a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales number 1109402 and 1109403, Scottish Charity Register reference number SC039497. Registered office: 2 New Bailey, 4 Stanley Street, Manchester M3 3LS.

Enhanced health measurement feedback

“An opportunity to take part in research and learn new information about **your blood pressure, cholesterol.**”



In partnership with 



Address
Address
Address
Address

Dear (First name),

An opportunity to take part in research and learn new information about your blood pressure and cholesterol.

You are invited to take part in a new research programme called Our Future Health. If you take part, you will have the chance to find out more about your health, including your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Today, too many people spend many years of their life in poor health. Our Future Health aims to help prevent, detect and treat diseases earlier. Diseases like dementia, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

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 Scan this QR code for more info and to sign up
Or visit ourfuturehealth.org.uk/join/0432
Your invite code is 0432

You can also share this invitation with your friends and family.

If you have any questions, please call 0808 501 5634 or email support@ourfuturehealth.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Dr Andrew Rodham DMSc
Joint Chief Investigator
Our Future Health


Dr Ralph AI OBE MD FRCP(AM)
Chief Medical Officer & Joint Chief Investigator
Our Future Health, NHS Consultant in Acute Medicine, Oxford

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