

**NHS Outer North East London**  
**Bowel Cancer: Know The Signs**

### **Challenge**

Bowel cancer is the second biggest cause of cancer death in the UK and, in Outer North East London, one year survival rates are lower than the best in Europe.

To address this, NHS Outer North East London worked with Audience Communications to develop and deliver a social marketing campaign across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge, with the long term aims of:

- Increasing the number of people diagnosed with earlier stage bowel cancer
- Increasing the longer term survival rate of people with bowel cancer

### **Insight**

An initial scoping research phase highlighted the following:

- Those most at risk of bowel cancer are 50+, C2DE men and women
- Low symptom awareness and embarrassment are key barriers stopping patients going to their GP with bowel cancer symptoms at an early stage
- Early presentation is critical to early diagnosis

### **Overall strategy**

A clear 'push-pull' campaign strategy was developed:

*'Push':*

- Educate the public about bowel cancer prevalence and symptoms
- Prompt the public to approach their GP at an early stage

*'Pull':*

- Support health care professionals in engaging with patients presenting with symptoms – to generate more accurate referrals to secondary care
- Empower wider stakeholder groups, such as charities, community and faith groups, employers and adult social services, as 'trusted ambassadors' for the campaign – to refer individuals with symptoms to their GP

## Campaign 'look and feel'

Focus groups with members of the target audience showed they wanted a 'back to basics' campaign that didn't shy away from the facts about bowel cancer and spelt out the symptoms in 'straight-talking' language.

**CHANGE  
IN YOUR  
BOWEL  
HABIT?**

**NHS**

**Blood in your poo  
Persistent diarrhoea  
Severe abdominal pain  
Lump in your tummy  
Weight loss**

These are the key symptoms of bowel cancer, the UK's second biggest cancer killer.

If you have any of these symptoms, **see your GP now.**

**BOWEL CANCER  
KNOW THE  
SIGNS**

**90% OF BOWEL CANCER CASES CAN BE TREATED IF DIAGNOSED EARLY**

The campaign needed a 'Ronseal' approach – to 'do what it said on the tin'. The colour palette chosen included red – 'for danger', and the language used regarding the symptoms was direct – i.e., 'blood in your poo'.

The campaign logo, consistent across all materials to create a strong identity for the work, shows that bowel cancer affects men and women, and gives a very clear call to action – 'know the signs'.

**GIVE US AN HOUR IT WILL HELP SOMEONE IN THEIR FINAL HOURS**

**Marie Curie Cancer Care**

**THE GREAT DAFFODIL APPEAL**

**NHS**

**Bobby Moore died of bowel cancer  
He was 51**

If you have any of the following symptoms, see your GP now.

**Blood in your poo  
Persistent diarrhoea  
Severe abdominal pain  
Lump in your tummy  
Weight loss**

**BOWEL CANCER  
KNOW THE  
SIGNS**

**Bowel cancer is the UK's second biggest cancer killer but 90% of cases can be treated if diagnosed early**

The late Bobby Moore, local 1966 World Cup winner who died of bowel cancer, aged 51, was a popular choice for materials specifically targeting men.



The audience wanted to know the risks but also needed a message of hope – that 9 in 10 cases can be treated if caught early. Trusted communicators included survivors and GPs.

## Channels

Based on audience feedback, the campaign channels centred on two key opportunities to get the message across:

- ‘Reflective moments’ – times and places where the target audience would be looking for something to read or prompted to think about the issue:
  - 6 sheet adverts on bus shelters
  - Posters on backs of toilets doors and panels in washrooms in pubs, local authority leisure centres, service stations
  - Adverts and editorial of launch featuring George Cohen, local 1966 World Cup winner and bowel cancer survivor, in local print media
  - Ad van touring high footfall sites such as shopping centres
  - Symptom checker cards direct mailed to all 50-59 year olds and distributed via pharmacies and in GP waiting rooms
  - Branded bus pass wallets distributed on pensions day at transport links
  - Ambient media (leaflets highlighting the good odds that ‘9 in 10 cases can be treated if caught early’) in Coral betting shops
- ‘Interactive moments’ – face to face contact with trusted communicators (religious leaders, pharmacists, community workers, friends or relatives) to trigger the desired behaviour change
  - ‘Pop up’ public information event (an educational, inflatable ‘Big Bowel’ exhibition) at shopping centres, featuring NHS nurses
  - Briefing events in partnership with charities and community groups
  - Campaign presence at targeted local events



### **Using MOSAIC and NHS data**

Accurate targeting to reach the target audience was imperative to ensure best use of resources. Bus shelter sites were selected by using Experian data to map population data by age, demographic and health profile against available sites.

A symptom checker card, designed to help facilitate the conversation between GP and patient around symptoms, was mailed to all 50-59 year olds in the campaign boroughs using NHS data from the Acute Commissioning Unit.

### **Working with stakeholders**

The public campaign activity was underpinned by an awareness programme for healthcare professionals (GPs, practice nurses and pharmacists) and third sector bodies, including Age UK, to ensure they were fully briefed on the campaign aims, messages and activity plans, and refreshed on the signs.

By early June, 25 briefings had been held, including 12 group events such as GP Protected Time Initiatives. As part of the stakeholder engagement programme, a healthcare professional newsletter was mailed to all GPs and pharmacists across the three boroughs – and a wider campaign e-newsletter was provided to over 100 third sector bodies to offer an update and encourage groups to get involved.

### **Engaging with specific audiences**

The BME audience was identified as key to the campaign from the onset, given the need to address health inequalities, and research from the Cancer Awareness Measurement ethnicity report for the area showing that BME audiences are more likely to delay visiting the GP with bowel cancer symptoms.

Faith and community groups, such as the Redbridge Punjabi Centre and the Havering BME Forum, hosted talks on the campaign and materials were also made available at key events, such as a Redbridge LINKs BME men's health event and the Barking and Dagenham CVS Third Sector day.

The symptom checker card was made available in other languages on request and an advert in Hindi is scheduled to air on the East London community radio station, NuSound Radio, at the end of June.

## **Results**

The campaign runs until end of June 2011 and evaluation results will be available in October.

However, anecdotal feedback suggests a positive reception to activity to date.

During the first three 'Big Bowel' events, over 1,500 symptom checker cards were distributed and 17 GP referrals made. Comments included:

'I saw the campaign in the newspaper and picked up a symptom checker card in the pharmacy - because I'm worried about my mum' - female in 60s, Havering

'I had some of these signs a few years ago and they've come back again. I think I will go and see my GP' - male in 50s, Havering

'My husband has some of these symptoms but he won't see the GP - I'll give him the symptom checker card' - female in 40s, Barking