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Awareness of the Choose Well Campaign

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Awareness of the Choose Well Campaign

**Rebecca Cox and Sophie Nickson
Knowledge and Analytical Services
Welsh Government**

Data collection undertaken by Beaufort Research Ltd.

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

For further information please contact:

Sophie Nickson

Knowledge and Analytical Services

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Email: Sophie.Nickson@gov.Wales

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1. Key Findings

Background

- 1.1** In 2011 the Welsh Government introduced a communications campaign called 'Choose Well' in order to encourage the public to think about and make informed decisions on which health care service is appropriate for different illnesses and injuries.
- 1.2** In order to monitor the effectiveness of this campaign, Beaufort Research Ltd were commissioned to ask a representative sample of the Welsh population about their first choice of service for a variety of ailments, and their awareness of the 'Choose Well' campaign.

Service Choice

- 1.3** For almost all ailments, respondents most commonly selected the most appropriate service in terms of the 'Choose Well' campaign. Despite implying campaign success, there was no baseline to measure whether this would have been observed regardless of the campaign. Additionally, across the ailments tested, between 5 and 74 per cent of respondents would not have accessed the most appropriate service.

Campaign Awareness

- 1.4** When told the name 'Choose Well', 10 per cent of respondents reported awareness of the campaign. This number more than doubled to 24 per cent once the campaign was described; however among these respondents one third reported not knowing the main message of the campaign. Television was the most popular method of becoming aware of the campaign from those who reported awareness, with both adverts and programmes being cited as sources despite the campaign not running television adverts.

2. Introduction

Background

- 2.1** The winter period is busy for health services, with concerns that people are opting to visit General Practitioners or Emergency Departments for minor ailments when it would be more appropriate for them to access care elsewhere. In order to mitigate these problems, the Welsh Government has run an annual seasonal communication campaign over winter periods since 2011.
- 2.2** The 'Choose Well' campaign encourages people to think about and choose the right health service for their illness or injury, including self-care when appropriate. For the winter period of 2016-17, this campaign included a website, a smartphone application for iOS and Android, social media advertisements, 10,000 bilingual leaflets, radio advertisements, postcards, pocket cards and posters. In order to monitor the effectiveness of the campaign and inform its development, information was required on perceptions of what the right health service is in different situations and public awareness of the 'Choose Well' campaign.
- 2.3** To meet these research needs, the Welsh Government commissioned questions in the Wales Omnibus Survey, conducted by Beaufort Research Ltd.

Data Collection

- 2.4** The commissioned questions aimed to investigate which service respondents would choose for a set of ailments, and their awareness of the 'Choose Well' campaign.
- 2.5** The fieldwork was face to face Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) and comprised of 1,035 respondents in the period 27th February to 12th March 2017, although some interviews fell after the assigned period. The survey was designed to be representative of the population resident in Wales aged 16 years and over.
- 2.6** More information on the survey methodology is included in Annex A. The full questionnaire is attached at Annex B.

3. Choosing the correct service for specific ailments

3.1 Omnibus questions on the 'Choose Well' topic included a list of ailments. Respondents were asked which service, if any, they would choose first to treat each ailment in turn. The following ailments were asked about:

- Child feeling sick and has a slight fever, with no other symptoms
- Old person with numbness and slurred speech
- Cold and sore throat
- Crushing chest pains
- Persistent cough
- Vomiting and diarrhoea in the last 24 hours
- Injured ankle, no other injuries - painful but can walk on it
- Toothache lasting over a week
- Head lice
- Headaches when using computer or reading

3.2 The services that respondents could select from were the following:

- Self-care
- NHS Direct Wales
- GP
- Pharmacy
- Optician/ optometrist
- Dentist
- Health visitor
- Midwife
- Minor Injury Unit
- A&E

3.3 Respondents were also able to indicate that they did not know which service they would first select.

In summary: Services selected

3.4 Table 1 summarises the most popular and second most popular service selected by respondents and the percentage of respondents selecting it.

3.5 For all ailments, either the most or second most commonly service selected was the 'correct' service according to 'Choose Well'. Despite this, many respondents chose less appropriate services, with between 5 per cent and 74 per cent not selecting the most appropriate service for the presented ailment.

Table 1. The most commonly selected service for each ailment and the corresponding percentage, followed by the second most commonly selected service and its relevant percentage. Bold text indicates ‘correct’ response.

Ailment	Most Commonly Selected		Second Most	
	Service	Percentage Selecting	Service	Percentage Selecting
Child feeling sick and has a slight fever, with no other symptoms	Self-care	38	GP	36
Old person with numbness and slurred speech	A&E	76	GP	16
Cold and sore throat	Self-care	65	Pharmacy	24
Crushing chest pains	A&E	76	GP	17
Persistent cough	GP	72	Self-care	13
Vomiting and diarrhoea in the last 24 hours	Self-care	53	GP	26
Injured ankle, no other injuries - painful but can walk on it	Self-care	38	Minor Injury Unit	26
Toothache lasting over a week	Dentist	95	Self-care	2
Headlice	Pharmacy	46	Self-care	44
Headaches when using computer or reading	Optician / Optometrist	50	Self-care	37

Base: 1,035 respondents

4. Awareness of the Welsh Government ‘Choose Well’ campaign

Unprompted awareness

- 4.1** Respondents were asked ‘are you aware of the Welsh Government ‘Choose Well’ campaign’ in order to understand their unprompted campaign awareness. This question is referred to as unprompted as it did not provide any ‘Choose Well’ context. Ten per cent of respondents reported awareness of the campaign.

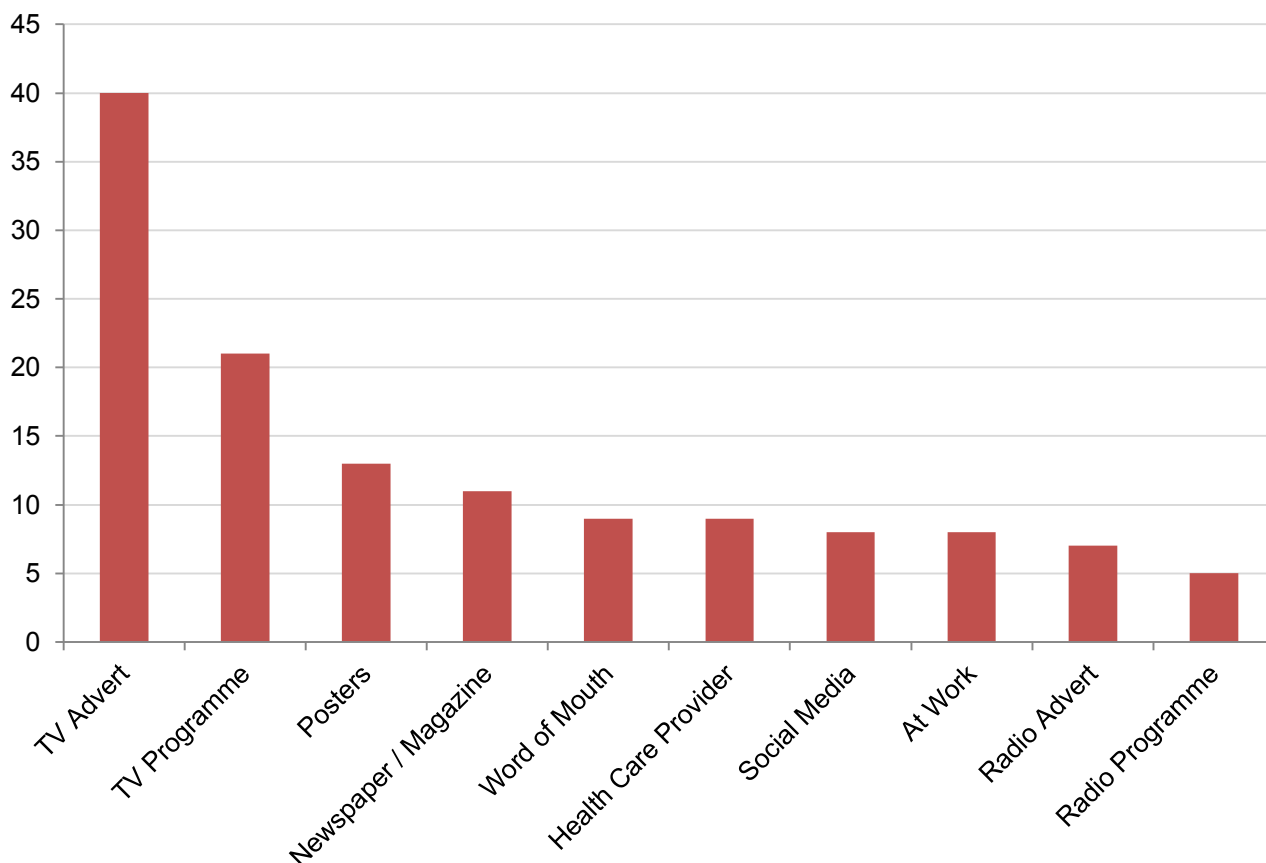
Prompted awareness

- 4.2** Following the unprompted question, respondents were provided with a couple of sentences about what ‘Choose Well’ is, then were asked whether they had seen or heard anything about the campaign. Twenty-four per cent of respondents responded affirmatively to this question.

Source of information

- 4.3** If a respondent reported awareness of the campaign in terms of seeing or hearing about it, they were probed on the source of their awareness. Respondents answered this question freely, and their answers were coded to the list presented in Annex B. The most popular sources were through television, with 40 per cent of responses coded as television adverts being where they heard of the campaign and a further 21 per cent as television programmes. Responses that were mentioned by five per cent or more of respondents can be seen in Figure 1. Five per cent of those who reported awareness of the campaign responded that they did not know the source of their awareness. Although percentages have been reported, respondents were able to mention more than one source, so these do not sum to 100.

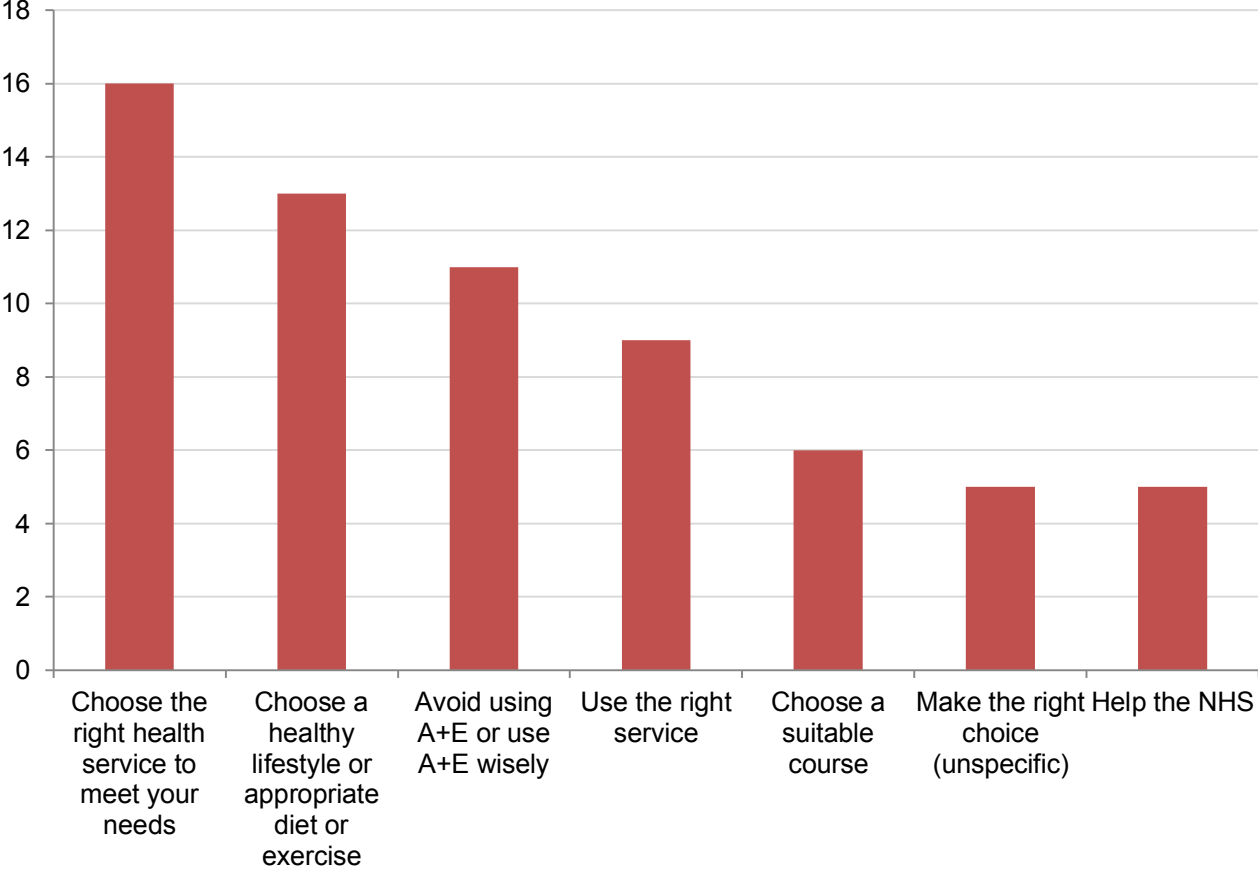
Figure 1. Sources of information cited by respondents in per cent.



Main messages of ‘Choose Well’

4.4 Respondents reporting awareness were subsequently probed about their knowledge of the main messages of the campaign, and as with the previous question this was free text coded to a frame. The reader should remember at this point that all respondents had been provided with a brief summary of the campaign in previous questions (see Annex B question three for full question wording). The most common code for responses to this question was not knowing what the main message of ‘Choose Well’ was, reported by 33 per cent of respondents. Responses other than ‘don’t know’ which were provided by over five per cent of respondents can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Main messages of Choose Well as reported by respondents in per cent,



5. Discussion

Choice of Service

- 5.1** For all but one of the ailments presented, most respondents selected the service which 'Choose Well' considers the most appropriate. It was, however, in no cases a unanimous selection, implying that not everyone is aware which service they should be accessing. The only instance where the most popular choice was not what 'Choose Well' would prescribe was for an injured ankle that can be walked on with no other pain, where the second most selected option (minor injury unit) was the most appropriate.
- 5.2** As the data were captured through a survey at a time when the respondents were not experiencing the ailment, it should be recognised that respondents may not always behave in the manner that they have indicated. For example a respondent who indicated they would go to the GP in response to an ailment may well take a different course of action were the ailment to actually befall them or their family.
- 5.3** These findings cannot be conclusively attributed to 'Choose Well', as unfortunately no baseline measure was taken in advance of the campaign, making it difficult to see whether the campaign impacted respondent decisions.

Awareness of 'Choose Well'

- 5.4** A minority of respondents indicated they were aware of the 'Choose Well' campaign when asked based solely on the name. This apparent awareness increased from 10 per cent to 24 per cent once respondents were provided with a brief overview of the service. Respondents most commonly reported finding out about the campaign through television, both by means of adverts and programs, despite the campaign not using television adverts nor programme placement. Television programmes could mean through the news, however, where Ministers were encouraged to mention the campaign.
- 5.5** Despite almost a quarter of respondents reporting awareness of the campaign once prompted, the largest group of respondents were unable to recall the 'Choose Well' main messages. This may be an artefact of the face to face survey mode, leading to social desirability, in this case reporting knowledge of the campaign when in reality they are unaware. However, it may also be due to respondents recalling the campaign name, but being unable to recall specifics.

6. Concluding Remarks

- 6.1** Despite the limitations discussed above, this survey does provide insight into the 'Choose Well' communications campaign. It can be seen from the service choice data that there is still further work to be done in terms of ensuring the public choose the correct service for their needs. As the data is broken down by ailment, it can advise future campaigns on which ailments to focus on, for example although people with toothache seem to know to go to the dentist, people are less informed about the correct services for a sick child and therefore this could be targeted.
- 6.2** As some respondents profess campaign awareness, it is possible that 'Choose Well' has had some impact upon positive service choices; however this can not be definitively proven.

Annex A: Methodology

The Wales Omnibus Survey sample is designed to be representative of the population resident in Wales aged 16 years and over. The unit of sampling is Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) and 69 interviewing points throughout Wales are selected with probability proportional to resident population, after stratification by unitary authority and social group.

Within each sampling point, demographic quota controls of age and social class within sex are employed for the selection of respondents. Quotas are set to reflect the individual demographic profile of each selected point.

The data have been weighted by age group within gender within unitary authority grouping to give each cell its correct incidence within the Wales total derived from the results of the 2011 Census.

A fresh sample of interviewing locations and individuals are selected for each survey and no more than one person per household is interviewed. Interviews are conducted face to face in the homes of respondents utilising CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) technology.

Most survey fieldwork was conducted between 27 February and 12 March 2017, with a few interviews conducted after this date; and a total of 1,035 face-to-face interviews were conducted and analysed.

Annex B: Questionnaire

Welsh Government

March 2017 Wales Omnibus: Choose Well Campaign Questions

Q1. I am now going to read out some ailments. Please could you tell me which service, if any, you would choose first to treat that ailment?

Ailment:

Child feeling sick and has a slight fever, with no other symptoms	Persistent cough	Toothache lasting over a week
Old person with numbness and slurred speech	Vomiting and diarrhoea in the last 24 hours	Headlice
Cold and sore throat	Injured ankle, no other injuries - painful but can walk on it	Headaches when using computer or reading
Crushing chest pains		

Answers:

Self-care	Pharmacy	Minor Injury Unit
NHS Direct Wales	Optician/ optometrist	A&E
GP	Dentist	Don't know
Midwife	Health visitor	

Q2. Are you aware of the Welsh Government 'Choose Well' campaign?

Answers:

Yes	No	Don't Know
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Q3. In 2011 the Welsh Government and NHS Wales launched the 'Choose Well' campaign. Choose Well encourages people to think and pick the right health service for their illness or injury, to help reduce pressures on emergency services. Before today, have you seen or heard anything about the 'Choose Well' campaign?

Answers:

Yes	No	Don't Know
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Q4. Only asked of those who answered yes to Q3. **How did you become aware of the ‘Choose Well’ campaign?** Answers coded not prompted.

Answers:

TV advert	Newspaper advert	Any other website (please specify_____)
TV programme	Newspaper article	Internet / website (unspecific)
Sponsorship of TV programme	Magazine advert	Cinema advert
Radio advert	Magazine article	At an event / roadshow
Radio programme	Post card	Mobile Advertising Van
Poster - in street	Leaflet	Someone told me about it
Poster – on a bus / train	Social media – e.g. facebook, twitter	At work
Poster – at a bus / train station	Any mention of Government website	Other (please specify_____)
Poster – unspecific		

Q5. Only asked of those who answered yes to Q3. **Can you tell me the main messages of the ‘Choose Well’ campaign?** Probe: **What were they trying to say?** Answers coded not prompted.

Annex C: Percentage results: Choosing the correct service

Table A.1. Service choice for different ailments

Ailment	Selected Service (per cent)										
	Self Care	NHS Direct Wales	GP	Pharmacy	Optician / Optometrist	Dentist	Health Visitor	Midwife	Minor Injury Unit	A&E	Don't Know
Child feeling sick and has a slight fever, with no other symptoms	38	8	36	11	0	0	2	0	0	2	2
Old person with numbness and slurred speech	1	6	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	1
Cold and sore throat	65	1	9	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Crushing chest pains	1	5	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	1
Persistent cough	13	1	72	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Vomiting and diarrhoea in the last 24 hours	53	6	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Injured ankle, no other injuries - painful but can walk on it	38	1	20	2	0	0	0	0	26	12	1
Toothache lasting over a week	2	0	1	0	0	95	0	0	0	0	1
Headlice	44	0	4	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Headaches when using computer or reading	37	0	7	4	50	0	0	0	0	0	0

Base: 1,035 respondents