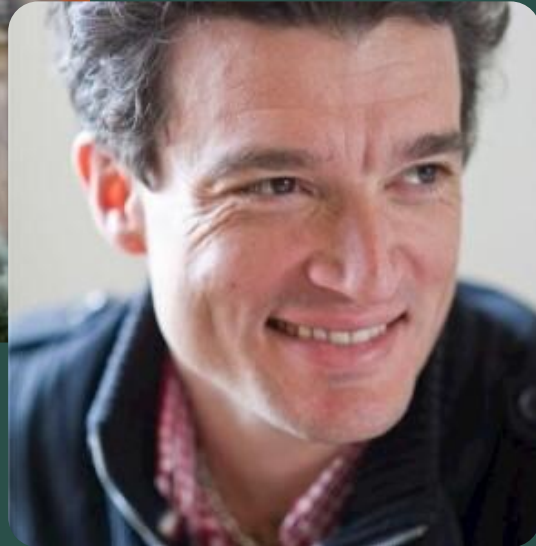


magpie.

Designing for Diversity: Simplifying Complex Healthcare Navigation Through User-Centric Behavioural Design





Saransh Ahuja

Senior Behavioural Strategist, Magpie

Humphrey Couchman

Assistant Director of Communications,
Media and Campaigns
NHS South East London

wearemagpie.com

hello@wearemagpie.com

Communications vision from NHS SE London



**Example
existing
solution**

Use the Right Service



 Self Care Care for yourself at home	 Pharmacy Local expert advice	 NHS 111 Non-emergency help	 GP Advice Out of hours: Call 111	 UTCs Urgent Treatment Centres	 A&E or 999 For emergencies only
Minor cuts & grazes Minor bruises Minor sprains Coughs and colds	Minor illnesses Headaches Stomach upsets Bites & stings	Feeling unwell? Unsure? Anxious? Need help?	Persistent symptoms Chronic pain Long term conditions New prescriptions	Breaks & sprains X-rays Cuts & grazes Fever & rashes	Choking Chest pain Blacking out Serious blood loss

01. The brief



Aim of the brief:

More people in SE London know how to navigate healthcare effectively.

The desired outcome is for people to believe:

“I have the knowledge and confidence to use NHS services if ever I need them, and therefore, I feel in charge of my own health.”

Audience:

Core20 PLUS 5 in SE London

Pilot:

In Lewisham, from January to March 2025

What outcomes do we want to encourage?

- More people use NHS services correctly
- They keep the solution for the time they need it
- Those who default to A&E choose new opportunities
- Increased self-efficacy and persistence
- Enhanced resilience to setbacks (or prior negative experiences)
- Maintain existing positive behaviours (correct use of NHS services)

02. Developing a wireframed solution



Inclusion of a comic strip with 3-5 illustrations

The essential knowledge for a better experience

My symptom/ condition	Where to go	What to do	Being prepared
Minor cuts & grazes Minor bruises Minor sprains Coughs and colds	Self Care Care for yourself at home	How (info/illustration TBC)	Being prepared (TBC)
Minor illnesses Headaches Stomach upsets Bites & stings	Pharmacy Local expert advice	How (info/illustration TBC)	Being prepared (TBC)
Feeling unwell? Unsure? Anxious? Need help?	NHS 111 Non-emergency help	How (info/illustration TBC)	Being prepared (TBC)
Persistent symptoms Chronic pain Long term conditions New prescriptions	GP Advice Out of hours: Call 111	How (info/illustration TBC)	Being prepared (TBC)
Breaks & sprains X-rays Cuts & grazes Fever & rashes	UTCs Urgent Treatment Centres	How (info/illustration TBC)	Being prepared (TBC)
Choking Chest pain Blacking out Serious blood loss	A&E or 999 For emergencies only	How (info/illustration TBC)	Being prepared (TBC)

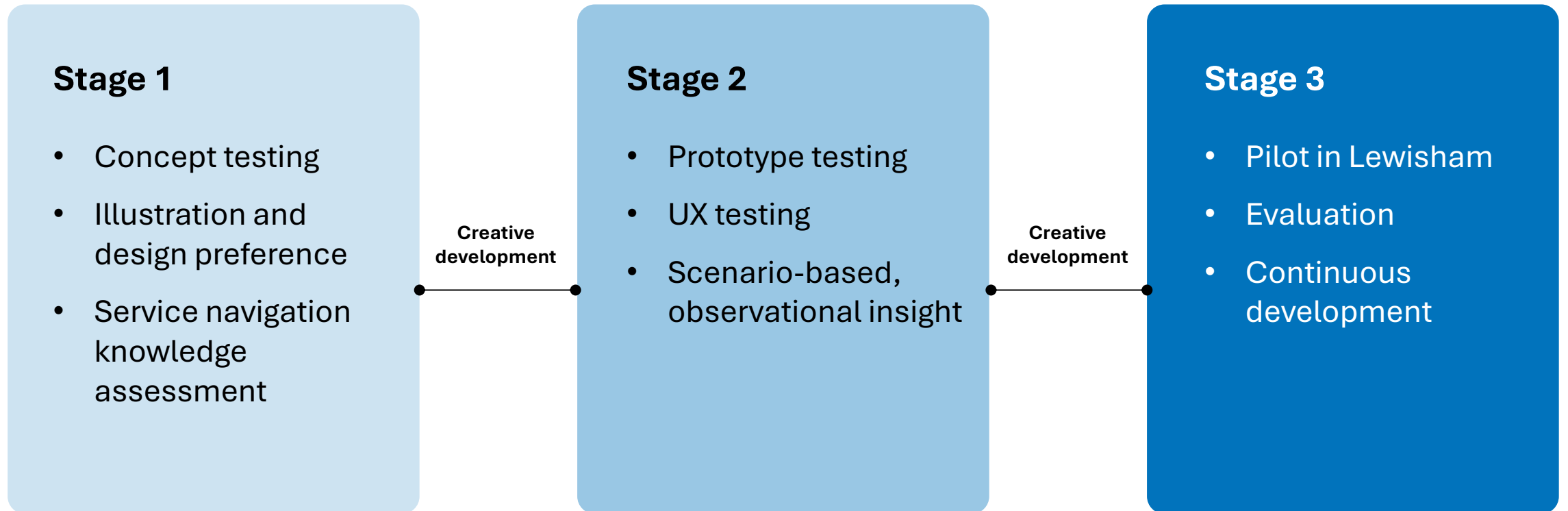
Navigating the NHS



03. Inclusive co-design



Iterative formative evaluation



Testing with rigour for:

Clarity
Language
Literacy
Accessibility
Relevance

Effectiveness

Likelihood of:

- usage
- decision-making
- retention
- sharing
- recall

Dissemination

- Media and format
- Delivery method
- Where to access



Local voices and lived experience across Lewisham

87 participants took part in testing and development

20 linguist groups from diverse ethnic backgrounds

+ testing for literacy, health literacy and neurodiversity

The frequency of NHS usage among participants (over the previous 12 months) ranged from 0 to 24 visits.

Frequent users (6+ visits per year):

Common in Groups 1, 3, 5, and 6, reflecting a reliance on NHS services for chronic conditions or ongoing care.

Rare or non-users:

Found primarily in Groups 2 and 4; reasons included not having registered for a GP and lower healthcare needs among these groups.

04. User centered behavioural design



Content design

Mapping out symptoms, pathways and scenarios

Your guide to how to get the right medical help



What are you suffering from?	Go to...	How to get the care you need
<p>I know I have a very serious injury or life-threatening emergency*</p>	<p>Straight to the Emergency department</p>	
<p>I know have an urgent medical or dental problem that I need help with right now. I'm worried and not sure what to do.</p>	<p>Call 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk</p>	
<p>I think I have... a possible broken bone, a painful injury to my foot, ankle, wrist, thumb, knee, leg, or back. A large cut that is long or deep and hasn't stopped bleeding after 10 minutes of applying pressure. Problems with my eyes. A high fever.</p>	<p>Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC)</p>	
<p>I think I have... a new or ongoing medical problem that isn't getting better and I'm not sure what it could be.</p>	<p>Your GP</p>	
<p>I think I have... a cough, cold, sore throat or headache, itchy skin, or a rash, pain when I pass urine, an infection, been bitten or stung by an insect.</p>	<p>Pharmacy</p>	
<p>I think I have... a minor cut, graze, bruise, a sprain, a cough or cold</p>	<p>Stay at home and look after yourself</p>	

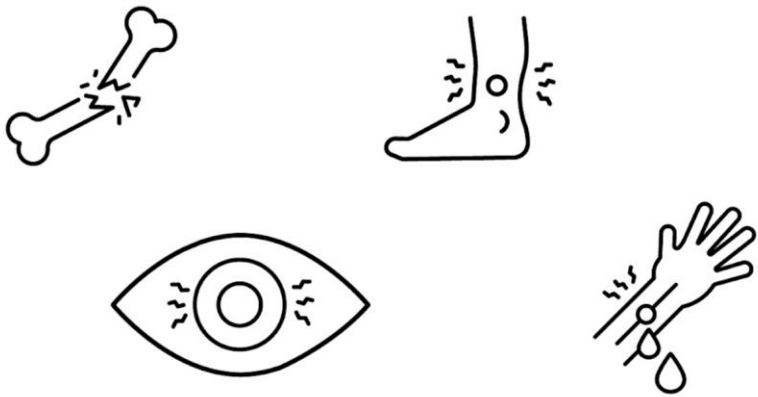
For mental health emergency please contact: [INSERT DETAILS HERE]

4.1

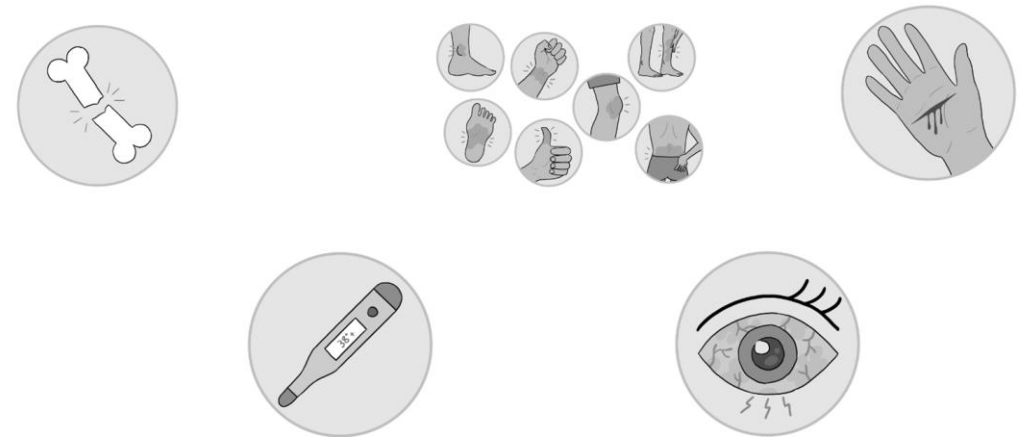
We tested understanding of symptom illustrations and ‘how to access’ instructions to define the brief for the final prototype.

Can you determine what conditions these people are suffering from?

Style 1



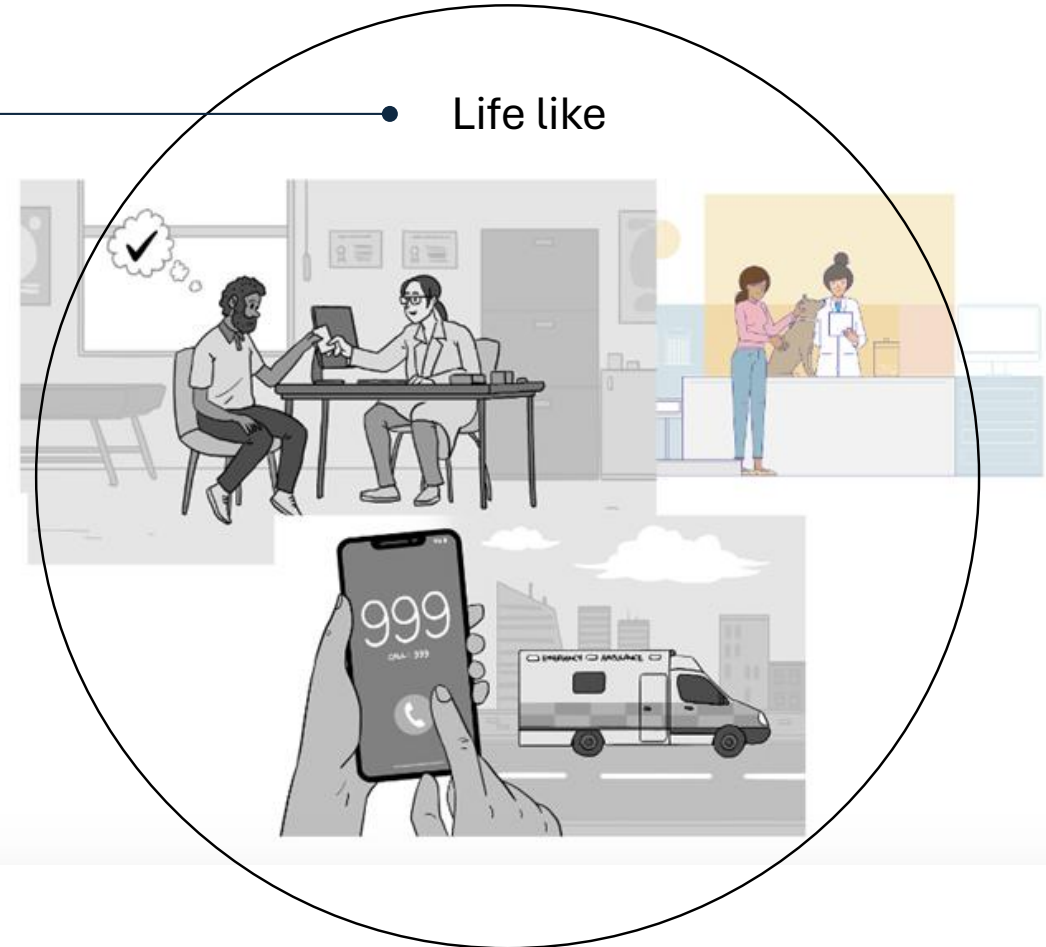
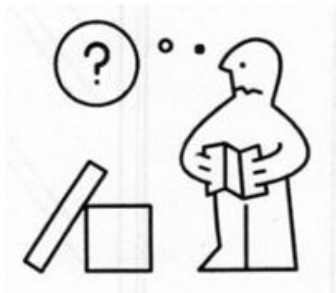
Style 2



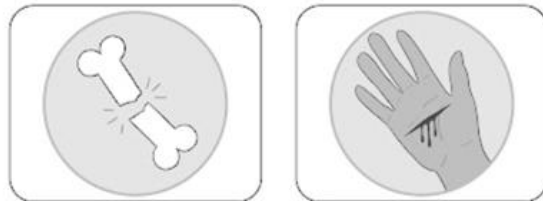
Style testing

Not life-like

Life like



Scenario testing – using no text



Without annotation



Scenario testing – how to access an Urgent Treatment Centre

With annotation



Step 1: Call 111 for advice if your symptoms are severe enough



Step 2: Locate your nearest Urgent Treatment Centre



Step 3: Walk-in or call ahead to book an appointment

Key insight from Stage 1 testing

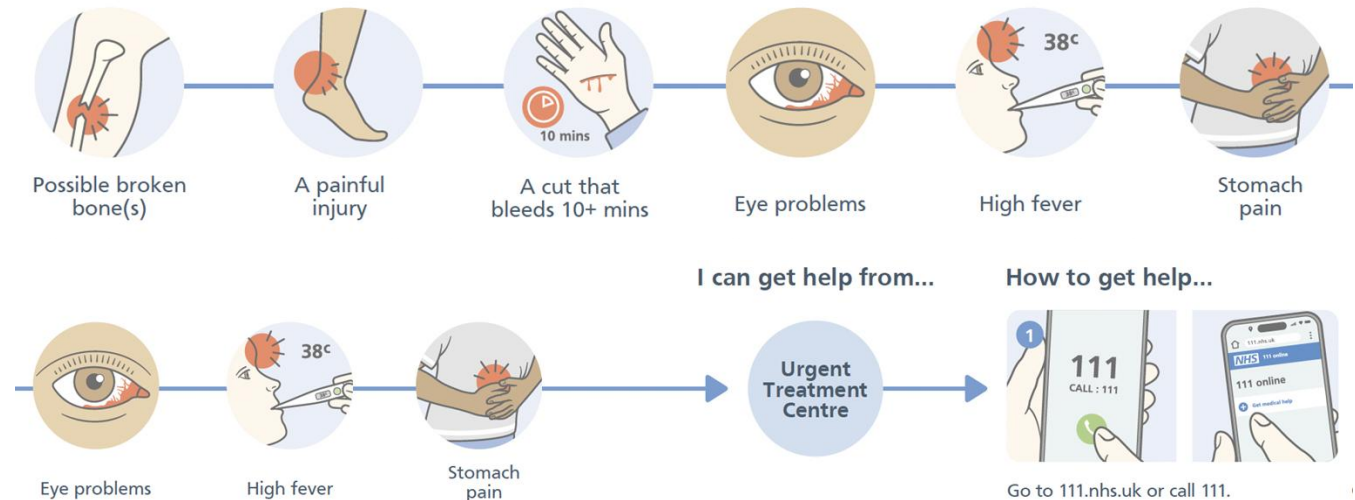
Use **short and simple annotations** to add further clarity alongside the illustrations.


The illustrations need to be **full colour, life-like, very literal** and have **lots of detail**.

Use **visual cues to show severity** and **show the length of time** of conditions in the illustrations e.g. using pain signals, highlighting key areas and timeframes.

Develop more **explicit labelling** and improve the **sequential flow** of information.


Examples





Pharmacy

Pharmacists can give advice and help with medicines and treatments. No appointment needed.



Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC)

Get same-day help with urgent problems that are not life-threatening. Walk in. No appointment needed.

Illustration style and briefings

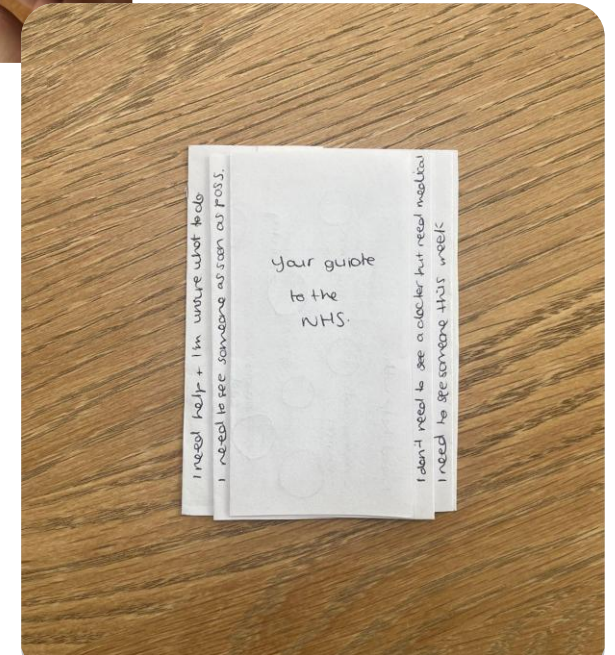
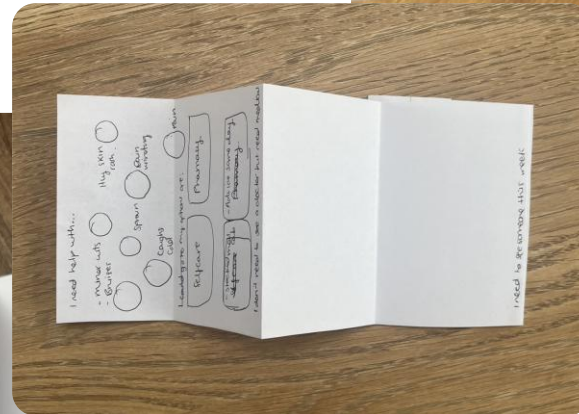
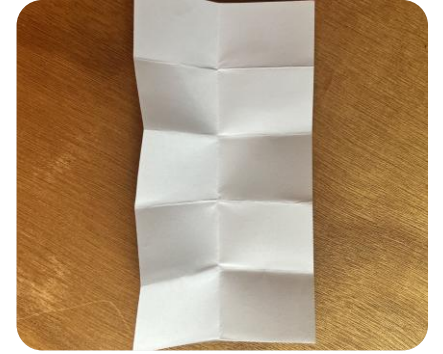
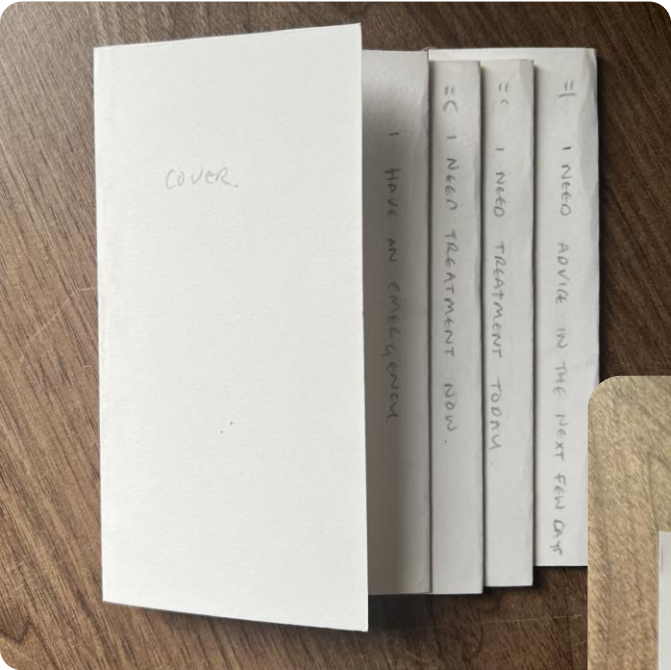
'How to access' illustrations



Symptom illustrations



Layout testing

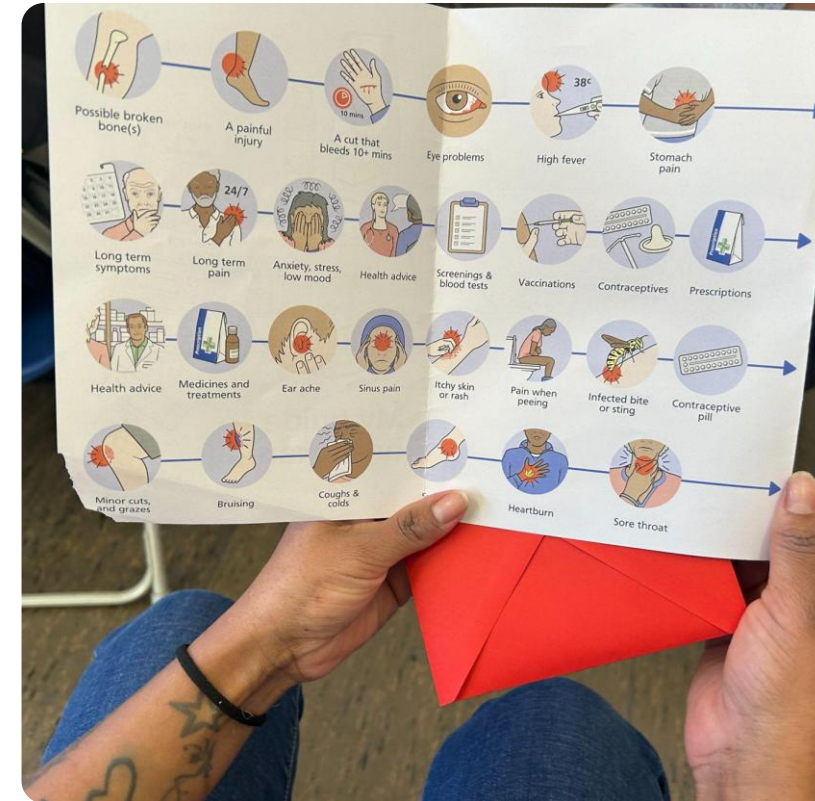


4.2

We tested a prototype developed from the learnings of Stage 1 testing with users in Lewisham.



Testing the prototype



01.

Clear, simple
and trusted

02.

Actionable
universal appeal

03.

An accessible
reference guide
people would use
and keep

Key insights from stage 2 testing

We reduced the number of **steps/instructions** in a single image.

Fixed subtle layout issues e.g. use of arrows in pathways.

We reduced ambiguity in symptom and scenario depictions and **added more contextual cues** e.g. detailing a doctor and a pharmacist.

Colour coding and **highlighting** was used to enhance understanding.

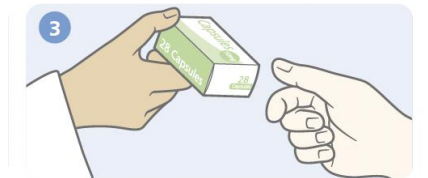
Examples



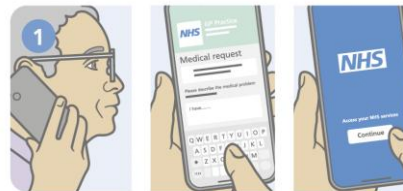
Go to your nearest pharmacy.



Talk to your pharmacist.



Get treatment or advice.



Book an appointment.



Go to your GP and get advice.



GP closed? Go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111.



Infected bite or sting



A cut that bleeds 10+ mins

4.3

Pilot solution developed
ahead of testing in Lewisham.

I need help with...



A painful injury



A cut that bleeds 10+ minutes



Eye problems



High fever



Stomach pain



Skin infection

Urgent Care Centre



Long term symptoms



Long term pain



Anxiety, stress, low mood



Health advice



Screenings and blood tests



Vaccinations



Contraceptives



Prescriptions

GP practice



Medicines and treatments



Earache



Sinus pain



Itchy skin or rash



Infected bite or sting



Pain when peeing



Blood pressure testing



Contraceptive pill



Vaccinations

Pharmacy



Minor cuts and grazes



Bruising



Coughs and colds



Sprain



Indigestion



Sore throat

Home

I can get help from...

How to get help...



Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.



Go to your local Urgent Care Centre.



Get same-day help.



Contact GP practice.



Speak with your GP practice.



GP closed? Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.



Go to pharmacy.



Get advice or treatment.



Pharmacy closed? Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.



Rest at home.



Take medicines if you need to.



Getting worse? Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.

Medicines and supplies to have at home.

Serious injury? Life or death emergency?

Call 999 for an ambulance. Or – go to a hospital Emergency Department (ED).

Worried about your mental health?

Anxiety, stress, low mood? Contact your GP practice.

Or – call 111 and choose the mental health option. Risk to life? Call 999.

Need help? Unsure what to do?

Use NHS app. Or – go to 111.nhs.uk. Or – call 111.

Help available to you...

Urgent Care Centre (UCC)
Same-day help with urgent problems. Walk in.

My nearest UCC:

GP practice
Family doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other specialists for advice, treatment or referral to another service. It's free to register. No ID or address needed.

My GP practice:

Pharmacy
Advice and help with medicines and treatments. Walk in.

My Pharmacy:

©NHS South East London 2025. Version 1.2 Lewisham.

A guide to healthcare.

South East London

Read me and keep me.

I need help with...	I can get help from...	How to get help...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A painful injury A cut that bleeds 15+ minutes Eye problems High fever Stomach pain Skin infection 	Urgent Care Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111. Go to your local Urgent Care Centre. Get same-day help.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term symptoms Long term pain Anxiety, stress, low mood Health advice Screenings and blood tests Vaccinations Contraceptives Prescriptions 	GP practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact GP practice. Speak with your GP practice. GP closed? Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicines and treatments Earache Sinus pain Itchy skin or rash Infected bite or sting Pain when peeing Blood pressure testing Contraceptive pill Vaccinations 	Pharmacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to pharmacy. Get advice or treatment. Pharmacy closed? Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor cuts and grazes Bruising Coughs and colds Sprain Indigestion Sore throat 	Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest at home. Take medicines if you need to. Getting worse? Use the NHS app, 111.nhs.uk or call 111.



Medicines and supplies to have at home.

Serious injury? Life or death emergency?

Call 999 for an ambulance. Or - go to a hospital Emergency Department (ED).

Help available to you...

Urgent Care Centre (UCC)
Same-day help with urgent problems. Walk in.

GP practice
Family doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other specialists for advice, treatment or referral to another service. It's free to register. No ID or address needed.

Pharmacy
Advice and help with medicines and treatments. Walk in.

A guide to healthcare.

Read on and keep on.

Need help? Unsure what to do?

Use NHS app. Or - go to 111.nhs.uk. Or - call 111.

Worried about your mental health?

Anxiety, stress, low mood? Contact your GP practice. Or - call 111 and choose the mental health option. Risk to life? Call 999.



05. Pilot evaluation and beyond

January - March 2025 in Lewisham



Distribution and promotion

Posted through
112,697
letterboxes.

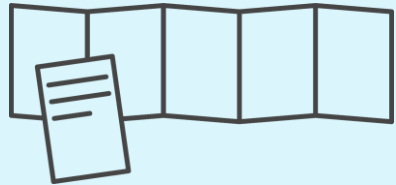
Shared with
33
GP practices.

Shared with
48
pharmacies.

Present in around
40
community settings.



Distribution and promotion



118,127

guides distributed.



3,868,208

ads shown on social media.



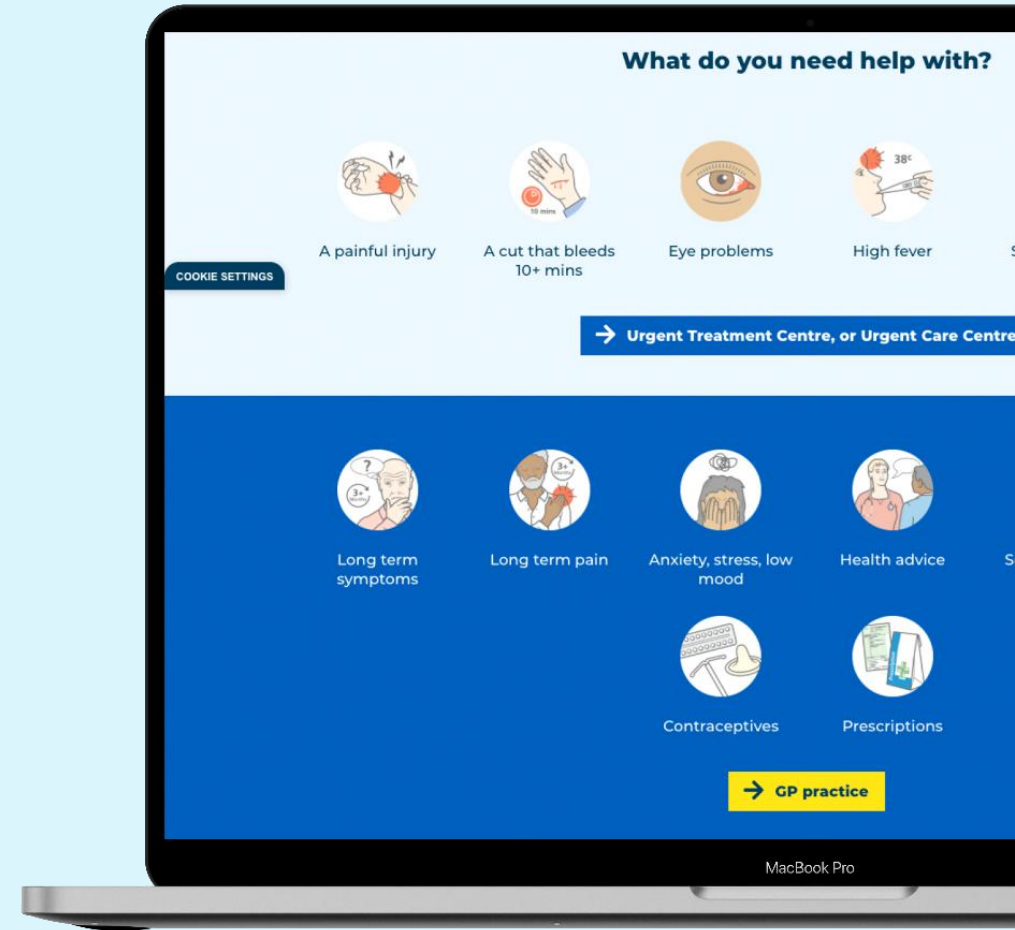
307,681

plays of ads on Spotify.



1,215

visits to the SEL ICS webpage.



MacBook Pro

Operational data showed:

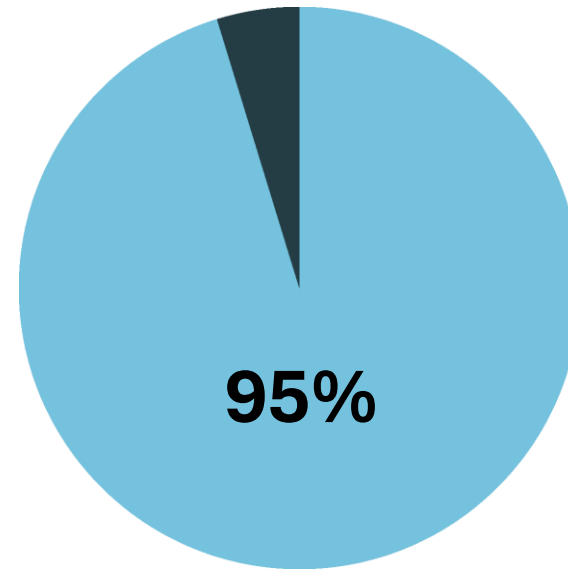
- There were **93,594** more NHS app log-ins compared to the three months prior.
- Pharmacy first consultations hit a new peak **1,240**.
- Ambulance handover delays reduced by **10.72%***

*(to note an ED redirection pilot was also running in Lewisham hospital in Feb and Mar)

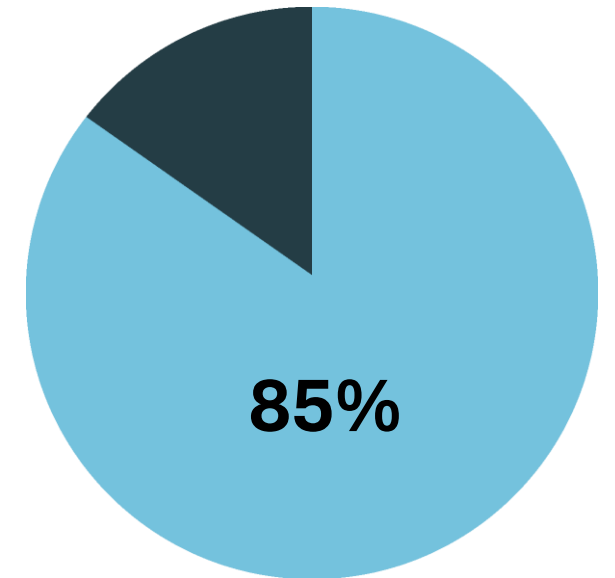


Survey findings

NHS SE London ran two surveys: one early, and one near the end of the pilot period. From the second survey of 391 people, **47% (150) recalled receiving the guide - nearly 11 weeks after receiving it.**

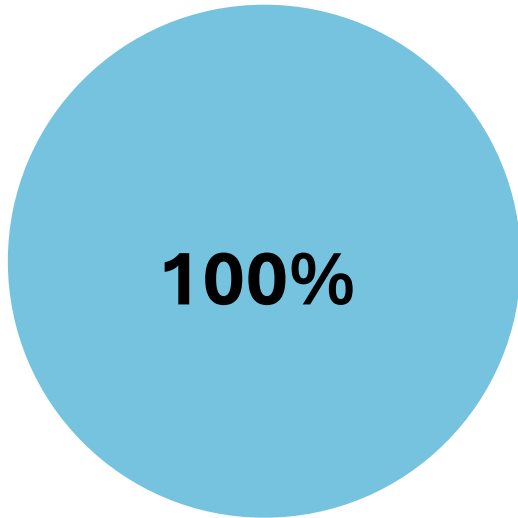


95% said the guide was clear and easy to understand.

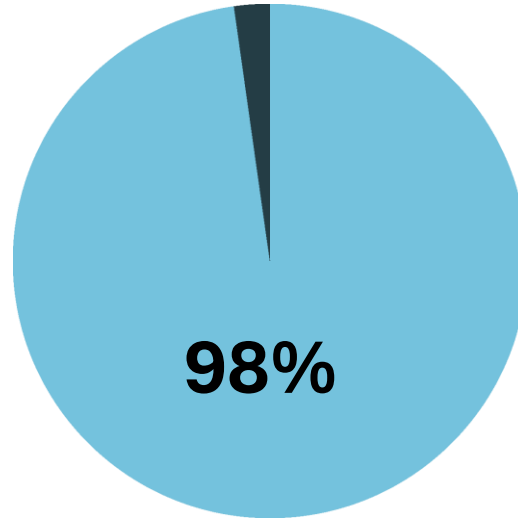


85% said that they had learnt something new.

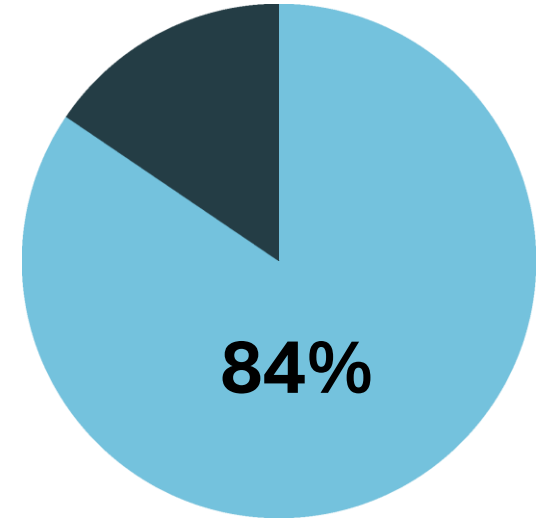
When asked about scenarios we know people frequently go inappropriately the to ED/call 999 for:



100% of people selected an alternative service to ED/calling 999 **with a sore throat.**



98% of people selected an alternative service to ED/calling 999 **with an earache.**



84% of people selected an alternative service to ED/calling 999 **if their usual GP and pharmacy was closed.**

Thank you

Saransh Ahuja

Senior Behavioural Strategist, Magpie

Humphrey Couchman

Assistant Director of Communications,
Media and Campaigns
NHS South East London

wearemagpie.com

hello@wearemagpie.com