

FACT SHEET ON SOCIAL MARKETING

KEY FACTS

- In 2004 we held one of the biggest consultation exercises amongst people in England asking the population what information/advice they needed from government to help them lead healthier lives. The results demonstrated that the public wanted advice and information about health issues to be both better targeted and more relevant to their actual circumstances.
- The White Paper that followed, committed Government to a new promoting health strategy – underpinned by social marketing techniques and values. This cross government strategy would begin the gradual process of delivering behavioural change by putting people, especially people living in disadvantaged communities at the centre of policy and service development.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SINCE CHOOSING HEALTH

- Launch of Small Change, Big Difference in April 2006 by the prime Minister. This was the first initiative to recognise the need for a paradigm shift in emphasis and approach in order to achieve behavioural change. The core message was that for many people, small changes in behaviour could have significant impact on their overall health outcomes. This was particularly relevant for audiences between 40-60 yrs and is the first example of the value of deeper audience understanding and segmentation.
- With the active support of the DCMS, DFES and DfT we are currently developing the first 'promoting health' social marketing strategy for England. An extensive piece of work over the last few months has involved the scoping and mapping of PSA targets, policy priorities and existing clinical and consumer focussed research in order to begin the process of developing detailed audience segments. These segments will enable us to more accurately pin-point those people that have traditionally proved hardest to reach especially in deprived communities.
- Better understanding of what lies at the root of the behaviours is how we we will achieve lasting change. One of the core insights of the obesity social marketing strategy that we are currently developing with DCMS, DFES and DfT was that people do not want more or better information in order to change their behaviour. Research is showing us that people often have deep-rooted behaviours and we cannot tackle these with simple and efficiently targeted messages, alone. More importantly, these behaviours were found not to be issue specific but a recurring indicator of combined behavioural problems in relation to drugs, alcohol and sexual activity.
- We have concluded that it is the underpinning behaviour that we must tackle and this cannot be achieved through purely an issue-based approach. Evidence has been particularly compelling on teenage mums where sexual activity goes hand in hand with alcohol and drug abuse and where single issues campaigns will likely fail.

WHERE WE ARE HEADING

- We will launch our new strategy early in 2007. A critical part of our new approach is ensuring that we target people through more appropriate means than traditional government rhetoric. For many audiences we fail to achieve 'traction' on a number of issues simply because they are not willing or prepared to be told 'what to do' by government. The combined power of the voluntary and commercial sectors, in partnership with government, will deliver more appropriate channels and means to influence and change entrenched behavioural norms.
- Health improvement partnerships will be flexible and enable the partner organisations to use the combined knowledge, service or reputation as a recognised brand, expert or NGO to make a lasting impression on the behaviours and choices that each person, within a targeted group, makes about their lifestyle choices.

WE WILL HAVE DELIVERED IF

- We have developed new ways of working within the directorate that enable us to develop our new cross issue social marketing programmes that are based on real understanding of how people live their lives and what they want in order to help them change.
- We have achieved measurable impacts on PSA targets across the health improvement agenda by developing a range of audience 'insights' and galvanised our partners in other government departments and key external stakeholders to help us deliver a number of new cross issue promoting health social marketing programmes.
- We have established genuine two-way partnerships agreements between ourselves and the business and NGO/charity sectors in order to maximise the potential impact of our work programme.