

Healthy Incentives

An incentives programme that helps people to lead healthier lives or manage their long term condition by rewarding them for adopting healthier behaviours.



ENTREPRENEUR:

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What does it do?

Healthy Incentives helps people to lead healthier lives and manage their long term conditions using a combination of motivational messaging by text, one to one support and incentives in the form of vouchers and cash given periodically over an extended period. The aim is sustained behaviour change, resulting in better health outcomes and cost reduction.

Need

Many public health campaigns and self management programmes have a high rate of failure. Smoking and rates of obesity are more prevalent amongst poorer communities, exacerbating health inequalities. A political imperative exists to build 'healthy communities' (Department of Health 1999; National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal 2000). The NHS also has a duty to empower people to take better care of themselves and provide the support that encourages them to kick bad habits and embrace good ones.

Solution

Healthy Incentives, created in partnership with NHS Birmingham East and North is a social enterprise that runs a number of incentive schemes, supported by clinicians, to motivate and reward people for taking better care of their health. They include quitting smoking or exercising to lose weight or maintain already achieved weight loss. A jointly agreed action plan is supported by SMS messaging and rewards in the form of vouchers and cash, encouraging people to make permanent changes to the way they lead their lives.

The Healthy Incentives pilots are intended to prove the sustained efficacy of the scheme in comparison with existing programmes and to fine tune its delivery. The aim is to develop the programme into a nationwide commissioned service. The pilots recruit participants in three ways:

1. Smoking in Pregnancy. Pregnant women who smoke are invited to enrol in a smoking cessation programme. Early results show quit rates several times higher than baseline data.
2. HPV Vaccination. 16-18 year old girls are incentivised to undertake and complete the vaccination programme (3 injections). This includes first time approaches and previous non attenders.
3. Weight Loss / Weight Maintenance. Helps people at risk of heart disease or diabetes who need support either to lose weight or maintain weight loss.

Healthy Incentives Ltd has received a further investment of £100K and a commissioning contract of £80K for delivery of smoking cessation services in 2010/11.

Health Launchpad has been instrumental in co-funding Healthy Incentives and providing and sourcing the necessary expertise to design, manage, cost and implement such a complex reward system. Through links with academic institutions and clinical experts it has also helped to design a robust evaluation of Healthy Incentives and its impact on health outcomes.



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