

Evaluation report:
Ask About Medicines Week 2004



Who was involved?

Organisers

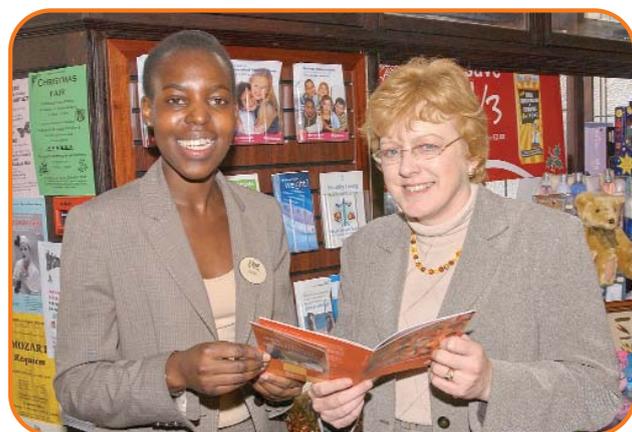
Ask About Medicines Week 2004 was organised by the Ask About Medicines Week Executive supported by an advisory group of stakeholders representing patients, carers, health professionals, the pharmaceutical industry and the NHS.

Partners

454 partners in 2004 compared with 400 in 2003. Numbers have risen in almost every category

Many more partners were involved in Ask About Medicines Week 2004, reflecting strong growth in support for our aims and objectives. Partner feedback has been positive: many participated in the national activities for Ask About Medicines as well as using the Week and the materials to support local initiatives, often as part of an ongoing programme of work prompted by Ask About Medicines Week.

- 14% more organisations chose to partner the event compared with 2003
- Almost three fifths of partners heard about 2004 AAMW through involvement in 2003
- Most partners were Primary Care Trusts with pharmacy and voluntary organisations making up the bulk of the remainder:
 - 216 primary care organisations (over 70% of all PCTs)
 - 58 pharmacies*
 - 55 voluntary health organisations and patient groups
 - 43 hospital trusts, including hospital pharmacies
 - 13 professional organisations
 - 10 NHS bodies and agencies
 - 12 pharmaceutical companies
 - 47 other organisations, including GP surgeries and universities.



Eastleigh PCT, Moss Pharmacy joint event and Sandra Gidley MP.

*pharmacies were not a primary target this year.

Beyond England



Gwent Shopping Centre

Ask About Medicines Week 2004 was developed and funded for England. This year both Wales and Northern Ireland adopted Ask About Medicines Week and developed it further to reflect the health needs and priorities of their own populations.

The examples of Wales and Northern Ireland show how partnership across the administrations can contribute to the common goal of improving the use of medicines throughout the UK.

Some partnerships also crossed borders. Age Concern played a key role in Wales as well as in England.

"...whilst written records are useful tools, reliable communication between patient and health professional is essential to maintaining health and well being."¹

Information on partner projects can be found at:
www.askaboutmedicines.org

1. Age Concern, Wales

Lord Warner, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, launched Ask About Medicines Week 2004, kicking off the activities that brought the Ask About Medicines messages to patients in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Lord Warner at Westminster launch

“...because medicines are so central to everyone’s health care, [Ask About Medicines] has the potential to make patient choice a reality for a very large number of people.”²

Partners used national resources and developed their own local projects.

- Almost two thirds distributed Ask About Medicines materials³
- Over half organised activities and events, including
 - Display stands in shopping centres
 - Events at sheltered housing and homes for older people
 - Medicines reviews
 - Competitions
- One in three partnered other Ask About Medicines partners!³



Rosie Winterton, Minister of State at the launch of RPSGB Ask About Antibiotics

All Ask About Medicines materials were rated useful or very useful. The most widely used publications were the Health & Medicines Information Guide and Directory and the Medicines Reminder Chart, both used by over 80% of partners³.

Partners reported that materials would ideally have been distributed earlier, but did not have significant difficulties obtaining stocks.

Ask About Medicines materials reached over 2 million people during the week.

Medicines Guides for Cholesterol Treatment

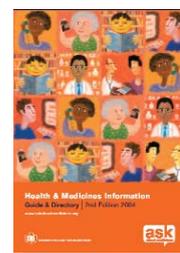
New electronic Medicines Guides on cholesterol medicine were available through NHS Direct Online www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk and www.medguides.medicines.org.uk/



Launching new Medicines Guides in a community pharmacy: Dr Jim Smith & Riaz Esmail

Health and Medicines Guides and Directory

The second edition of the Health and Medicines Guides and Directory had a new searchable version on the Ask About Medicines website, with live links to other sites.



200,000 Health & Medicines Guides & Directory. Published in partnership with the ABPI

Ask About Medicines Week helpline

“The ability to speak to the patient promptly was very beneficial.”

A special local-rate helpline ran during Ask About Medicines Week 2004 for England.

- Medicines information experts from the UK Medicines Information network supported NHS Direct nurse advisers to answer medicines enquiries
- Online information was provided by NHS Direct Online
- 20% of all calls resulted in a call back from the Medicines Information Pharmacist.

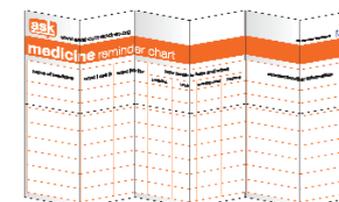
“Very pleased and surprised about the service as [I] felt the advisor had time to listen and provide very helpful information.”

Medicines Chart

A credit-card sized folding chart sponsored by the Department of Health for keeping a record of medicines – over the counter, prescription and complementary – was distributed via pharmacies, GP surgeries and through partner organisations.

1.5 million fold-out medicines reminder charts published in partnership with the Department of Health.

5,000 charts in Welsh.



Ask About Cancer Medicines



25,000 Ask About Your Cancer Medicines published in partnership with CancerBACUP and Roche.

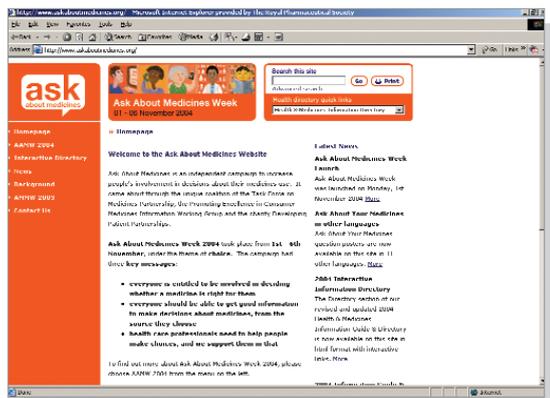
2. Lord Warner, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Health 1st November 2004
3. Taylor Nelson Sofres Partner Survey, December 2004

Activities

Media

A national and local media campaign promoted the need for choice in medicine-taking

- Almost **18 million opportunities to read or hear the Ask About Medicines messages** in the consumer or trade media
- **National coverage** on BBC TV, The Times and Daily Express
- **Regional coverage** gave a representative geographical spread including Wales and Northern Ireland
- **Dozens of websites** featured Ask About Medicines.



Media	Opportunities to read or hear messages
TV – BBC TV Breakfast	1,400,000
Radio – BBC, independent local and national	2,620,000
Print – national and local newspapers	10,662,441
Weekly magazines	451,690
Trade press – pharmacy, nursing and medical	2,083,767



Dr Rosemary Leonard, speaking at the Westminster Launch

A further 243,000 people were reached via linked initiatives:

- 'Ask About Antibiotics' – Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
- 'Talking About Complementary Medicine' – Developing Patient Partnerships.

Feedback

Public Awareness

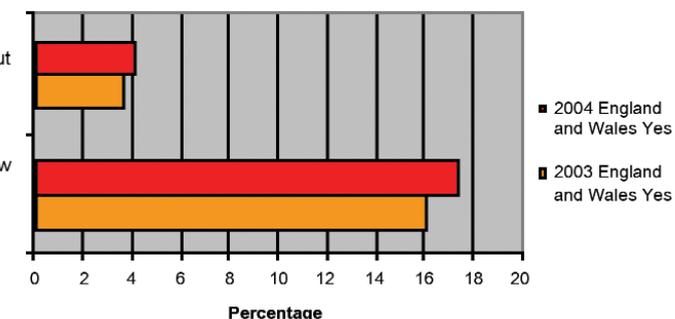
In a MORI survey of the general public just over 17% were aware of a campaign about medicines and nearly 4% recognised the Ask About Medicines Week brand.⁴

Three surveys were commissioned to measure the impact and success of the week.

Feedback from the public and patients emphasises how valuable people find discussions about their medicines. Partners are clear that more can and needs to be done.

Have you seen or heard anything about 'Ask About Medicines Week' or not?

Have you seen or heard anything in the last few weeks about a health campaign to do with medicines?



"I heard you on the radio so I brought in all my medicines to be checked."

"I've got more information today than I have over the years."

4. MORI Poll Public Awareness Survey, November 2004 3. Taylor Nelson Sofres Partner Survey, December 2004

Partners' views

Value of the campaign

35% of partner organisations responded to a survey by Taylor Nelson Sofres, including representatives from all the partner groups.³

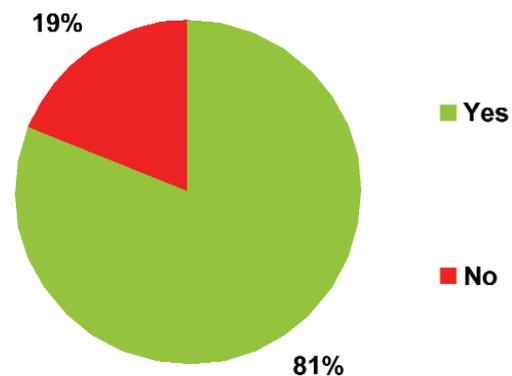
"This is an excellent project that needs to become familiar to the public and thus encourage people to actually ask about their medicines." (VHO)

- Two thirds of partners agreed with statements that the Ask About Medicines Week messages are relevant and the campaign will make a difference:
 - The AAMW campaign will encourage patients to ask questions about medicines
 - The AAMW campaign will improve the relationship between health professionals and people taking medicines
 - The AAMW campaign will enable more people to be involved in deciding whether a medicine is right for them
 - The AAMW campaign will improve the availability of useful information about medicines.

Partners view the campaign as part of an ongoing initiative.

"We see the campaign as an ongoing concern and not something we want to support for a week a year. In the new year we will be sending out some more materials to pharmacies and also run a waste medicines campaign which will link into AAMW." (PCT)

80% of respondents said they did something that they plan to continue or repeat in the future.



Partners' views

Views of key stakeholders

Key stakeholders who had played a pivotal role in developing the strategy, and in funding and implementing the week fed back through an independent qualitative survey.⁵

- The main achievement of the campaign so far has undoubtedly been bringing together many organisations and stakeholders to work to a common goal
- Managing on minimum resources and with a limited budget is a real problem
- Key stakeholders are ready to join in more inclusive governance and decision making, and want to know:
 - What is the 3 year plan for Ask About Medicines and how will it be funded?
 - How will a full time team be established to co-ordinate the campaign?
 - How can the long term national goals balance with local projects in a sustainable fashion?

Addressing these points will provide a strong base from which to build more partnerships, attract funding and enable Ask About Medicines to track and respond to change.

Staying in touch

Electronic communication was by far the most effective means of keeping in touch with partners.

- The **ebulletin** was the primary means of communication for 83% of partners.

The website was extremely popular with partners:

- 99% visited once or more
- 60% used it regularly for information
- 80% downloaded materials.

Resources and logistics

Most partners used the relevant planning resources:

- 62% of PCT partners used the PCT Action Pack and 28% used the Community Pharmacy pack also
- The Hospital Action Pack was used by 76% of hospital partners
- 27% of Voluntary Health Organisation partners used the VHO Action Pack.

Most partners strongly support Ask About Medicines Week and intend to participate in future years. Some logistical and planning points need to be taken on board:

- Provide earlier/better information about ordering materials (16%)
- Raise the profile/more media coverage/promotion (35%)
- Allow larger quantities of material to be ordered (14%).

3. Taylor Nelson Sofres Partner Survey, December 2004
5. Top Tier Survey, Ask About Medicines, December 2004

Future plans

Activities in 2005 and 2006

We have twin aims for the immediate future: to deliver an excellent campaign in 2005; and to secure the future of Ask About Medicines by developing the organisation and its governance and establishing longer-term funding partnerships.

Ask About Medicines Week 2005

- The dates will be 7th – 11th November
- The theme will build on the core brand by emphasising a clear, central message of 'Ask'
- Media focus will be on creating early press awareness, developing individual case studies with help from partners and targeting in-depth features rather than aiming for news coverage
- We aim to develop one or more projects focusing on particular therapy areas outside the Week itself, beginning with further work on Ask About Your Cancer Medicines.

Organisation building

Our aim is to have created a fully operational independent organisation by the autumn of 2006. This aim flows from our strategic objective of creating an independent organisation which builds long-term partnerships – with the Department of Health and related agencies, health professional bodies, voluntary organisations and the pharmaceutical industry – in order to develop, implement and fund Ask About Medicines in delivering its purpose.

To achieve this we plan to:

1. Successfully run Ask About Medicines Week in 2005 and 2006
2. Build a strong brand, including guidelines for partners on how to use the brand and logo
3. Develop a long-term funding plan that will enable activities to be planned two years in advance.

Who are AAMW?

Ask About Medicines Week is an initiative of AAMW Ltd, a company limited by guarantee. The Week was led by the company's four Directors – David Dickinson, co-chair pecmi (Chair) Melinda Letts OBE, independent member and immediate past chair of the Long-Term Medical Conditions Alliance (Company Secretary), Kristin McCarthy, Director, Developing Patient Partnerships and Joanne Shaw, Director, Medicines Partnership.

Ask About Medicines is a company limited by guarantee. Total budget was £307,200 (slightly above 2003) with 56% from NHS sources, 39% from industry and 5% from professional organisations.

Organisations that contributed to the finances and strategic development of Ask About Medicines Week are listed inside the back cover.

As in 2003, central resources were modest. Time and money were stretched by the scale and scope of the campaign. A full time co-ordinator was appointed from mid-July and a Project Director on a part time basis from August.

Statement of purpose

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Ask About Medicines aims to achieve lasting change by:

- encouraging better communication between people and their health professionals
- improving the depth and quality of medicines information
- changing expectations so that asking questions about medicines becomes the norm.

The theme for Ask About Medicines Week 2004 was **choice**. The **key messages** were:

- everyone is entitled to be involved in deciding whether a medicine is right for them
- everyone should be able to get good information to make decisions about medicines, from the source they choose
- health care professionals need to help people make choices, and we support them in that.

The organisations that made a significant contribution with **resources, projects and / or finances** to Ask About Medicines Week 2004 were:

Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
Department of Health
Developing Patient Partnerships
Lilly
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
Medicines Partnership
MSD
National Patient Safety Agency
Novartis
Organon
Pfizer
Roche
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

About this report

This document is based on a suite of surveys, both qualitative and quantitative, commissioned by Ask About Medicines to provide objective evaluation of the impact of Ask About Medicines Week 2004.