

NHS 111 Help Us Help You Advert (2023)



Use 111

If you need urgent medical help but you're not sure where to go, use 111 to get assessed and directed to the right place for you.

Call, go online or use the NHS App.



NHS 111 Help Us Help You poster. A young girl is lying in a hospital bed while her father sits beside her, looking concerned. The poster encourages people to use NHS 111 for urgent medical advice.

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GCSE Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas: Media language Representation Media contexts

Product Context

- The NHS 111 Help Us Help You is a national campaign launched in December 2022. It was created for NHS England by M&C Saatchi London and distributed by the UK Government's Department for Health and Social Care.
- The campaign is funded by NHS England and HM Government, and it is a public health campaign with no commercial aspect to it at all.
- The multi-channel campaign seeks to encourage people to use the NHS 111 service when they have an urgent but not life-threatening medical need. The campaign promotes the NHS 111 service and how people can call 111, go online or use the NHS App to get assessed and directed to the right service for them.
- The primary target audience for the campaign is all adults, as anyone can have an urgent care need, but The Department of Health and Social care specified that there should be more investment targeting young people under 35, and parents of children aged 5-12 years.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Social and cultural contexts:

- NHS 111 helps to ease the burden on emergency services, by reducing the number of people unnecessarily calling 999 or going to Accident and Emergency (A&E), ensuring that emergency services can focus on more critical cases.

- The overarching campaign, launched in 2022, was to tackle a lack of understanding about the NHS 111 service, and as a result the adverts aim to educate and inform people, highlighting how the service can be used and for what ailments.
- In a post-Covid society, NHS England wanted the public to contact NHS 111 first in order to help NHS services maintain social distancing and ensure that patients receive the correct care, in a timely and safe way.
- Colour is an essential element of any brand's identity. Research shows that the public strongly associate the NHS with the colours blue and white.

Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how media language influences meaning:

The dominant image encourages the audience to engage with the brand's message:

- A long shot of a father sat on his sick daughter's bed, which is located in an NHS Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). Conventionally, for a public health campaign, none of the models are famous, in order to target ordinary adults, who would be able to identify with this scenario.
- The father's slippers, neutral grey top and jeans along with the daughter's stripy pyjamas and fairy lights are all used to construct a sense of familiarity and connection with the audience.
- The father's concerned facial expression, posture and reassuring arm gesture, could convey protective care. This in combination with the daughter's neutral facial expression, costume and position in bed suggest her sickness and need for care.
- The dominance of the father in the image suggests he is the Proppian hero of the

narrative, on a quest to find help for his sick daughter. With this Proppian lens we could also see the NHS framed as the helper, aiding the hero on his quest by providing the 111 service on his tablet.

- The background setting of the UTC is constructed with the use of props typical of a medical waiting area, including a reception desk with a leaflet rack, wipe-clean beam seating, a clock and signage. The grey walls, heavy duty carpet and LED downlights connote a clinical workplace; professional and trustworthy. This setting also serves to make the daughter's wooden bed and colourful bedding look brighter. The contrast between the two is purposeful and highlights the universal theme of family care, which helps the NHS 111 service feel more approachable, specifically among parents of 5-12 year olds.
- The UTC background is a core part of the brand's identity and illustrates one of the many services the public can access via 111. The same image is used across other products in the campaign, with the foreground image changing.
- Across the main image is the campaign's tagline "Get to the help you need", which is used across the campaign for consistency and recognition. The use of the imperative "get" and direct address "you" reinforces the public health genre of the advert, as it calls on the target audience to take action and access the app, online or phone 111.
- The body copy uses simple, clear language to explain what NHS 111 is and why it's important to use it. The language is direct and concise, ensuring that even those with low literacy can understand the message. This accessibility is crucial for promoting engagement with the NHS 111 service with all adult audiences.
- This accessibility and clarity is echoed in the choice of sans-serif font for the typography used across the tagline, website and main title.
- The consistent use of the NHS blue (Pantone: 300) in the logo, the written codes and the UTC signage create a sense of cohesiveness conventional in adverts and links the advert strongly to the NHS brand identity.
- A muted, soft colour palette is often used in healthcare advertising to evoke trust, calmness, and reliability. In this advert, these colours help reinforce the message that NHS 111 is a supportive and trustworthy service.
- The triangle in the bottom right hand corner is suggestive of the warning signals used on highways, which connotes urgency and the importance of the number. The designers are using the icon of this well-known warning sign in order to grab the audience's attention.
- In the top left of the advert is the official logo for the UK government "HM Government" and in the top right is the NHS logo; the use of both reinforces to the audience that the advert is not for commercial gain, but to raise awareness of a public service.

Consider the relationship between technology and media products:

- In addition to physical posters and pull up displays, the advert was created to run across digital display, social media and search engines. The written codes "..go online or use the NHS app" in combination with the central model using a tablet reinforce the digital nature of this advert, which is targeting young people under 35 and parents.
- The campaign's brief specified "engagement with organisations to reach disabled audiences, with alternative formats, including British Sign Language (BSL) versions which include details of contacting 111 using the NHS 111 BSL interpreter service and text relay." This

awareness of diverse audiences and the importance of accessibility is reflected in the choice to include a model with a hearing aid.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Consider the social and cultural significance of particular representations:

- The campaign's agenda is to encourage parents to use NHS 111 services. In order to do this, they construct a positive representation of a concerned father at his sick daughter's side.
- **Stereotypically**, men aren't seen as emotionally nurturing, but this campaign seeks to **challenge these stereotypes** and recognise the emotional and practical role men play in the domestic sphere. We can see a man actively seeking the "help" that his family needs, which is reinforced by the large written codes framed around him.
- The advert represents the idea of **health literacy** by showing the father as a responsible, pro-active figure, and it encourages parents to be informed and take appropriate action. By representing the father as a decision-maker in his daughter's healthcare, it emphasises that seeking advice through NHS 111 is an intelligent, responsible choice, not just an emergency measure.
- The processes of **selection and production** have been carefully considered. This advert, like others in the campaign, seeks to specifically target global majority audiences in the UK, so the choice to represent a Black family is significant.
- Black men have been an **historically underrepresented** group, particularly in health campaigns. Studies show that representation in health advertisements is crucial for improving health outcomes;

social groups who are left out may not feel the message is directed at them and as a result they may not benefit.

- The child's female **gender** is constructed through her plaited pigtails and the dominant use of the colour pink; a colour **stereotypically** associated with girls.
- The child's youthful **age** is reinforced with the use of props and costume, in combination with her look to her dad, which suggests her illness and dependence.

Consider how the representations reflect the social, cultural and political contexts in which they were produced:

- The father represented as the primary caregiver challenges the **dominant ideology** that mothers are always the primary caregivers. However, this reflects contemporary **societal norms** in the UK; studies show that fathers' involvement in parenting has increased from less than 15 minutes a day in the mid-1970s to three hours a day during the week, with more at the weekend (Fisher et al, 1999). The shift in fathering roles can be seen as a response to changing family structures, such as the rise in dual-income households and single-parent families.
- The child is wearing a hearing aid and reflects the recent increase in the representation of the deaf community in the mainstream media.
- The models in the background are represented wearing face masks and working behind plastic screens, which reflects the social distancing procedures in health environments post-Covid.

Consider the ways the media represent the world, and construct versions of reality:

- The advert successfully constructs the **'real'** world of the UTC with the use of a set, lighting, props and costumes. Additionally, the child's bed is constructed

realistically too with age-appropriate bedding, fairy lights and a rosette.

- Interestingly, the advert constructs **verisimilitude** in relation to the two separate scenarios it depicts (the UTC and the child's bedroom) but seen as a whole we are not meant to believe the daughter's bed is in the UTC. Instead, the **combination** of the two represents how accessing NHS 111 on the tablet is a way of accessing the UTC.
- The non-diegetic text "Get to the help you need" framed around the model's head also reinforces the constructed nature of this advert but serves a greater purpose to push the target audience to take action when they or their family need it.

References:

Fisher, R., et al. (1999). "The Changing Role of Fathers: Evidence from a National Survey."

Henz, U. (2019). "Fathers' involvement with their children in the United Kingdom: Recent trends and class differences."