



Patient Information Forum

Raising the Standard of Consumer Health Information

Health literacy: *How Information Producers see it*

PiF Survey

Annie Gilbert – MSD

annie.gilbert@sky.com

07899066851



Acknowledgements

- All 347 respondents – THANK YOU!
- *This project has been supported by an educational grant from MSD and the secondment of A K Gilbert, researcher and employee of MSD*

Health literacy

- US - recognises need, data and resources quite widely available
- Europe - health literacy is close to becoming part of the EU Health Strategy
- UK - increasing interest in health literacy
 - LSBU work
 - Information Strategy
 - NHS Education Scotland (NES) – Staff training and competencies identified

Background

- Improved health literacy leads to improved healthcare
- Today's health service is complex, treatments develop rapidly and patients are deluged with information from many different sources
- It is incumbent on health information providers to create resources that are clear, easily understood and relevant to the user
- Questions needed answering: What is being done in this area at the moment? What is working? Are there barriers or challenges?

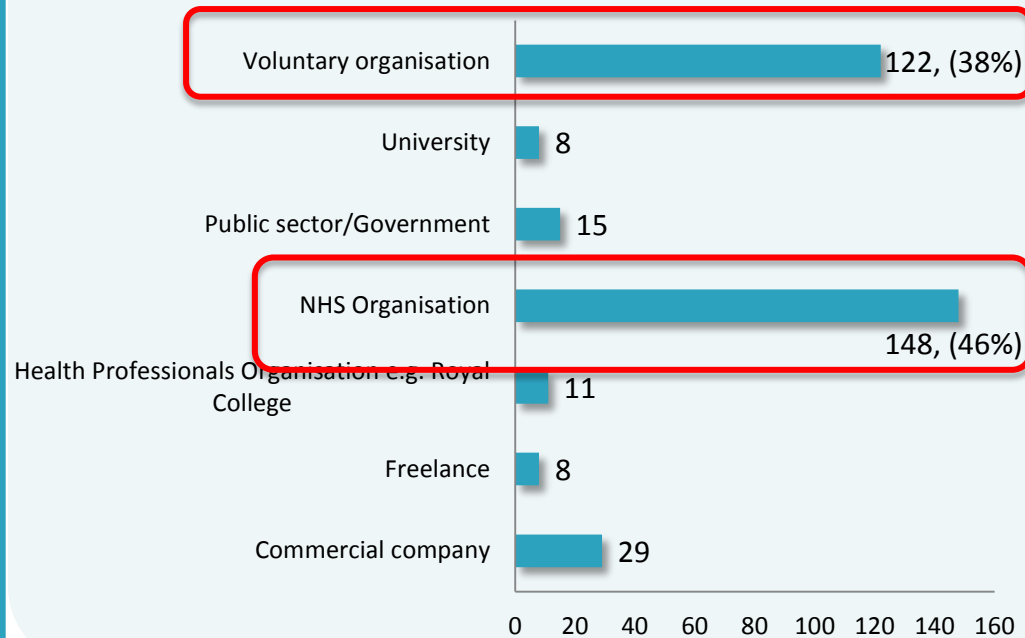
Methods

- Survey development, pilot peer review
- Jan 2013 - Covering email and survey link sent to:
 - PiF membership
 - PiF regional network
 - Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook
 - Health Literacy Group UK
 - Information Standard members
 - Association for Health Communications and Marketing
 - NHS networks
 - NHS Confederation
 - National Voices

Results - demographics

- 347 organisations responded - 338 included

1. Type of Organisation

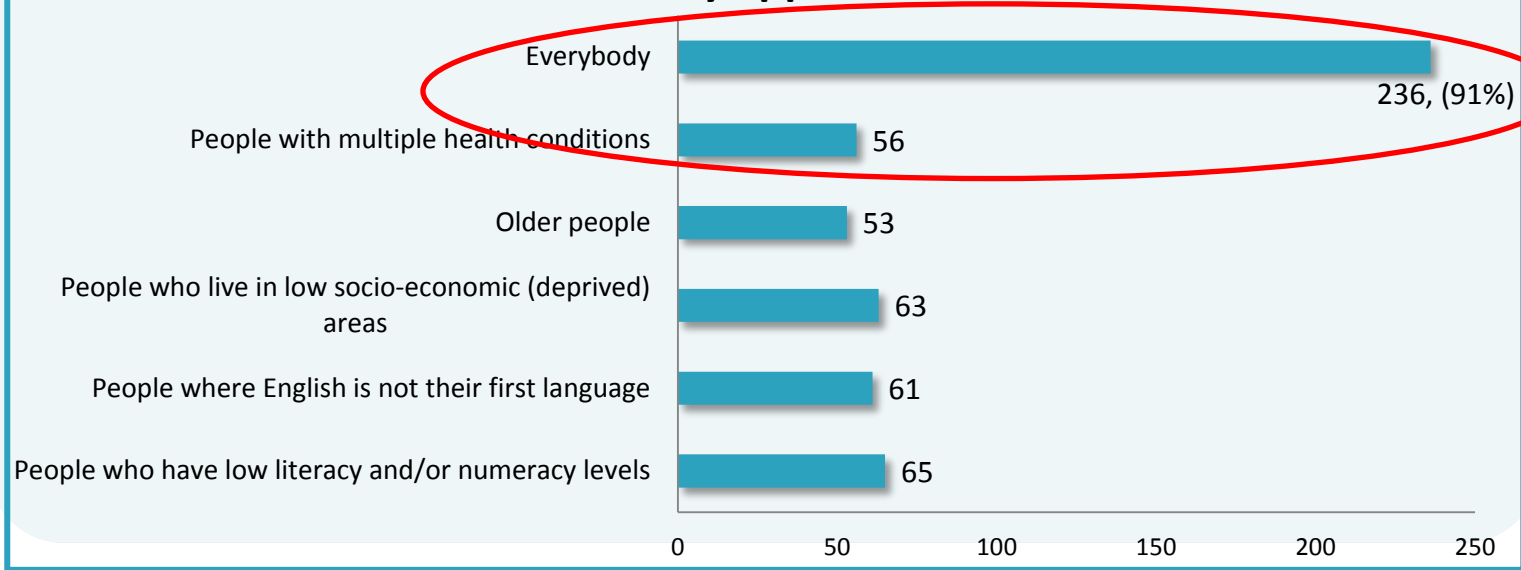


- Covered the whole of the UK
- 80% produced information in-house
- 51% were not PiF members

Understanding of health literacy

- 71% had heard of the term 'health literacy', 21% hadn't and 8% weren't sure

10. Which of the following groups do you think health literacy applies to?



Which of the following groups do you think health literacy applies to? Other-please specify

“can apply to all”

“anyone with a health issue that is unfamiliar to them”

“I know many people with high general literacy levels but poor health literacy levels (including graduates)”

“people with learning disabilities or mental health issues”

How important is health literacy when producing information?”

1-Don't know, 2-Not very important..... 5-Extremely important

Average score: 4.4 out of 5

Understanding of health literacy

Q8 What does health literacy mean to you?

62 (25%) 'ability to understand'

"Being able to make informed decisions about what is best for my health and well-being"

Q9 What does it mean to be health literate?

55 (23%) 'able to understand'

32 (13%) 'informed decision'

"....someone who knows they have options and where to go to find out about them"

"...effectively participate in their own healthcare decisions"

Which approach do you believe is the most likely to be effective?

90% ticked:

“Anyone can have low health literacy, so all information resources and services should be clear, simple and straightforward, so as to meet the needs of many and be understandable to a wide range of audiences, including those with low literacy”

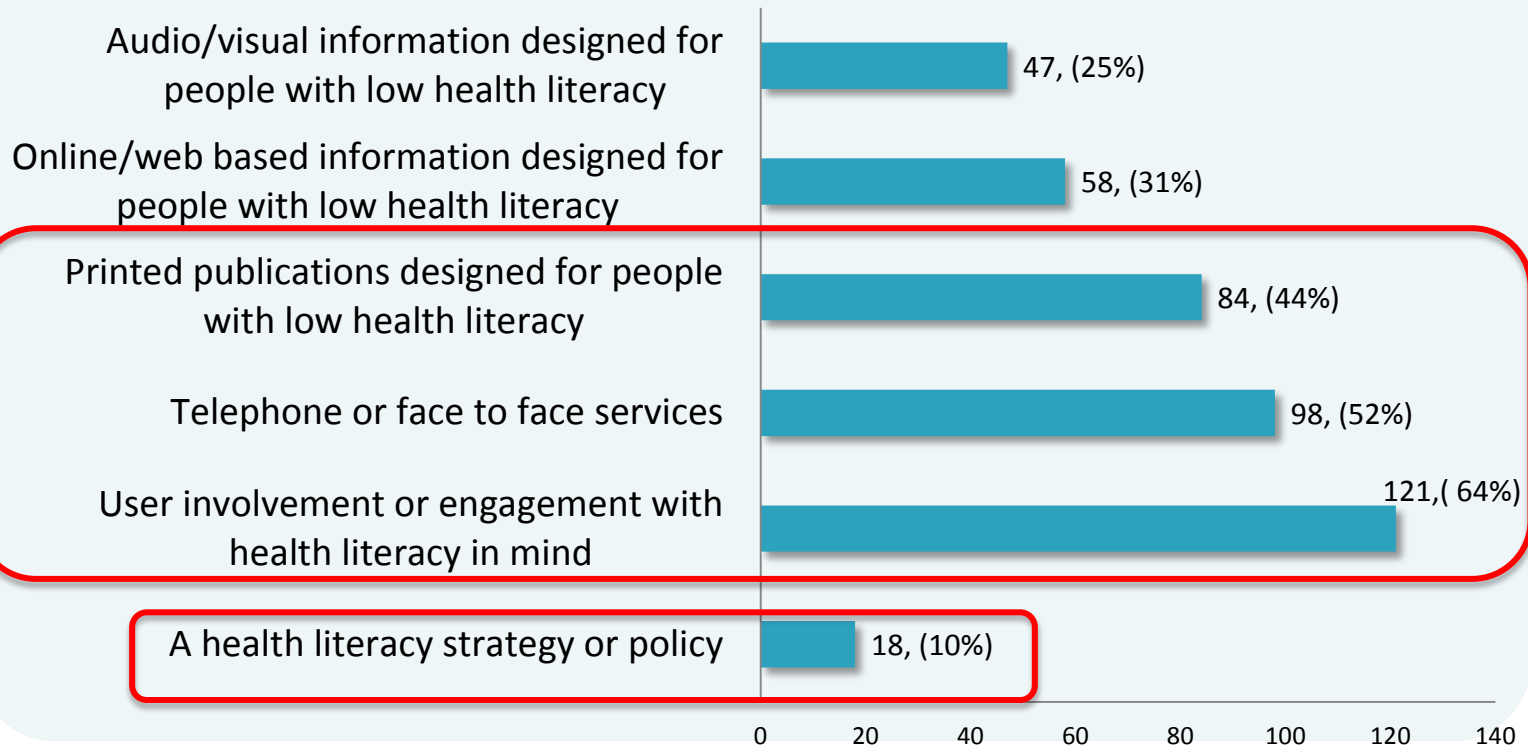
10% ticked:

“Low health literacy is strongly linked to low literacy and numeracy skills, therefore information should be developed to meet the specific needs of people with poor literacy and numeracy skills”

Health literacy definition *“Ability to read, understand and act on health information”*

Health literacy activities

Does your organisation have any of the following in place to address the needs of people with low health literacy?



Health literacy activities - Other

“working with staff on health literacy training” “patient panel to proof read”

“use of interpreter services for face to face activities”

“developing specific easy read publications in 2013”

“alternative sources of information are available (large print, audio etc.)”

“...involve service users to obtain feedback and make necessary amendments”

Barriers and challenges

Lack of funds/resources	184	73.02%
Limited understanding of needs	171	67.86%
Limited understanding of how to develop resources or services for people with low health literacy	190	75.40%
This is a new area to consider	45	17.86%
Information producers don't realise how important health literacy is	133	52.78%
Health literacy is not a priority for information producers	59	23.41%

Other - please specify

“It is often not produced properly i.e. the images do not visually represent the text so that money is not necessarily used in the most effective way”

What impact do these health literacy barriers have on your service users?

“..risk to patient safety” “huge”

“..unable to manage condition” “people tend to muddle through”

“...hospital admissions that could be avoided” “..results in increased acute episodes of ill health”

“they remain in ignorance”

What can PiF do to help?

A practical guide to health literacy	201	84%
Workshops or seminars about health literacy	139	58%
Good practice examples	191	79.9%
Online expert discussion group	68	28.4%

What can PiF do to help? Other

“Evaluation and measures”

“Web-based workshops or seminars would be helpful “

“..an across the board, consistent approach”

“to understand how we manage the many complexities and shades of grey associated with patient involvement and engagement with their health”

Conclusions

- Health literacy is still a relatively new area
- There is good understanding of what health literacy is, and its importance
- There is a demand for health literacy to be considered when producing information for service users
- There is a limited understanding of needs and how to develop resources
- A practical guide and good practice examples were highlighted to be useful resources

Any questions?

“I think that this is a very important issue that you are addressing”

“It's great that PIF is conducting this survey”

“I would like to see health literacy debate include social media”

“Great work, I'm so pleased to see this very real problem being discussed”



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