Applying behavioural insights to policy

Owain Service
The Behavioural Insights Team

THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM

In partnership with Cabinet Office

“Our government will find intelligent ways to encourage, support and enable people to make better choices for themselves.”

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….With a little help from our friends!

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YVONNE STANYER
ROOM 201
KELSALL HOUSE
STAFFORD COURT
STAFFORD PARK
TELFORD
TF3 3BD

Debt Management & Banking

Mr R Harding
HMRC London South

Dear Sir/Madam

Please pay £999999999999.99

Our records show that your Self Assessment tax payment is overdue.

Nine out of ten people pay their tax on time.

It is easy to pay. Please call the phone number above to pay by debit card, credit card, or Direct Debit.

You can also pay using internet and telephone banking. For more information on when and how to pay, go to **www.hmrc.gov.uk/payinghmrc**

If you don't believe that this payment is overdue, please contact us on the number above.

If you have already paid, thank you. If not, please act now.

Yours faithfully

Officer of Revenue and Customs

IDMS99P HMRC 10/10

Nine out of ten people pay their tax on time.

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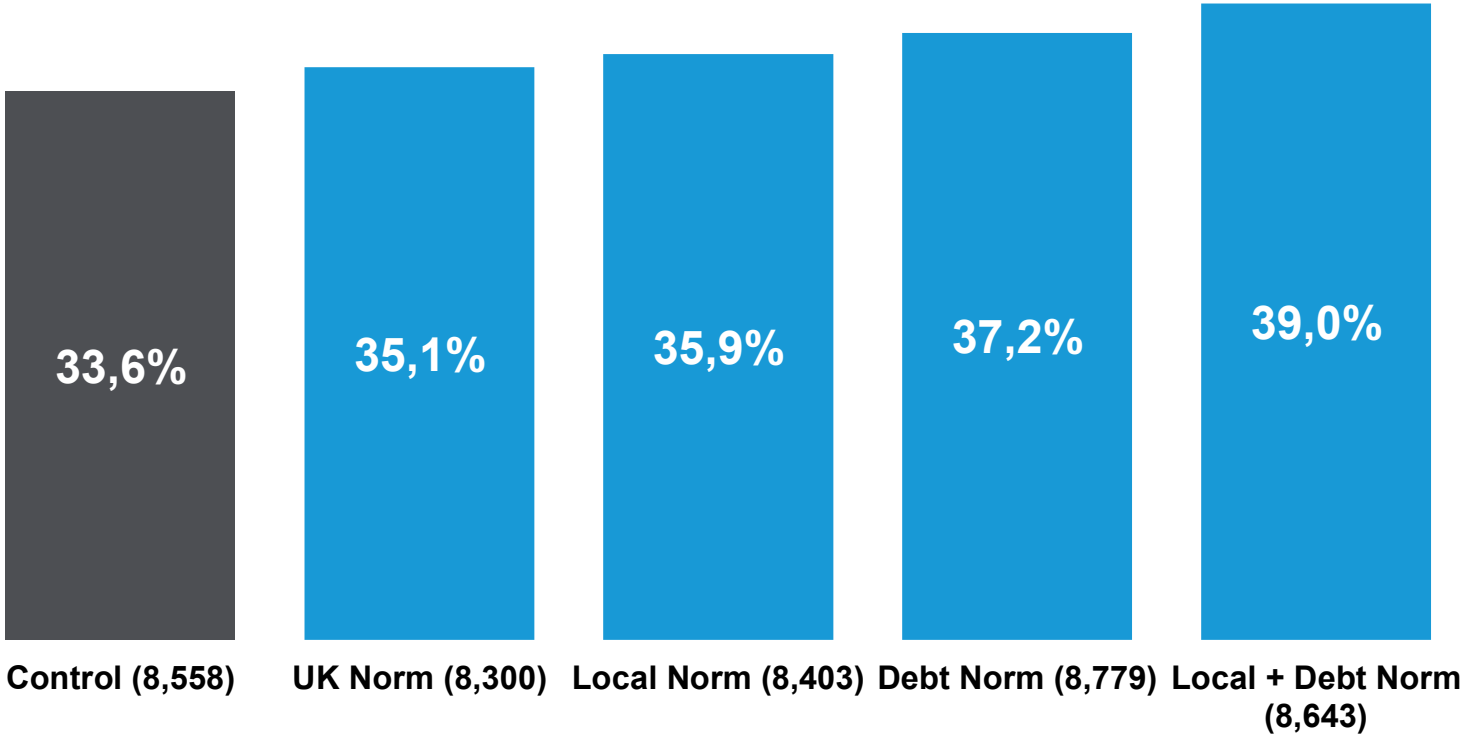
Social norms to increase tax payment rates within 23 days (1 month)



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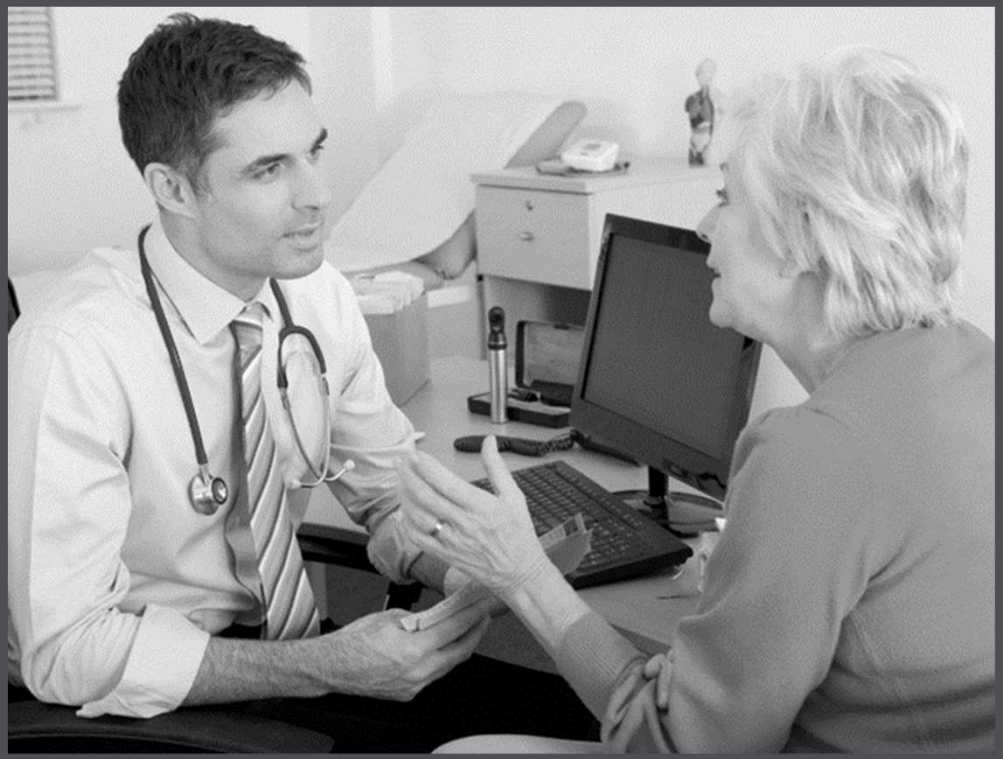
Changing doctor's behaviour



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Effect of Chief Medical Officer letter on antibiotic prescribing, 2014-2015

n=1,581

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Public Health England

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The effect disappeared when the control group received a letter

n=1,581

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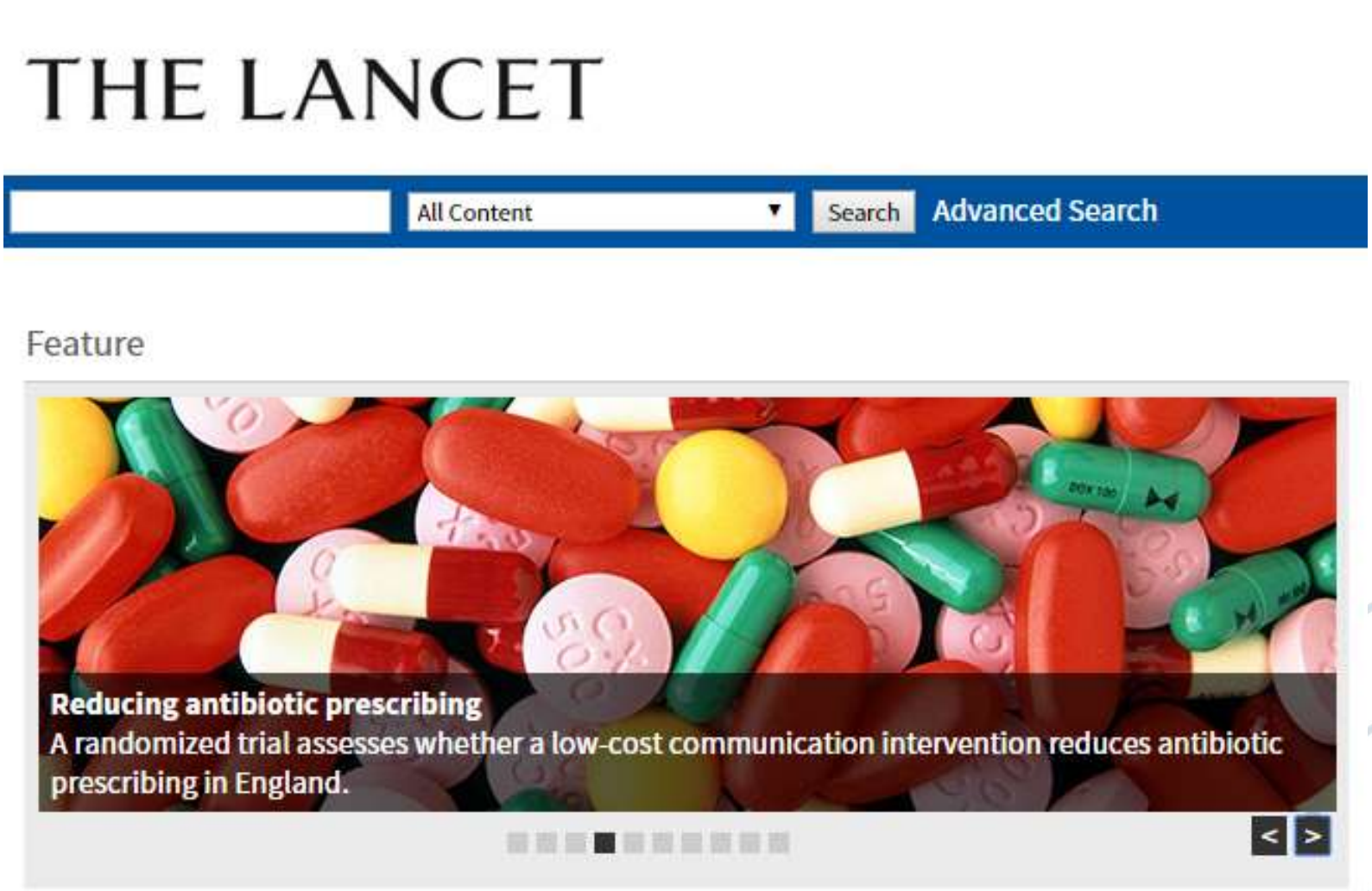

Hallsworth et al. (2016) Provision of social norm feedback to high prescribers of antibiotics in general practice: a pragmatic national randomised controlled trial

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Improving outcomes using social support

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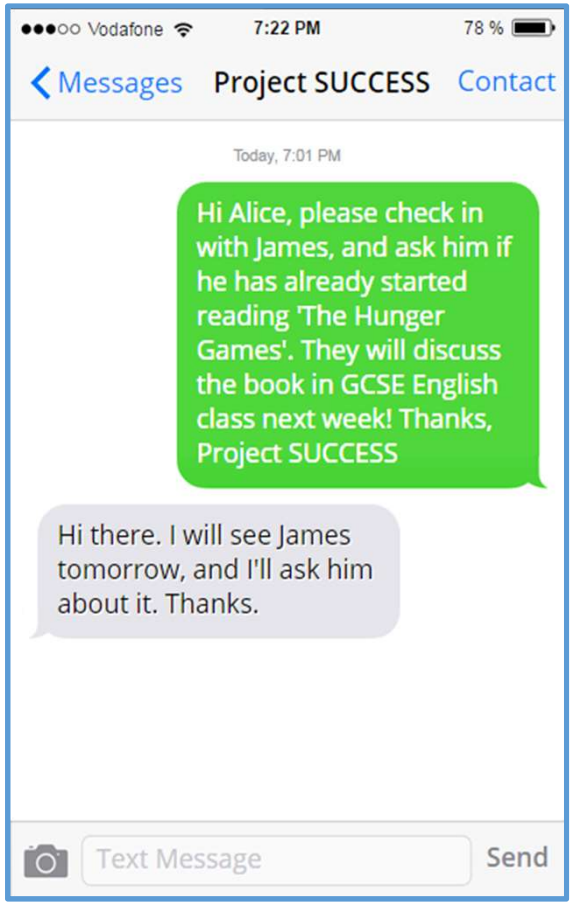
Study supporter scheme

So, you're reading The Hunger Games in class? Who's your favourite character?

Yeah, need to get started on that.

OK, don't forget to read a few chapters before next week's class!



Education Endowment Foundation

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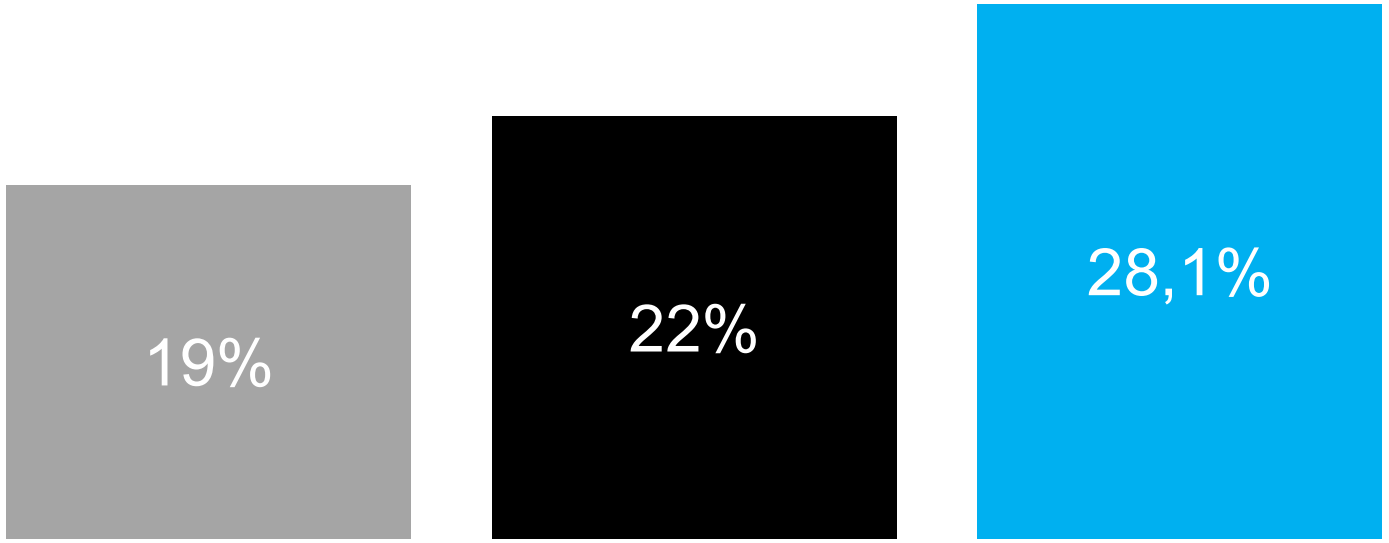
GCSE pass rates increased by nearly 30%



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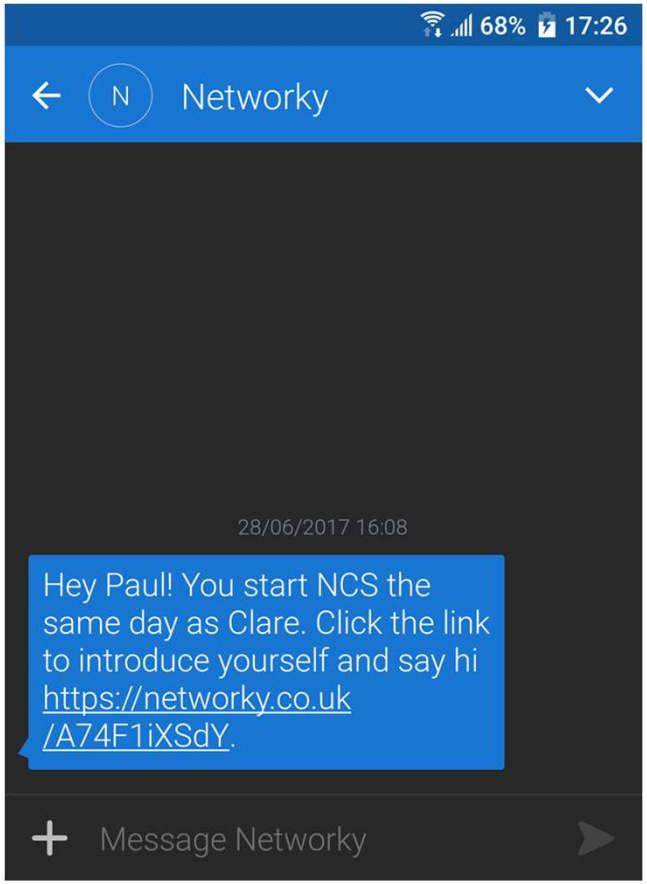
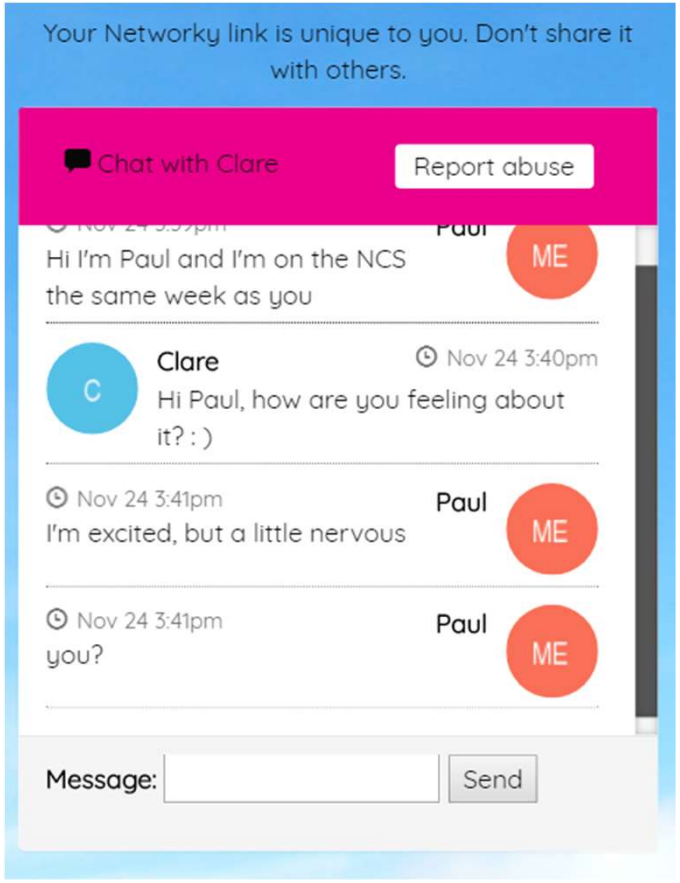
Buddying people up before a programme starts





"You'll each get a £10 Amazon voucher after you both turn up!"

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Which variant worked best?

1. Control

2. Buddy scheme

3. Buddy scheme + incentive

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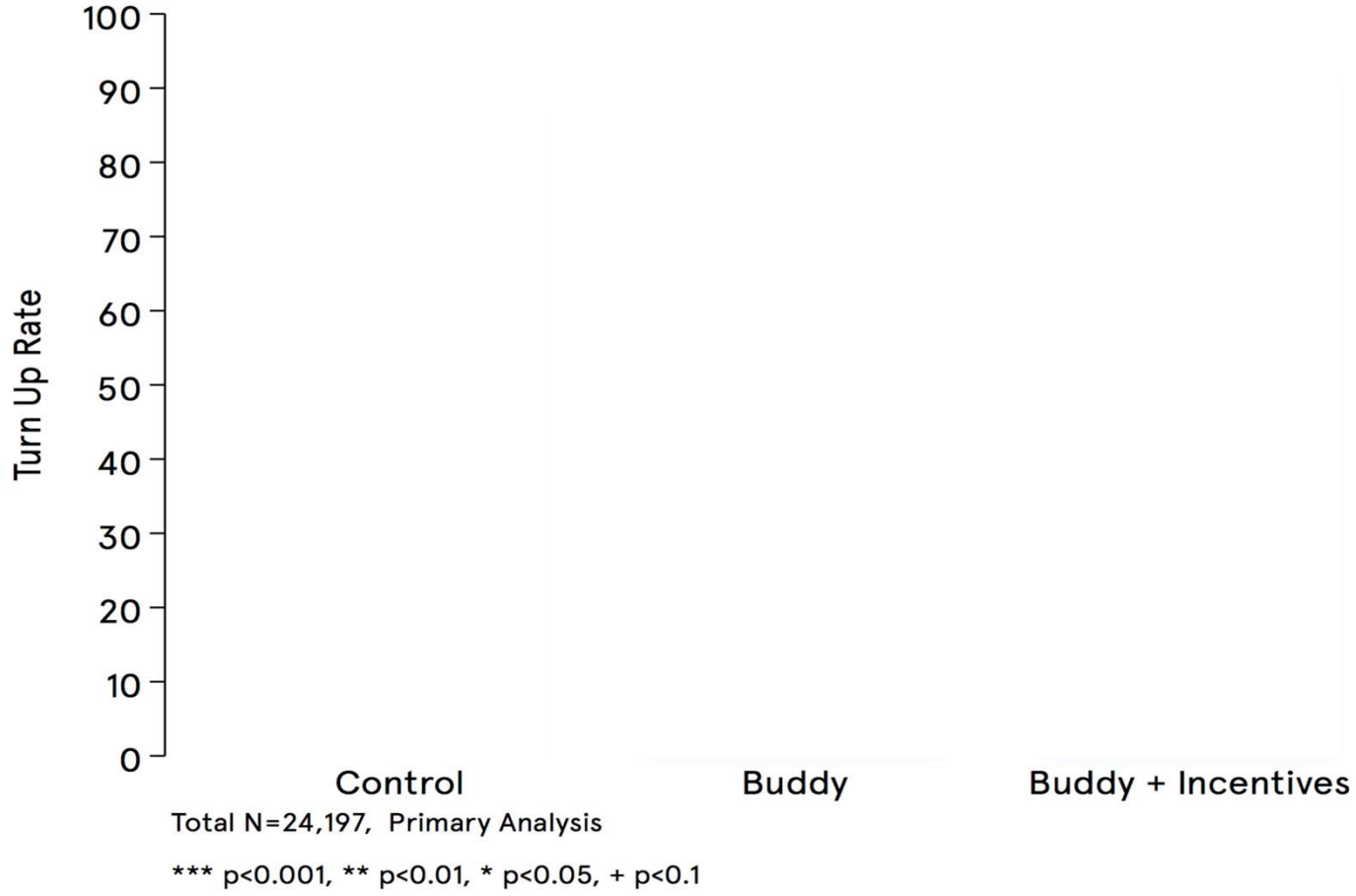
Which variant worked best?



Total N=24,197, Primary Analysis

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

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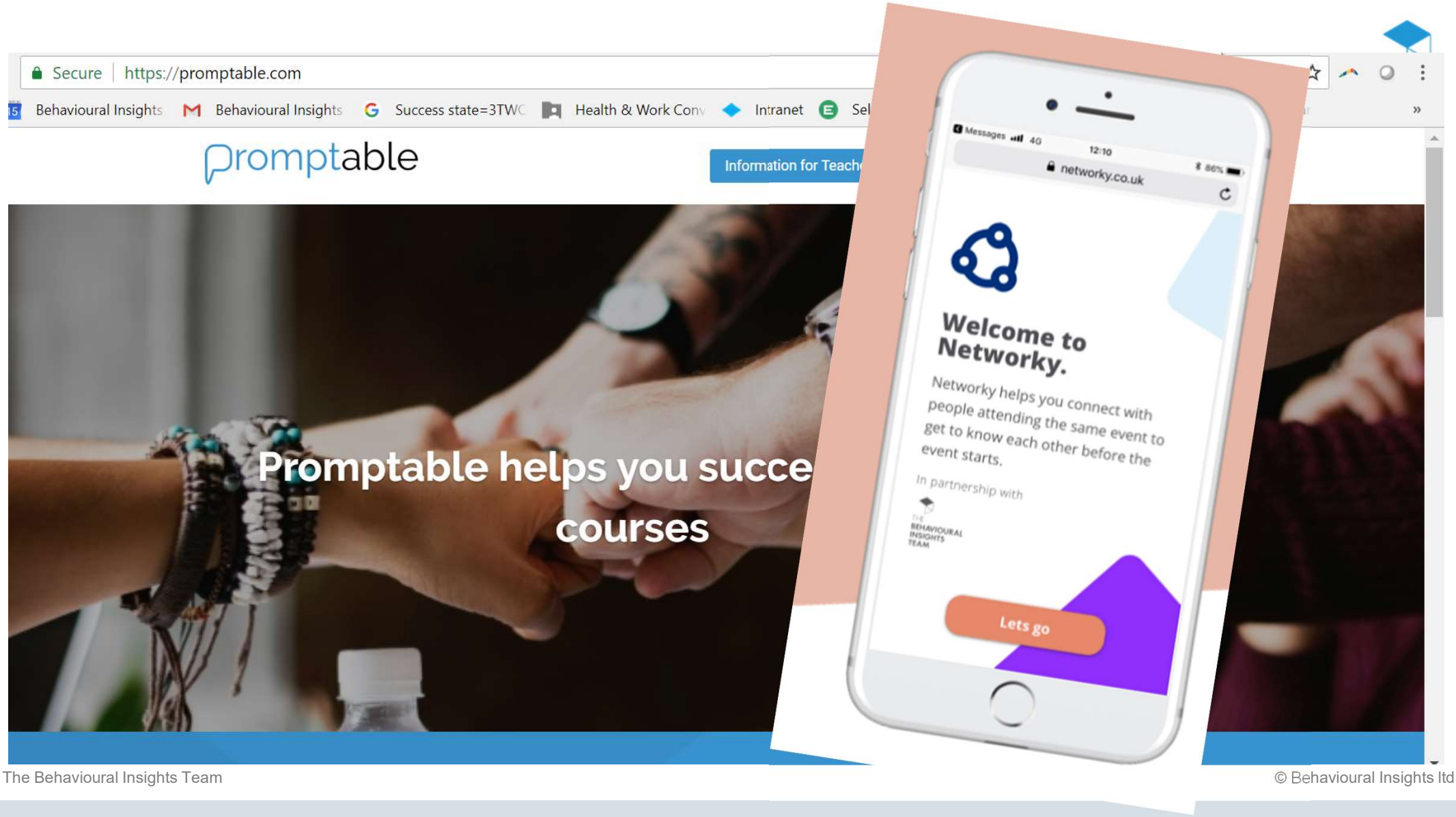

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From trials to policy
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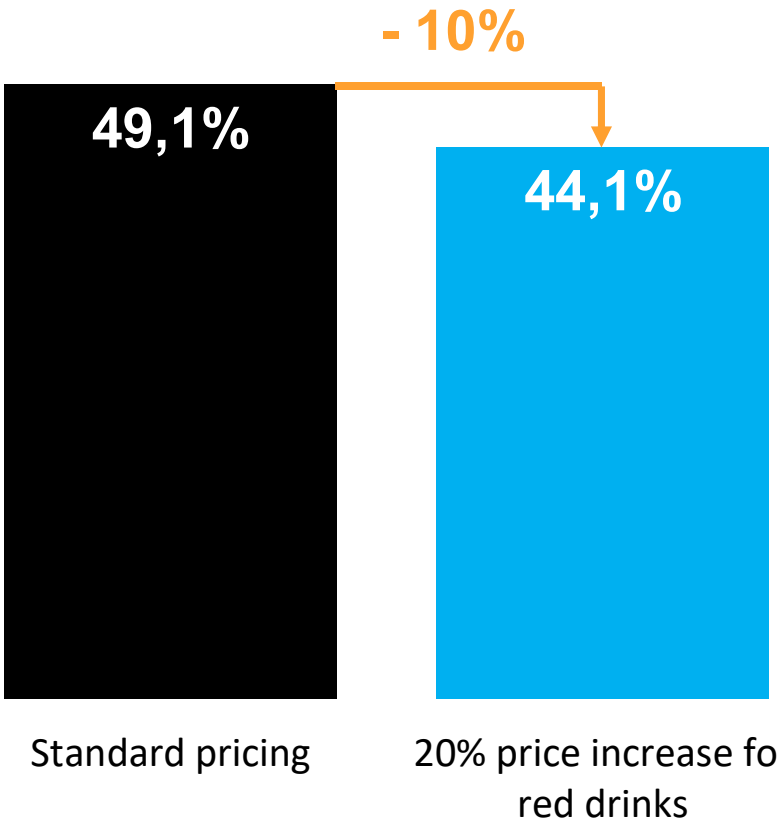
In partnership with
Cabinet Office

Encouraging healthy swaps: Price changes

Proportion of vending machine drink sales that are high sugar



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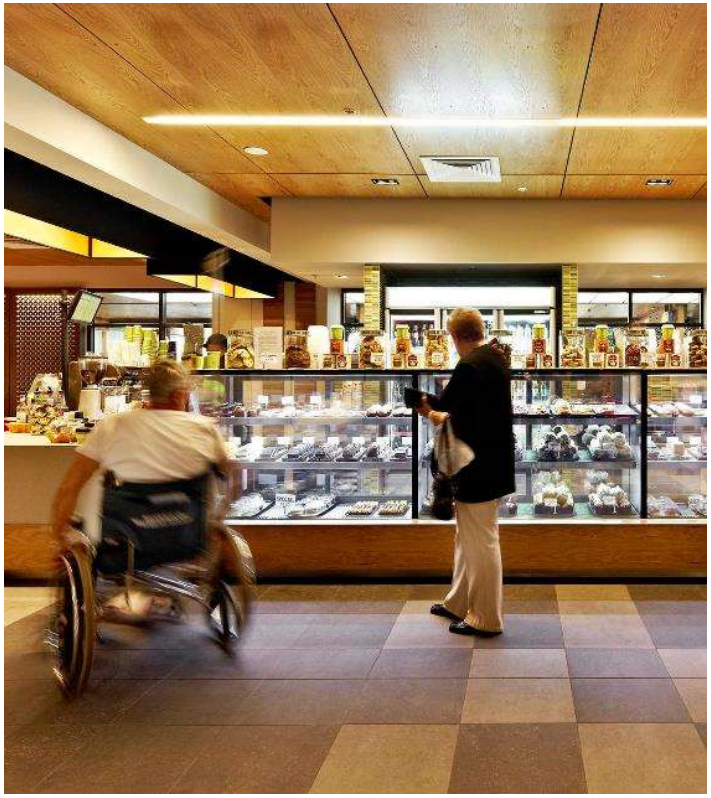
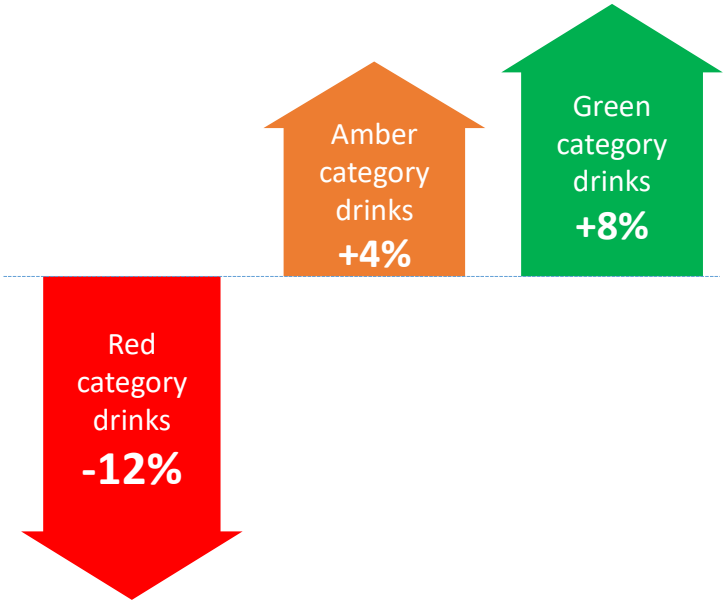
Encouraging healthy swaps: Product position





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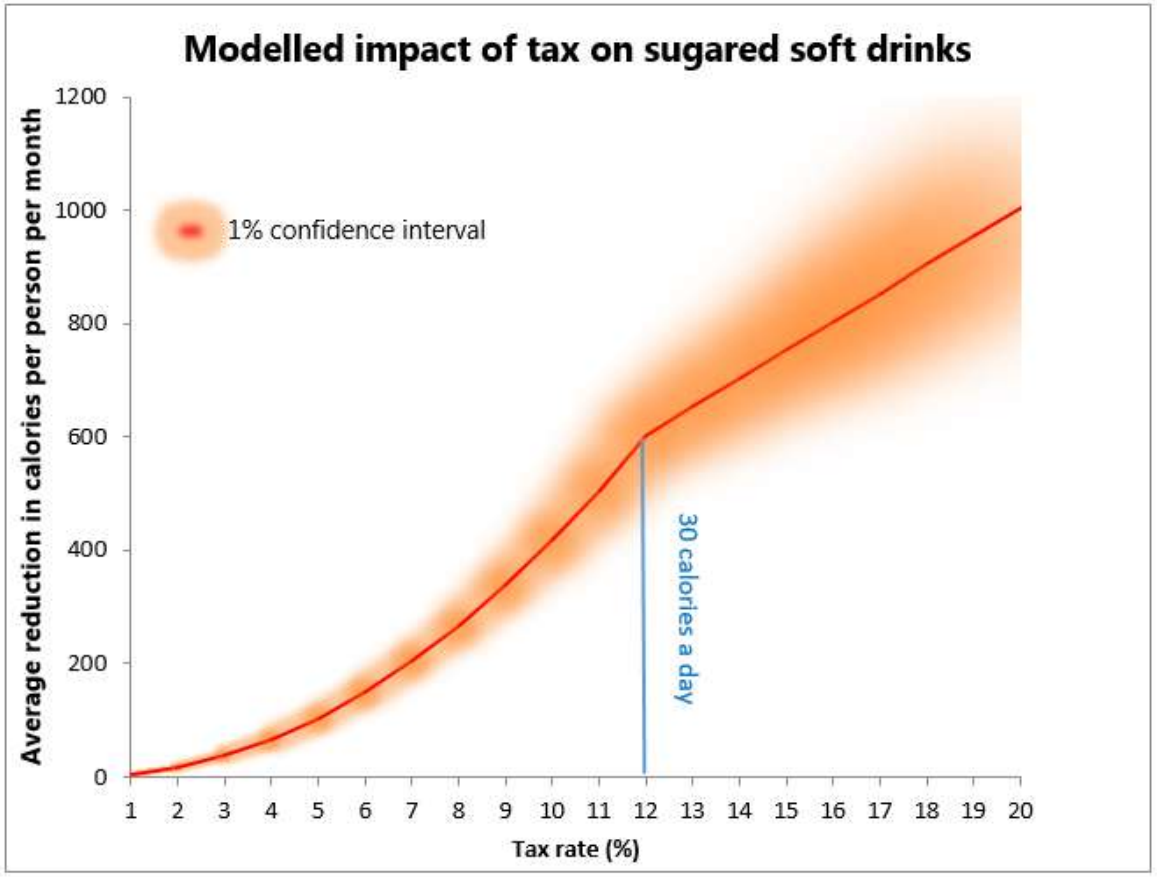
Consumer price elasticity for soft drinks



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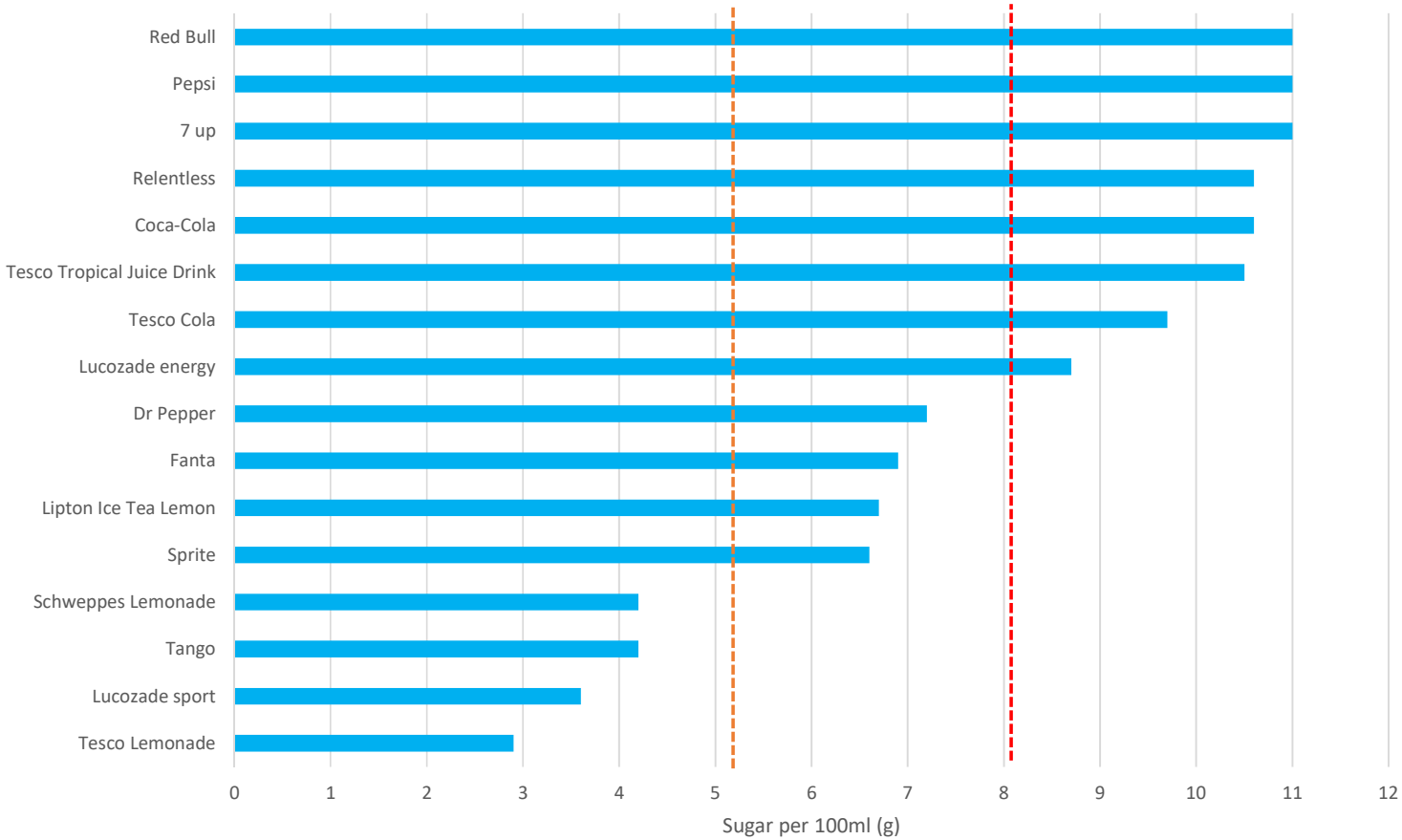
Sugar tax – a ‘double nudge’



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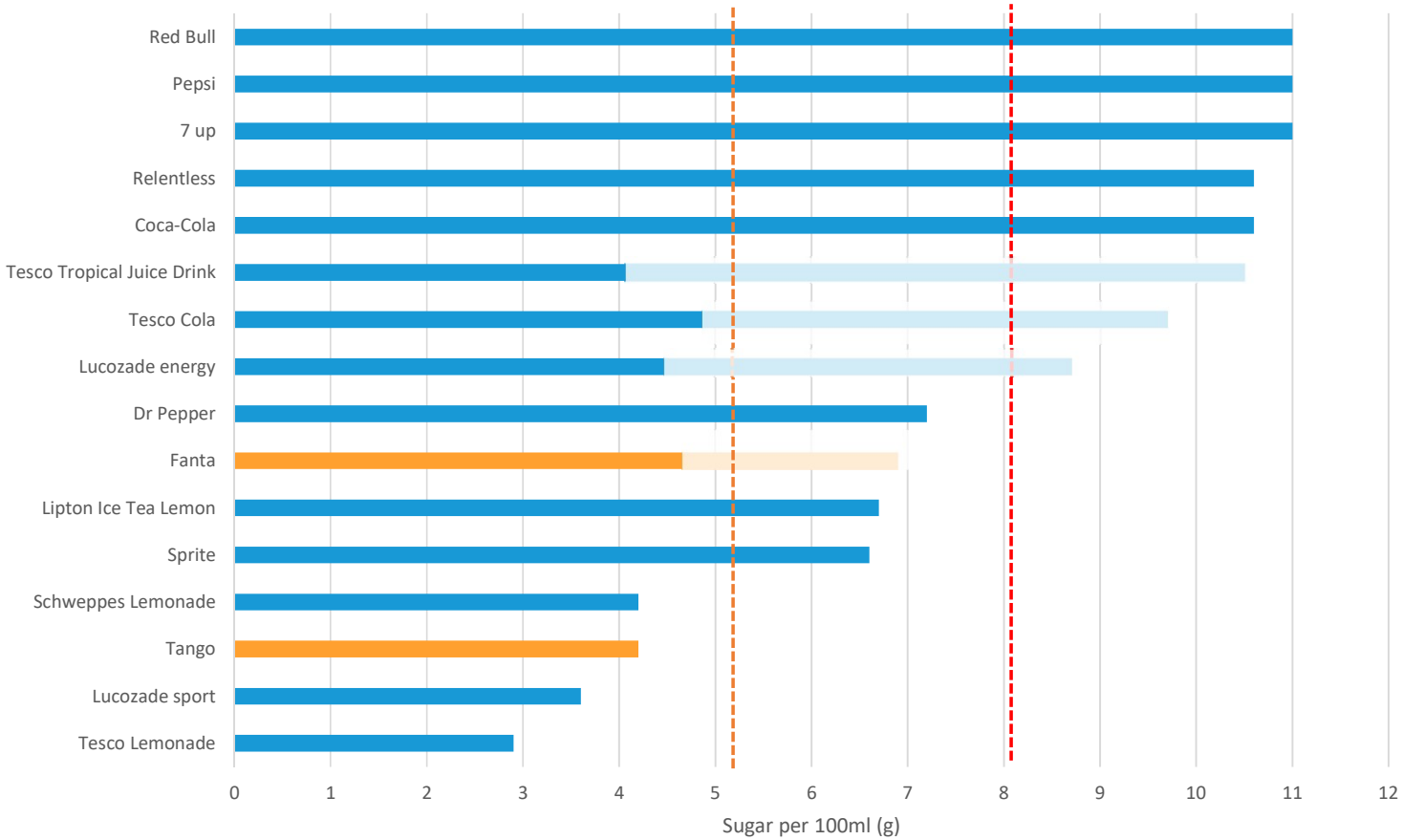
Sugar tax – a ‘double nudge’



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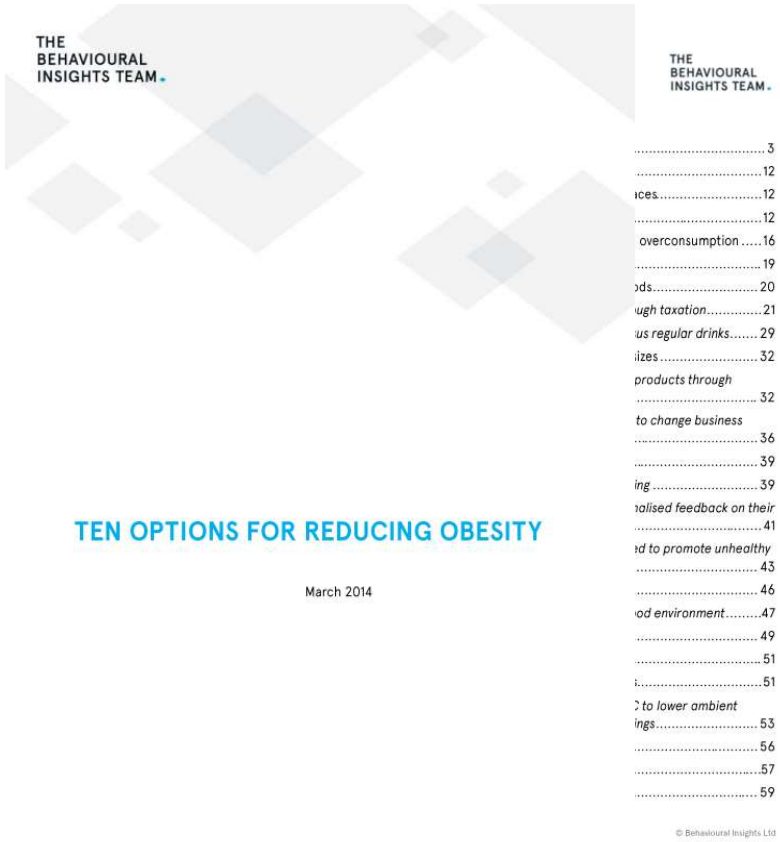
A big success, built on a lot of work



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TEN OPTIONS FOR REDUCING OBESITY

March 2014

THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM

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12
ices 12
12
overconsumption 16
19
ods 20
ugh taxation 21
us regular drinks 29
ilzes 32
products through 32
to change business 36
39
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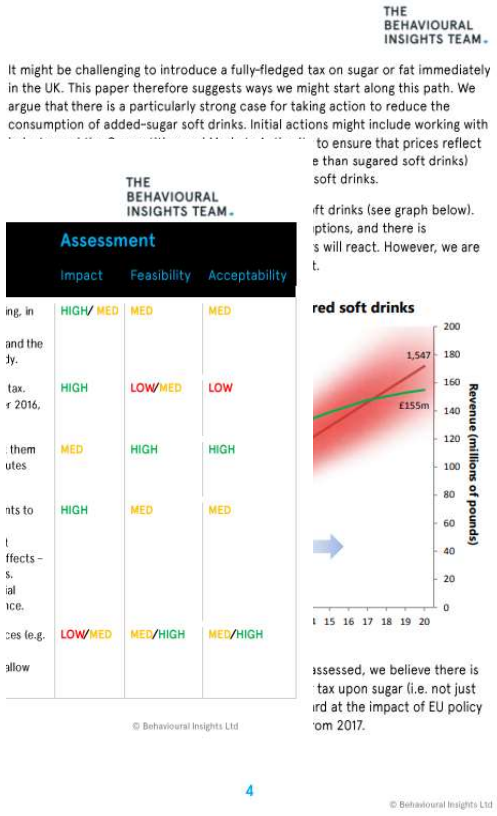

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It might be challenging to introduce a fully-fledged tax on sugar or fat immediately in the UK. This paper therefore suggests ways we might start along this path. We argue that there is a particularly strong case for taking action to reduce the consumption of added-sugar soft drinks. Initial actions might include working with to ensure that prices reflect e than sugared soft drinks) soft drinks.

ft drinks (see graph below). ptions, and there is s will react. However, we are t.

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Assessment

	Impact	Feasibility	Acceptability
ing, in	HIGH/ MED	MED	MED
and the dy.			
tax. r 2016,	HIGH	LOW/MED	LOW
them utes	MED	HIGH	HIGH
nts to	HIGH	MED	MED
ffects – s. ial nce.			
ces (e.g.	LOW/MED	MED/HIGH	MED/HIGH
allow			

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red soft drinks

assessed, we believe there is tax upon sugar (i.e. not just rd at the impact of EU policy om 2017.

4

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go.[27] At the same time, lly reduced food prices. s fallen dramatically; we become relatively more sumption of sugar has

so been a large increase oducts in the last thirty cause experiments have lories being consumed – uent days.[32]

2010

011).

r of consumption, and example, in the US the d the food they serve in size since the 1950s.[34] [35] In fact, eating five ek (as opposed to in America since the

at we are exposed to a go wider than just and the consumption of

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New approaches
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In partnership with
Cabinet Office
Share of market activity
Changes in the activity of the
Distribution of the securities market key players
FRT division

"We know that consumers rarely read terms and conditions when they enter into a contract."

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Running online experiments, where field trials are difficult

PREDICTIV

LARGE PANEL

Access to **200k UK panel participants** (& growing) that are broadly representative of the UK population.

BEHAVIOURAL TESTS

Tests that rely on the same principles as field RCTs. We also tie consequences to people's choices to elicit reliable responses.

SPEED

By developing test templates, experiments can be set up and run within weeks.

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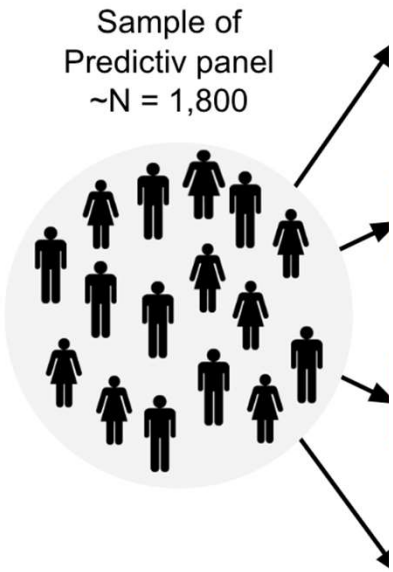

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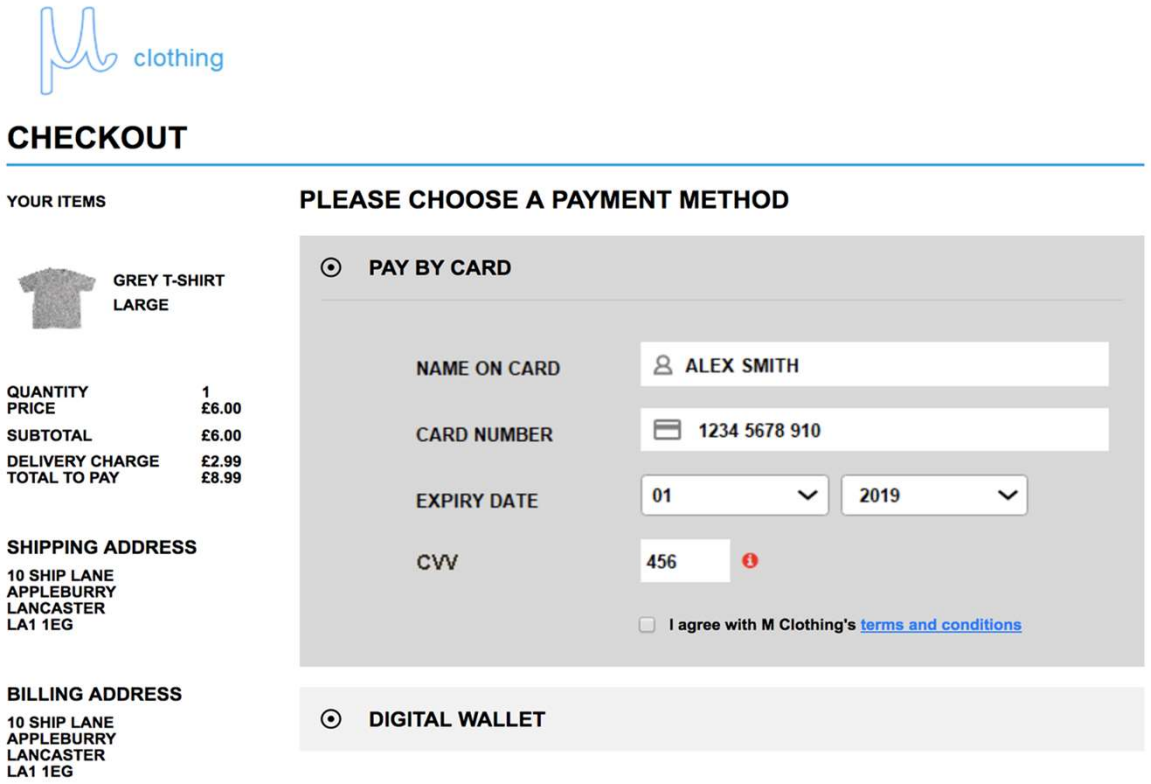
Control – single click



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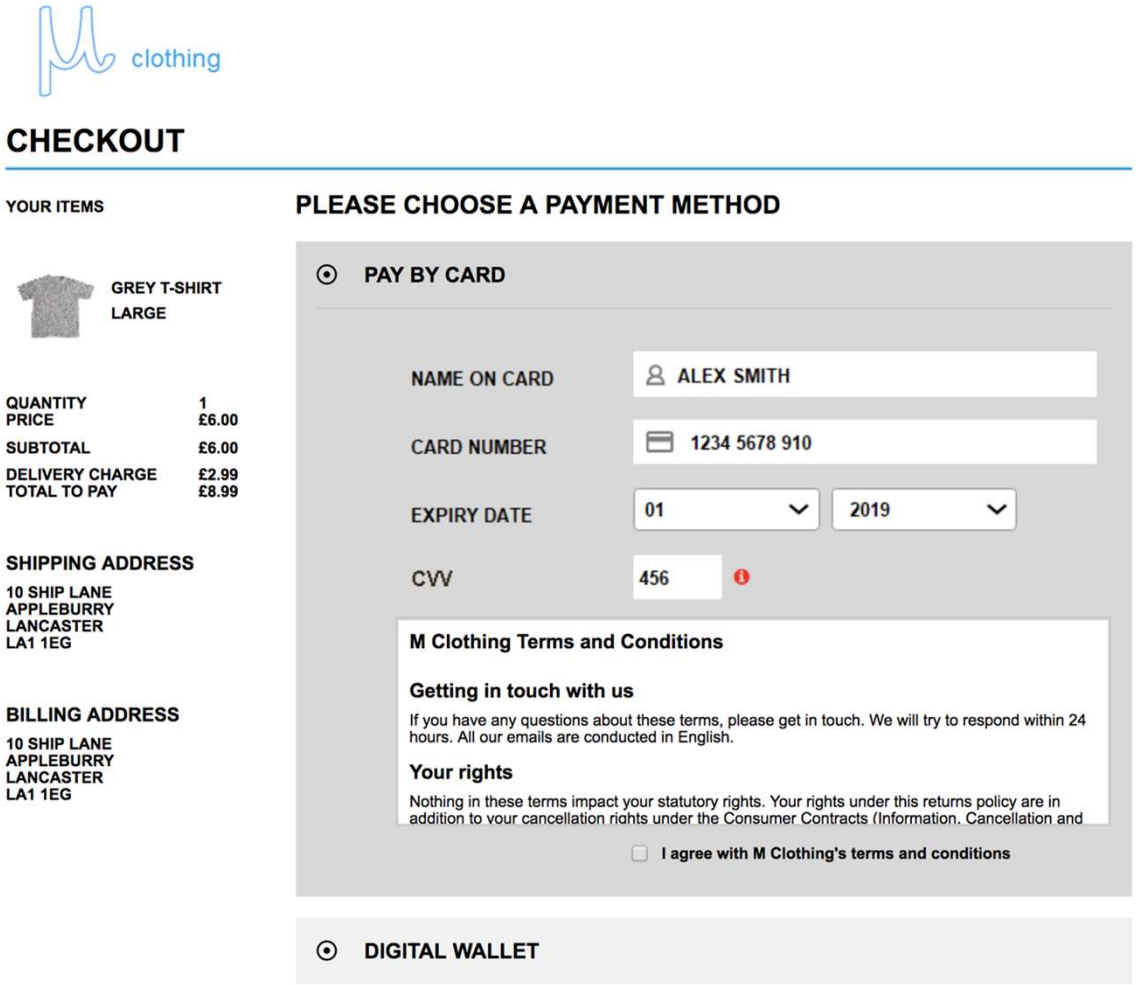
Scroll



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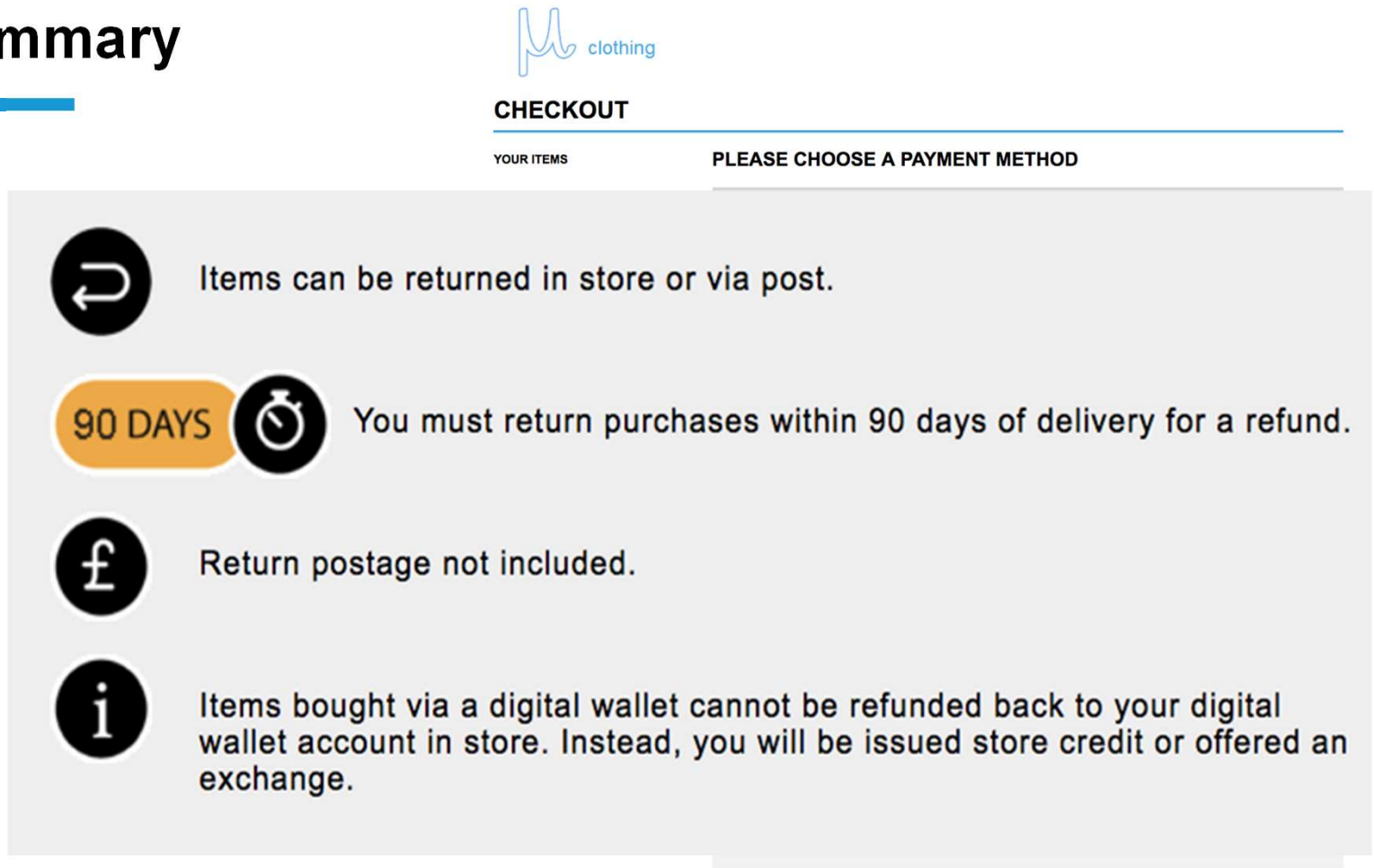
Icons summary



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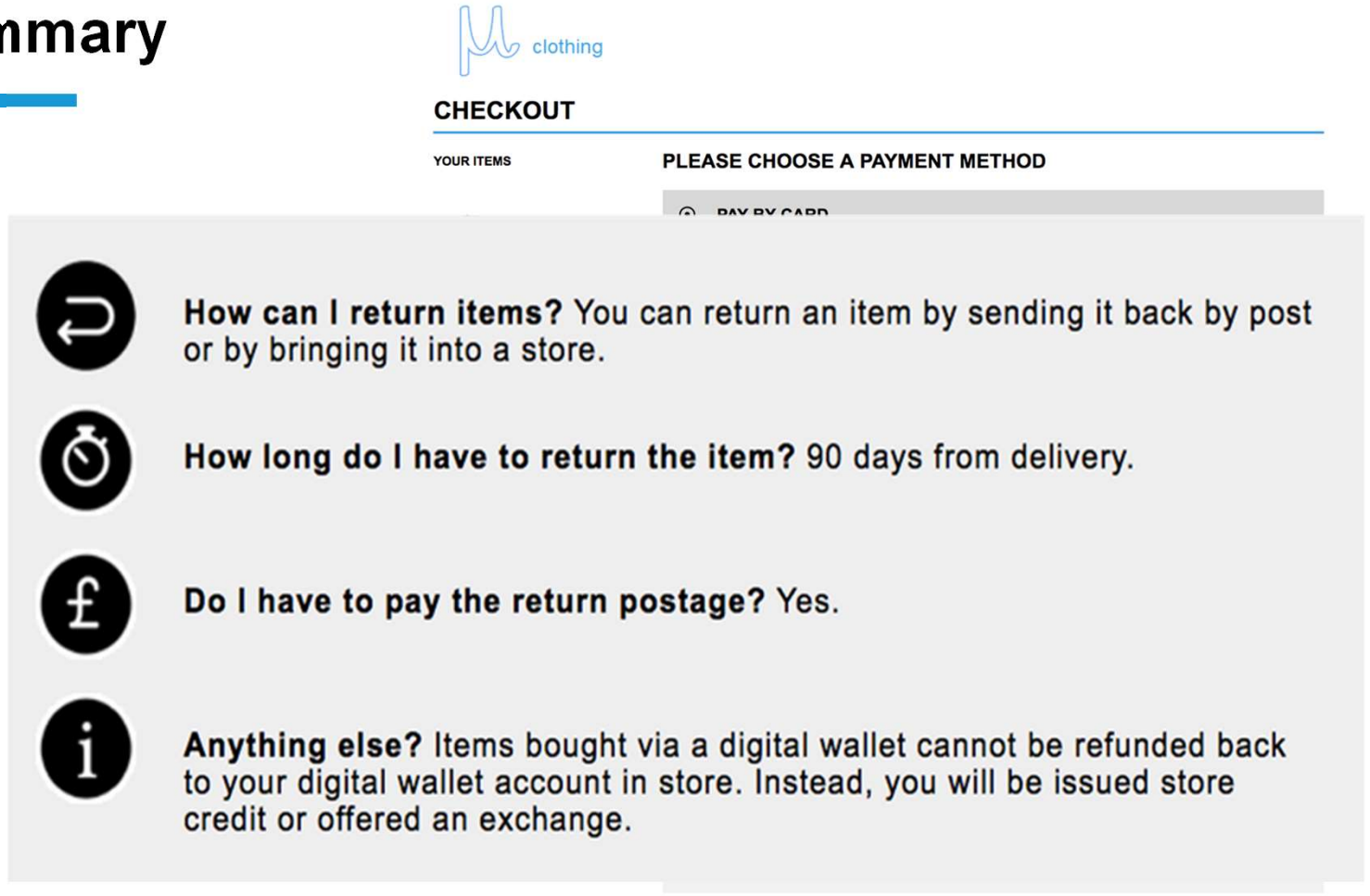
Q&A Summary



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- **1. Based on the information you have read, how much time do you have to return the item and get a refund? We start counting from the day that you received the item.**
- 0-20 days
- 21-30 days
- 31-60 days
- 61-100
- At any point
- Don't know

- **2. How can you return the item?**
- By post only
- In store only
- By post or in store
- Don't know

- **3. Will you have to pay for the postage to return the item?**
- Yes
- No
- Don't know

4. If you pay using a digital wallet and return the item in store, what will happen?

- You will be offered a full refund, exchange or credit note
- You will be offered an exchange or credit note
- You will be offered a credit note only
- Don't know

5. When can you return a piece of clothing?

- If you have not worn it or washed it
- After you have worn it, as long as you wash it
- If you keep the receipt and delivery note
- Don't know

6. What happens to your refund if an item is lost in the post on its way back to M Clothing?

- You will not get any refund.
- M Clothing will still refund you.
- M Clothing will send a note to the postal service asking them to refund you.
- Don't know

7. How long will a refund take to reach you?

- 0-10 days
- 11-20 days
- 21-30 days
- 31-40 days
- Over 40 days
- Don't know

8. If you place an order but the item is out of stock, what will happen?

- M Clothing will send you a similar item
- M Clothing will automatically refund you
- M Clothing will give you a £10 gift card
- Don't know

Which variant worked best?

1. Control
2. Scroll
3. Icons Summary
4. Q&A Summary

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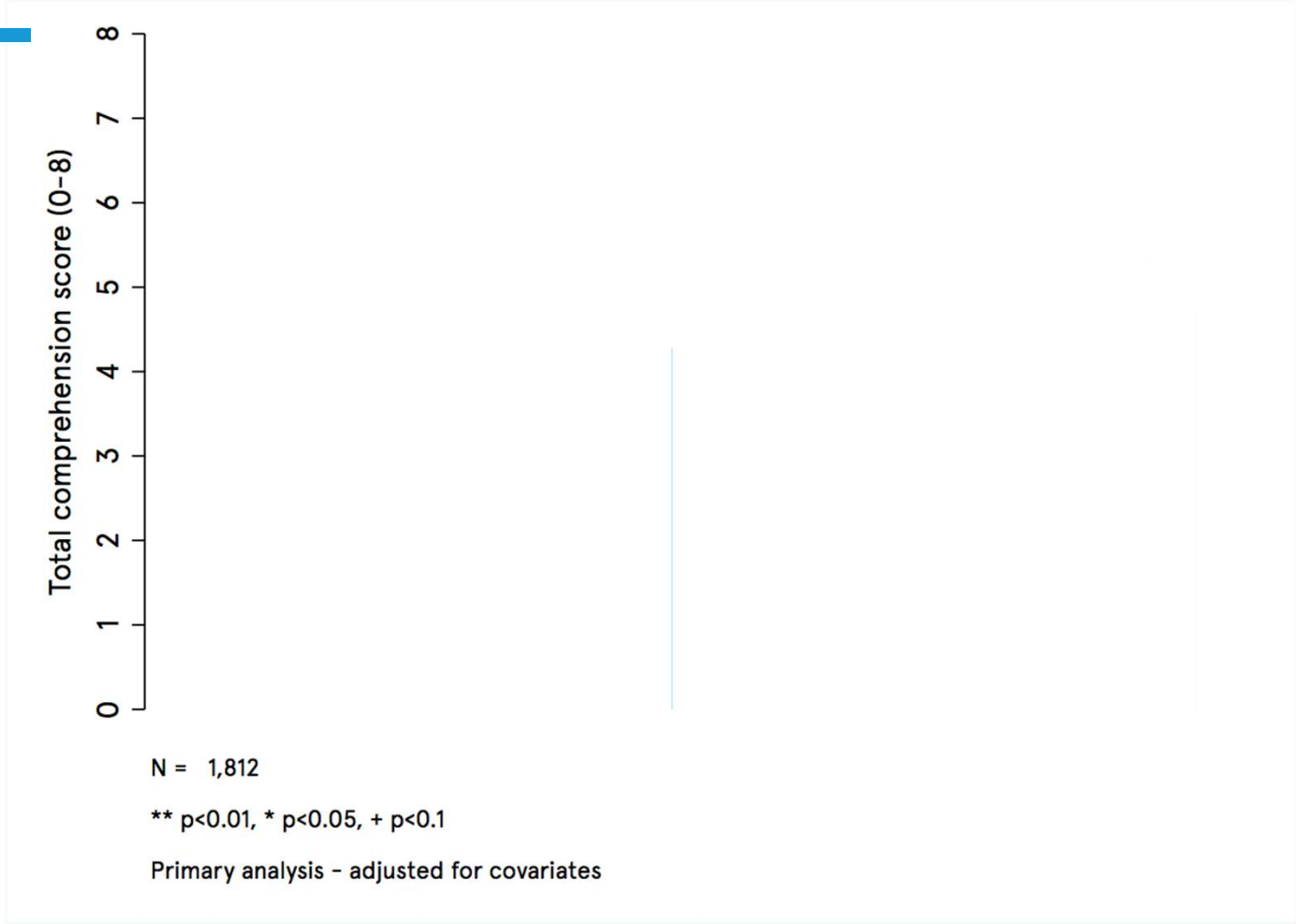
Which variant worked best?



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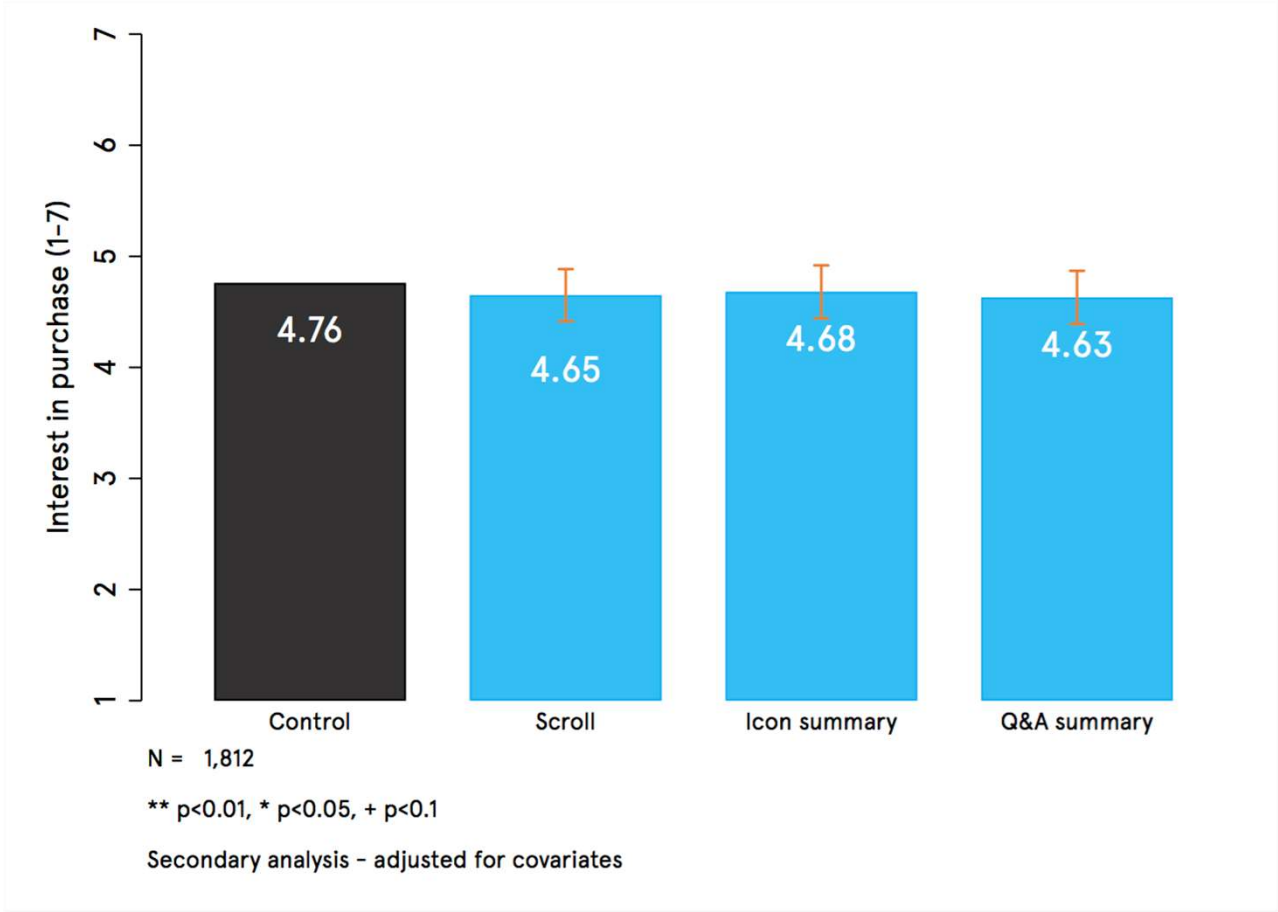
Expressed interest in using the site



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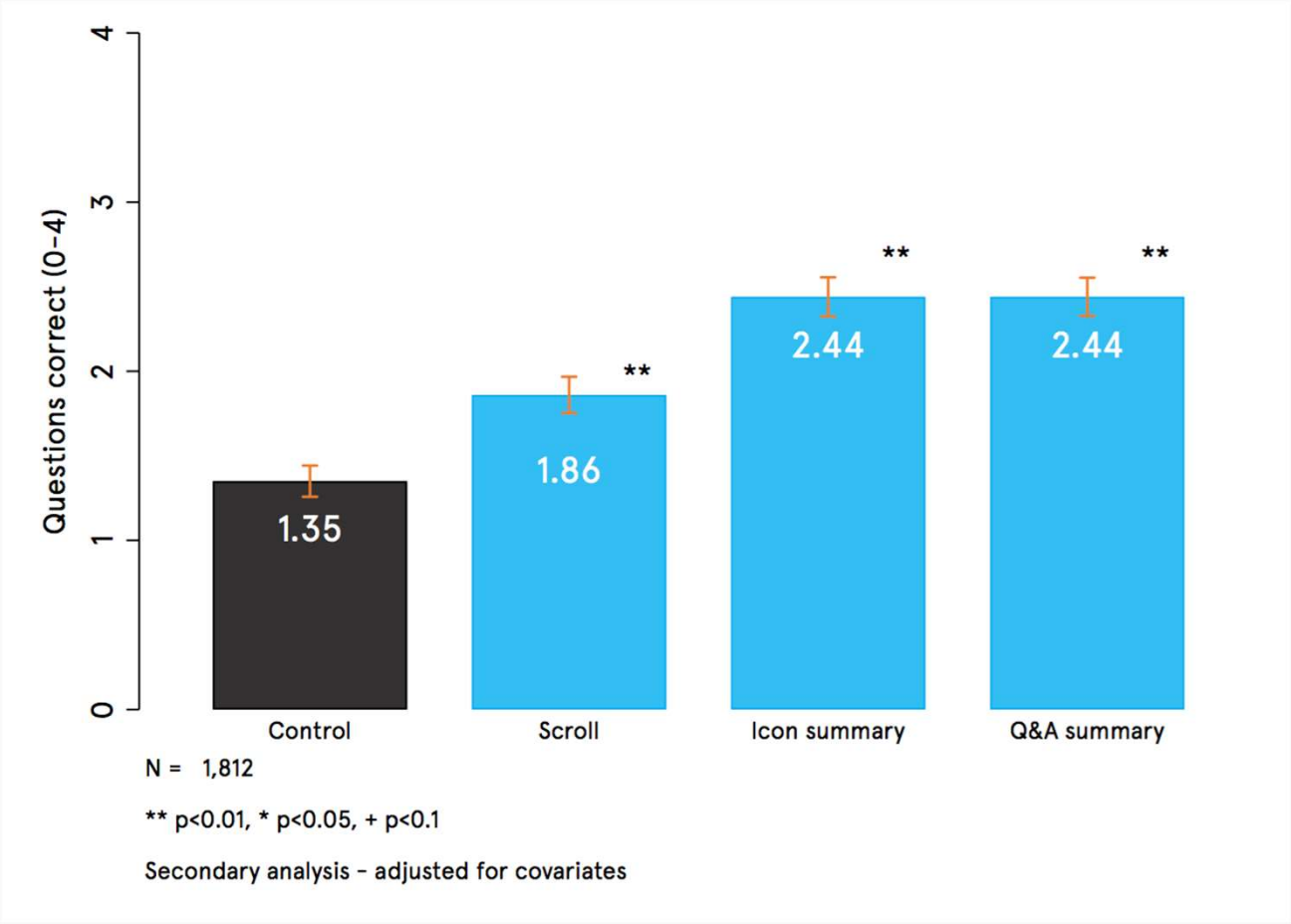
What about



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