

Public Perceptions of Sexual Health Services in Wales



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Public Perceptions of the Frisky Wales Website and Sexual Health Services in Wales

This project has been a collaboration between Public Health Wales, Cardiff University and Fast Track Cities Cardiff and the Vale (FTC C&V). Adam Williams, MSc was responsible for survey development, data collection and analysis of all results and took lead of developing this report. Amaka Dibigbo and Grace Fry (Cardiff University) provided the initial survey questions to work from. Zoë Couzens, MPH (Public Health Wales) and Dr Jane Nichols (FTC C&V) contributed to the development of the idea, producing the survey questions, and reviewing the report.

Executive summary

This report sets out the findings from the survey exploring the public opinions of the current name Frisky Wales and future sexual health services that could be provided within Wales. The e-survey, hosted on Qualtrics©, consisted of nine questions developed within the team including a mixture of open and closed questions.

The public perception was clear in that the majority viewed Frisky Wales to be an inappropriate name. Being associated with promiscuity and believed to be an outdated term. It was acknowledged that the name was suitable when the website was first developed, acting as a source of information source. However, as the service has developed to include Test & Post as well as services for sexual assault the once sex positive name is now viewed as insensitive.

Recommendations:

- When deciding a new name many reported that it needs to be simple and understandable with many providing the same/similar name of “Sexual Health Wales”.
- If there is a name change, there needs to be an extensive advertising campaign.
- As many are accustomed to the name Frisky Wales, it could be embedded within the new site and be used to search for the new site. Therefore, not wasting the time and energy invested.
- Inclusion of rapid testing for HIV and syphilis and pregnancy testing via postal testing kits would be welcomed along with a click & collect service and community pick-up/drop-off for self-testing.
- Rebranding would also provide the best opportunity to add new services as both can be promoted in unison.

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Background

Frisky Wales started as an online service to provide information on all things related to sexual health and wellbeing, run by Public Health Wales. It aims to provide a single location for people to be able to access remotely to gain advice and knowledge of various aspects of sexual health and wellbeing including infections, contraception, relationships, unplanned pregnancies, and menstrual wellbeing. Detailed information is provided relating to each of the topics mentioned along with links to nearby clinics and hospitals that provide required services. In 2018, a postal testing service for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) was piloted, called Test and Post, and was adapted into the Frisky Wales website. Test and Post was intended to be expanded over time to include all of Wales but the closure of clinics in response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a quicker expansion of the service. The service was made available across all of Wales on March 27th 2020, and continues to run through the Frisky Wales website. Test and Post allows for service users to tests for Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, HIV and Hepatitis B & C. At completion of the ordering process for test kits a feedback survey is available for service users to provide their comments. From these comments it was identified that some individuals found issue with the name Frisky Wales. One issue highlighted is that many people seem to have confused the Frisky Wales website as the name of the postal testing service. The Frisky Wales website is simply the conduit through which people can access the Test and Post service. From the feedback provided it was decided that an inquiry into the public perception of the Frisky Wales website and sexual health services provided was required. This report sets out the findings from the survey exploring the public opinions of the current name Frisky Wales and future sexual health services that could be provided within Wales.

Data Collection and Analysis

To review public perceptions an e-survey was developed to examine views surrounding the current name 'Frisky Wales' along with an alternative name of WellSH (Wellbeing and Sexual Health). The usefulness of current ideas for expanding the sexual health services provided through the website were also explored. The e-survey consisted of nine questions developed within the team including a mixture of open and closed questions. The first two questions asked for age and region, the next five questions explored views on the current name 'Frisky Wales' and how it should be changed, ending with two questions relating to future expansions on the service. Full survey available in the Appendices. The e-survey was created on Qualtrics© (a cloud-based software for developing electronic surveys) and distributed via an electronic advert promoted on various social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. English and Welsh options were available for both the adverts and survey. Upon access via the link within the adverts all responders had to provide consent to be able to complete the survey. Data collection started on 25/08/2021 and closed on 01/10/2021, with an average completion time of 7 minutes 36 seconds.

Data collected was split between open and closed questions. Closed questions were analysed descriptively using frequency counts and percentages for responses to each question. Question eight included a Likert scale examining 4 items with 5 options provided. During analysis the options 'very useful' and 'moderately useful' were combined into one variable of 'useful'. For the open questions, analysis varied. Question three which asked for words associated with the name Frisky Wales, responses were grouped into positive, negative, and neutral words. These words are visually presented in word clouds with the size of words relating to their frequency within the data. Other open responses were analysed thematically with quotes grouped into themes and explained within the results section with quotes used to highlight points made.

Results

The survey received 125 responses (all completed in English), five individuals refusing to consent to participate and 13 not completing further than demographic questions, leaving 107 responses for analysis. Most respondents were within age groups 46-55 (30%) and 26-35 (27%) with at least one response coming from each region of Wales, although most resided in Cardiff (27%) and Carmarthenshire (17%). See appendices.

Public perception of Frisky Wales

The first question relating to the name of the website asked for three words associated with the name 'Frisky Wales'. The words provided were reviewed and split into three groups: Positive (n=61), Negative (n=132) and Neutral (n=57). The words for the positive and negative groups are presented in Images 1 and 2. Most words provided fell within the negative group, with 'promiscuity', 'outdated', 'inappropriate', 'embarrassing' and 'childish' being mentioned most frequently. For the positive, the word 'fun' was most frequently used by a large margin with 'sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing' and 'memorable' having numerous mentions. Neutral words consisted largely of 'sex/sexual' and 'aroused/horny' with others referring to animals, people, and Wales. The question relating to the appropriateness of the name 'Frisky Wales' (*see Figure 1*) found that 73% believed the name to not be appropriate, with only 11% viewing it as appropriate. As for the name 'WellSH', public opinion was more evenly divided with each answers receiving nearly a third each, although it not being an appropriate name received the highest vote (35.5%). When asked what name would be best for the website, opinions were split between 'WellSH' (39%) and another name being better (39%). With only 12% viewing the current name, 'Frisky Wales', as appropriate, *see Figure 2*. For those who indicated another name, they were asked to provide a suggestion for a name. Many indicated the name needed to be simple and self-explanatory, with "Sexual Health Wales" or names akin to this ("Wales Sexual Health website", "Wales Sexual Health services", "SHWALES") being most commonly suggested. See Image 3 for all suggestions.

Ending this section was an open question asking for any additional suggestions to improve the sexual health website. From the answers, it was clear that some chose to use this section to provide more detailed comments relating to the naming of the Frisky Wales site as well as providing additional suggestions. Answers to this section will be presented separately between comments on the name Frisky Wales and suggestions. There were 16 comments relating to the naming of the Frisky Wales website. These consisted of comments expressing positive and negative views towards the name Frisky Wales. The positive related to Frisky Wales being sex positive and a good descriptor of the website, insisting the name should be kept. On the other hand, the negative comments highlighted that Frisky Wales is an inappropriate name due to the service now also being used for individuals who may have been victim to sexual assault. As on quote presents:

“Please remember that, increasingly, more vulnerable people are having to use postal testing. E.g., sexual assault victims, sexual exploitation, people with disabling symptoms, people with sexual dysfunction etc. These people may not feel very frisky and may not associate sex in a positive way. This needs to be considered with the branding/website.”

Some did have positive views about the suggestion ‘WellSH’ but more commented how this name was not memorable and that it does not make sense when spoken:

“The WellSH name is clever and looks good, but how would you say it? Here’s the number for ‘Welsh.’ Doesn’t really sound right.”

Most of the comments indicated that another name should be developed due to issues with both suggested names:

“Frisky Wales feels like a dirty name, like we’re all just having massive amounts of casual sex, but WellSH sounds like someone is being told to well, Shhhh! To me, it feels slightly oxymoronic for sexual health testing service. You want people to get tested and talk about sexual health. As much as I like the anonymity of the postal service, I’m still in the clinic every 3 months discussing my sexual health and encouraging others to get tested and know their status. WellSH feels a tad ‘brush it under the carpet’ or don’t talk about it at all.”

It was explained that the name “*doesn't need to be catchy, it needs to be neutral and self-explanatory,*” and that the name needs to be simple enough for healthcare practitioners to be able to clearly direct someone to the site without causing confusion such as “*Sexual Health Wales*”.

For the 14 comments relating to additional suggestions for the Frisky Wales website, themes included:

- More links to services (these included to New Pathways, SHOT, THT, SARC, RISE and to research opportunities)
- Better advertising to improve awareness
- More information (a better focus on sexual health, inclusive for Transgender individuals, and substance misuse)
- Updating service (making it look attractive and more interactive, bring it in-house and allow e-consult to request progesterone only pills, condoms, emergency contraception).

Expanding services for the future

The final section of the e-survey explored public opinions regarding future expansion of the services provided. Of the four future services provided (see Table 1) all were mostly viewed extremely useful or useful with few believing they were not useful. For rapid testing for HIV and Syphilis in postal testing kits, 96% of respondents believed this service to be extremely useful/useful. Receiving the most support for any of the services suggested. A Click & Collect service and community pick-up/drop-off points for self-testing both received equal support with 90% viewing these services to be extremely useful/useful. For pregnancy testing via postal service, 86% believed this service to be extremely useful/useful, this option received the highest no opinion (11%) likely being the opinion of males.

Table 1. Results regarding the future expansion of sexual health services in Wales

	Extremely useful	Useful	Not useful	No opinion
	<i>Frequency/% [n=102]</i>			
<i>Rapid testing for HIV and Syphilis in postal testing kits</i>	70/68.6	28/27.5	4/3.9	-
<i>Click and collect service for self-testing kits</i>	56/54.9	36/35.3	6/5.9	4/3.9
<i>Community pick-up and drop-off point for self-testing</i>	49/48.1	44/43.1	6/5.9	3/2.9
<i>Pregnancy testing via postal testing kits</i>	49/48.1	37/36.3	5/4.9	11/10.8

The final question queried respondents for their suggestions of how postal testing could be improved. The 35 comments were split into seven themes:

Additional services: Within this theme, respondents highlighted the suggestions indicated in the previous question (rapid testing, click & collect, community pick-up/drop-off and pregnancy testing), explaining how these services would be appreciated and beneficial to improving sexual health in Wales. Comments also included the need for better services for transgender individuals and the creation of a phone line for assistance.

Improve advertising: Increased promotion of the service is suggested as well as further encouraging of people to get tested via Post & Test.

No improvements needed: Respondents viewed the service to be very efficient and could provide no suggestions for improvement.

Orders and delivery: Some highlighted that a log-in should be possible for those who want it when they are ordering kits regularly. Additionally, kits specially for SARC's so that clients can do these at home. Some respondents did mention that there needed to be a better system in place for tracking kits due to non-deliveries and there should be more consistent timing for ordering to delivery.

Results: For this theme suggestions included a need for improved communication of the results, including feedback to those with inconclusive blood test results.

Testing: Suggestions included the need for spare swabs within testing kits, especially for anal swabs and that for the blood tests and option to attend clinic to have blood taken should be available due to the difficulties some have collecting a blood sample.

Other: This theme had comments that the service should remain free, that the name needs to be changed from Frisky Wales and one suggestion that feedback to local areas around testing would be useful.

Conclusions

The public perception was very clear with the majority believing that Frisky Wales was not an appropriate name for the sexual health website. The name was suitable when Frisky Wales was first developed, and the site acted as an information source and would direct people to relevant services. However, as the service has developed to include Test & Post as well as services for sexual assault the once sex positive name is now construed by some as insensitive. With respondents reporting how being directed/directing people to Frisky Wales after a sexual assault is extremely inappropriate. The name Frisky Wales is largely associated with promiscuity and being outdated. While WellSH is considered more appropriate as a name, many explained that it is not memorable and does not clearly state what it is. When deciding a name many reported that it needs to be simple and understandable with many providing the same/similar name of “Sexual Health Wales”. Many viewed it important for the services to expand and rapid testing for HIV/STIs had a high level of support along with the alternatives to postal testing and pregnancy testing via postal testing kits.

If the name of the website is changed there may be some confusion so an extensive advertising campaign would be required to ensure everyone is aware. However, as some do like the name Frisky Wales and have become accustomed to its use, the name could be embedded within the new site and be used to find it. With a change of name this would also be the best time to add new services and promote them along with the rebranding.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey questions

First can we collect some demographic data to identify if certain groups/areas have needs requiring addressing:

1. What age group are you? [Selected Choice]
2. What region of Wales do you live? [Selected Choice]

In response to public feedback, we are considering renaming the Frisky Wales website. One suggestion for the new name of the website is 'WellSH' (Wellbeing & Sexual Health Wales). First can we have your views on the name of the website.

3. Please list 3 words you associate with the name 'Frisky Wales' [Open ended]
4. Do you like the original name 'Frisky Wales' for the website? [Selected Choice]
5. Do you think 'WellSH' is an appropriate name for the website? [Selected Choice]
6. What do you think the name for Wales' Sexual Health website should be? [Selected Choice- Another name (please state) – Text]
7. Any additional suggestions for the sexual health website? [Open ended]

With the success of the introduction of the Postal Testing Service for HIV and STIs in Wales we would like your opinion on potential future enhancements to the service.

8. Please indicate the usefulness of the various additional services suggested below: [Likert scale]
 - Rapid testing for HIV & Syphilis in postal testing kits(result in 10-15 minutes at home)
 - Click and collect service for HIV & STI testing kits (i.e. from a pharmacy)
 - Community pick-up and drop-off point for self-testing samples
 - Pregnancy testing via postal testing kits

9. Do you have any suggestions for how postal testing could be improved in Wales? [Open ended]

End of survey _____

Appendix 2: Findings from closed questions

Question	Frequency [n=107]	Percentage [%]
<i>Age of Participants</i>		
18-25	9	8.4
26-35	29	27.1
36-45	23	21.5
46-55	32	29.9
over 56	14	13.1
<i>Region</i>		
Bridgend	6	5.6
Caerphilly	2	1.9
Cardiff	29	27.1
Carmarthenshire	18	16.8
Ceredigion	7	6.5
Conwy	4	3.7
Denbighshire	1	.9
Flintshire	2	1.9

Gwynedd	3	2.8
Merthyr Tydfil	2	1.9
Neath Port Talbot	2	1.9
Newport	2	1.9
Pembrokeshire	6	5.6
Powys	11	10.3
Rhondda Cynon Taf	2	1.9
Swansea	6	5.6
Vale of Glamorgan	3	2.8
Wrexham	1	.9

Do you like the original name 'Frisky Wales'?

No	78	72.9
Somewhat	17	15.9
Yes	12	11.2

Do you think 'WellSH' is a more appropriate name?

No	38	35.5
Somewhat	35	32.7
Yes	34	31.8

What name is most appropriate? (n=97)

Another name	42	43.3
Frisky Wales	13	13.4
WellSH	42	43.3

Appendix 3.1: Comments relating to the name of the Frisky Wales website [n=16]

Themes	Quotes
WellSH is better	WellSH is much better than Frisky Wales.
Frisky Wales inappropriate name	Offering 'Frisky Wales' to sexual violence victims is very embarrassing and we must apologise every time we provide the details. We have had patients get quite upset by the name. I don't think frisky Wales is an appropriate name. Frisky is not a suitable name given the range of services that fall under this provision. It is off putting, insulting, and demeaning to people who have experienced sexual assault and who need to access this website and services. Please remember that, increasingly, more vulnerable people are having to use postal testing eg sexual assault victims, sexual exploitation, people with disabling symptoms, people with sexual dysfunction etc These people may not feel very frisky and may not associate sex in a positive way. This needs to be considered with the branding/website.
Frisky Wales is a good name	I like that Frisky Wales is a sex-positive descriptor. I think WellSH could work well. Frisky Wales you know exactly what it's about, Keep the name!

Name should be simple and clear	Keep it simple and matter of fact. Rather than shying away from using the words sexual health. WellSH might take a lot of explaining to patients when signposting them to this service. It also does not make sense in the Welsh Language. However, it is a clever use of English and works well visually
	It doesn't need to be catchy; it needs to be neutral and self-explanatory.
	It does not need to be complicated but needs to be clear what service you are offering. WellSH also is confusing as it is unclear to the public what service this is.
	It needs to be something that's easy for the appointment line staff to give out to patients without offending them or having to spell it, Frisky Wales is totally unsuitable, WellSH will need to be spelt out and wouldn't make much sense to patients whereas something like SH Wellbeing is what it says
Another name would be better	Just call it Sexual Health Wales, why do you need to give it a branding type name? Frisky Wales is such an awful term, who came up with that?!?
	I think the name 'Frisky Wales' is a bit too forward and very sexualised. The name 'WellSH' doesn't really give you any idea of what the website is about.
	I expect mostly young people use the service and for people my age, I do think of the word 'frisky' with young people having energy! But I don't think young people use the word frisky (?) so to them it probably sounds like it's for older people! It also sounds like we're all a bit horny in Wales! The WellSH name is clever and looks good, but how would you say it? He's the number for 'Welsh.' Doesn't really sound right.
	Frisky Wales feels like a dirty name, like we're all just having massive amounts of casual sex, but WellSH sounds like someone is being told to well, Shhhh! To me, it feels slightly oxymoronic for sexual health testing service. You want people to get tested and talk about sexual health. As much as I like the anonymity of the postal service, I'm still in the clinic every 3 months discussing my sexual health and encouraging others to get tested and know their status. WellSH feels a tad 'brush it under the carpet' or don't talk about it at all.
	Even though I like the name Frisky Wales, I appreciate it may give off that people who require testing or contraception are being judged as 'frisky' etc. Perhaps WellSH is more neutral but isn't as memorable
	I feel WellSH is perhaps too vague!
Other	I mean I'm not full of suggestions on naming the service, just wanted to give my feedback.

Appendix 3.2: Additional suggestions relating to the Frisky Wales website [n=14]

Themes	Quotes
Additional links to services	<p>How about links to research opportunities, surveys, other support organisations e.g., SHOT, THT, SARC, RISE</p> <p>Another link attached for clients we support at New Pathways and within Cardiff SARC in which it is specifically for those who have experienced sexual violence, where it can be reassuring and aimed for those victims</p> <p>Make sure easy to read and give local advice links</p> <p>Possibility for request for remote testing via ISVA service so that can link access for those who have experienced sexual assault, who won't want to access DOSH in traditional way, but where testing services can know there is a professional linked with a client to provide support around follow up/ safeguarding.</p>

Better advertising	What's more important is how the service is advertised beyond local SH services, such as through social media, GPs etc. Better advertised so that it is more widely known about.
Additional areas to focus	There needs to be a better focus on sexual health and substance misuse such the use of Chemsex It needs to be safe and welcoming to lesbians and not accessible to Men calling themselves Lesbian who have a penis! Include a section about Transgender sexual health, we need to know this stuff too
Updates	Update quite a bit of it; spend some resources on making it look attractive; and bring it in-house, not an orphan off to one side More interactive E-consult type electronic form to request progesterone only pills, condoms, emergency contraception
Other	I love how it has testing for all STIs in one place. Offer to send testing kits to somewhere other than home i.e., chemist/pharmacy like a prescription

Appendix 4: Suggestions for how postal testing could be improved

Themes	Quotes
Additional services	Alternative collection and drop offs
	Click and collect pregnancy tests for women who do feel nice to have a test delivered at home (conflicts with parents, etc.)
	The more services available via post the better as we no longer have drop-in clinics, so it makes things more accessible and the embarrassment factor is taken out of it with postal/pick-up and drop-off points, also saves times waiting in queues, saves people travelling so more environmentally friendly and lessons the risk of spreading Covid/Flu etc.
	Better services for trans people
	Pick up points may be problematic due to covid 19.
	Pay attention to those people who don't have a secure postal home address; ensure people who never go near STI clinics know about it; dispel GP fears about recommending HIV testing.
	Providing information on how sexual diseases can be cured for anyone who may be nervous about testing positive and safe sex tips for younger users to teach the importance of safe sex
Improve advertising	As mentioned before, rapid at home testing would be a massive improvement on an already important Welsh service.
	Rapid testing would be a huge improvement on an already great service! I've appreciated the anonymity of frisky Wales service, while not prudish about sexual health, I like that this is a home testing service, which can be completed at any time. Especially when I live over 20 miles from the nearest clinic.
	A phone line to talk you through it
	Better advertising of the service
	Home testing needs to be encouraged as this will allow people to test who don't want to speak to someone due to confidentiality Make sure everyone knows it is a free service. More widely known about. I'm not sure how it could be improved. I find it very efficient

No improvements needed	No improvements None - I've found the service very useful. I've also found the rest turnaround way quicker than what it is when attending a local clinic.
Orders & Delivery	A log in should be possible for regular users which would negate any necessity for re-inputting one's details on every individual occasions. Kits for SARC's so that it provides clients to do this at home without having to go back to another medical setting... but allow for FME to determine if they can give it to clients or not depending on situation maybe More consistent time from ordering to delivery Too many packs not arriving Too much time between sending off test & getting result - why do I get a text to phone clinic then have to wait for them to phone me Confidential packaging to seem like a freebie etc. Whilst there is a reference number for the parcel (which no one pays attention to) there should be an easy way of tracking the package/progress of the test. One of my tests went missing (I waited three weeks for the results), as I had no way of checking or even contacting you I ordered another package and all was fine.
Results	Feedback from patients are the results are returning for their blood test as inconclusive Improved communication of results They work well, above would improve the accessibility and generate quicker results which would in turn benefit the patients' mental health especially after suffering sexual violence.
Testing	Need a spare swab for the anus as sometimes things can go wrong. I should probably grow up a bit, but i really struggle with using the needles and the sheer amount of blood you need in the current kits - other tests i've seen do seem to literally be a finger prick only? This would make things a lot better for me but understand I'm likely to be in a small percentage. I would prefer blood testing to be done in clinics by professionals, but the rest should be at home.
Other	Provided they remain free provided there is good sign posting to secondary services and adequate investment in these to be able to provide timely follow up Provided the sensitivity, specificity and positive predictive values are robust The postal service seems great, just please rename and rebrand the term Frisky Wales. For people who must use the service for all sorts of reasons, e.g an unwanted sexual experience, worry, shame, stress, this is a very unhelpful term. Would be useful to feedback to local areas the testing patterns. Could have info on website, public used to the covid graphics so why not other infections?