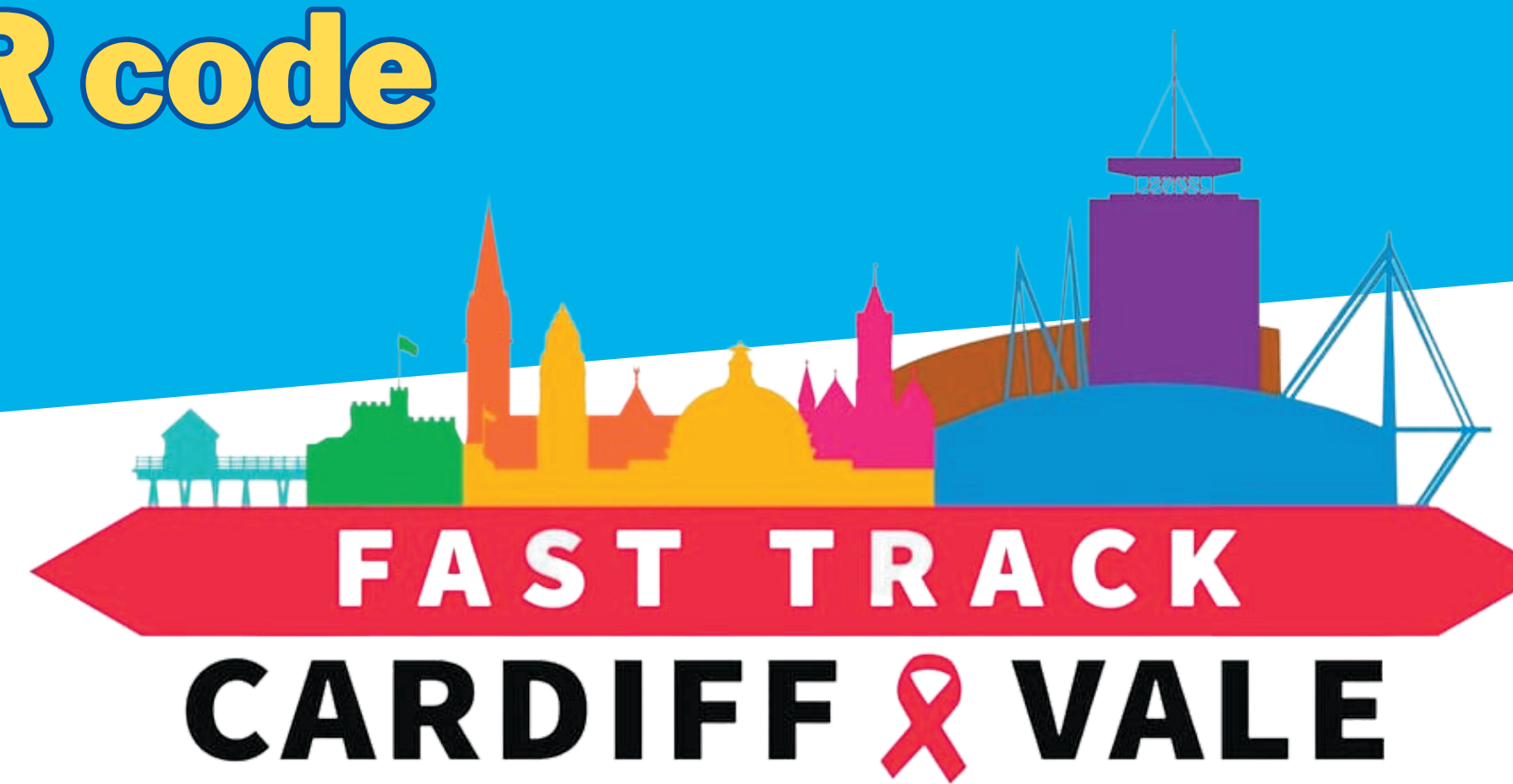


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Campaigning for HIV prevention in Wales: a community-led approach to widen access and uptake of HIV testing

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Increased test orders

Background

- We present an evaluation of the impact of a volunteer-produced and community-led strategy to promote HIV testing as part of **Wales HIV Testing Week 2022** - with minimal funding and much goodwill.
- This was delivered by Fast Track Cardiff & Vale - a collaboration of clinicians, local authorities, universities, and community organisations working to prevent late diagnoses.

Method

- The campaign runs in Wales in November, mostly online, asking people to order a postal test kit offered by **Public Health Wales**.
- The 2022 campaign involved **Welsh community champions**, instead of TV celebrities involved in the 2021 campaign, to produce advertising material. Data were collected from social media and "click-tracking".
- Pre-campaign advertising starts in October, with impact measurable until December; therefore, all-STI postal test order data include figures from October to December (see **Figure**, 2020 to 2022).

Results

- Click-trackers identified an increase (+179%) in engagement with the campaign: from 558 clicks to the website to order test kits in November 2021; to **1,558 clicks** in November 2022. Test orders increased in the Cardiff and Vale area from 5,195 in the 2020 trimester (Oct-Nov-Dec); to 7,758 in 2021; and to **8,206 in 2022, the highest recorded** (see **Figure**).

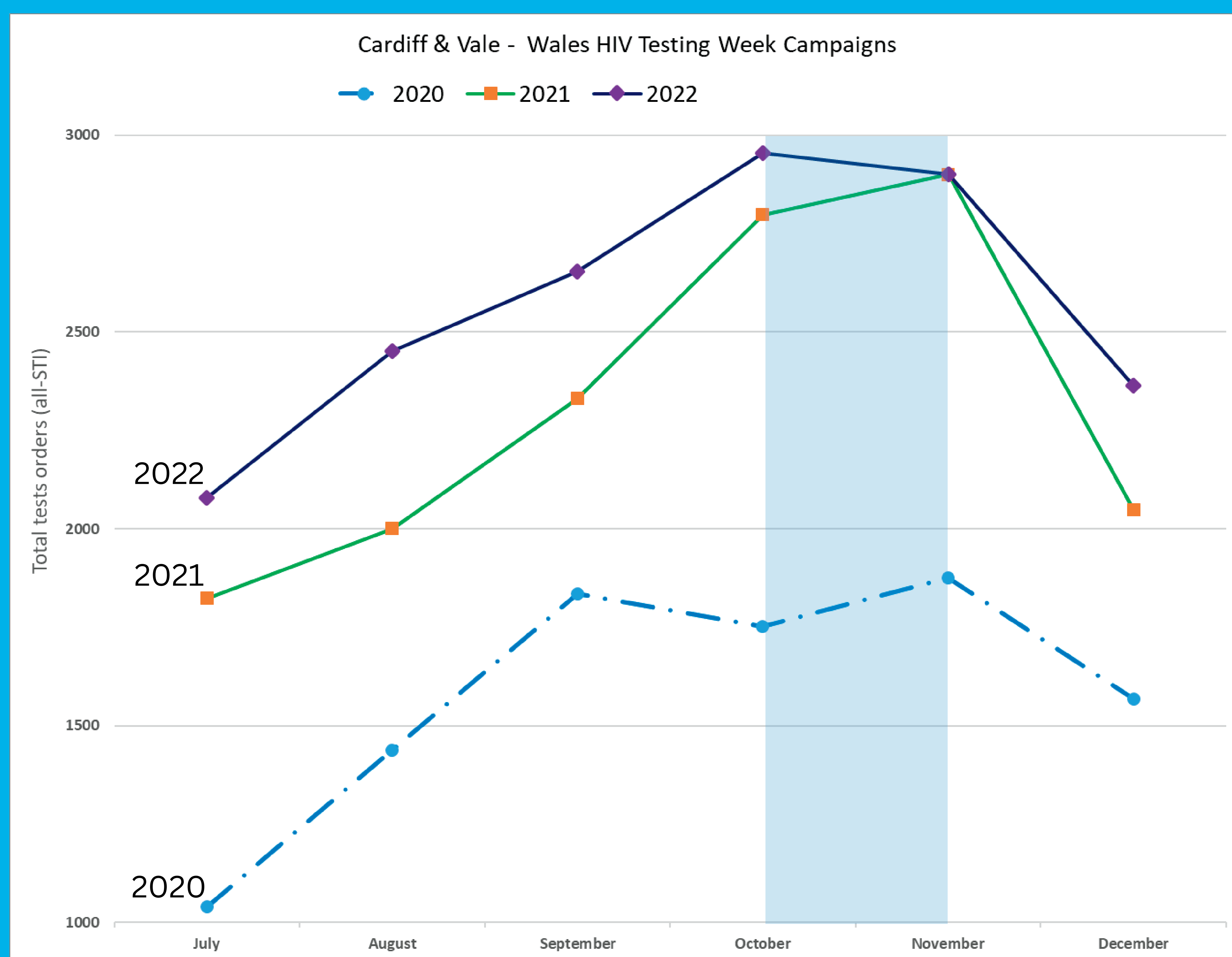


Figure - STIs postal tests from online booking – Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. The graph shows the increase of all-STI test orders online (blue line and red dots) from July 2020 up until December 2022. The dotted lines show the trend before the establishment on **Wales HIV Testing Week in 2021 and 2022**.

- **Welsh community champions** had more impact compared to TV celebrities from previous years in generating engagement and clicks.
- Celebrities resulted in higher reach on certain platforms, but the community-based approach resulted in more clicks and tests ordered. Location data showed an impact in Welsh postcode areas – suggesting local take-up.

- Compared to the 2021 campaign; online reach **increased** during the 2022 campaign on Facebook (+49%) and the website (+21%); however, **international** engagement on Twitter (-17%) and Instagram decreased slightly.

Conclusion

- The campaign had a significant impact on social media engagement which translated into increased clicks and tests ordered on the online service, particularly where the statutory services struggle to engage.
- **Community-led and Welsh-specific content generated a much greater engagement**, and we believe that a grassroots approach is more effective in Wales.
- Further research is needed to explore and reduce digital exclusion. The challenge of using volunteers is maintaining long-term momentum: considering the lack of funding, the campaign was successful; however, there is a need for greater resources to empower the sector to continue health promotion.

Acknowledgments:

Supported by ViiV Healthcare as part of a larger project.