



Public Health  
England

# **NHS Health Check implementation review and action plan**

## Summary

## About Public Health England

We work with national and local government, industry and the NHS to protect and improve the nation's health and support healthier choices. We address inequalities by focusing on removing barriers to good health.

We were established on 1 April 2013 to bring together public health specialists from more than 70 organisations into a single public health service.

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## Introduction

The NHS Health Check programme offers a fantastic opportunity to reduce avoidable deaths and disability, and tackle health inequalities in England. Public Health England (PHE), the Local Government Association (LGA) and NHS England are working closely together to provide consistent, strong support for this programme.

Between January and May 2013 we have taken stock of lessons learned from the implementation of the programme to date. Our resulting plan sets out PHE's priority actions with NHS England and local government to support effective implementation across the country and realise its potential to save lives and reduce ill health.

The successful implementation and scale-up of the NHS Health Check programme is a high priority action in support of our common goal to reduce avoidable deaths. Colleagues working across health and social care all play a critical part in making this happen, saving lives and preventing ill-health in the communities we serve and among our friends and families too.



Professor Kevin Fenton  
Director, Health and Wellbeing



Councillor Zoe Patrick  
Chair, Community Wellbeing Board



Professor Sir Mike Richards  
Director for Reducing  
Premature Mortality (Domain 1)



Public Health  
England



# NHS Health Check: reducing preventable deaths

Too many people are dying before they should. Too many others are living with avoidable ill-health. The Global Burden of Disease Study 2012 clearly shows that, while life expectancy has improved over the past 20 years, levels of ill health have not and the UK is now below average compared with 18 other countries on many important indicators.

Taking action – helping people live longer, healthier lives – is a shared priority for the whole health and social care system. We need to focus much more on prevention and early intervention, helping people to help themselves and their communities to be as healthy as they can be and for as long as possible. This programme also offers an important opportunity to reduce the growing health and social care spend related to ill health.

NHS Health Check is a national risk assessment and prevention programme that systematically targets the top seven causes of preventable deaths: high blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol, obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity and alcohol consumption. We know it could:

- prevent 1,600 heart attacks yearly, saving at least 650 lives
- prevent over 4,000 people from developing diabetes
- detect at least 20,000 cases of diabetes or kidney disease earlier, allowing people to manage their condition and prevent later complications
- help reduce the increasing health and social care costs related to long term ill-health and disability

Support for the successful implementation and scale-up of NHS Health Check by local authorities is, therefore, a key priority for PHE, in pursuing our goal to reduce avoidable deaths. Staff across our organisation will work to offer the best possible service to colleagues in local government and the NHS commissioning, undertaking and managing this critical programme.

## Supporting the programme

An early task has been to carry out a review to identify how best to support implementation in the future. Key to the review has been talking to people involved in commissioning and delivering local programmes.

Qualitative research to understand how the NHS Health Check programme has been implemented since 2009 was combined with a series of stakeholder and expert meetings to explore, in detail, best practice, barriers to implementation, emergent issues and possible actions.

Through the review process and in discussion with our partners in the LGA and NHS England and others, we have identified ten key areas which will be the focus of PHE support.

Our role will be to:

- support effective implementation and monitoring
- facilitate sharing best practices
- support evaluation and research
- make sure that any new strategic developments are based on the best evidence
- support strong, challenging and robust governance

The review has provided an opportunity to take stock of what we have achieved, share what we have learned and develop our understanding of what makes a successful programme, locally and across England.

2012-13, the first full year of the NHS Health Check programme, saw 2.7 million offers made and 1.26 million NHS Health Check appointments taken up, during a time of so much transformation across the health system. This provides a solid base upon which to build.

The challenge now is to move further and faster. We must continue to increase national coverage so that all areas are offering access to this mandated public health programme. We must also strive to increase further levels of uptake and referral to appropriate risk management services, particularly in those communities at greatest risk.

The implementation review and action plan sets out our work with key partners to support effective implementation across the country and realise the programme's potential to reduce avoidable deaths, disability and inequalities.

## Summary

The successful implementation of the NHS Health Check programme is a key priority for PHE. Staff across our organisation will work to offer the best possible support to colleagues in local government and in the NHS.

The issues identified through the review and our resulting key actions are summarised in the following table.

<b>NHS Health Check Implementation Review and action plan</b>		
	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>1</b>	Leadership	PHE fully supports the NHS Health Check programme at all levels. It will lead the development of collaborative national leadership through a clear programme governance structure including an advisory committee, comprising the key stakeholders (NHS England, NHS Improving Quality (NHS IQ), Department of Health (DH), LGA and others) and an expert clinical and scientific advisory panel. PHE will provide timely and authoritative advice on emerging issues and will empower public health leaders locally with the evidence and rationale for the programme.
<b>2</b>	Improving uptake	PHE will work with local authority NHS Health Check teams to test the potential impact of behavioural insight and marketing interventions on uptake. This will include developing options for improving the NHS Health Check brand, establishing the effectiveness of different approaches to recruitment and testing marketing campaigns to support uptake locally and nationally.
<b>3</b>	Providing the Health Check	<p>a. PHE will thoroughly review and collate previous approaches to commissioning and delivering the NHS Health Check programme and so learn from and share promising practice and experience.</p> <p>b. PHE will collaborate with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to work with several test bed sites to explore approaches to effective commissioning the programme.</p>
<b>4</b>	Information governance	PHE will explore long term solutions to free up the system to enable the flow of data, including to and from GP practices, for the best possible delivery of the NHS Health Check programme. It will explore the use of innovation and IT technologies to allow the seamless flow of NHS Health Check data across the health and social care system. This will create an environment that supports local teams to commission and evaluate programmes which aspire for excellence and improved outcomes.
<b>5</b>	Supporting delivery	PHE will build upon and give continued support to established national, regional and local implementation support networks, ensuring equitable access to all organisations across England. PHE will work with the LGA to advance NHS Health Checks through the sector led improvement agenda.
<b>6</b>	Programme governance	PHE will set up clear programme governance arrangements, including an expert clinical and scientific advisory panel to assure that any additional elements of the programme are evidence based. It will keep the programme under review and advise the DH and ministers accordingly.

7	Provider competency	<p>a. PHE will work with Health Education England (HEE) to build upon existing competency frameworks for use by providers and commissioners to ensure high quality training for those delivering the NHS Health Check.</p> <p>b. PHE will work with local commissioners, training providers and professional bodies to develop a professional development programme of work on NHS Health Checks to enhance the focus on behaviour change for better health outcomes.</p>
8	Consistency	<p>PHE will release and review on a regular basis best practice guidance describing all the elements and standards it would expect of a quality programme such as quality of delivery and robustness of data capture and reporting. It will raise awareness, promote adoption and explore opportunities for quality assurance programmes in local authorities.</p>
9	Proving the case	<p>PHE will work with system partners to facilitate future research and evaluation of the NHS Health Check programme at a national and local level. This will provide the implementation evidence required to ensure effective roll-out and improvement.</p>
10	Expected roll-out	<p>PHE will support those LAs taking on challenging programmes. It will work with LAs to achieve offers to 20% of the target population annually with a vision to realise at least 75% uptake per year. This will support local authorities to achieve offers to 100% of their eligible population over five years.</p>

Full details of the implementation review and action plan can be found at [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)