

Wiltshire Council

Health Select Committee

16 March 2022

NHS Health Checks Programme in Wiltshire

Purpose of Report

1. Provide an update on the NHS Health Checks programme in Wiltshire including how the programme is restarting since the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery.

Background

NHS Health Checks in England

2. Cardiovascular disease is one of the largest causes of mortality in Wiltshire and the largest single cause of long-term ill health and disability. Cardiovascular disease risk increases with age, progresses faster in men than women, and in those with a family history of cardiovascular disease, and in some ethnic groups. These are all factors which cannot be changed, but modifiable factors such as being overweight or obese, smoking and having a sedentary lifestyles all form part of the behaviour change advice provided during an NHS Health Check.
3. The NHS Health Check programme started in 2013, with the aim of reducing the development of cardiovascular disease and its related illnesses. It is a rolling programme, inviting people to attend a check every 5 years, and targets two fifths of the eligible population each year. Between 2015-2020, 41% of England's population had accessed an NHS Health Check.
4. During an NHS Health Check, the health professional completing the check will support the patient to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease by supporting them to adopt healthier behaviour which may provide advice, and is delivered by General Practices in Wiltshire.
5. The programme aims to improve the health and wellbeing of eligible adults through the promotion of early awareness, assessment and management of the risk factors of cardiovascular disease. By raising awareness and instigating a discussion, the intention is that the individual better understands their risk status, and is able to make informed healthy lifestyle changes and potentially decrease their risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Where appropriate, the healthcare professional may also make a referral to existing specialist services, such as smoking cessation support,

or prescribe medication. The programme also aims to help reduce inequalities in the distribution and burden of behaviour risks, related conditions and multiple morbidities.

6. The NHS Health Check programme is commissioned by Wiltshire Council as a mandated service required by the Health and Social Care Act (2012).
7. In December 2021, an evidence review of NHS Health Checks was published by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities. The review acknowledged that the programme had largely achieved its aims nationally of reaching 2 in 5 eligible people including those at a higher risk of cardiovascular disease and delivering better outcomes for these patients. There were national recommendations; having multiple opportunities to improve NHS Health Check across the entire pathway, behaviour change is needed sooner as many people's risks set in early, a wider view of health could address the current burden of disease and greater use of technology may help target, reach and personalise the NHS Health Check for individuals. National colleagues are reviewing the recommendations to consider how these can be implemented in local programmes.

NHS Health Checks in Wiltshire

8. Wiltshire's population is healthier than the England average with lower prevalence of cardiovascular disease. Nonetheless, between 2017-2019 around 400 people in Wiltshire aged under 75 died from a coronary heart disease event, and cardiovascular disease remains the second most common cause of all age mortality in Wiltshire.
9. In April 2013, the Health and Social Care Act (2012) moved responsibility for NHS Health Check from the NHS to local authorities.
10. The Public Health Services contract with Primary Care contains the Service Level Agreement for the delivery of NHS Health Checks in Wiltshire. Each check attracts a payment of £26 per 20-minute consultation which includes payment for point of care tests for cholesterol ratios.
11. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities provide modelling for the potential benefit of NHS Health Checks. In Wiltshire it is estimated that based on the current 45% uptake rate in Wiltshire the following benefits could be realised in each year:
 - 846 additional people will complete weight loss programme
 - 118 additional people will be diagnosed with diabetes
 - 219 additional people will increase physical activity
 - 15 additional people will quit smoking

Further estimations are provided within Appendix A

12. It is estimated that the cost savings to health and social care as a result of the interventions associated with an NHS Health Check cumulate year on

year as the numbers of strokes, heart attacks and diabetes cases prevented also increase. Cost savings also arise when individuals who receiving their NHS Health Check modify their lifestyle behaviour or are treated for a newly diagnosed condition. Modelling indicates potential cost savings to the Wiltshire system of over £1.5M in 10 years and over £2.4M by 2031. This is based on modelling in 2010/11 and for continuing the NHS Health Check programme over a 20 year period. These estimates are based of the 20% of the eligible population who are invited each year, 75% will attend a NHS Health Check.

Main Considerations for the Council

Covid-19 pandemic

13. During the pandemic there was significant disruption to Primary Care services, leading to NHS Health Checks being paused nationally in March 2020 as part of the national prioritisation of Primary Care Services. In July 2020, Wiltshire Council agreed a continuation of financial payment to Primary Care with a focus on targeting health inequalities in any NHS Health Check delivery that a GP Practice undertook. Examples of this health inequalities work across Wiltshire GP Practices included;

- Prioritising patients with learning difficulties
- Offering asylum seekers and NHS Health Check on registration
- Evening clinics to support access
- Wider promotion of the NHS Health Check through social media and websites

14. It was the decision of local authorities from December 2020, as commissioners, of when to restart the NHS Health Check programme depending on local prioritisation and impact of COVID-19 response and vaccination work. Since the restart of NHS Health Checks in Wiltshire, there has been variation amongst GP Practices in offering and delivering the programme, primarily due to capacity; influenced by the continued Covid-19 vaccination work. It is expected during 2022 that GP Practices will return to usual operating and thus return to offer and uptake levels seen prior to the pandemic. However, there is a significant backlog of NHS Health Checks, as well as many other Primary Care appointments which will have a significant impact on the health system.

15. The Covid-19 pandemic has heightened the impact and risks of cardiovascular disease on our populations. Some groups have had worse outcomes from Covid-19 which relate to socio-economic, behavioural and clinical risk factors. Opportunities to address these modifiable risk factors through the NHS Health Checks will support action on addressing health inequalities across Wiltshire which may have been exacerbated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cardiovascular disease prevention as a priority

16. Cardiovascular disease links with many elements of Wiltshire Council's Business Plan 2022 to 2032, through supporting people of Wiltshire to increase activity levels, improving health outcomes for all population groups across Wiltshire and reducing smoking prevalence.
17. Cardiovascular disease prevention remains a high priority for our Public Health Team and with partners in the Clinical Commissioning Group. Public Health continue to collaborate with partners to address health inequalities and support early detection and prevention of cardiovascular disease amongst the Wiltshire population.
18. Engagement in health improvement interventions which reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease such as smoking cessation, weight management services, physical activity and substance misuse continue to be promoted. Close working with primary care enables efficient referral and feedback pathways from Primary Care to these services.
19. In Wiltshire, 95.5% of the cumulative population (eligible population to date) have been offered an NHS Health Check between 2015/16–2019/20, higher than the England average of 87.7%. The uptake of the NHS Health Check in Wiltshire over the same 5 years is 45.9% which is much higher than the England average of 41.3%. This is a fantastic achievement for Wiltshire and demonstrates how well the NHS Health Check programme has been embedded within the County.

Integrated Care System and NHS England and NHS Improvement

20. The NHS Long Term Plan has committed actions towards the prevention of ill health through improving upstream prevention of avoidable illnesses and their exacerbations, including smoking cessation, diabetes prevention and obesity reduction, all of which are encompassed within the NHS Health Check.
21. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) play a key role in working with local authorities at 'place' level to work together to improve population health. Further work through this partnership will be focusing on addressing health inequalities within the NHS Health Check programme, and widening the opportunities for diverse population groups to engage in the programme.
22. NHS England and NHS Improvement have published their national approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at a national and system level. Core20PLUS5 defines a target population cohort as well as identified 5 clinical area requiring accelerated improvement. ICS's are determining their population groups who experience poorer than average health access, experience and/or outcomes e.g. ethnic minority groups, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, people with multi-morbidities.

Proposals

23. Groups in Wiltshire who have lower uptake of NHS Health Checks include;
- People living in the most deprived quintiles
 - Adults aged 45-54 years old
 - Males
 - Ethnic groups
24. Public Health England published data on the NHS Health Check programme in 2020/21, which can be viewed in Appendix B which details these findings of groups where uptake is lower.
25. There is considerable learning from the COVID vaccination programme which provides potential opportunity to capitalise on this engagement across communities, specifically in reducing the health inequalities. The planned delivery of a community outreach NHS Health Check offer will apply learning from COVID response to wider elements of public health work.
26. In 2022, the Public Health team will undertake a Health Equity Assessment of the NHS Health Check programme in Wiltshire and following recommendations from national colleagues from the evidence review, further recommendations and improvements to the programme locally will be considered. This will support with the development of community outreach offer for NHS Health Checks.

Safeguarding Considerations

27. Patients with learning difficulties who are included on Practice Learning Difficulties registers will already receive regular health checks and so are excluded from this NHS Health Check programme.
28. GP Practices are required to follow their own safeguarding pathways for any concerns for vulnerable adults identified within the NHS Health Check programme.

Public Health Implications

29. This is a Public Health report which throughout has considered the health implications of the report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

30. Nationally, following the NHS Health Checks evidence review, considerations for digital elements of the NHS Health Checks are being undertaken, which would reduce the carbon footprint of patients travelling to their GP Practice for their appointment.
31. As the NHS Health Checks programme restarts and considers how it can tackle health inequalities within the programme; engaging with inclusion groups where there is low uptake, the programme could be offered in

workplaces where there is a significant proportion of the eligible population which would also reduce the carbon footprint.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

32. The NHS Health Check is a universal programme and should be offered to all eligible people aged 40-74 years old. However, in achieving this there is an opportunity to reducing health inequalities by prioritising checks to those groups with the greatest health need.

33. In 2021, data was collected from Primary Care following a health inequalities survey which illustrated how health inequalities was being tackled through the NHS Health Check programme during the Covid-19 pandemic. Examples of healthy inequality work undertaken was by offering asylum seekers an NHS Health Check on registration, and evening clinics to help with access.

34. The Public Health team will undertake a Health Equity Assessment of the NHS Health Check programme in 2022 incorporate findings into any community outreach work.

Risk Assessment

35. The budget allocated to NHS Health Checks is paid to GP Practices based on activity and based on the average uptake rate of 45% which has been consistent in recent years there has always an underspend in the budget.

36. There will be a cost implication for the community outreach work of the NHS Health Check programme, which will be funded through Public Health Grant allocation. The budget covers GP activity payments for NHS Health Checks, annual Best Practice training for Health Care Professionals, as well as quality assurance checks on point of care testing machines used within the Health Checks. Public Health will undertake a cost analysis of the NHS Health Check outreach programme and review the most appropriate way of commissioning and contract managing this service to enable a higher uptake rate and improvement in addressing health inequalities, whilst maintaining the current provision through the Primary Care delivery model.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

37. The NHS Health Check programme will continue to be delivered and accessed through Primary Care, but the opportunity to reduce the health inequalities associated with cardiovascular disease will be limited.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

38. Any community outreach provider commissioned by Wiltshire Council will need to work closely with Primary Care to offer a joined up approach to

patients, of which Public Health will manage and will work closely with colleagues in the Integrated Care System to ensure this works effectively.

39. Best practice from other local authority areas which undertake this approach will be considered when designing this work.

Financial Implications

40. The NHS Health Check programme is a statutory programme for Public Health teams in local authorities and funded by the Public Health ring fenced grant.

41. The majority of the £368k NHS Health Check budget is allocated against activity based spend. The proposal in this paper will not require additional funding through the public health grant allocation and will be delivered through the existing budget allocated to NHS Health Checks.

Legal Implications

42. The NHS Health Check programme is commissioned by Wiltshire Council as a mandated service required by the Health and Social Care Act (2012).

Conclusions

43. Cardiovascular disease prevention remains a high priority for Public Health and the wider health and social care system. The NHS Health Check programme in Wiltshire is fully embedded and uptake of the programme is good and above the national average. Further work is needed to target and engage with inclusion groups across Wiltshire and Public Health will explore innovative ways to develop this further and to work in partnership across the health system to ensure this works effectively.

Proposal for Health Select Committee to consider

44. Public Health are inviting comments from the Health Select Committee on the development of community outreach element of NHS Health Checks and to note the intention to address inequalities through this approach.

45. Agree mechanism for reporting back to the Health Select Committee including timescales and/or key milestones to be reported on.

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(16 March 2022)

Appendices

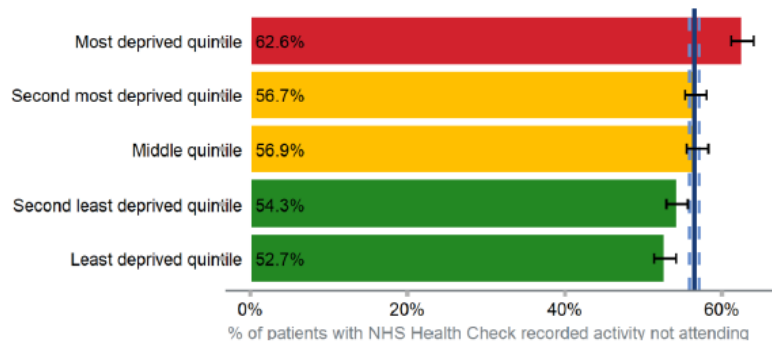
Appendix A, NHS Health Check predicted benefits based on uptake of 45% for Wiltshire population

| NHS Health Check Ready Reckoner for Wiltshire based on an uptake rate of 45% | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| 229,593 people aged 40 to 74 years based on the User defined population by age and gender. | 153,042 people aged 40 to 74 years without either diagnosed CHD, diagnosed CKD or diagnosed diabetes based on national model estimates. | 30,608 people invited for a Health Check of which 13774 will attend. | 3,115 people are obese based on national | 2,648 people take up weight loss programme, 1,245 due to NHS Health Check | 846 additional people complete weight loss programme due to NHS Health Check | | |
| | | | 1,485 people require statins | 1,485 people prescribed statins, 743 due to NHS Health Check | 520 additional people compliant with statins due to NHS Health Check | | |
| | | | 6,076 people at high risk of diabetes | 578 people with high glucose result | 317 diagnosed with IGR, 285 due to NHS Health Check | 242 take up of IGR lifestyle intervention due to NHS Health Check | 218 additional people compliant with IGR lifestyle intervention due to NHS Health Check |
| | | | | | 197 diagnosed with diabetes, 118 due to NHS Health Check | | |
| | | | 4,015 people have a single high blood pressure measurement | 1,961 people prescribed anti-hypertensive drugs, 471 due to NHS Health Check | 391 additional people compliant with anti-hypertensive drugs due to NHS Health Check | | |
| | | | | 602 people diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease, 325 due to NHS Health Check | | | |
| 9,035 people are inactive | 6,957 people take up brief exercise intervention, 4,383 due to NHS Health Check | 219 additional people increase physical activity due to NHS Health Check | | | | | |
| 3,186 people smoke based on national estimates | 605 people referred to smoking cessation services, 309 due to NHS Health Check | 15 additional people quit smoking due to NHS Health Check | | | | | |
| | | | Total cost of providing NHS Health Checks for one year based on national estimates - £403,176 | | | | |
| | | | Workforce requirements to undertake NHS Health Checks in this year - 4,132 hours of time to invite people to Health Checks and arrange appointments, 5,023 hours of contact time for the Health Checks and 3,443 hours of contact time for feedback of results. | | | | |
| | | | Total lifetime gains for the cohort of people invited for an NHS Health Check this year 1,652 QALYs at a cost of £1,998 per QALY | | | | |

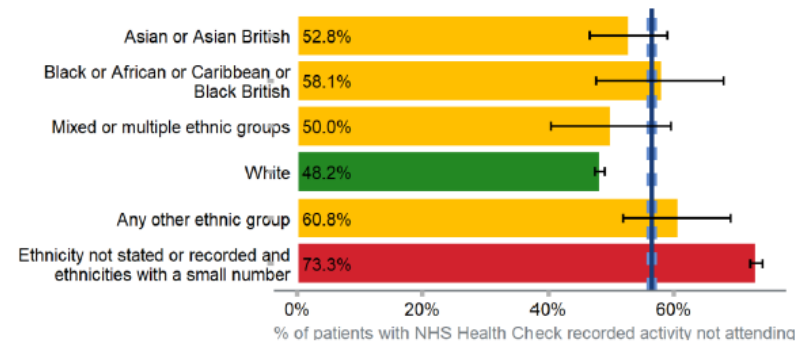
Appendix B, Graphs from Public Health England's CVD Prevention Packs on non-attendance by inequality breakdowns

NHS Health Checks non-attendance by inequality breakdowns: Wiltshire

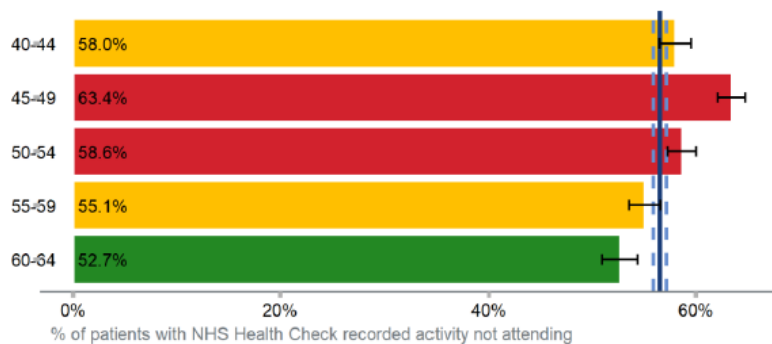
Non-attendance for NHS Health Checks by within LA deprivation quintile (IMD2015), Wiltshire, 2017-18



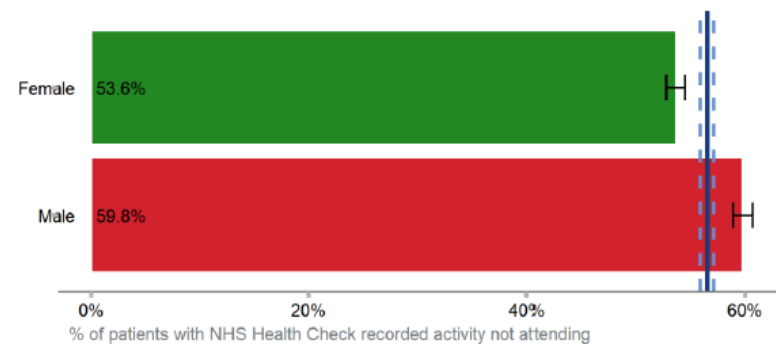
Non-attendance for NHS Health Checks by ethnic group Wiltshire, 2017-18



Non-attendance for NHS Health Checks by age group Wiltshire, 2017-18



Non-attendance for NHS Health Checks by sex Wiltshire, 2017-18



Source: NHS Health Check programme, via NHS Digital

Compared to LA value ■ Better ■ Similar ■ Worse
 LA value (56.5%) LA 95% confidence interval