

# Public Health England NHS Health Check PR Toolkit



**NHS  
HEALTH  
CHECK**

Helping you prevent

diabetes

heart disease

kidney disease

stroke & dementia

## **Contents**

<b>1. Overview</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>2. PR campaign overview</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>3. Key messages</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>4. Use of existing statistics</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>5. Developing a local PR campaign</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>6. Template press release</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>7. PR Checklist</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>8. Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<b>Page 16</b>

## 1. Overview

### **Background - NHS Health Check programme**

The NHS Health Check programme offers eligible people between the ages of 40 and 74, who are not currently on a vascular register, advice to help prevent the onset of a vascular disease, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia.

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 responsibility for commissioning and monitoring the programme passed to local authorities. Local authorities work with CCGs who commission clinical services to ensure the programme is effective. Therefore, there is a legal responsibility for local authorities to ensure that 100% of their eligible population are offered an NHS Health Check every five years, whilst also demonstrating year-on-year improvement in the number of people having a check.

Public Health England (PHE) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have advised that 20% of the eligible population should be invited each year and they aspire to achieve more than 75% uptake. PHE, the LGA and NHS England are working closely together to provide consistent, strong support for this programme.

### **Aim of the toolkit**

In order to increase the number of people having their NHS Health Check, PHE is supporting local authorities to run local campaigns and PR activity to promote their own service and raise awareness of the programme and the benefits of having a check. It is up to local authorities as to when they want to run their local campaigns.

This toolkit provides tools and collateral to support communications and PR, including suggested activity, messaging and template copy that can be easily tailored to ensure consistency of messaging across all channels. This forms part of a set of marketing materials including branding guidelines, a marketing toolkit, collateral (photo library templates and artwork), customer research and behavioural insight reports to support you to market your NHS Health Check programme.

These materials are available on the NHS Health Check website [here](#).

If any successful activity runs in your local area, or there are any key learning that can be shared, please get in touch with Ian Williams in the national PHE marketing team at [ian.williams@phe.gov.uk](mailto:ian.williams@phe.gov.uk). Feedback and insight from teams on the ground is essential to the development of future campaigns and activities.

### **Who the toolkit is for**

The toolkit has been developed for communication, press and marketing teams in local authorities who are developing local PR activity and campaigns. It will also be a useful tool for those who work in public health and have been asked to support campaign activity.

## 2. PR campaign overview

To promote NHS Health Check, there are various tactics that can be used including the following:

- use the key messages, local facts and stats in any relevant communications (including general health communications that are directed at the eligible age group)
- use available social media channels, e.g. Facebook and Twitter, to encourage those who have been invited to attend an NHS Health Check to act upon the invitation, and generally share information on the campaign activity
- illustrate and strengthen your PR campaign using NHS Health Check photography and branded materials available [here](#).
- utilise available statistics, such as local NHS Health Check uptake figures and Healthier Lives incidence and mortality data, to highlight the scale and need for the programme. Statistics should also be used as positive hooks and try to establish the check as a 'norm' - for example 100 people have had their NHS Health Check this month
- implement some of the recommended local media campaign suggestions in this toolkit
- use template copy to raise awareness of the NHS Health Check programme with local media
- use positive case studies in the media of people who have had an NHS Health Check
- use national consumer research insights along with your local knowledge to customise promotional activity
- the NHS choices website has information for the public on the [NHS Health Check](#) that you can use.

### 3. Key messages

The key campaign messages below should be used throughout any communication materials.

The primary message encapsulates the NHS Health Check programme and should be used in all relevant communication materials whether it's a spokesperson's briefing or related press release. The secondary messages should be included where possible, to further provide context about the programme.

<p><b>Primary message</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are aged between 40-74 years, an NHS Health Check is available free of charge</li> <li>• The free NHS Health Check can lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and (certain types of) dementia.</li> <li>• Through simple lifestyle changes, such as diet and physical activity, you can lower your risk of developing serious health problems. Take action now and enjoy a healthier life for longer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Secondary messages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important that everyone eligible takes up the offer of this important check</li> <li>• Everyone aged 40 to 74 years old in England will be invited for a free NHS Health Check once every five years (apart from those already seeing their GP for certain conditions).</li> <li>• Get personalised advice through the NHS Health Check programme and reduce your risk of developing serious conditions</li> </ul>
<p>Where possible use local stats about conditions as this will resonate more with your audience</p>	
<p><b>Key messages around each condition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heart disease:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the UK.</li> <li>- Most deaths from heart disease are caused by heart attacks with an average of 90,000 attacks in England per year</li> <li>- The NHS Health Check can help reduce your risk of heart disease by encouraging simple lifestyle changes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Stroke:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every year over 110,000 people in England have a stroke - it is the third largest cause of death after heart disease and cancer</li> <li>- The NHS Health Check can help reduce your risk of stroke</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>by encouraging simple lifestyle changes such as a healthy diet and regular exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Chronic kidney disease (CKD):</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There are a number of risk factors for the development of chronic kidney disease, including having high blood pressure and diabetes.</li><li>- The NHS Health Check can help reduce your risk of developing kidney disease by encouraging simple lifestyle changes such as a healthy diet, regular exercise and drinking in moderation</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Type 2 diabetes:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 6% of adults have diagnosed diabetes, of which approximately 90% have type 2 diabetes. By the time they are usually diagnosed, many people with Type 2 show signs of health complications</li><li>- With Type 2 diabetes becoming more common, the NHS Health Check presents an opportunity for individuals to take steps earlier, such as weight control and exercise, to prevent or even reverse type 2 diabetes in its early stages</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Dementia:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Dementia is one of the biggest health challenges facing the UK</li><li>- There are an estimated 800,000 people living with dementia in England</li><li>- The NHS Health Check can help reduce your risk of developing certain dementias by encouraging a healthy, active lifestyle</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Cancer:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- By making healthy lifestyle changes, such as eating a balanced diet, regularly exercising and maintaining a healthy weight you can lower your cancer risk. The NHS Health Check is an opportunity to evaluate your lifestyle and get advice on making these simple changes</li></ul></li></ul>
--	---

#### **4. Use of existing statistics**

The [NHS Health Check website](#) has a useful tool which provides NHS Health Check data at a national level and is also broken down by local authority. The data provides useful statistics on the number of people eligible for an NHS Health Check in each area, alongside how many people have had a check.

[The ready reckoner tool](#) on the NHS Health Check website uses modelling work to predict the number of people in your area who have improved their health for example by losing weight, quitting smoking and getting more active because of an NHS Health Check.

PHE's [Longer Lives website](#) highlights premature mortality figures across every local authority in England. Alongside Healthier Lives the website covers key cardiovascular conditions including diabetes and high blood pressure.

These tools will be helpful for generating compelling statistics to include in media materials particularly where you can use a case study of someone who has had an NHS Health Check and examples of where NHS Health Check is being successfully delivered in your local area. If you are targeting specific groups in your campaign then you can tailor your stats so they resonate with those groups.

#### **5. Developing a local PR campaign**

It is important to think long-term with your campaign and plan a series of activity throughout the year to build awareness about the programme. For example, you can think about having themed campaign weeks or running activity on the back of awareness weeks or campaign activity like the Act FAST Stroke campaign or stop smoking campaigns.

Before you begin planning your campaign you should take stock of your current situation. It may help to answer the following questions:

1. do you have a list of communication or public health priorities?
2. are you aware of what marketing or promotion has been done before?
  - a. Did it work?
  - b. Is it worth repeating?
  - c. How would you do it differently?
3. is there commercial, or other public health marketing activity, happening in your area?
4. are there any complementary national, local or other local authority campaigns taking place?
5. do you need to tie in the campaign to your local GPs – i.e pick a time when they are less busy
6. do you need to alter your approach to make allowances for these?
7. what do you know about your audience?
8. how can you best reach them?
9. what kind of messaging would appeal to them?
10. what are the key factors affecting/influencing your environment?
11. think about what PR and marketing channels are open to you and what may be appropriate bearing in mind the above questions

Below is a selection of suggested approaches and tactics that can be executed, in order to generate positive media coverage and encourage uptake of the NHS Health Check in your local area.

### ***Creating story hooks***

It's important to think about news hooks your local media will be interested in. For example, every quarter, data is published on the number of NHS Health Check being invited for an NHS Health Check and the number taking up that offer. This is broken down at local authority level and if you have some good results then this along with a case study can provide a story for your local media.

### ***Tie in with other awareness weeks or other campaigns***

In order to get more effective delivery for your campaign you can align with other campaigns and other local healthcare initiatives. For example PHE run campaigns like the Act FAST stroke and smoking campaigns and you may be able to tie in local NHS Health Check activity off the back of one of these campaigns. There are various awareness days and weeks such as National Cholesterol week or Blood Pressure month that run throughout the year that you could align your campaign to which will help give your message a greater coverage and deeper penetration.

### ***Join forces with other local organisations***

Think about partnership working with local organisations like local walking clubs to help you engage with your audience. You can use key themes for messaging e.g. walking, healthy eating etc. to 'piggy back' on strong local messages to ensure you reach your target audience. Also think about working with other local authorities to do a joined up campaign that will help amplify and increase the reach of your activity.

### ***Work with a local celebrity or sports club***

Regional and local celebrities (ideally those over 40 to align with the target audience) and organisations (such as local football/rugby clubs) often provide a hook which can be used as part of your campaign. Invite them to lend their support to the campaign well in advance - it may well be that they are happy to act as a spokesperson and participate in media interviews or they may prefer to provide a supporting quote and a stock image of themselves.

Examples of the types of support local celebrities and organisations could offer include:

- provide a supportive quote for the campaign to be included within the press release – ideally this would link to some form of personal or family experience
- be available for print/broadcast interviews to talk about their involvement/support
- support the campaign through Twitter and other social media channels– we would recommend suggested tweets which adhere to the campaign messaging above
- where appropriate, use campaign materials in all formats (posters in stadiums, leaflets at information points in stadiums etc.)
- a photo-call opportunity – this can be done by either arranging professional photography and then disseminating to local picture desks or by inviting media down to a pre-organised photo opportunity perhaps featuring the talent/team having a NHS Health Check



Below are some suggested questions for celebrities you approach for your campaign:

- name, age, location
- why have you chosen to support the NHS Health Check campaign in <insert region>?
- in what way are you supporting the NHS Health Check campaign?
- have you received an NHS Health Check (if aged 40+)?
- why is the NHS Health Check so important?
- provide a head and shoulders high resolution photograph

Note – with any level of agreed involvement, we would recommend you develop a detailed briefing document that key messages and stats for your spokesperson to ensure they are fully informed about your campaign.

### ***Work with expert spokespeople***

Local expert spokespeople should be identified well in advance of launch of any PR or campaign activity, to ensure that they are fully briefed and have time in their diaries to take part in media interviews.

It is useful to have several spokespeople available, so that the person with the most relevant area of expertise can be selected for interviews. Your Director of Public Health can be the main spokesperson for any campaign or PR activity you run, but it is also beneficial to have an independent voice to call upon, such as a GP, who can offer a clinical and objective perspective on the benefits of a NHS Health Check. You may also want to engage a councillor as the spokesperson as they may be keen to front or champion a campaign to promote the NHS Health Check.

Work with other departments and teams within your local authority as it could help you save money as well as enhancing your NHS Health Check campaign. Teams such as Health and Wellbeing or sports leisure and culture departments organise activities and events throughout the year which may be an ideal opportunity to promote the NHS Health Check. They may also have established links with local clubs and organisations that could help you promote your campaign. They may also have links with local sporting celebrities, spokespeople or case studies which you can use in your campaign.

### ***Case studies***

Case studies are an important element to any health campaign as they add a human dimension alongside all the facts and statistics. They also offer opportunities for greater in-depth feature coverage and can prompt conversations about the NHS Health Check.

A case study is somebody who has been personally affected by the issues. In terms of the NHS Health Check this would be someone who has been diagnosed through a check for example with Type 2 diabetes, increased high blood pressure or been provided with lifestyle advice about losing weight or stopping smoking.

Sourcing case studies needs to be done regularly and you need to put a plan in place to ensure that you have a supply of case studies to use in your PR campaign activity. The media will be keen to use fresh case studies and you won't be able to use the same case studies time again. You should talk to service providers and other departments and teams with your local authority about them finding case studies.

The case studies can be used in a variety of formats and communication channels. For example you can use them in posters, video clips on your website and on social media channels like Facebook and on Twitter.

The ideal case study would meet the following criteria:

- aged between 40 and 74
- diagnosed with one of the conditions which the NHS Health Check tests for, that could have been avoided if they had made a lifestyle change earlier
- treatment has been successful and they are living well with their condition and want to encourage others to attend their NHS Health Check
- had a positive experience of NHS service within the context of their NHS Health Check. For example, did not experience any delays or long waits for appointments

Below are some questions and key pieces of information to ask the case study. For support and advice on approaching case studies, please contact Ian Williams in the national PHE marketing team at [ian.williams@phe.gov.uk](mailto:ian.williams@phe.gov.uk).

- name, age and location
- age when first invited for a NHS Health Check?
- how were they contacted about the NHS Health Check?
- how did they go about booking their appointment and where was their NHS Health Check carried out? E.g. at the GP / pharmacy?
- what happened during the NHS Health Check, how long did it take, was it easy and simple?
- how did the diagnosis come about and what was it?
- what happened next? Were they referred for further tests / screening?
- what treatment followed the diagnosis? Is this a permanent or temporary treatment option?
- were they also given lifestyle advice to help manage the condition? If so, what was this and have they taken it on board and for example, lost weight or cut down on drinking?
- how did they feel about the diagnosis?
- how important is/was it to get an early diagnosis?
- how do they feel now?
- what recommendation would they give to others who get invited to attend a NHS Health Check?
- a head and shoulders high resolution photograph

Approach case studies sensitively and do explain what their role will involve. If the case study agrees to be interviewed by media, make sure it is identified in advance which types of media they are happy speaking with (i.e they may not want to do radio interviews but would be happy speaking with print journalists over the phone). Again, make sure that the case study is briefed before they speak to any journalists.

It is also important to ensure a consent form is signed by all case studies, and any copy written about them that is kept on file is approved before sharing with media.

## Use of social media

Use online channels to talk about and raise awareness of the importance of having an NHS Health Check, and encourage local organisations and supporters to do the same. You can link to your local authority website if it has information on the NHS Health Check or to the NHS Health Check pages on [NHS Choices](#). Think about creating simple infographics with local stats that you can use on your social media channels.

You should also be aware that people may use social media to be critical of the programme or about their experience of having an NHS Health Check. Think about how you respond to critical posts as it may spark further debate on social media, as a rule you should try to respond at least once to an individual who has asked a direct question on social media and provide a link to a website for further useful information. Look at the FAQs in Annex A to see how to respond to critical comments.

Below are some suggested social media posts however please feel free to tweak and amend so they fit with your local campaign.

### Twitter: general PR and campaign messaging

#NHSHealthCheck for 40-74 yr olds, helps prevent conditions such as #heartdisease #diabetes #stroke #kidneydisease <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx">www.nhs.uk/ NHSHealthCheck.aspx</a>
#NHSHealthCheck gives 40-74 yr olds an opportunity to take control of own health, take steps now to reduce your risk <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx">www.nhs.uk/ NHSHealthCheck.aspx</a>
The #NHSHealthCheck is for adults in #England aged 40-74, help lower your risk of developing serious conditions: <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx">www.nhs.uk/ NHSHealthCheck.aspx</a>
Take steps to improve your health by having your #NHSHealthCheck when invited <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx">www.nhs.uk/ NHSHealthCheck.aspx</a>

### Facebook: general PR and campaign messaging

By building activity on your Facebook pages and getting positive comments from people who have had an NHS Health Check then it will help with the marketing of the programme

#### Option 1

The NHS Health Check programme could prevent 1,600 heart attacks and strokes, 4,000 diabetes cases and detect a further 20,000 cases of diabetes or kidney disease each year.

If you are over 40 and have been invited to attend an NHS Health Check, make sure you book your appointment as soon as possible to get personalised health advice and access specialist support.

For more information on what you can expect from an NHS Health Check, visit [www.nhs.uk/ NHSHealthCheck.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx)

#### Option 2

If you're aged between 40 and 74, it is likely that you will be invited to attend an NHS Health Check. Find out more [www.nhs.uk/ NHSHealthCheck.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx)

The NHS Health Check programme helps prevent heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia. An early diagnosis of any one of these

conditions can help improve your health.

So far, only X% of those invited to attend a NHS Health Check in <insert area> have taken the time to do so. If you have had an invite, or receive one in the coming months, it is important that you book your appointment.

For more information visit [www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSHealthCheck.aspx)

X% of people of had #NHSHealthCheck – why not have yours ?

### **Social media advice**

- Use #NHSHealthCheck in tweets where possible and encourage people to use the same – this will help the topic to ‘trend’ and appear on more feeds
- Engage with people who reply to tweets/posts with questions or comments to continue momentum
- Interact with relevant partners and follow their Twitter feeds – for example local media, local charities, support groups and MPs
- As well as encouraging followers and local organisations/contacts to re-tweet messages, it’s also important to re-tweet relevant and interesting messages not necessarily mentioning NHS Health Checks

## 6. Template press release

Below is a template press release for the publication of your local data which you could adapt and use with local media.

### Over **[insert figure]** people in **[insert region/local authority area]** are having their free NHS Health Check

**[Insert success, e.g. More people than ever before]** in **[insert region/local authority area]** are having a free NHS Health Check according to new figures published today by Public Health England (PHE).

The figures show that over **[insert figure]** people in **[insert region]** have had their NHS Health Check since April this year, compared to **[insert figure]** the same time last year.

The NHS Health Check is an important step for many people towards improving their health and becoming more aware of what they can do to lead a healthier life. The NHS Health Check can help lower people's risk of developing heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and some types of dementia.

**[Insert PHE regional spokesperson name and title e.g. Director of Public Health]** commented:

"It is fantastic to see that so many people are taking action to reduce their risk of developing some serious conditions.

"The success of the programme in **[insert region/local authority area]** is testament to the commitment of local authorities and the NHS; working together to ensure the check is easily accessible for those that need it most."

The NHS Health Check invites adults in England, aged 40 to 74, for a free health assessment which aims to identify those at risk of serious, but potentially avoidable conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

**[Insert local council spokesperson name and title e.g. local councillor/Assistant Mayor]** commented:

"The NHS Health Check provides a real opportunity for people to take control of their own health and it is encouraging to see so many people in **[insert region/local authority area]** actively engaging in this.

"Through partnerships with GPs, pharmacies and community groups we can reach the people that would benefit most from the check. We need to ensure that everyone has access to the information and local services that will support them in making changes that will reduce their risk."

The [NHS Health Check interactive website](#) provides information about what happens at the NHS Health Check, when and how to get one, and how to lower your risk.

For further information visit [insert information about NHS Health Check on local council website or if not available [NHS Choices](#)]

## 7. PR Checklist

Below is a PR checklist for you to consider when planning your campaign to ensure that you have thought about all aspects of the campaign.

- Are there learnings from previous marketing or PR activity that you can use to inform your new campaign ?
- Do you know your audience and how best to reach them?
- Is there other local or national activity that you can tie in with?
- Have you planned your messages for your activity?
- Have you approached a local celebrity, sportsman, councilor or charity for the campaign?
- Do you have spokespeople available and have you booked time in their diaries?
- Have you included local case studies?
- Are you using all of your available media channels including your social media channel ?
- Have you thought about how to evaluate the campaign?

## **8. Frequently asked questions**

These questions and answers will help you deal with questions from journalists or queries from the public

### **1. Why do I need an NHS Health Check, there is nothing wrong with me?**

The NHS Health Check is a chance for people, aged 40 – 74, to get specialist advice so they can take early steps to lower their risk of getting certain conditions and improve their chances of a healthier life.

Even if a person's risk is quite low, there are still small changes they can make, such as through diet and exercise which can have an impact on their health.

### **2. Why do you have to be over 40 or under 74 to have an NHS Health Check?**

The NHS Health Check is for people aged 40 – 74 years old, who do not already have a certain condition such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and vascular dementia.

Younger people generally have a much lower risk of getting these conditions, so checking people in this group would not be an effective way for the NHS to address these health problems.

Many people over 74 will already be under the care of their doctor for either a cardiovascular condition or other illness so will be regularly monitored by their GP.

It is recommended, however, that all adults are aware of their blood pressure and other measures such as their BMI.

### **3. What is the evidence for the NHS Health Check?**

The tests that form part of the NHS Health Check have been proven in large, long-term studies to be able to detect cardiovascular conditions and assess people's risk of developing these problems.

For example, the Framingham heart study provided the first clear evidence that heart health could be affected by both lifestyle factors, such as smoking, and health factors, such as high blood pressure.

Public Health England is currently developing a research and evaluation strategy and set up the NHS Health Check Expert Scientific and Clinical Advisory Panel who will be able to further investigate the effectiveness of the programme in addressing some of the most serious public health issues.

### **4. What are the risks of having an NHS Health Check?**

Prior to receiving the NHS Health Check, you should be asked to provide consent for the information to be collected and your results saved on your primary care record.

There are minimal risks associated with the NHS Health Check itself but there are some risks associated with having the blood tests, which your healthcare provider will explain.



These are largely related to the procedure itself and in ensuring that the correct results are acted upon. If you do have any concerns, please discuss these with your nurse or doctor.

**5. Is the NHS Health Check just an opportunity to tell people they are overweight and unhealthy, why have a programme just for this?**

The NHS Health Check provides an opportunity for people to take control over their own health; it is not the aim to point out unhealthy lifestyles, but to support and provide advice on taking positive steps to improve lifestyles by changing diet and activity levels.

The NHS Health Check will work out a good estimate of a person's risk of conditions such as heart disease or stroke over the coming years. If a person is at high risk, there is plenty that can be done to reduce their chances of developing these conditions, including changes to diet, levels of physical activity or even preventative medication.

**6. The NHS Health Check is embarrassing, making people feel ashamed and guilty over their lifestyles, it does little to motivate people to make positive changes.**

All health tests can cause anxiety and embarrassment whether the person has a healthy lifestyle or not.

The NHS Health Check provides an opportunity for people to take control over their own health; it is not the aim to point out unhealthy lifestyles, but to support and provide advice on taking positive steps to improve lifestyles by changing diet and activity levels.

This is certainly not a service to be critical of lifestyles but to provide information and support, enabling people to take control of things which could lead to ill health and early death.

**7. Why is money being spent on healthy people when ill people who need prescriptions, dental care etc have to pay for it?**

We know that there is a huge burden of disease associated with potentially avoidable conditions such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and kidney disease. These conditions are not only devastating to those affected but are also a huge burden on the NHS and social care services.

The NHS Health Check aims to tackle an individual's risk of developing these conditions and therefore reduce the likelihood of them needing lifelong, costly, medical care in the future.

**8. Being given a risk score for example, stroke in the next 10 years, based on factors that cannot be changed (ethnicity, family medical history) just causes unnecessary worry and stress.**

Those with a history of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, or kidney disease in their family may be more at risk of these conditions. However, there are still simple

changes in lifestyle that could help prevent the onset of these conditions and lessen the severity.

All health tests have the potential of causing anxiety whether the person lives a healthy lifestyle or not. The NHS Health Check provides an opportunity for people to assess their own lifestyle choices with the help of a professional and to take control of their own health to make positive changes that can reduce their risk of developing potentially serious conditions.

**9. If the NHS Health Check is so beneficial why is it not offered to everyone who is eligible in England, and why do Wales, Ireland and Scotland not follow suit?**

The NHS Health Check programme is only available in England. However, there are similar programmes being implemented across the UK. They are not necessarily the same and often the eligible age range differs to meet the specific needs of the public's health. In Wales, a Health Check programme started in 2013 while in Scotland a 'Live Well' programme began in 2006.

**10. Why do men in the UK have an increased risk of dying young from vascular illnesses?**

Statistically, men are more likely to be smokers, heavy drinkers and those under 75 years old have higher blood pressure than women. Middle-aged men are more likely to be obese than women in this age group. Men are also less likely than women to go for health checks or visit their GP to discuss any health concerns; they often delay or avoid talking to anybody about serious health issues.

**11. Is this just another campaign which simply targets the 'worried well'?**

No, everyone has a chance of developing heart disease, stroke, kidney disease or Type 2 diabetes. The NHS Health Check is an evidence-based way to identify those at risk earlier. Those who have an NHS Health Check are informed of their results and advised on lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of getting serious health conditions. If patients require a prescription, they'll be given that too.

**12. Encouraging people to attend the NHS Health Check is just for statistics, there is no interest in the actual benefits to the individual.**

It is clear that there is a major health threat from preventable conditions and evidence shows that those aged 40 to 74 years old are most at risk. By assessing risk, raising awareness and discussing lifestyle and medical management the NHS Health Check will help people to reduce their chance of developing conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke.

However, in order to maximise the benefits to public health it is essential that the impact of the programme continues to increase – it is recommended that everyone eligible takes up the offer of this free, simple check. Public Health England will continue to support the development of the programme ensuring it is accessible and benefiting those that need it across the country.

**13. I am not sure if I have had an NHS Health Check?**

If you are unsure if you have had an NHS Health Check then speak to your GP practice and they will be able to tell you if you have had a check.

**14. I am over 40 – why haven't I received my letter for a check? Can I ring my GP to book one?**

You will receive an invitation to an NHS Health Check if you are between the ages of 40 and 74 and are not already on a disease register. If you have not received an invitation, you will receive one, but you may have to wait. The NHS Health Check should happen once every five years so you can see if your risk has changed. Some NHS Health Checks are also carried out in the community in some local areas with pharmacies, nurses and other health professionals doing the check.

If you are concerned that you have not yet received your invitation, don't worry, you may just have to wait as the programme is new and it takes time to invite everyone that is eligible. If you are not registered with a GP it is, however, important that you do this. Please contact your [local GP surgery](#) to do so.