

‘Despite the challenges faced by the NHS cardio vascular disease (CVD) prevention remains a priority work stream within our county. The statistics speak for themselves. CVD is the largest cause of premature mortality and years of life lost in males and stroke is the third largest in males under 75 years of age. For women CVD and stroke are the third and fourth greatest contributors to premature mortality’

*Judith Wright - Director Public Health*

## Highlights so far...

27 GP and 11 pharmacy sites involved in pilot

2,945 people had an NHS Health Check since March 2010

13% of the referrals for the ‘Why Weight’ Service have followed a health check

257 smokers have been signposted onto stop smoking support



**NHS**

**West Sussex**



# NHS Health Check newsletter

November 2010

## Where are we now?

In April 2008 the Department of Health announced plans to introduce an ambitious vascular risk assessment and management programme now known as NHS Health Check.

In West Sussex we have been working with 27 GP and 12 pharmacies to provide NHS Health Checks since March 2010. Agreement to work together followed popular stakeholder events last October.

This newsletter provides you with a bite size review of the last six months and expectations for the remainder for this financial year.

We have learnt a lot already which has helped us consider how we might further develop an integrated CVD prevention service within West Sussex.

## Onward plans

As you all know, the White Paper has set out the future direction for the NHS, which will mean a change in NHS functions and a new health role for the county council, and GPs as they take on commissioning roles. We are also awaiting the Public Health White paper due in December. This combines to create uncertainty in the short to medium term and with budgets reduced we therefore cannot extend the service or increase the number of pilot sites this financial year.

With limited resources, rather than roll out the pilot to new providers for a further six months, we are looking at ways to learn more from the existing sites and run some targeted schemes in the community. This will help enrich our learning and inform our next steps in deciding on the best way to tackle CVD prevention with you, our key partners.

As we work to create the arrangements with our partners for the future, we should be able to clarify the position for NHS Health Checks. We do already know that NHS West Sussex public health team are moving to West Sussex County Council from April 2011. This will all help facilitate much closer working to help support the health inequalities and CVD agenda.

Despite the changes CVD prevention remains a priority for our county. We need to continue developing a strategy for the future to improve standards in preventative cardiology, which addresses the engagement of high risk individuals and includes public health measures to reduce future risk and to support healthy lifestyles.

We will write to you all again to inform you of our next steps as soon as we have more clarity. Thank you for all your work so far.

## Other plans in place

- Continuing the momentum and learning from pilot sites
- Reducing Health inequalities – engaging potentially high risk patients
- Development of some outreach targeted work for risk assessment in community venues working with the Jobcentre plus to address specific access barriers to groups known to have low registration with primary care services
- Actively looking at sources of new funding to support the health inequalities agenda
- Linking with the Taxi Driver project, led by West Sussex County Council, linking up with workplace health

## Developing skills and knowledge in CVD prevention has proved popular

- During January and February, 83 staff received training in Cardio-Vascular risk assessment by staff at the primary care training centre
- Feedback from providers identified the need for further training to support the service. We now have a training programme in place
- 60 providers have attended evening forum workshops to learn about onward referral pathways and support services
- Following a training needs analysis we arranged a Motivational Interviewing day at the end of November for providers

## Achieving results

Here are some of the main results from our pilot sites since the service started in March 2010 – thank you for your commitment and support.

- 2,945 individuals have had an NHS Health Check
- 11% have been identified as having a CVD risk of greater than 20%
- 15% of those who have had a health check were smokers
- Of these smokers, 257 have been signposted onto stop smoking support
- 368 were referred on for assessment for hypertension. Elevated BP is a risk factor for CHD, heart failure, CVD, peripheral vascular disease, and renal failure in both men and women. BP levels correlate inversely with cognitive function, and hypertension is associated with an increased incidence of dementia
- 358 were referred on for investigation into glucose regulation. Progression to diabetes can be prevented or delayed by lifestyle intervention (NICE guidance on pre-diabetes is expected June 2011)
- 13% of referrals received to the *Why Weight?* Service have been following a health check and the outcomes of weight loss following the programme will be reviewed. As the prevalence of overweight and obesity increases so does the prevalence of type 2 diabetes and hence all its complications may be anticipated. Consequently, control of the growing epidemic of obesity is a priority
- 21 West Sussex residents are now regularly using an online behavioral support tool - Activheart - following their health check. We aim to learn more about how this is benefiting individuals and this service

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## Play a part in the future of NHS Health Checks

Your views are important to us. We are in the process of developing an online survey which will be coming to you very soon.

Working with patient participant groups we also want feedback from patients who have experienced a health check.

This vital insight will give us further understanding into how to develop the service in the future.

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For further information contact Karen Davies - Public Health Quality and Development Manager - NHS Health Check, NHS West Sussex. Tel: 01903708017 - mob: 07917895528 - email: [karen.davies@westsussexpct.nhs.uk](mailto:karen.davies@westsussexpct.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.westsussex.nhs.uk/heart-health](http://www.westsussex.nhs.uk/heart-health)

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