

Councillors briefing note re the communications plan for the NHS Health Check programme

Dear Cllrs,

A paper was recently agreed at Joint Public Health [Board](#) about the new delivery model of the NHS Health Check programme in Dorset.

What is an NHS Health Check

The NHS Health Check is a free check-up of your cardiovascular health. It can tell you whether you're at higher risk of getting certain health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease or stroke.

The programme is targeted to residents aged 40-74. By having a check, it provides residents an opportunity to know about their potential risks to help them to make effective positive behaviour changes to reduce their risks for the future.

NHS Health Checks in Dorset have previously been offered by only GPs and pharmacies but this is about to change.

What is changing?

The programme team have helped shape a new and exciting way of delivering the NHS Health Check programme based on consultation with providers and residents.

The target age range is the same but the way we plan to deliver the programme has changed.

Working with Public Health Dorset's locality team and providers, the NHS Health Check programme team have agreed a new delivery model based on providers and residents' feedback.

Many of our primary care (GPs and pharmacies) providers have offered to invite patients and deliver NHS health checks which is the preferred way our residents said they'd want to access health checks.

Where some primary care providers have identified they don't have capacity to deliver all or part of the programme, a community offer with [LiveWell Dorset](#) will be introduced. LiveWell Dorset is Public Health Dorset free behaviour change service helping residents to quit smoking, lose weight, move more and drink less alcohol.

LiveWell Dorset will work with providers to help carry out health checks where Primary Care Networks (PCNs) don't have capacity. The main offer LiveWell Dorset is offering is to help carry out health checks on higher risk groups first.

The communications approach

At Joint Public Health Board in February, we discussed how councillors could be involved in supporting and promoting the programme.

The health checks programme is launching from 1 April 2023. We are conscious that there is a pre-election period in the BCP Council area from 23 March to 4 May and publicity of this and any campaign needs to be limited.

It is therefore planned to promote NHS health checks being available as a soft launch with a press release, some social media posts and posters displayed by our providers. The service hasn't been running since before the COVID-19 pandemic and residents need to be aware the service is still available to access.

After the elections we will be ready to introduce LiveWell Dorset's community offer to those providers who have asked for help with delivery. This is where we hope councillors can support us in getting the word out there about the programme in their communities. It would also be great if any councillors who are eligible for a health check to tell us of their experience. Pictures, videos and quotes would be great to use in future publicity. We can support with guidance on this if you wish to take part in providing some content for use.

We will update councillors just after the launch to inform of more communications activity.