

# Health Check

Case Study



## Community Health Checks/ Knowsley at Heart

### Background

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is the leading cause of premature death and is responsible for one third of all deaths in Knowsley – 22% higher than the national average. Of the 60,800 people in the 40-74 year age group, it is estimated that there are around 13,200 who are at high risk of CVD. In order to address health inequalities and CVD, Knowsley Health and Wellbeing Partnership, which brings together the resources and expertise of the PCT and local council, has launched the Community Health Checks initiative.

### The Scheme

Launched in October 2008, the initiative aims to offer free health checks to all adults between the age of 40 to 74 years who reside or who are registered with a GP in Knowsley. In addition to GP surgeries, checks are available in a wide range of community venues including community centres, social clubs, pubs, bingo halls, supermarkets, leisure centres and 'one stop shops'. Checks are currently available from 9am – 5pm at both 'drop in' and 'fixed time' locations and there are plans to extend this to evening and weekend sessions. Attendance at community venues is largely opportunistic, with promotion targeted at deprived communities and 'at risk' populations. In general practice, screening is both opportunistic and systematic; Patients are offered a health check during in routine GP or nurse consultations and health intelligence software is also used to identify and contact patients with higher risk profiles.

### How it works

Health Checks are administered by nurses from the service provider Optimal Renal Health, with support from Health Trainers. The check includes tests for blood sugar, total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, body mass index and blood pressure, and clients are asked a series of lifestyle questions relating to smoking, fitness and family history. Data is entered onto a laptop and CVD risk calculated using the Framingham equation, with results downloaded to the general practice via a secure link. Clients are given immediate

feedback and a letter that explains their results and lifestyle advice. A Health Trainer is available to provide support and referral to other existing lifestyle services such as smoking cessation and exercise programmes. All those with a 10-year CVD risk at or above 20% will be followed by the GP for appropriate management.

### On-the-spot results

The Community Checks scheme depends on the availability of immediate results and the Alere Cholestech LDX® point of care analyser was selected on the basis of its accuracy, performance ease of use. The LDX is already widely used in a range of health screening settings and is the analyser of choice for the British Heart Foundation screening programmes, Flora Test the Nations Hearts, and other healthy heart schemes around the UK. Testing requires just a drop of whole blood from a finger prick sample and results are available in 5 minutes. The performance of the analysers is monitored by an internal QC scheme operated by the Royal Bolton Hospital, ensuring compliance with stringent laboratory standards.

### What has been achieved?

The Community Checks scheme has been successfully introduced and initial data shows a good level of attendance and identification of individuals at a high risk of CVD. With a high level of engagement from all stakeholders including GP practices, patients and the public, the initiative forms part of an ambitious programme to tackle CVD and health inequalities in Knowsley. Needs have been identified, clear objectives established, a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy implemented and a robust evaluation strategy developed to inform development of the programme.



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