

Alzheimer's Research UK submission to NHS Health Check: Dementia Risk Reduction Messaging

20th October 2017

Alzheimer's Research UK is supportive of the proposal to communicate dementia risk reduction to all individuals having an NHS Health Check. The evidence from the pilot projects showed that both professionals and people having a health check found the information was helpful as part of a wider conversation about a range of lifestyle factors. The pilots also showed that the intervention was feasible from a service perspective.

Current public awareness of the potential to reduce the risk of developing dementia is very low - a recent YouGov poll for Alzheimer's Research UK (2016) found that only 25% of adults thought there was anything they could do to reduce their risk, compared to 49% for cancer and 83% for diabetes. All opportunities to improve public understanding on how people can reduce their risk of developing dementia are therefore crucial.

We also support the proposal that it should be included as a mandated part of the programme - there is a need for clear and explicit expectations of what an NHS Health Check should contain. From evaluation of the existing dementia component for 65-74-year olds undertaken by Solutions Research for PHE, we know that there is already variable implementation of the current dementia component. We would be concerned that if the mid-life risk reduction messaging is not mandated, it will simply be ignored by some services. We do recognise, and would recommend, that suitable training and training resources are made available to support Health Check practitioners in delivering the risk reduction messaging

About Alzheimer's Research UK

Alzheimer's Research UK is the UK's leading dementia research charity, and the second largest charity funder of dementia research in the world. We are funding £33.7 million in world-class research at leading universities and research institutions across the UK and to date have funded £66 million in research projects. As research experts, we are committed to finding new ways to diagnose, prevent, treat and cure dementia.

Contact Details

If you have any queries, or would like to discuss any of our responses in more detail, please contact Susan Mitchell on 01223 824571 or susan.mitchell@alzheimersresearchuk.org.