

IMMEDIATE - FMQs: Annual Health Checks

Subject: IMMEDIATE - FMQs: Annual Health Checks

Importance: High

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport

As you are aware, Paul O’Kane MSP raised Annual Health Checks for people with Learning Disabilities at FMQs today as follows:

Paul O’Kane MSP: Last week it was reported that despite handing at least £4m to health boards since 2022 to deliver health checks for vulnerable Scots who have a learning disability and promising that these would be completed by March 2023, as of this year not a single board has met that target and some boards have offered no checks at all. This week the Equalities Committee was told by individuals who have a learning disability that they feel like they quote “remain unheard and are not a priority for Scotland”. So can I ask the First Minister, what has happened to that £4m given to health boards for their unfulfilled promise, what is going to be done to rectify this failure and will he now apologise to those vulnerable scots with learning disabilities who have been let down by his government yet again.

First Minister: I am not familiar with the issue that Mr O’Kane puts to me today. If we’ve allocated £4m to Health Boards, I would expect Health Boards to have followed up and delivered that and applied that so I will investigate this in the light of the exchanges today and I will reply in full to Mr O’Kane.

Mr O’Kane has also been following up with commentary on X this afternoon.

I include below the briefing on this that was included in the Mental Health FMQ brief this week. We will draft a short note to the FM setting out the issues and the steps we are taking, along with a draft letter for him to send to Paul O’Kane. As discussed with Ms Todd earlier this week, we are developing a letter for Ms Todd to send to NHS Boards setting out the importance of this issue and expectations around delivery.

Including Comms and spads for sight.

LEARNING DISABILITY ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

<p>20 Nov: STV media query - Labour FOI shows the majority of people with learning disabilities have not yet received a health check by the end of March 2023 as required in the National Directions sent out by the Scottish Government.</p>
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The Scottish Government wants people with learning disabilities to live longer and healthier lives. Offering annual health checks is big step towards fulfilling that ambition.

- We have allocated £2 million each year to NHS Boards to implement annual health checks for people with learning disabilities.

- Most Boards have started offering annual health checks and this has led to positive results in identifying treatable health conditions and supporting people with learning disabilities to access appropriate treatment.
- We have been working closely with Boards to support them to progress delivery as much as possible, including through meetings with individual boards and the national implementation group.
- The National Directions require Boards deliver annual health checks to all people with learning disabilities (16 and over) who are known to services.

We are aware Boards have faced challenges in delivering health checks within the projected timescale and are doing so on a phased basis.

- Due to the individual delivery mechanisms chosen by each Board and the internal infrastructure required to support delivery of annual health checks, implementation is taking the form of a phased introduction across all Board areas to ensure optimum delivery of annual health checks.
- Although the implementation of health checks has not quite delivered as many as we had expected at this point, in the health checks that have been delivered so far, we are seeing the positive results of the checks for those who have accessed them.

FMQs 28 Nov – Action

Hi there,

The First Minister during today's FMQs promised to write to Paul O'Kane regarding the issue with NHS Boards not meeting their targets in terms of annual health checks for adults with learning disabilities.

More on the issue can be found here: [SNP fail pledge to offer adults with learning disabilities annual health check | STV News](#)

Grateful if you could please take this forward.

Many thanks,

Annual Health Checks for Adults with Learning Disabilities National Implementation Group Meeting

Thursday 05 December 2024

In Attendance

Scottish Government
Scottish Government
Scottish Government
Scottish Government
Scottish Government
NHS Highland
NHS Grampian
NHS Tayside
NHS Shetland
NHS Lanarkshire
NHS Borders
NHS Grampian
NHS Western Isle
NHS Ayrshire & Arran
NHS Fife
NHS Forth Valley
NHS Lothian
NHS Grampian

Apologies

NHS Orkney
NHS24
NHS Fife
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Introduction

Scottish Government Official welcomed everyone to the meeting and the group provided introductions.

Updates from the Scottish Government

Recent Media Interest on Annual Health Checks

Scottish Government Official spoke to the group about the recent media and parliamentary interest on annual health checks and that this had been raised at First Ministers Questions (FMQ's).

Scottish Government Official confirmed that the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport will be writing to the Chief Executive of each Health Board to highlight the importance of the delivery of annual health checks. Scottish Government Official welcomed feedback from members regarding content of the letter. **The Group are to provide any comments directly to Scottish Government Official by week commencing 9 December 2024** with the aim that the letter is issued before Christmas.

NHS Forth Valley highlighted that Boards are facing so many conflicting priorities and that significant reprioritisation exercises were going to be undertaken.

NHS Lothian raised the issue around the lack of recognition of reoccurring finance for future years was causing a partnership within NHS Lothian to not progress in the delivery of health checks.

FOI

Scottish Government Official advised the Group that the SG have received an FOI request about the latest correspondence between the Scottish Government and health boards regarding the delivery of annual health checks for people with learning disabilities.

Members of the Group expressed concern around their personal information being released as part of the FOI. Scottish Government Official confirmed that all personal information will be redacted from the documents that are released

Follow up on Funding/Finance Discussion

Scottish Government Official advised the group that in the new year **to gather more a more up to date position from the Boards, SG will issue a feedback form to members requesting budget and delivery information.**

Data Update

Scottish Government Official gave members an update on the work of the Data Programme Board. Scottish Government advised the members that they were currently working on an audit of all the systems that are currently used by Boards used for carrying out health checks.

Phlebotomy Protocol

Scottish Government Official updated the group on the ongoing work with NES in relation to the creation of podcasts on delivering health checks. Scottish Government Official encouraged the group to provide feedback on what the content of these podcasts might look like or if colleagues would like to be involved in this. **The group were asked to contact Scottish Government Official directly via email ahead of the meeting with NES next week.**

Scottish Government Official then updated the group that they have been in contact with the Chair of Inverclyde Adult Support and Protection Committee which led the

review into the disappearance and murder of Margaret Flemming in October 2023. The Chair is interested in getting feedback from Boards in relation to ensuring individuals are offered to attend their annual health check at least 3 times. **The Group were asked to provide Scottish Government Official with any feedback on this ahead of their next meeting with the Chair on 16 December 2024.**

Scottish Government Official shared the Phlebotomy Protocol that has been created following feedback from Boards for this to be reviewed. Scottish Government Official explained the rationale behind this is because bloods should be done as part of routine care. For multiple reasons, often this doesn't happen for people with learning disabilities and due to the very high rates of use of antiepileptics, and antipsychotics, and higher rates of diabetes etc compared with the general population, these bloods are more important than they are in the general population. Scottish Government Official thanked the 3 pilot sites for their contribution in developing the protocol and for GPs in NHS Lanarkshire for their review.

A copy of the Phlebotomy Protocol will be circulated along with the minutes of the meeting. **Members are encouraged to have a look over this and provide any feedback to Scottish Government Official.**



HC phlebotomy
protocol - October 20

Health Board Update Presentation – NHS Ayrshire & Arran

NHS Ayrshire and Arran gave the following presentation updating then Group regarding the progress made by NHS Ayrshire & Arran.



Initial Learning from
Annual Health Checks

NHS Ayrshire and Arran highlighted to the members that their main concerns for Ayrshire is around GPs in the Health Board area have now taken a step back from undertaking health checks as they did previously and the concerns around continued funding.

There was a discussion around enhanced service being paid for local areas from the SG. **SG colleagues will look into this further and feedback to the group.**

Scottish Government Official thanked NHS Ayrshire and Arran for their presentation and noted that the positive data and outcomes from delivery health checks helps SG with talking about the future and rational of health checks.

Scottish Government Official highlighted to the group the work of the Public Health Scotland LIST analysts which are a great resource for Boards. Scottish Government Official can provide members with contact information if they would like to reach out to the team.

AOB

No AOB.

Future Meetings

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 16 January 2025, 1pm – 2.30pm.

Scottish Government Official thanked the group then closed the meeting.