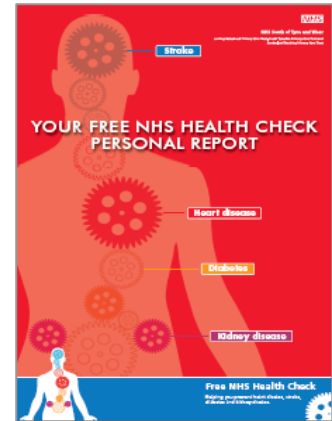


# NHS South of Tyne and Wear working with Health Diagnostics

Cardiovascular disease kills one in three people in the UK and with 33,000 people currently feared to be at risk of the disease in South Tyneside, the need to implement a comprehensive programme to tackle the problem had never been greater. In dealing with CVD on a local level, NHS South of Tyne and Wear commissioned Health Diagnostics to provide 34 pharmacy, 17 GP practices and 6 mobile outreach programmes with all the means to deliver on-the-spot, effective health checks.



With the programme now in full swing and having been expanded from an initial pilot to an extensive county-wide service, over 900 people have been able to access a free health check. Phil Ray, the Services Commissioner for NHS South of Tyne and Wear, has given his account of what it has been like working with Health Diagnostics over the course of the last 9 months.

It was the ‘really nice, complete package’ offered by Health Diagnostics which led NHS South of Tyne and Wear to initially look to the company as the supplier of the service. In terms of the implementation of the scheme, Phil Ray remarked that ‘everything from the training to the consultation process was easy to set up and took very little organisation on the part of the PCT. This was thanks to the experience of Health Diagnostics and their already established and recognised procedures’.

**“Everything was very easy to set up and took very little organisation on the part of the PCT”**

With the process obviously being an on-going one, there is a high level of continued interaction between PCT and supplier. Not only have Health Diagnostics delivered at the out-set, but Phil Ray also commented that they have always been **‘quick to provide solutions to any requests made by the PCT’**. The bespoke software, that which is the real core of Health Diagnostics’ product, is a something that NHS South of Tyne and Wear has always found ‘very easy to use and extremely adaptable to the PCT’s individual requirements’.

As part of the service, Health Diagnostics have analysed the data from the tests conducted so far and produced compiled reports for the PCT. These reports have helped the PCT to map out the areas of high risk and furthermore, focus on the demographics that are in crucial need of consultation.

Phil Ray explained that 'NHS South of Tyne and Wear plan to launch a large scale media campaign and by using the information revealed by the reports, this exposure can be targeted at those localities and age-brackets that are most in need of the advice being offered to them'. Not only then has the project brought to light the very specifics of the problem in the region, it has also allowed for increasingly focussed marketing strategies, helping the scheme to be as successful as possible.

## **“A really nice, complete package”**

Those delivering the health checks on the ground and in the community have given an equally positive response to level of training and support they have received from Health Diagnostics. With the pharmacists awarding the training programme an average overall score of 9/10, Phil Ray fittingly remarked ***'It was all very well received. I was really pleased and the surveys that the individual pharmacists did spoke for themselves'***.



The health check programme has also helped improve ties between GP's and pharmacy. The PCT worked closely alongside GP's in designing the feedback letter that has been formatted and initiated into the Health Options software. On this topic, Phil Ray explained that 'there has been a lot of co-operation between GP practices and pharmacy. The PCT is obviously taking a proactive role in bringing these various health professionals together so as to discuss and develop within the same domain, encouraging a coherency across the sector'.

In terms of achieving this 'coherency' across the sector, NHS South of Tyne and Wear are looking to establishing a 'joined-up approach' with NHS Durham and Darlington, another of Health Diagnostics, customers, so as to ensure that as many people as possible gain access to the free health checks being offered. With a number of pharmacies on the border of the two PCT's, the joined-up approach would simply mean that, for example, if someone who lives in County Durham goes for a health check in South Tyneside, they are still able to receive their free check, despite being ineligible by certain standards. Those in charge of conducting this co-operative move commented that 'all it means is that people are not being turned away. We need to get as many of these people checked as possible if we are to really combat the issue'.

**END**

**For further information about Pharmacy Delivered Health Checks contact: Julie Evason**