

Blood Pressure - What We Want Stormont To Do



Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke has launched a public awareness campaign to alert the public to the risks posed by high blood pressure. 280,317 people in NI are living with high blood pressure, that's 15% of the population, and around 146,698 adults have undetected high blood pressure.

As part of our blood pressure campaign we are calling on **Stormont to do 4 things to help people to prevent or delay the onset of a heart attack or stroke.**

1. Commission blood pressure and atrial fibrillation awareness campaigns

Many people are unaware that 1 in 2 heart attacks and strokes are linked to high blood pressure. They are also unaware that atrial fibrillation greatly increases your risk of stroke.

We believe that the Public Health Agency should be doing more to alert the public to the risks posed by these conditions if left unchecked and untreated

2. Commission health checks in the community – especially in socially deprived areas

Opportunistic testing in the community raises awareness of the issues in an area and helps to detect patients who might not otherwise be detected. Health inequalities are a major problem in Northern Ireland with people in socially deprived areas not only living shorter lives but also living less of their lives without health problems.

People should also be encouraged and facilitated to monitor their blood pressure at home.

3. Introduce 'NHS Health Checks' in Northern Ireland

In England an NHS Health Check is available for people who are aged 40 to 74 who do not have any pre-existing conditions.

The NHS Health Check is designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. As we get older, we have a higher risk of developing one of these conditions. An NHS Health Check helps find ways to lower this risk. These checks are carried out every five years.

We believe that these health checks should be made available in Northern Ireland too.

4. Carry out a primary care audit

An audit should be carried out of current practice around the diagnosis and management of six high risk conditions that cause stroke, heart attack and dementia: atrial fibrillation (AF), high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, non-diabetic hyperglycaemia and chronic kidney disease.

This is being done in England by automatically extracting routinely held GP data under the banner of CVD Prevent. The CVDPREVENT audit aims to support quality improvement in the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

For more information visit: www.nichs.org.uk/highbloodpressure

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