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Introduction

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the main cause of death globally, with almost 19 million people having died from CVD conditions in 2023. The two main contributors to this are ischaemic heart disease, which was the number one cause of death globally, with over 16% of the world's total deaths in 2023 (9.5 million). Stroke was the second leading cause of death responsible for 11% (6.8 million). There were just under 2 million deaths from hypertensive heart disease.[1]

Over eight million people are living with CVD in England, and it contributes to over a quarter of deaths each year in the UK (170,000). People from our most deprived populations are nearly four times more likely to die prematurely from CVD, compared to those from the most affluent populations.[2]

Health care costs in the UK relating to CVD are estimated at £12 billion each year, with wider costs to the economy estimated at £29 billion.[2]

An estimated 50% to 80% of CVD cases are caused by modifiable and preventable risk factors, including: smoking, obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol, harmful drinking, poor diet and physical inactivity. These risk factors are greater in lower socioeconomic groups, making CVD one of the conditions most strongly associated with health inequalities. As a result, premature death rates from CVD in the most deprived 10% of the population are almost twice as high as rates in the least deprived 10%.[3]

The **NHS Health Check** programme aims to help prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. Everyone between the ages of 40 and 74, who has not already been diagnosed with one of these conditions, will be invited (once every five years) to have a check to assess their risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and diabetes and will be given support and advice to help them reduce or manage that risk.[4]

Since April 2020, almost 16 million people have been offered an NHS Health Check, and more importantly, just over six million people have received a check. The proportion of people taking up the offer of a health check has been decreasing and getting worse, with the national uptake rate currently at 34.7%, meaning that over half of all people invited do not take up the offer.

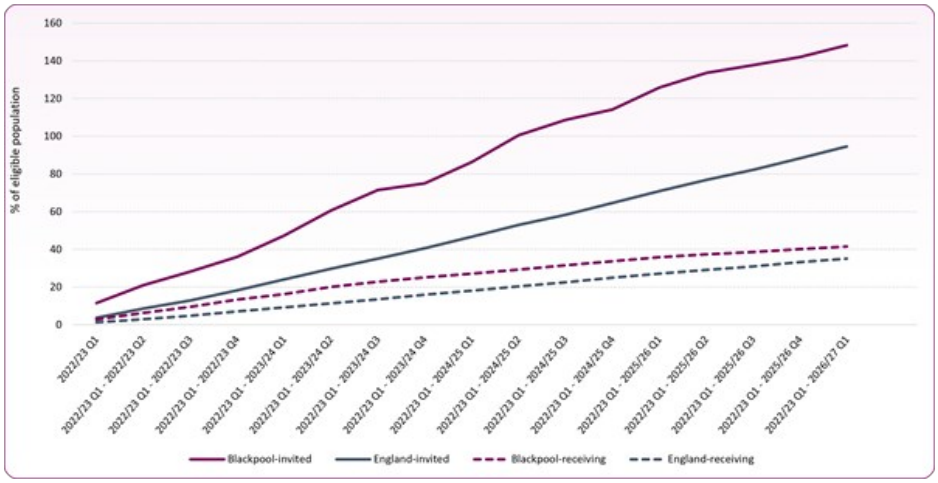
Facts and figures

Note: During the Covid-19 pandemic the NHS Health Check programme was paused and fully resumed in 2022. This can be seen in the lower numbers of patients invited and health checks completed over the period.

Between quarter 1 2022/23 and quarter 1 2026/27, the five-year cumulative data shows there were 61,300 invites to a health check for eligible people aged 40-74 in Blackpool (over 100%), compared to 94.7% in England. Blackpool's proportion is over 100% as the NHS Health Check dataset counts all invitations issued over a fiveyear cycle, including repeat and opportunistic invitations, while the denominator (eligible population) is a snapshot, so cumulative invites can surpass the size of the eligible cohort (figure 1).

Just over two-fifths (42%) of those who were offered a health check have received one (compared to 35% nationally) between Q1 2022/23 and Q1 2026/27.

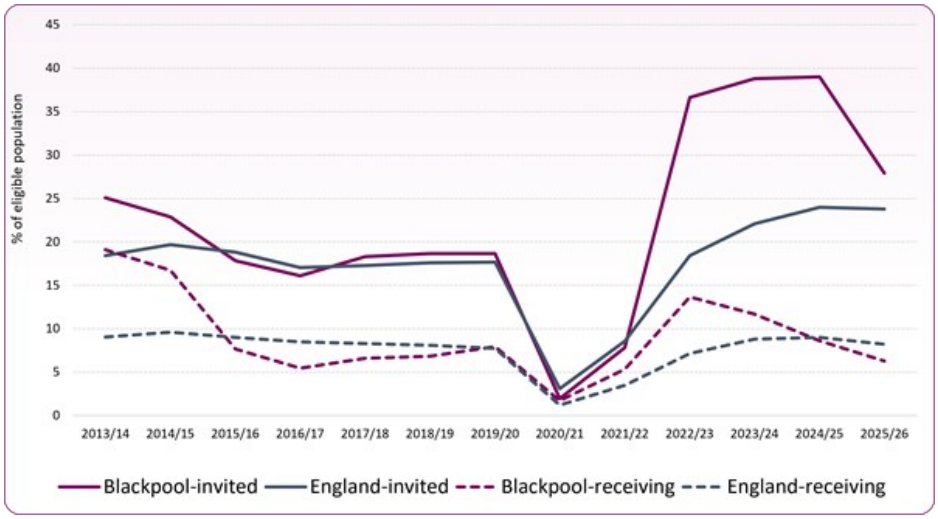
Figure 1: cumulative trend in proportion of the eligible population offered and receiving an NHS Health Check, Blackpool and England: Q1 2022/23 to Q1 2026/27



Source: OHID, NHS Health Check Profile

Figure 2 shows the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the suspension/reduction of health checks during this period. While a few health checks were done opportunistically, the routine sending out of invitations was postponed. NHS Health Checks were recognised as having a clear role in the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, and as of autumn 2021 the programme restarted.

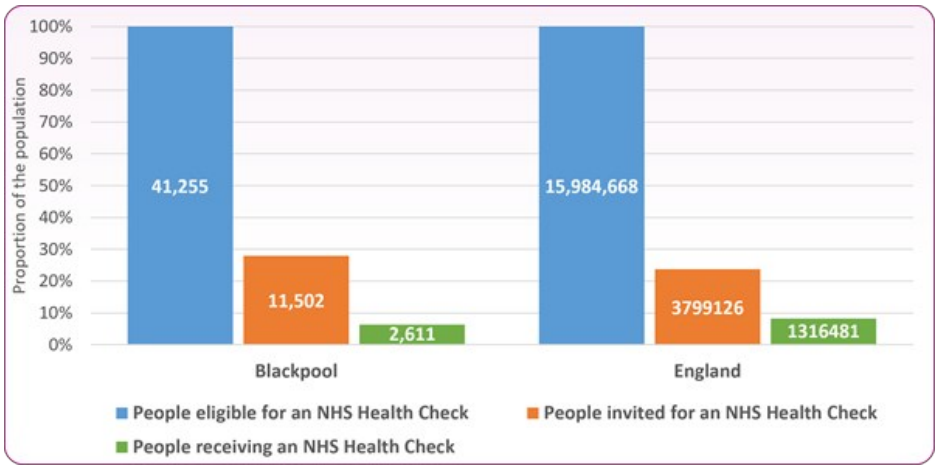
Figure 2: annual trend in proportion of the eligible population offered and receiving and NHS Health Check, Blackpool and England: 2013/14 to 2025/26



Source: OHID, NHS Health Check Profile

- In 2025/26, 11,502 eligible people aged 40-74 in Blackpool were invited for a health check
- 2,611 people received a health check in the same period. This was 6.3% of the eligible population, a level significantly lower than the national average of 8.2%
- However, only 22.7% of those invited took up the opportunity, significantly lower than the England average of 34.7%

Figure 3: number and proportion of people aged 40-74 who are eligible for a NHS Health Check, invited and received in 2025/26, Blackpool compared to England



Source: OHID, NHS Health Check Profile

Blackpool NHS Health Check Health Equity Audit

The NHS Health Check Health Equity Audit (HEA) for Blackpool looks in detail at performance for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23 and gives an in-depth analysis of the data for 2023/24 on who has come forward for an NHS Health Check during the period of the audit, and just as importantly, who has not. The data considers how best to reach those in the community who are missing the opportunity for an NHS Health Check - who are they, where are they and what can be done to support and encourage them to access the service.

Health Equity Audit of Blackpool NHS Health Check Programme: Key Performance for years 2019/20 – 2022/23 And In-depth Analysis of Data 2023/24 (4.32 Mb)

National and local guidance

A collaborative resource which brings together national and local resources aimed to support those involved in commissioning and providing the NHS Health Check programme.

OHID's NHS Health Check Programme review (Dec 2021) offers advice on how the NHS Health Check programme can evolve over the next 10 years to deliver greater benefits for the public.

References

[1] World Health Organization, The top 10 causes of death, October 2026

[2] BHF UK Cardiovascular Disease Factsheet

[3] UKHSA, Health Matters: NHS Health Check – A world leading CVD prevention programme, January 2018

[4] Department of Health & Social Care, NHS Health Check Profile

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