NHS HEALTH CHECKS

Why must NHS health checks be commissioned by local authorities?

Anthony J Morkane public health consultant
Derbyshire County Council, Matlock DE4 3FW, UK

McCartney’s article continues the debate on the evidence for and against NHS health checks and whether they constitute a screening programme. These discussions fit comfortably within the context of an NHS provided service. However, I believe that a more fundamental question needs to be considered first: why is this programme a mandated programme to be commissioned by local authorities? Who decided this? Where is the spokesperson from the Local Government Association in this debate? Many local authorities, including Derbyshire, are faced with draconian cuts in their budgets over the next few years, which are already affecting public health programmes. I reflect the president of the Faculty of Public Health’s concerns on the Lansley reforms, “it is hard to imagine a more complicated and less fit-for-purpose set of structures and responsibilities.”

Competing interests: None declared.

1 McCartney M. Where’s the evidence for NHS health checks? BMJ 2013;347:f5834. (2 October.)
2 Ashton J. From the president. Public Health Today Sept 2013:3.

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