



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Ashley Dalton MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Public Health and Prevention*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

Layla Moran MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

18 March 2025

Dear Layla,

As you know, I have taken up the position of Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention. I am writing in response to a letter you sent to my predecessor following the non-inquiry session on the National Audit Office's (NAO's) report 'Progress in Preventing Cardiovascular Disease'. Please accept my apologies for the delay in doing so.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their consideration and scrutiny of this important issue. Improving the health of the nation is a top priority for this government, and, as a consequence, we have set an ambition to reduce premature mortality from heart disease and stroke by a quarter in the next 10 years.

I held a symposium on 13th March with charities, patient advocacy groups, clinicians, think-tanks and other experts where I got to hear first-hand how we deliver on this important ambition.

The NHS Health Check programme has an important role to play in achieving this ambition and I am very keen to ensure the programme is running as effectively as possible so that we maximise this important opportunity to identify and treat cardiovascular disease risk early.

In addition, the government is taking wider system action to tackle behavioural risk factors for cardiovascular disease including the ambitious Tobacco and Vapes Bill, interventions to create a more health promoting food environment, and continuing to offer and enhance behavioural programmes to support people to make healthy choices.

As part of the government's aim to shift healthcare from sickness to prevention through the Plan for Change, GPs will be rewarded with funding for helping to prevent stroke and heart disease in the 2025/2026 GP contract. More resources will be freed up for GPs to help prevent some of the country's biggest killers, thanks to government reforms to scrap pointless box ticking targets. This action will unlock over £200million funding, trebling spend on cardiovascular disease prevention in general practice.

I have noted the concerns you raise in your letter, particularly about the lack of routine access to demographic data for those attending the NHS Health Check, and the variation in

uptake rates among different local authorities. I welcome the Committee's recommendations on these points. I can confirm that my officials are currently carrying out policy work to assess how both uptake and the impact of the NHS Health Check programme can be improved. In addition to the four recommendations in the NAO's report, I have asked officials to consider the recommendations in your letter.

I expect this policy work to conclude later in the Spring and I will write to you again with a more detailed response to the recommendations at that point.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me again should you and the Committee have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Dalton', with a stylized, cursive script.

ASHLEY DALTON