Annual Physical Health Check for People with Severe Mental Illness (SMI)

This information is for patients

If you live with a **severe mental illness (SMI)** such as **schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or psychosis**, you are entitled to a **free physical health check every year** at your GP surgery.

This leaflet explains:

- What an SMI physical health check is
- Why it is important
- What will happen at your appointment
- How you can get extra support if you need it

What does SMI mean?

SMI stands for **severe mental illness**. This includes conditions such as:

- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- Psychosis

People living with SMI can be at higher risk of physical health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, lung problems and some cancers. Many of these conditions can be **prevented or treated early** with regular checks.

What is an annual physical health check?

An annual physical health check is a **routine check-up** to look after your physical health.

It is a chance to:

- Spot health problems early
- Talk about any health concerns
- Review your medication
- Get advice and support to stay well

The check is carried out by a trained healthcare professional, such as a nurse or healthcare facilitator.

What happens during the health check?

You will be supported throughout the appointment and can ask questions at any time.

The health check usually includes **six key checks**:

- **Blood pressure** and heart rate
- **Height and weight** (to calculate BMI)
- **Blood test** to check:
    - Blood sugar (for diabetes)
    - Cholesterol levels
    - Liver function
- **Smoking status** (including vaping)
- **Alcohol use**

You may also be asked about:

- Your diet and physical activity
- Oral (mouth and teeth) health
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Any use of drugs
- Your personal and family medical history

A **medication review** can be arranged if needed.

Why is this health check important?

People with SMI are more likely to develop physical health conditions and may die younger than the general population due to **preventable illnesses**.

Having this check:

- Helps find problems early
- Allows treatment and support to start sooner
- Improves long-term health and wellbeing

You do not have to attend, but it is **strongly recommended** for your health.

Vaccinations and screening

During your appointment, you can also talk about:

- Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations
- Other recommended immunisations
- National screening programmes (for example bowel or cancer screening)

Reasonable adjustments – extra support is available

Your GP surgery can make changes to help you feel more comfortable. You can ask for:

- A **longer appointment**
- A **quiet waiting area** or a specific appointment time
- A **friend, carer or support worker** to attend with you
- Extra reassurance if you are anxious or afraid of needles
- An **interpreter or sign-language support**
- Help with **transport**
- A **home visit** if you are unable to leave home

Please let the surgery know what would help you.

How do I book my health check?

- Your GP surgery may contact you to invite you for an appointment
- You can also contact your GP surgery directly and ask to book your **SMI annual physical health check**

Remember

This health check is about **supporting you**, not judging you.

Your physical and mental health are equally important, and this check is one way your healthcare team can help you stay as well as possible.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask your GP surgery.