Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a group of diseases of the heart and blood vessels. It includes conditions such as coronary heart disease, stroke, heart failure, peripheral vascular disease and some other less common conditions.

CVD is second only to cancer as the biggest killer in Islington, causing 28% of all deaths. The majority of these deaths are preventable. Premature death from CVD (people under 75 years) is one of the main contributors to health inequalities within Islington, and the reason that life expectancy in Islington is lower compared to England as a whole.

Deaths

28% of all deaths and 24% of premature deaths in Islington are due to CVD 2010-12

Over half (58%) of CVD deaths are due to coronary heart disease (CHD) 2010-12

Prevalence

The diagram shows diagnosed and expected prevalence in Islington for the major cardiovascular diseases and for high blood pressure (an important risk factor for CVD). There are gaps between the expected and diagnosed prevalence of high blood pressure, coronary heart disease and stroke/TIA.

Source: QOF 2012/13

http://evidencehub.islington.gov.uk
Risk factors and inequalities

The main risk factors for CVD are; smoking, an unhealthy diet and a lack of physical activity, and their consequences; obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. These lifestyle risk factors increase the likelihood of getting CVD and also contribute to the deterioration of existing CVD.

Key programmes

Primary prevention

A number of services in Islington are in place to encourage and support healthy lifestyles and behaviours in order to help prevent long term conditions, including CVD. These include:

- **Stop Smoking Services** are available in many GP practices, pharmacies and community locations and are available to anyone living or working in Islington who smokes.
- **Weight Management Services** for people aged 18+ with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 kg/m² (or >27.5kg/m² for South Asian people)
- **Exercise on Referral** for those at high risk of CVD or diabetes identified through the NHS Health Checks.
- **Alcohol Screening & Advice** is available to all residents via primary care providers and dontbottletup.org.uk an alcohol self-help website provided by Islington Public Health. Structured expert support is also available from Islington Community Alcohol Service.
- **Hearty Lives Islington** is a £100,000 three year project funded by the British Heart Foundation (BHF). The project aims to impact on health inequalities in the borough by tackling areas relating to heart health. There are three strands; healthy catering commitment, workplace health and community engagement.

NHS Health Checks programme

The NHS Health Checks programme is designed to prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease by identifying and treating people at high risk through targeting 35-74 year olds. During the Health Check individuals are also offered lifestyle advice. Between 1st April 2013 and 1st June 2014 39,319 checks have been delivered in Islington in general practices, pharmacies and outreach community centres. Health checks have been effective for case-finding CHD in Islington; between April 2011 and March 2012, 51 new diagnoses of CHD and Myocardial Infarction (MI) were made following a health check.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation is suitable for most people with acute coronary syndromes, post revascularisation, newly diagnosed angina, heart failure, established stable angina, and to aid recovery following valve and other cardiac surgery. There are four phases to cardiac rehabilitation, and in Islington, phases 1–3 are provided by the Whittington Hospital and UCLH. Phase four is provided by Aquaterra Leisure, and is an extended exercise programme designed to maintain physical activity and lifestyle changes for the long term. Patients who receive cardiac rehabilitation are 26% less likely to die from CVD over the following five years, compared to similar patients who do not receive cardiac rehabilitation.

Secondary Care Services

Secondary care services play an important role in the acute and specialist management of patients with CVD. In Islington, the main secondary care providers are the Whittington Hospital, UCLH and to a lesser extent the Royal Free Hospital (RFH). All are part of the North Central London Cardiovascular and Stroke Network. In recent years, key changes to models of service provision, patient pathways and improvements in the way units work together, have delivered improvements in CVD outcomes.
National and local strategies

As a major and increasing cause of ill health in the population, the diagnosis, management and care of CVD is a priority both nationally and locally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Strategies</th>
<th>Local Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NHS Health Checks Programme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2013-2016</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The NHS Health Checks Programme is a national screening programme which aims to prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease. It focuses on prevention and case finding. Locally a health check is offered to all eligible patients aged 35-74 once every five years.</td>
<td>The management of long-term conditions, which includes CVD, is one of the three key priorities identified by Islington’s Health and Wellbeing Board. <strong>Closing the Gap: Tackling Health Inequalities in Islington, 2010-2030</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CVD Outcomes Strategy, 2013</strong></td>
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<td>The Department of Health (DH) sets out a number of actions including; the development and evaluation of CVD service models; improving the access to benchmarked data; improving support of the implementation of the Health Checks programmes; improving the care of patients living with CVD; improve intelligence, monitoring and research and support commissioning.</td>
<td>Islington’s Health Inequalities Strategy highlights the need to reduce early deaths caused by long-term conditions. It makes recommendations to tackle the main lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, physical activity, and healthy eating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Islington has a history of high death rates from CVD. However, since 2007; premature CVD mortality has been falling at a faster rate in Islington than both London and England. As of 2012, Islington’s reduction in premature CVD mortality is the highest amongst the London boroughs.

**Key measures for reducing inequalities**

The ‘wider determinants of health’ are the social, economic and environmental conditions which influence the health of individuals and populations. Building upon the existing work of Islington Councils, Islington CCG and other partners, the recent transition of Public Health into local government provides an opportunity to consider what more can be done locally to reduce health inequalities by tackling the wider determinants of health.

Alongside a focus on influencing the determinants of health, we are working to better target our services aimed at preventing and managing long term conditions. To reduce health inequalities we work to improve access and increase uptake for people in different age, ethnic, geographical and gender groups who may be missing out.
FURTHER INFORMATION

- British Heart Foundation [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)  Help Line: 0300 330 3311

Contact information:

- Weight Management: [www.aquaterra.org/activities/aquaterra-rebalance-weight-management](http://www.aquaterra.org/activities/aquaterra-rebalance-weight-management)
- Alcohol Screening & Advice: [www.dontbottleitup.org.uk](http://www.dontbottleitup.org.uk) or call 0808 800 0019
- Stop Smoking Services: [www.smokefreeislington.nhs.uk/](http://www.smokefreeislington.nhs.uk/) or call 0800 093 9030

About the Evidence Hub

The Evidence Hub is a partnership between the local NHS and Islington Council that brings together information held across different organisations into one accessible place. It provides access to evidence, intelligence and data on the current and anticipated needs of the Islington population and is designed to be used by a broad range of audiences including practitioners, researchers, commissioners, policy makers, Councillors, students and the general public.

This profile has been produced by Polly Reynolds, Assistant Public Health Strategist and signed off by Liz Brutus, Assistant Director of Public Health.
For more information contact carly.woodman@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 8086.
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