

# The Power of Prevention



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As the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care has set out, the long-term sustainability of the NHS is reliant on a cultural shift which acknowledges the value of investing in prevention in both principle and in practice. The NHS has pursued this for many years, yet it remains a challenge to move to a system which truly invests in prevention alongside the necessary resource required to treat disease.

We support the view outlined in the NHS' Long Term Plan, that the scope of prevention should include not only primary prevention, such as the adoption of good lifestyle habits to maintain health and the integral role of vaccination programmes in preventing illness where possible, but also focus on secondary prevention and careful condition management. When people become unwell or have a pre-existing condition, they must be well-equipped to manage their care and condition and in the right setting; whether at home, with the advice of a pharmacist, or in a GP surgery. This approach can ease pressures on the health system by avoiding unnecessary hospital visits or GP appointments in the short term. It can also limit unnecessary costs in the longer term, by reducing incidence of avoidable conditions and complications of pre-existing conditions.

To achieve this cultural shift, we must acknowledge that maintaining good health and preventing avoidable illness is everyone's responsibility, both individually and as a collective.

A recent survey commissioned by Sanofi found that there is an understanding of personal responsibility in the prevention of ill-health to reduce the burden on the NHS. However it also found that even when we are aware of healthy behaviours, we don't necessarily make the changes that could improve our health and well-being. These could be as simple as making sure we eat well and are more active, get a flu vaccine if we need one, take medicines as directed or make better use of the local pharmacy. These actions may only have a small impact on an individual's daily life, but on a nationwide scale they could help to reduce the burden on the NHS and support an active and healthy population.

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At Sanofi, this is more than a policy discussion. As a healthcare company, we work with the health service and proactively support the people, patients and consumers who use our treatments to get the best out of their health. And as an employer, we are taking action to enhance our work environment to better support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our employees. We are training employees to be mental health first aiders, providing lunchtime yoga classes and running clubs. We are also offering all our employees flu vaccinations, supporting education and awareness with wellness clinics, and piloting the roll out of a health app to track healthy behaviours. We are committed to furthering this agenda by adopting flexible working and moving to activity-based work areas that encourage more movement and will introduce a health and wellbeing room and a contemplation room. Though it is up to individual employees to utilise these opportunities; it is up to us to make a healthier lifestyle at work available and acceptable.

Prevention is now front and centre of the NHS' long-term thinking. A key factor in actually achieving transformational change will be how we collaborate to ensure that individuals are supported, confident and able to improve their health. We all have a part to play in prevention, let's play it.

