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Gillian Martin MSP  
Convener  
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
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20 May 2022

I am writing to inform the Committee of the announcement today introducing funding for a national roll out of annual health checks for anyone over the age of 16 with a learning disability.

In the 2019-2020 Programme for Government, the Scottish Government recognised the importance of learning disability health checks and committed to piloting them in Scotland. We also committed to this in our “Towards Transformation” Learning Disability and Autism Plan, published in 2021, in partnership with Cosla. Following the success of the pilot programme, we are now allocating £2 million per year to NHS Boards to implement annual health checks for people with learning disabilities across Scotland, beginning this financial year.

People with learning disabilities have some of the poorest health of any group in Scotland and die on average twenty years earlier than the rest of the population. Last year, new evidence was published by the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory that adults with learning disabilities are twice as likely to die from preventable illnesses.

Formal Directions will require NHS Boards to support health checks and identify an approach for the health checks to be undertaken. This allows flexibility for Boards to work out what approach to delivery will work best in their local context.

It is the expectation of the Scottish Government that by 31st March 2023 all of the known adults with learning disabilities will have been offered their first annual health check and that the majority will have had one completed.

We understand that not all people with learning disabilities will be known to NHS Boards but we expect all reasonable steps to be taken to identify people and to offer them health checks. We are also aware that it will take time for Boards to identify all people with learning disabilities in their area and that this will lead to a phased implementation throughout the next few months.

The Scottish Government will write out in 6-8 weeks from today’s issue of directions to ask Boards what mechanism they will be using to implement the checks.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

We want people with learning disabilities to live longer and healthier lives and this is a significant and important step in making that a reality.

If the Committee requires any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this letter to Paul O’Kane MSP, Convener of the Cross Party Group for Learning Disability.

Yours Sincerely,

**Kevin Stewart MSP**  
**Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care**

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