# Young widows campaign for mandatory NHS health checks for adults aged 25 to 35



Two young widows, Laura Burr and Gabby Evans, have embarked on a poignant campaign advocating for mandatory NHS health checks for young adults aged 25 to 35. Their initiative, sparked by personal tragedies, aims to raise awareness regarding undetected health conditions that can lead to premature deaths, much like those of their partners. Laura, 31, and Gabby, 32, lost their husbands in quick succession, both in their early thirties, and now seek to ensure that their loved ones' deaths serve a greater purpose.

Laura’s husband, Edward, passed away suddenly at the age of 32 after a diagnosis of dilated cardiomyopathy, a serious heart condition that went unnoticed until it was too late. His illness began with a complaint of feeling unwell just a day after their wedding, eventually leading to a critical condition that left him needing a heart transplant, which he tragically did not receive in time. Similarly, Gabby's partner, Tom, suffered from undiagnosed hypertension and coronary heart disease, culminating in a cardiac arrest that took his life at 34. Gabby's story resonates with countless others; she observed that Tom's warning signs were missed despite their frequency, viewing his health complaints as ordinary fatigue rather than serious symptoms.

Despite living in different regions—Laura in Banbury, Oxfordshire, and Gabby in Burnley, Lancashire—the two women found solace in their shared grief through social media, particularly TikTok, where they connected in March 2023. Since then, their bond has strengthened, evolving into a collaborative effort to advocate for systematic changes in young adult health care. They launched a petition on Change.org aimed at implementing regular health checks to identify underlying issues before they escalate into life-threatening conditions.

Their campaign is underscored by both personal loss and a broader imperative for public health reform. Current NHS guidelines target health checks primarily at individuals aged 40 to 74, an approach that may exclude significant health risks faced by younger people. While the government currently emphasises a new digital NHS Health Check set to roll out in 2024—which aims to deliver an additional one million checks and enhance the management of cardiovascular health—it remains focused on older demographics. This raises critical questions about the need for early intervention strategies that could identify risks in younger adults, simplifying the path to preventive care.

Research supports the efficacy of regular health checks in reducing health risks. A study conducted by King's College London demonstrated that participants who underwent NHS Health Checks exhibited improved management of risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases over six years. Statistically, these individuals were more likely to receive tailored health advice and treatment, leading to crucial reductions in hypertension and related conditions. Another study suggests that preventive checks could significantly decrease the risks of various diseases, inclusive of significant organ diseases, enhancing longevity and quality of life.

The NHS Health Check programme was initiated in 2009 with the goal of addressing health issues proactively, yet a recent government review has highlighted calls for its expansion to younger age groups. Introducing health screenings for those aged 30 to 39 could yield substantial benefits, ostensibly allowing the identification of critical risk factors early, an assertion echoed by Laura and Gabby's advocacy.

In their efforts, both women have expressed a profound desire to prevent others from experiencing a similar loss. Laura remarked, “We don’t want Tom and Edward to have died for no reason. Their deaths have to count for something…” Gabby similarly articulated the hope that “if our campaign can get just one person to check their health, it’s worth it.” Their emotional testimonies poignantly illustrate not just their personal grief but the urgent need for systemic health checks aimed at younger populations, to potentially avert future tragedies rooted in preventable health conditions.

Thus, while both the NHS and government initiatives work toward tackling cardiovascular diseases, a compelling case emerges for extending these efforts to younger adults. The stories of Laura and Gabby underscore the critical importance of health awareness and preventive care, advocating for a future where no family has to endure the grief that they have experienced.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2. Paragraph 4
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraph 6
5. Paragraph 7
6. Paragraph 8
7. Paragraph 9

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/young-widow-nhs-health-checks-b2750660.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-digital-health-check-to-tackle-deadly-cardiovascular-disease> - The UK government announced a new digital NHS Health Check to be rolled out across England starting in spring 2024. This initiative aims to deliver an additional one million checks over the first four years, identifying cases of hypertension and preventing strokes and heart attacks. Each digital check is expected to save 20 minutes of NHS time, potentially freeing up hundreds of thousands of primary care appointments. The program is part of the government's strategy to use technology to improve diagnosis and treatment, particularly for cardiovascular diseases, which are a leading cause of death in England.
3. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/nhs-health-checks-reduce-cardiovascular-disease-risk-new-study-finds> - A study from King's College London found that attending an NHS Health Check is associated with increased risk management interventions and decreased risk factors for cardiovascular disease over six years. The research analyzed data from 127,891 participants who completed the health check between 2010 and 2016, compared to 322,910 matched controls. Participants were more likely to receive weight management and smoking cessation advice, with higher use of statins. Six years after the check, there were net reductions in body mass index, systolic blood pressure, and smoking status among participants.
4. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/> - The NHS Health Check is a free check-up offered to adults in England aged 40 to 74 who do not have certain pre-existing conditions. The check assesses the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes, and dementia. During the check-up, individuals discuss how to reduce their risk of these conditions. Those aged over 65 are also informed about symptoms of dementia to look out for. The program aims to prevent these conditions by identifying risk factors early and providing guidance on managing them.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-health-check-programme-review/preventing-illness-and-improving-health-for-all-a-review-of-the-nhs-health-check-programme-and-recommendations> - A government review of the NHS Health Check program presents a vision for its future, aiming to reduce ill-health from cardiovascular disease. The program, launched in 2009, targets adults aged 40 to 74 without pre-existing cardiovascular disease, offering checks every five years. The review recommends expanding the program to include individuals aged 30 to 39 to address preventable risk factors like smoking, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and obesity from an earlier age. Early intervention is believed to produce greater benefits than treatments later in life.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clywg73vzxdo> - The BBC reports on a new initiative to offer free workplace health checks to over 130,000 people in England over the next six months, aiming to prevent heart disease. Starting in September 2024, employees in sectors like building and hospitality will have access to quick assessments determining their risk of developing cardiovascular disease, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes. The checks are available to those aged between 40 and 74 without certain pre-existing conditions. The scheme seeks to increase the number of NHS Health Checks conducted, introduced in 2009.
7. <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20240124/NHS-health-checks-linked-to-reduced-risk-of-heart-brain-kidney-and-liver-diseases.aspx> - A study published in BMC Medicine found that attending NHS Health Checks is associated with a reduced risk of multiple organ diseases, including heart, brain, kidney, and liver diseases. The research compared individuals who received the health evaluation to those who did not, analyzing data from the UK Biobank. Over time, participants who underwent the checks had a significantly decreased risk of various diseases and lower rates of cardiovascular and all-cause deaths. The study highlights the long-term benefits of the NHS Health Check program in disease prevention.