

# Trends, patterns and perspectives of health, wellbeing and resilience

## A Level Health and Social Care



### What do trends and patterns of health, wellbeing and resilience tell us?

The government collects data through a wide range of organisations in Wales in order to determine the trends and patterns in health amongst the people of Wales. This is important in order to see if government strategy campaigns and initiatives are working effectively. The government looks at trends and patterns to inform their policy on improving health and well-being and also to inform their perspective on the most effective way of doing this.

### What are the current trends in Wales?

Health in Wales is improving in many ways, which is a positive trend. People are living longer and the rates of some diseases such as certain types of cancer and heart disease have been falling. The rate of child mortality before and after birth has decreased. Despite this positive trend, there are many more instances where the situation could be improved. In terms of different types of illnesses, there are mixed trends. There has been a slight decrease in some illnesses over the last ten years in Wales including heart conditions and arthritis. On the other hand, there has been an increase in other issues such as diabetes and mental illnesses.

**Mortality** - Since people are living longer, there will be an increased number of elderly people in Wales. This will put more pressure on the NHS and social services in Wales. In the future, the demands on the NHS in Wales can be reduced if the government ensures that the elderly enjoy increased health, well-being and resilience. In Wales, trends show that a significant portion of the population are obese or overweight at the moment. This increases the levels of chronic disease amongst the people of Wales such as diabetes, joint problems, heart disease and some cancers. These can then lead to disabilities and increased demands on health services in Wales. This is a trend that government initiatives and campaigns are trying to reverse. With an ageing population and if current rates continue, there could be an increase in dementia sufferers. By 2025, there could be 50,000 people aged 65 or over suffering from dementia in Wales, with nearly a quarter of them aged 90 or over.

**Smoking** - The amount of people smoking in Wales is decreasing, which is a positive trend towards the improvement of the health amongst the people of Wales. However, the pattern of this trend is only a slow decrease and more can be done to reduce the impact of smoking on people's health in Wales. This will therefore reduce the impact on the NHS. This is also a major part of Welsh Government strategy to improve health and well-being in Wales.

**Mental well-being** – This is key in improving the health, well-being and resilience of the people of Wales. Poor mental health is a factor that has a significant impact on many physical diseases and also leads to an increase in unhealthy lifestyles and substance misuse. It also influences a negative trend towards increased social inequalities in health. There has been a noticeable increase in the people suffering from mental illnesses in Wales, with the figure of adults reporting that they have received treatment for mental illnesses rising from 9% in 2009 to 13% by 2015.

**Tackling inequalities** - The difference in the amount of years people can enjoy good health in Wales varies depending on the areas in which they live. Welsh men living in the less deprived areas of Wales are likely to enjoy good health for 19 years longer than men living in the more deprived areas in Wales. The same is true for women living in less deprived areas of Wales, who enjoy good health for 18 years longer than women living in more deprived areas. This pattern is repeated across many areas of health. For example, instances of cancer are 23% higher and cancer mortality are 48% higher in the most deprived areas of Wales.

**Children** - Tackling adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has emerged as a focus for government strategy in Wales. This is vital in addressing long-term health outcomes. There are 5,000 police officers across Wales who are now trained to identify childhood adversities and they also work with partners to provide early interventions for children. For every 100 adults living in Wales, 47 of them have suffered at least one ACE during their childhood and 14 of them have suffered four or more. Individuals who have experienced a higher number of ACEs are more likely to engage in health-harming behaviours and are more likely to report that they suffer from low mental health and well-being. The pattern here shows that those who experience more ACEs have a higher risk of poor health during their adult lives.

14% of children in their first year of primary school in deprived areas of Wales are obese, compared to 9% in less deprived areas. The government perspective on these trends and patterns is to tackle these inequalities by supporting families to ensure that they make healthier lifestyle choices. This will improve the health and well-being of families in Wales. It is now understood that, in order to improve health in Wales, we need to support and enable people to be able to make healthy lifestyle choices for themselves and their families.



### What is the current perspective in Wales on health, well-being and resilience?

It is important to understand current trends and patterns regarding health in order to inform government strategy on how to improve the health, well-being and resilience of Wales as a nation both now and for future generations. Working towards a healthier future is a global trend. All countries have adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to 'end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all' through achieving the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

#### Key Words

**A trend** is a general tendency to change. Governments will look at changes in statistics on health to establish if there are now less smokers in Wales.

**A pattern** is something that happens in a regular and repeated way. Therefore, the government will examine the pattern of deaths from cancer in Wales in order to ensure that the necessary services are available in the areas that need them the most.

**A perspective** is a particular way of considering something. Perspectives on health are shaped by ideology, for example ideas about what is meant by the fundamental concept of health. In Wales, health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organisation).

**Health** depends on many factors, and not just the presence or absence of disease. The wider, or social, determinants of health include the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that can either improve or detract from their health and their well-being.