



PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK CYMRU

E-BULLETIN

JULY 2023

IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY IN WALES





Welcome

Welcome to July's e-bulletin. This month we are taking a closer look at the socio-economic duty. The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on the 31st of March 2021 and aims to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage in areas such as health, life expectancy and educational attainment.

Do you have any projects, research or case studies to share with the wider public health community in Wales? Send your articles to Publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk or [@PHNetworkCymru](https://twitter.com/PHNetworkCymru)

We need your feedback on our systems thinking in public health webpage!

Tools and methods from systems thinking are useful when looking at complex public health issues and enable policy makers and practitioners to look at the relationships between different parts of a system, where to intervene in the system and intended and unintended consequences of making changes in a system.

We have noticed that there has been a large increase in visits to our systems thinking in public health page and we want to ensure we are providing relevant information/content for our members. Please complete our [short survey](#).

Let us know what you think of our e-bulletin by answering [two questions](#).

Contact us

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The Socio-economic Duty – maximizing opportunities for health and wellbeing for people and communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in Wales

Public Health Network Cymru

The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on the 31st of March 2021 and aims to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage in areas such as health, life expectancy and educational attainment. Whilst public bodies have welcomed the Duty, [research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) suggests it has not been fully implemented and more support is needed. The Socio-economic Duty is an opportunity to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and promote equality.

This [webinar](#) explored the implementation of the Duty in practice, provided additional guidance on systems leadership, using data effectively, engaging



meaningfully and knowing how organisations have made a difference. The webinar explained how inequalities of outcome are linked to socio-economic disadvantage, with a strong focus on health.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand what the Socio-economic Duty is and how organisations can implement the Duty
- Understand the relationship between socio-

economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome

- Recognise the Duty as an important opportunity to reduce health and other inequalities of outcome

How to maximise opportunities to improve health and wellbeing in disadvantaged communities: a practical toolkit for public bodies to implement the Socio-economic Duty

Public Health Wales

Public Health Wales has published a [toolkit](#) to help other public bodies in Wales to maximise opportunities that the Socio-Economic Duty offers, in order to improve the health outcomes for people across Wales who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Most public bodies in Wales, including local health boards, county and county borough councils, and Welsh ministers, as well as Public Health Wales, have a legal responsibility to “give due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage”.

Public Health Wales’ guide, “Maximising opportunities for health and wellbeing for people and communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage: A guide to using the socio-economic duty in policy and practice in Wales”, is designed to ensure that public bodies are able to utilise the powerful levers of the duty most effectively, and to make a tangible difference to communities in areas of deprivation.

The toolkit covers areas which include a description of what the duty actually is, the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on equality of outcome, the need for strong and visible leadership, and practical checklists so that organisations can embed the duty into their systems and processes.

Professor Jo Peden, Consultant of Public Health, at the World Health Organization Collaboration Centre for Public Health Wales, said:

“This toolkit is a really useful, practical guide which will enable public bodies in Wales to utilise the Socio-Economic Duty most effectively.

“The guide contains practical tips, so it offers public bodies the opportunity to embed the duty into their whole approach and to make real change – so it is not just a box-ticking exercise, but adds real value to the communities we serve.”

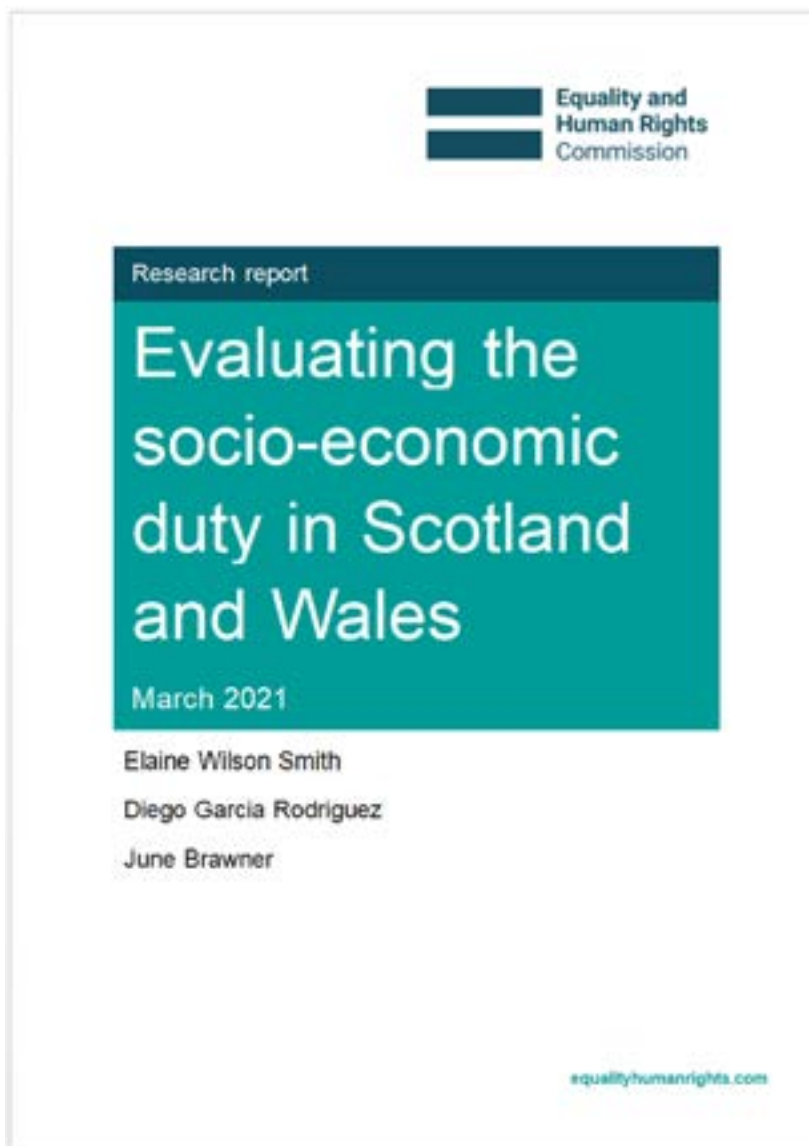


Evaluating the Socio-economic Duty in Scotland and Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2021 published a [report](#) looking at how 24 public bodies in Scotland and Wales are implementing, or preparing to implement, the duty. It looks at the barriers and facilitators to effective implementation, the impact of the duty on the behaviour of public bodies and the aspirations for long-term change.

It also highlights ways in which the duty can be implemented effectively and the steps needed to ensure future success. The report concludes whilst public bodies in both Scotland and Wales were largely positive about the duty, research suggests that more support is needed to ensure effective implementation.



Know Your Rights - Your guide to the Socio-economic Duty

Disability Wales

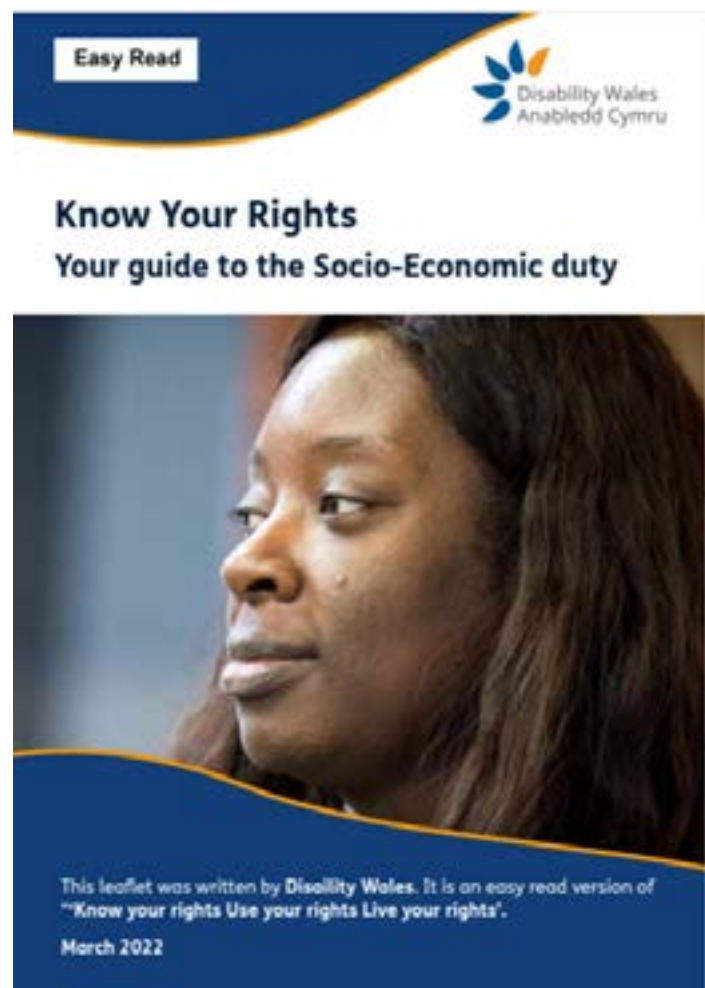
This booklet was first published in 2013 as part of Disability Wales' 2012-2015 core work programme. This latest version includes information about legislation introduced since 2013 including the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

During 2020 Disability Wales surveyed Disabled People in Wales. The results show that 68% of the 120 respondents did not feel that their rights were being adequately enforced, and 35% did not feel their rights were being enforced at all. Worryingly, 76% of respondents were not confident that their rights would improve over the next five years and 43% of these people didn't think that their rights would improve at all.

The aim of this resource is to equip members with knowledge and information about disabled people's rights and how they can use them to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment in their communities. A further aim is to support and empower disabled people at a particularly challenging time, given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of so many.

The revision of this resource is a key element of Disability Wales' response to the pandemic and in support of the recovery and a more inclusive future. As well as providing information about legislation, it outlines several case studies whereby disabled people and their organisations have successfully argued their rights under the Equality Act (2010), the Public Sector Equality

Duties and the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. The outcome of this has been to influence the planning and delivery of national or local policies or to challenge decisions which threatened to undermine disabled people's equality and right to independent living.



Disability Wales recognises how vital it is that disabled people understand our intrinsic human rights and value ourselves for who we are.

Strengthening disabled people's perception about ourselves is an important means of challenging belief systems that we are powerless especially in the face of institutionalised discrimination and individualised harassment.

Our hope therefore is that this resource will act as a source of inspiration and affirmation of what can be achieved when disabled people act together, fully equipped with the tools for change.

When Disability Wales wrote this pack, it decided to concentrate on the rights of Disabled People under various equality laws. These laws are very important and help to make sure that Disabled People can argue for their rights. However, in many legal cases about the rights of Disabled People, other laws are used too. These laws are explained elsewhere and are not covered in detail in this pack.

Our publication and easy-read resources are available here <https://www.disabilitywales.org/socialmodel/>

Implementing the Socio-economic Duty: learning from experience

Wales Centre for Public Policy

On 31st March 2021, the Welsh Government commenced section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, known as the [Socio-economic Duty](#). It requires that public bodies, when making strategic decisions, have “[due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage](#)”. This signals the most recent attempt from the Welsh Government to embed equality principles with its own activities, and those of the wider public sector.

As the 2021 report *The Welsh Government's use of policy tools for mainstreaming equalities* shows, the Welsh Government has extensive experience in

embedding equality within its decision making, although has faced a number of challenges in doing so. These experiences and lessons learned offer suggestions for the implementation of the socio-economic duty, applicable to both the Welsh Government and the wider public sector.

Statutory duties are not enough on their own to enact change.

The Welsh Government has a number of [statutory requirements to promote equality](#) within its decision making. Although, however transformative their potential may be, these requirements are not enough to deliver

substantive change on their own. Implementation gaps, and a disconnect between statutory requirements to consider equality, and policy outputs and outcomes, are common. Even in cases where legislative duties are established, the extent to which equality is embedded within decision-making is often limited.

This requires that public bodies be ambitious in implementing the duty. Public bodies should aim high when implementing the Duty. Even when statutory duties are clearly communicated and effectively implemented, they may not be ambitious enough to meet their desired goals. This may be the case with the implementation of the Duty in Wales, particularly given the requirement to give ‘due regard’, and the apparent lack of specific outcomes for public bodies to achieve. It is entirely possible to give ‘due regard’ to an issue, and for this to have little to no impact on policy outputs or socio-economic outcomes.

Collective ownership

A key barrier to implementation is the lack of collective ownership when embedding equality within government. Despite the work of dedicated individual officials, equality-related issues struggle to gain traction throughout government, with equality often seen as somebody else’s business.

As the Duty only applies to ‘strategic decisions’, high-level buy in and support will be essential. However, the chances of effective implementation will be greater if officials throughout a public body feel a level of collective responsibility for its implementation.

Awareness and understanding

In building this collective ownership around the Duty, public bodies should work to increase awareness and understanding throughout their organisations. As the Welsh Government’s experience of mainstreaming equality shows, a key barrier to implementation is lack of awareness of equalities issues among officials, along with a limited understanding of how to embed equality considerations within their activity.

Avoiding a culture of ‘tick-box’ compliance

The Welsh Government and relevant public bodies should be conscious of avoiding the emergence of a culture of ‘tick-box’ compliance when implementing the Duty. Evidenced in prior experience in mainstreaming equality within Wales, and [highlighted during consultation](#) prior to commencing the Duty, requirements to embed an issue within decision making are often seen as bureaucratic add-ons to decision making processes. Public bodies should therefore work to ensure that the Duty is meaningfully implemented, rather than working to fulfil statutory obligations and nothing more.

Being accountable

A key barrier to effectively embedding equality within decision making is accountability, and the degree to which the Socio-economic Duty can be enforced will have a significant impact on this. As [evidence in numerous cases](#) shows, if there are no consequences for not doing it, implementation is likely to be sub-optimal, and adherence to the Duty sporadic. According to the Welsh Government’s [statutory guidance](#), judicial review proceedings may be brought against a public body if it is felt that they are not complying with the Duty. Examining previous statutory duties on equality issues shows that this has consistently proved to be a barrier within Wales. Many organisations who may have cause to challenge Government or a public body lack the resources to do so, limiting the extent to which previous duties around embedding equalities can be, and have been, enforced.

Data and Evidence

The Welsh Government’s experience in mainstreaming equality highlights the necessity of equalities-relevant data when embedding equalities within decision making. A dearth of equalities related data, and a lack of clarity over how this data informs decision making has proved a key barrier to effectively embedding equality in Wales.

Without sufficient data, public bodies will struggle to effectively and accurately consider socio-economic inequality within their strategic decision making, and will have no means of accurately evaluating the impact of such decisions.

By considering the lessons learned from the Welsh Government’s experience in mainstreaming equalities, public bodies in Wales may prove more successful in implementing the socio-economic duty. However, it should be noted that effectively implementing such a duty is difficult, and a proactive approach among public bodies will be required if the duty is to become a meaningful tool for addressing socio-economic inequality within Wales.



The Grapevine

Facing the challenge - Occupational Health Long-Covid support and return to work

Stephen Hayward, Swansea Bay University Health Board

A specialist service for Swansea Bay University Health Board employees experiencing Post Covid-19 Syndrome (Long-Covid) symptoms was established in November 2020. The service provides employees with advice and support to enable effective condition management, to signpost to other sources of support and provide vocational advice/recommendations to managers in order to facilitate returns to work. Despite a reduction in referrals in 2023, the service continues to provide vocational advice and condition management for staff that are referred, as Covid-19 continues to remain prevalent in our communities.

The service was initially developed in response to the increasing number of employees being referred to the Occupational Health service with a range of symptoms following contracting Covid-19, prior to Post Covid-19 Syndrome being classified as a medical condition.

Following an evaluation of a small-scale pilot project completed within the Health Board and the increase in the number of employees being referred for support, it was identified that the service needed to continue. As a result, Adferiad funding via Welsh Government was secured to enable the service to continue and develop.

The service is delivered by a specialist Occupational Therapist. Individuals who are referred are offered an initial assessment, followed by a review appointment and additional follow-up appointments, if appropriate. In addition, with the appropriate level of consent, management reports are provided with specific

vocational advice and recommendations to support employees to remain in work or facilitate earlier returns to work.

Intervention focusses on symptom management, vocational advice and signposting to other sources of support. Frequently delivered interventions include:

- Fatigue management.
- Emotional/Anxiety management.
- Managing concentration/memory.
- Vocational advice and recommendations for service managers.
- Virtual 'Managing your Wellbeing after Covid-19' group sessions.

To date, the service has supported 231 employees. Supporting 84 employees to return to the workplace and 91 employees to remain in work. Symptom management intervention has been provided to 194 employees.



The service assists employees to return to the workplace by providing vocational advice which can include; phased return to work, flexibility in working hours, adjustments to roles/duties, and encourages communication between managers and employees.

In addition to return to work outcomes, the service uses the EQ-5D-5L health outcome questionnaire and the Brief Fatigue Inventory, which demonstrate improvement in all domains for individuals who received support.

MDT Working: The Occupational Therapy role within the Occupational Health Department is unique and has enhanced the service in delivering holistic safe and effective patient care.

Early intervention: Early advice has aided effective management, reducing the likelihood of symptom development.

Ongoing support: Providing review appointments, to monitor and promote condition management.

Evaluation: Data capture to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Producing reports for the health board and WG, demonstrating the value of the service to support ongoing funding.

Collaboration: Collaborative working with Pulmonary Rehabilitation, communications team, Occupational Health & Wellbeing colleagues and relevant local and national networks.

Further Information can be found here or contact Stephen.Hayward@wales.nhs.uk or matthew.tidball@wales.nhs.uk

Adferiad's 'Time to Take Control' Summer campaign: How to get through the cost-of-living crisis safely and in good health

Chloe Harrison and Peter Martin, Adferiad Recovery

Back in May, we [announced the launch](#) of our 2023 campaign, 'Time to Take Control' which focuses on the [cost-of-living crisis](#) and specifically, what we can all do to gain control of our finances and navigate through the cost-of-living crisis successfully, as well as what the UK and Welsh Governments can do to help.

Despite limited government intervention, people we support and speak up for – those with mental health, substance-use and addiction problems - face ever increasing and more daunting challenges as the soaring prices for fuel, food, and other essentials strain their limited resources. Our members and clients are finding it difficult coping with the financial and economic pressures and we want to help and support them to better plan for the future.

Currently, 1 in 5 households do not have enough income to cover their essential bills, which inevitably leads to debt and in turn, can negatively affect peoples' mental health and wellbeing. As a mental health and substance-use charity operating across Wales, we are committed to improving the lives of vulnerable people and supporting them through challenging times.

Therefore, the main aims of our campaign are;

1. To host county event days delivering practical and personal support to help people deal with money and debt problems, energy costs, food shopping, and other challenges
2. To conduct a nation-wide survey to gain insight into people's personal experiences of the cost-of-living crisis
3. To call for action by the Welsh and UK Governments, Local Authorities, the NHS, and others to better support our client group through the cost-of-living crisis.

Right now, our campaign events are in full swing and our staff and guests are joining in activities such as gaining advice about money management, learning about healthy and affordable food options, participating in price-checking comparison activities, and developing support networks and work experience opportunities.



Although our survey is still currently in progress, early findings show that over 80% of respondents felt that their costs of living had 'increased a lot' over the past 18 months and worryingly, nearly ¾ of respondents had relied on credit cards, loans, and borrowing from friends or family members to cope with the cost of living.

In addition to our campaign event days and survey, we have also been developing a [Ten-Point Plan](#) outlining our asks of the UK and Welsh Governments. These include:

- ensuring that benefits rise with inflation
- restoring the Universal Credit uplift
- improving financial support for carers
- and making sure that all adults at risk have easy and timely access to advice and advocacy relating to money management and debt.



Our campaign will end on [World Mental Health Day](#) (October 10th), after which we will publish a full report on our findings along with a "Cost of Living Survival Guide", designed specifically for people with mental health and addiction problems and based on our campaign feedback.

To find out more about our Time to Take Control campaign and the wide-range of services we provide, please visit our new [website](#) or contact Chloe Harrison: chloe.harrison@adferiad.org

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/adferiad>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Adferiad/>

Providing advice and assistance to public bodies and PSBs (Public Service Boards)

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

We provide advice, assistance and support to people on the Well-being of Future Generations Act in a variety of ways.

We provide learning and development opportunities; publish recommendations and reports; comment on policy and current affairs; produce toolkits and resources; provide advice directly to organisations; and respond to members of the public that contact us.

Our team receive many requests for support and we need to prioritise those organisations with duties under the Act. As such, each public body and PSB covered by the Act has a dedicated point of contact within our team.

Working with organisations, we put the emphasis on knowledge sharing, quality conversations and coaching to help organisations build their capability. We want to help you and your teams to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of how to drive change.

From next month we will be hosting sessions covering a range of topics. For example:

- A refresher on the Act, the sustainable development principle, applying the ways of working and contributing to the national well-being goals.
- Masterclasses on using the ways of working within your context and organisation.
- Opportunities to explore how to apply the Act within corporate centres of organisations.
- Learning on long-term and futures techniques.
- Sharing international practice on sustainable development.

Many of these will be open sessions that you, or your colleagues, can book to attend but we will also be offering tailored sessions for public bodies.

More information on this work is available on our website and other sessions arranged so far are at the bottom of this link tree.

See our upcoming sessions here and please get in touch through your point of contact or via contactus@futuregenerations.wales to talk to us about something more specific for your own organisation.

If you are interested in having a tailored session for your organisation, please get in touch with us.



Comisiynydd
Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol
Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
For Wales

Videos



Detection and prevention of illicit trade in drugs, alcohol and tobacco in Wales

The significant increase in deaths and hospitalisations associated with illicit drug and alcohol use, alongside the persistent risk posed by tobacco, is a public health crisis that requires cross-sector and multi-agency collaboration and coordination. Illegally traded drugs, alcohol and tobacco have a damaging impact on population health and well-being...

[Watch](#)

Health Impact Assessment: The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Trade is a key commercial determinant of health and affects everyone in Wales. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is one of the largest free trade agreements in the world, including eleven countries on four continents and accounted for £96 billion worth of UK trade in 2018...

[Watch](#)

Addressing health inequities in Wales: The Welsh Health Equity Solutions Platform

Join Public Health Wales, Welsh Government and World Health Organization Europe who are launching a new innovative web platform, the – Welsh Health Equity Solutions Platform. The platform has been designed as a resource to find data and solutions relating to health equity. It includes an interactive data dashboard, policy and healthy equity frameworks and international case studies.

[Watch](#)

Explore our video library
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News & Resources



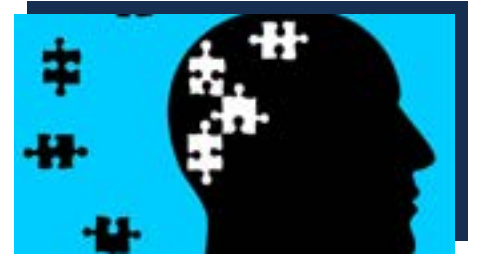
[A new report sets out how reducing inequalities can build a fairer Gwent](#)

01-08-2023



[Make a promise to enjoy Wales safely this summer](#)

01-08-2023



[Refugees and Asylum-seekers are among the most vulnerable members of society having poorer mental health than the general population](#)

01-08-2023

[All News](#)

[A smoke-free Wales: Our long-term tobacco control strategy](#)

Welsh Government

[Water-related fatalities in children and young people under 25 years of age, Wales, 2013-2022](#)

Public Health Wales

[All Resources](#)

Topics

Prevention and Improvement in Health and Healthcare

Nursing Now Cymru/Wales

Mental Ill Health

Mental Health Conditions

Suicide and self-harm prevention

Non-communicable Diseases

Diabetes

Communicable disease

Foodborne Communicable Diseases

Influenza (Flu)

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

People

LGBT+

Gender

Learning, physical and sensory disabilities

Maternal and newborn health

Offenders

Older adults

Ethnicity

Carers

Working age adults

Children and young people

Early years

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Health related behaviours

Psychoactive substances

Alcohol

Food and Nutrition

Healthy Weight

Accident and Injury Prevention

Smoking and vaping

Physical Activity

Oral Health

Sexual health

Mental Wellbeing

Stress and resilience

Arts and health

Spirituality

Wider determinants of health

Poverty

Income and debt

Benefits

Housing

Homelessness

Fuel poverty

Housing quality

Education and Training

Preschool

School

Further, higher and tertiary education

Community

Assets Based Approaches

Social capital

Environment

Climate change

Natural environment

Sustainable development

Built environment

Employment

Unemployment

Precarious work

Good, fair work

Health in all policies

Health Inequalities

Social justice and human rights

Wellbeing of future generations

Approaches and methods in public health practice

Communities4Change Wales

Systems thinking in public health

Evaluation

Behavioural Science

All Topics

Next Issue

TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN WALES

Health inequalities result from a range of interconnected factors including access to healthcare services, health-related behaviours, mental well-being, social cohesion and the wider determinants of health such as quality of housing, access to fair work, poverty and air quality.

For our next e-bulletin we would particularly welcome articles which look at national, regional or local initiatives which focus on reducing health inequalities in Wales. Examples could include addressing the cost of living crisis, climate change adaptation, increasing access to green and blue spaces and promoting physical activity.

[Contribute](#)

