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Evidence Service

Current Awareness Bulletin February 2023

This current awareness bulletin is produced by the Evidence Service team at Public Health Wales. The focus is on grey literature* and items are selected from searching the websites of a range of UK organizations, a selection of European sources and the World Health Organization. The aim is to highlight newly published key documents and information relevant to public health. Enquiries about this bulletin should be sent to: evidence.service@wales.nhs.uk

Inclusion of items in this bulletin is not an endorsement.

* Grey literature refers to both published and unpublished research material that's not available commercially i.e., not published in journals or indexed by bibliographic databases.

A clinical case definition for post COVID-19 condition in children and adolescents by expert consensus, 16 February 2023. World Health Organization. Geneva: WHO; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1491580/retrieve>

The WHO definition of post Covid-19 condition for adults was published in October 2021. This enables a shared understanding of this important problem between people affected by post Covid-19 condition, healthcare workers, researchers and other stakeholders. A separate clinical case definition for children and adolescents has been formed, through a process of expert consensus, which recognizes the unique health needs and challenges of this group of people.

Adult social care outcomes framework 2023 to 2024: draft handbook of definitions. Department of Health and Social Care. London: HM Government; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-outcomes-framework-handbook-of-definitions/adult-social-care-outcomes-framework-2023-to-2024-draft-handbook-of-definitions>

This handbook of definitions is published in draft and sets out definitions for revised metrics for the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) for April 2023 to March 2024. The definitions and calculations for metrics sourced from the new client level data (CLD) collection, which becomes mandatory for all local authorities from April 2023, are under development and revised guidance is intended to be published from summer 2023 once the first quarterly collection of CLD has taken place.

Alcohol treatment services. National Audit Office. London: NAO; 2023.

URL: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/alcohol-treatment-services.pdf>

The safe level of alcohol consumption continues to be the subject of research and policy debate worldwide, but it is clear that excessive drinking can have costs for both society and individuals. In 2022 a member of Parliament expressed concern to the National Audit Office about the provision of alcohol treatment services in England. In this briefing we have collated some publicly available evidence on alcohol treatment services, which affect only a small number of heavy drinkers

Can mental health services afford the cost-of-living crisis? Onyeka, E; Lavis, P; Lowe, R. London: NHS Confederation; 2023.

URL: <https://www.nhsconfed.org/long-reads/can-mental-health-services-afford-cost-living-crisis>

The increased cost of living, coming so soon after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, poses a significant risk to the population's health, and in particular, its mental health. The number of people with mental health problems being referred to food banks by Citizens Advice has risen sharply from 1,043 referrals in August 2020 to 2,749 in December 2022.

Care data matters: a roadmap for better data for adult social care. Department of Health and Social Care. London: HM Government; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-data-matters-a-roadmap-for-better-data-for-adult-social-care/care-data-matters-a-roadmap-for-better-data-for-adult-social-care>

This framework is focused on the work happening nationally to improve how we collect, use and analyse data as a sector. It is not intended as guidance on how people and organisations should interact with data daily but outlines initiatives that will ultimately improve and enhance their access to, and use of, data.

Ending violence against women and girls. A public health approach. Public Health Scotland. Edinburgh: Public Health Scotland; 2023.

URL: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/17512/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-a-public-health-approach.pdf>

This paper describes a public health approach and highlights the actions and conditions required to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG). We explore the necessary steps to create a climate of prevention around VAWG issues and the opportunities to collaborate across sectors and with communities to create a fuller understanding of prevention approaches.

Evaluation of Government commitments made on the digitalisation of the NHS. House of Commons. London: House of Commons; 2023.

URL: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33979/documents/186799/default/>

The Health and Social Care Committee commissioned a review of the evidence for the effective implementation and appropriateness of the Government's policy commitments relating to the digitisation of the NHS in England. This report has been produced independently of the Committee's inquiry 'Digital transformation of the NHS'. The findings and ratings, however, may contribute to the Committee's inquiry on this topic.

Faecal immunochemical testing (FIT) in symptomatic colorectal cancer referral. Welsh Government. Cardiff: WG; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-01/new-lower-gastrointestinal-fit-national-optimal-pathway.pdf>

In July 2022, Welsh Health Circular (2022) 021 introduced an updated list of 21 nationally agreed clinical pathways for cancer for adoption by local health boards and trusts as part of delivering the suspected cancer pathway. The pathway for suspected colorectal cancer reflected current guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on the referral and investigation of colorectal cancer; specifically guidelines NG12 and DG30.

Good practice statement on the use of variant-containing COVID-19 vaccines. World Health Organization. Geneva: WHO; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1492004/retrieve>

This Good practice statement has been developed on the basis of advice issued by the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization at its [meeting](#) on 5 October 2022, and was updated on 20 February 2023 based on additional evidence and advice by SAGE. This Good Practice Statement summarizes current evidence on variant-containing vaccines and provides guidance on their use in the context of the continued availability of ancestral virus-only (monovalent) COVID-19 vaccines.

Guided self-help digital cognitive behavioural therapy for children and young people with mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety or low mood: early value assessment. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. London: NICE; 2023.

URL: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hte3/resources/guided-selfhelp-digital-cognitive-behavioural-therapy-for-children-and-young-people-with-mild-to-moderate-symptoms-of-anxiety-or-low-mood-early-value-assessment-pdf-1396168997317>

Early value assessment (EVA) guidance rapidly provides recommendations on promising health technologies that have the potential to address national unmet need. NICE has assessed early evidence on these technologies to determine if earlier patient and system access in the NHS is appropriate while further evidence is generated. The medical technology advisory committee has considered the evidence and the views of clinical and patient experts. This topic is the first pilot using the new EVA approach. EVA guidance recommendations are conditional while more evidence is generated to address uncertainty in their evidence base. Although there are uncertainties, they do not suggest a risk to patient safety. NICE has included advice in this guidance on how to minimise any clinical or system risk of early access to treatment. Further evidence will be generated within the next 3 years to assess if the benefits of these technologies are realised in practice. NICE guidance will be reviewed to include this evidence and make a recommendation on the routine adoption of these technologies across the NHS.

Investing to reduce tobacco usage and tackle associated health inequalities. Day, S . Bristol: HFMA ; 2023.

URL: https://www.hfma.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/briefings/investing-to-reduce-tobacco-usage-and-tackle-associated-health-inequalities---formatted.pdf?sfvrsn=75ba4ae7_0

Smoking is a major cause of preventable ill health and early death in England and a driver of stark inequalities in life expectancy. Reducing tobacco usage in England is a priority for NHS England in addressing public health. This briefing highlights key messages from relevant policies and guidance and identifies the funding streams in place to enable the work to be undertaken. The briefing also discusses the role of the finance function in supporting their organisations and systems with advice applicable not just to reducing tobacco usage but also transferable to other areas of reducing health inequalities and improving population health.

Preconception, pregnancy and healthy weight in childhood. Food Foundation. London: Food Foundation; 2023.

URL: https://www.foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/Early%20Years%20report_A4_NEW_0.pdf

This report argues Government must do more to break the cycle of health inequalities which have resulted in more than one fifth of children in England starting school with overweight or obesity. Preventative measures must start early. Research shows the extent to which a child's health is influenced before conception and in the womb and argues greater support is needed to support low-income women of child-bearing age and expectant parents during pregnancy to eat well. Policies targeting preconception and pregnancy are largely absent from Government strategies to improve diet-related health, yet this is the crucial time point to lay foundations for a child's healthy growth trajectory – which, in turn, impacts adult health and future generations.

Progress in improving mental health services in England. National Audit Office. London: NAO; 2023.

URL: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Progress-in-improving-mental-health-services-CS.pdf>

This report focuses on the implementation of NHS commitments as set out in:

- the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (FYFV, July 2016)
- Stepping forward to 2020/21: The mental health workforce plan for England (Stepping Forward, July 2017)

Supporting and expanding green social prescribing to address mental health inequalities in London. Plimpton, B. London: Mental Health Foundation; 2023.

URL: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/MHF-Green-Social-Prescribing-to-Address-Mental-Health-Inequalities-Report-2023.pdf>

This report highlights the opportunities that London's nature and green spaces could offer to improve the mental health of all those living in the capital.

TB annual report 2021. 2021 Tuberculosis annual report for Scotland. Public Health Scotland. Edinburgh: Public Health Scotland; 2023.

URL: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/17808/tb-annual-report-2021.pdf>

This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) presents national surveillance of tuberculosis and provides information on the numbers, distribution, and characteristics of cases, drug resistance patterns, and treatment outcomes. It supports the early identification and treatment of cases and enables the identification of high-risk populations. The Enhanced Surveillance of Mycobacterial Infections (ESMI) system was introduced in Scotland in 2000. Tuberculosis cases are identified by NHS Boards and notified to PHS. All 14 NHS boards contribute clinical, laboratory and epidemiological data to ESMI in three parts; on detection and notification of a case, when bacteriological results are known (at around 3 months) and at treatment completion (usually 12 months post notification). This report describes tuberculosis in Scotland through 2021, including treatment outcomes of cases first reported in 2020 (12-month outcomes) and 2019 (24-month outcomes). Please note that data in this report are provisional and may be subject to change as data continues to be received.

The identification of safety concerns relating to children. Ball, K; Buckley, L; Moore, R. London: HM Inspectorate of Probation ; 2022.

URL: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/09/Identifying-safety-concerns-RAB-1-2.pdf>

A key objective for those delivering youth offending services is to keep children and other people safe, which sits alongside and supports the all-important nurturing and strengths-focused work that helps children to realise their potential. The focus in this bulletin is upon the assessment stage of youth justice work, recognising that it is vital to identify all potential safety concerns and sources of harm in order to mitigate and prevent any dangers. We provide examples of what good and poor assessment looks like in practice, including areas for further attention.

Time to talk Public Health. January 2023 panel survey findings. Public Health Wales. Cardiff: Public Health Wales NHS Trust; 2023.

URL: <https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/time-to-talk-public-health/>

Time to Talk Public Health is a nationally representative panel of Welsh residents established by Public Health Wales to enable regular public engagement to inform public health policy and practice. Currently in its pilot phase, the panel aims to recruit a nationally representative sample of residents aged 16+ years to participate in monthly surveys and provide insight into key public health issues.

UK Poverty 2023: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. York: JRF; 2023.

URL: https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/uk_poverty_2023_-_the_essential_guide_to_understanding_poverty_in_the_uk_0_0.pdf

This is the second issue of our new-style UK Poverty report, which looks at trends in poverty across many important characteristics and impacts. We know poverty at any stage in life can lead to negative impacts, so it is critical to scrutinise the data thoroughly to work out who is worst affected, determine how trends are changing over time and see what the future prospects are likely to be.

What is the outlook for health funding?. Boccarini, G; et al. London: Health Foundation; 2023.

URL: <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/what-is-the-outlook-for-health-funding>

In this analysis we look at the outlook for health funding following the 2022 Autumn Statement, draw out some implications for clearing the NHS estate maintenance backlog and look at the potential impact of pay and other cost pressures on NHS spending power.

Working conditions in the time of COVID-19: Implications for the future. Gaude, B; et al. Eurofound. Luxembourg: Office of the European Union; 2022.

URL: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef22012en.pdf

The report documents the working conditions of Europeans in 2021. It examines variation in job quality and identifies its positive association with well-being, health, work engagement and the financial sustainability of work. It highlights the divergences in the experiences of workers depending on workers' own attributes and their place in the workforce. From this analysis, the report aims to derive lessons for the future, particularly in relation to the enduring marks on how we work and the implications for work organisation, the quality of work, and the interaction between work and private life.