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Current Awareness Bulletin May 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* Grey literature refers to both published and unpublished research material that's not available commercially i.e., not published in journals or indexed by bibliographic databases.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 guide to tailoring health programmes. World Health Organization.Geneva: WHO ; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1499380/retrieve>

Some of the most persistent public health challenges are dependent on human behaviour. These include, among many others, overuse of antibiotics, use of tobacco and alcohol, suboptimal uptake of vaccination and cancer screening, lack of pandemic or sexual protective behaviours, and low adherence to treatment plans for diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These challenges place a weighty burden on health systems and on the health and well-being of individuals. They call for evidence-based action that draws on an understanding of these health behaviours and the cultural context in which they take place, and on engaging with those affected. Using evidence, models and methods from behavioural and cultural sciences allows to tailor health-related services, policies and communication, thereby improving their outcomes. This guide offers an approach to do so, the Tailoring Health Programmes (THP) approach, and is aimed at public health units and experts who would like to apply behavioural and cultural insights (BCI) to health. The approach comprises four phases, each involving several steps, as well as a theoretical model and framework. An accompanying tool book offers inspirational ideas and exercises that complement the advice given in this guide. The THP approach can be applied to any health behaviour in any population group.

A rapid review of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of interventions that make homes warmer and cheaper to heat for households in fuel poverty in rural and remote areas..

Edwards, D; et al . Health and Care Research Wales Evidence Centre.Cardiff: Health and Care Research Wales Evidence Centre ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2023.04.18.23288747v1.full.pdf>

The cost-of-living across the UK has been on the increase since the start of 2021, reflecting the position globally. Living in a rural community is often associated with additional costs compared to those in urban areas. For example, people living in rural areas are not always connected to the gas grid, often using oil and liquid petroleum gas for heating that are more expensive and not subjected to energy price caps. Moreover, housing in rural areas is generally older, not as well insulated and less energy efficient than houses in urban locations, leading to increased risk of fuel poverty. Fuel poverty can be defined as a household spending more than 10% of their income on fuel for satisfactory heating and comfort and to sustain all energy services. Home energy advice, energy efficiency measures, and financial support all have the potential to mitigate fuel poverty. Thus, the aim of this rapid review was to determine the effectiveness of interventions that make homes warmer and cheaper to heat for households in fuel poverty in rural and remote areas.

A rapid review of the effectiveness, efficiency, and acceptability of surgical hubs in supporting planned care activity.. Okolie, C; et al . Health and Care Research Wales Evidence Centre.Cardiff: WG ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2023.04.20.23288815v1.full.pdf>

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated disruptions to elective care services in the UK, leading to longer waits for treatment and a growing elective surgery backlog. Surgical hubs are a key element of the elective recovery strategy for the NHS and can play a vital role in reducing the elective care backlog. These hubs aim to increase surgical capacity by providing quicker access to procedures, as well as facilitate infection control by segregating patients and staff from emergency care. This rapid review aimed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and acceptability of surgical hubs in supporting planned care activity, to inform the implementation of these hubs in Wales.

Black maternal health. Women and Equalities Committee.London: UK Parliament ; 2023.

URL: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/38989/documents/191706/default/>

The Women and Equalities Committee has called on the Government to set a definitive target to eliminate "appalling" disparities in maternal deaths. Black women are almost four times more likely to die from childbirth than white women. Significant disparities also exist for women of Asian and mixed ethnicity. Maternal death rates in deprived areas are on the rise, with women in the most deprived areas 2.5 times more likely to die than those in the least deprived areas.

Building a resilient social care system in England. What can be learnt from the first wave of Covid-19?. Curry, N; et al . London: Nuffield Trust ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023> -

[05/Building%20a%20resilient%20social%20care%20system%20in%20England.pdf](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/Building%20a%20resilient%20social%20care%20system%20in%20England.pdf)

The aim of this research is to identify actions that could be taken to build a more resilient social care system in the wake of Covid-19. This report is the result of a thematic analysis of 17 in-depth interviews with key social care stakeholders, six hours of workshops with a range of different stakeholders from the social care sector, and analysis of 72 policy documents, published papers and reviews. The interviews for this project were undertaken in spring and summer 2021. The focus of the interviews was on experiences during the first wave of Covid-19 (Feb–May 2020) and what had subsequently been learnt by the time of the second major wave (winter 2020/21). The intention was not to critique the response itself but to identify the underlying factors that shaped the response in order to identify priorities for building resilience in the sector.

Caring in a complex world: perspectives from unpaid carers and the organisations that support them. Fenney, D; Thorstensen-Woll, C; Bottery, S . London: KF ; 2023.

URL: [https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/Caring in a complex world unpaid carers.pdf](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/Caring%20in%20a%20complex%20world%20unpaid%20carers.pdf)

This report sets out findings from work by The King's Fund, commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care, to understand the current picture of local support available for unpaid carers in England. We were asked to look at what evidence is available for different types of interventions, what kinds of support are prioritised by the carers and professionals involved in commissioning and delivering services for carers, and what factors act as barriers to or facilitators of access to different types of support.

Community network survey on waiting times in children and young people's services. NHS Confederation.London: NHS Confederation ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.nhsconfed.org/system/files/2023-05/Community%20Network%20survey%20on%20waiting%20times%20in%20CYP%20services.pdf>

Results of a survey by the Community Network, which show that despite the best efforts of community providers there are still concerning waits for children and young people's services with significant impacts for children and families, and for staff morale.

Deepening poverty in Scotland – no one left behind?. Cebula, C; Birt, C . York: JRF ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/59848/download?token=w6K8Srzd&filetype=full-report>

This report studies the shocking increase in very deep poverty in Scotland. It shows that in the last 20 years or so, while overall poverty levels (and particularly those for children and pensioners) have fallen, the proportion, and number, of people in very deep poverty has risen dramatically. We conclude that both the Scottish and UK Government need to reconsider their priorities in this context, so that they can truly argue that no one is left behind. Other actions show it is possible, but the case for changing course is clear.

Early developmental impairment or intellectual disability (WHC/2023/03). Guidelines for paediatricians in supporting clinical decisions about early developmental concerns.. Welsh Government.Cardiff: WG ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/4/3/1681288392/early-developmental-impairment-or-intellectual-disability-whc202303.pdf>

The guideline aims to outline a consistent Wales-wide approach to the identification, clinical assessment and investigation of children and young people who have moderate or severe EDI/ID. The guideline offers a standardised approach to diagnostic (including genomic) testing, to reduce the diagnostic odyssey, promote diagnostic yield, efficiency and equity of access, identify any treatable causes and also to identify any clinical features or 'red flags' which would indicate more targeted or specialist testing is indicated.

Five principles for implementing the NHS Impact approach to improvement in England. Jones, B; et al . London: Health Foundation ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/five-principles-for-implementing-the-nhs-impact-approach>

This long read describes five guiding principles that should inform implementing the NHS Impact approach to improvement at provider, ICS and national level to maximise the chances of success in the current climate. We also present recommendations for provider organisation, system and national leaders on the steps needed to translate these principles into sustained

Health and Care Quality Standards 2023 (replacing Health and Care Standards 2015 - WHC 2015/015). Welsh Government. Cardiff: WG ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-05/health-and-care-quality-standards-2023.pdf>

The health and care quality standards in the duty will now replace the 2015 health and care standards issued under WHC (2015) 015. The introduction of the duty of quality provides an opportunity to directly align the standards not only with the duty but with wider quality management practice in health. The revised health and care quality standards are designed to simplify the requirements and be flexible with the wide remit of the duty of quality. These new standards set out the high-level standards that people in Wales can expect when accessing health services. They comprise six domains of quality (safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and person centred) supported by six quality enablers (leadership, workforce, culture, information, learning, improvement & research and whole systems approach).

Health first. Communicating about health and obesity in Scotland. Edinburgh: Public Health Scotland ; 2023.

URL: https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/18027/health-first_communicating-about-health-and-obesity_mar23_english.pdf

This guide is for anyone communicating about health and obesity in Scotland. It provides practical tips and advice to help build understanding, reduce stigma and drive action on improving health. This guide brings together recommendations from FrameWorks' research into health and obesity, the wider determinants of health and related issues such as poverty.

Health service delivery framework for prevention and management of obesity. World Health Organization. Geneva: WHO ; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1502093/retrieve>

The framework integrates health and social systems responses that can be adapted according to country, context, circumstance, and need. It outlines opportunities for integrating and activating obesity interventions within already existing care pathways. This avoids the need to design and deliver new and different models for service delivery and maximizes efficiencies for health systems including minimizing additional pressures on the health workforce.

Healthy people, prosperous lives. The first interim report of the IPPR commission on health and prosperity. Thomas, C; et al . London: IPPR ; 2023.

This report concludes that poor health harms both individual and national prosperity. Looking across the pre-pandemic and pandemic periods, it finds that experiencing a physical health condition was associated with a drop in annual earnings of £1,800 (in 2014–19) and £1,700 (in 2020–21), and that mental illness was associated with a drop in annual earnings of £2,200 (in 2014–19) and £1,700 (in 2020–2021).

Impacts of air pollution across the life course – evidence highlight note. Fuller, G; Friedman, S; Mudway, I . London: Imperial College London ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Imperial%20College%20London%20Projects%20-%20impacts%20of%20air%20pollution%20across%20the%20life%20course%20%E2%80%93%20evidence%20highlight%20note.pdf>

The authors looked at studies focused on the links between air pollution and ill health, including pollutants such as black carbon (or soot), small particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), and Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂). Among the key findings is evidence suggesting air pollution impacts fertility, by lowering sperm count and motility. Air pollution can also impair normal foetal development in the womb, increasing the risk of miscarriage, low birth weight and pre-term births. The review also highlights that children living in London are particularly at risk of developing lifelong, chronic conditions, including poorly developed lungs, asthma, high blood pressure, inattention and hyperactivity, and mental illness.

Implementation of health impact assessment and health in environmental assessment across the WHO European Region. World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being. Geneva: WHO ; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1504932/retrieve>

This report presents the results of three literature reviews and two online surveys conducted between 2015 and 2021, and develops suggestions for further action to implement HIAs and enhance inclusion of health in environmental assessments.

Lessons learned from public health laboratory responses to COVID-19 across the WHO European Region: Paris, France, 25–26 October 2022: meeting report. World Health Organization. Geneva: WHO ; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1503953/retrieve>

This meeting discussed national laboratory responses to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the lessons learned from the past two years. The COVID-19 pandemic placed great stresses upon public health laboratories globally. Member States and territories faced many challenges, including laboratory technical capacity, infrastructure, procurement and human and financial resources. A public health crisis of this magnitude, while never anticipated, highlighted the importance of laboratory preparedness and response.

Living (and dying) as an older person in prison. Davies, M; et al . London: Nuffield Trust ; 2023.

URL: https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Nuffield%20Trust%20-%20Older%20prisoners_WEB.pdf

This report uses hospital data to look at the health care needs of older people in prison in England. We found significant health care needs associated with frailty among our older prisoner population. We consider the implications for the prison service of managing increasing numbers of older prisoners as the population continues to age.

Mind the Gap - Exploring knowledge about physical activity in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Sheehan, A; O'Sullivan, R . Dublin: IPH ; 2023.

URL: <https://publichealth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Mind-the-Gap-Exploring-knowledge-about-PA-in-Ireland-and-N-Ireland.pdf>

The new report found that despite a high level of awareness about the benefits of physical activity and recommended guidelines, women were less active than men. The findings are based on surveys exploring how knowledgeable the adult population (18+ years) in Ireland and Northern Ireland is about physical activity, and specifically, its benefits, current guidelines and sources of information.

National Dental Epidemiology Programme (NDEP) for England: oral health survey of 5 year old children 2022. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. London: HM Government ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/oral-health-survey-of-5-year-old-children-2022/national-dental-epidemiology-programme-ndep-for-england-oral-health-survey-of-5-year-old-children-2022>

This report presents the results of the sixth National Dental Epidemiology Programme survey of 5 year old children in England, 2022. The data was collected during the 2021 to 2022 school year. The survey was delayed from 2020 to 2021 by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This data is the source for the dental indicator (percentage of 5 year olds with visually obvious dental decay) included in the [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#).

Needle and syringe programme activity in Wales. Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre. Cardiff: Public Health Wales NHS Trust ; 2023.

URL: <https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/needle-and-syringe-programme-activity-in-wales-annual-report-2021-22/>

This report for 2021-22 evidences the substantial changes in activity and the profile of service users accessing needle and syringe programmes (NSP) across Wales following the restrictions experienced through the COVID-19 pandemic. The fall in the overall number of individuals accessing NSP services may be the result of a number of factors including a genuine reduction in the number of people who inject drugs (PWID), a reduction in the number of PWID accessing NSP services resulting in increases in sharing and reuse of injecting equipment, increased use of alternative sources of injecting equipment or a combination of these and other factors. Analysis of NSP data over the coming years, alongside information derived from service user and peer engagement with people who inject drugs, will inform the longer term implications of service disruption and consequences in relation to blood borne virus transmission and bacterial infections.

NICE Guidance on Self-harm: assessment, management and preventing recurrence. Welsh Government.Cardiff: WG ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-04/nice-guidance-on-self-harm-whc202311.pdf>

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on Overview | Self-harm: assessment, management and preventing recurrence | Guidance | NICE The guidance covers assessment, management and preventing recurrence for children, young people and adults who have self-harmed. It includes those with a mental health problem, neurodevelopment disorder or learning disability and applies to all sectors that work with people who have self-harmed.

Rough sleeping (England). Wilson, W; Barton, C . London: House of Commons Library ; 2023.

URL: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn02007/>

Local authorities in England do not have a duty to secure accommodation for all homeless people. Rough sleepers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Studies have found strong correlations between homelessness and a multiplicity, and increased severity, of both physical and mental health conditions. In 2021, an estimated 741 homeless people died in England and Wales. Men accounted for most deaths. Most deaths recorded were due to drug-related poisoning, suicide, and alcohol-specific causes. See other links to support this document via url.

Shooting Up: infections and other injecting-related harms among people who inject drugs in the UK, data to end of 2021. Public Health Agency Northern Ireland; Public Health Scotland; Public Health Wales NHS Trust.London: HM Government ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shooting-up-infections-among-people-who-inject-drugs-in-the-uk/shooting-up-infections-and-other-injecting-related-harms-among-people-who-inject-drugs-in-the-uk-data-to-end-of-2021>;
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1143476/shooting-up-data-tables-with-data-to-end-2021.xlsx

This report describes infections, as well as associated risks and behaviours among PWID in the UK to the end of 2021. Prevention, detection and treatment of infections related to injecting drug use remain issues of public health concern in the UK. Hepatitis C virus (HCV) remains the most common BBV infection among PWID in the UK. There is evidence for a continuing decline in the prevalence of chronic HCV infection in this population, which is largely due to improved testing and access to direct-acting antiviral (DAA) treatment. However, prevention of new and re-infections remains a challenge.

Tackling disadvantage through childcare. Jarvie, M; Ollerearnshaw, R; Goddard, E . York: JRF ; 2023.

URL: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/59912/download?token=d-Yc1YYB&filetype=briefing>

This briefing outlines a proposal for a new childcare system that better meets parents' needs - particularly families facing disadvantage.

Thinking about wellbeing inequality. Sanders, M; et al . London: What Works Centre for Wellbeing ; 2023.

URL: <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Thinking-about-wellbeing-inequality-paper-March-2023.pdf>

In this paper, the authors explore the challenges and opportunities in attempting to produce a metrics of wellbeing inequality, introducing four possible approaches to measurement. The purpose is to prompt discussion about how best we might measure inequalities in wellbeing in a way that reflects the lived experience of people in society, and which allows useful comparisons to be made across groups of people and across time.

Use of non-sugar sweeteners. WHO guideline. World Health Organization.Geneva: WHO ; 2023.

URL: <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1501485/retrieve>

This guideline provides evidence -informed guidance on the use of non-sugar sweeteners to reduce the risk of unhealthy weight

gain and diet-related noncommunicable diseases in adults and children. The guidance in this guideline is not based on toxicological assessments of the safety of individual non-sugar sweeteners and is therefore not intended to update or replace guidance on safe or maximal levels of intake established by the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) or other authoritative bodies.