

Evidence Summary

User Guide



Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators

This user guide accompanies the Public Health Wales Observatory evidence summaries relating to Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) indicators.

Q – What is the Public Health Outcomes Framework?

The Public Health Outcomes Framework for Wales is a document produced by Welsh Government working in partnership with Public Health Wales. The framework was developed to help understand the impact which individual behaviours, public services, programmes and policies have on health and well-being in Wales. There are over 40 indicators in the framework relating to four broad areas, or domains.

More details on the full set of Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators is available from <http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/health/reports/health-framework/?lang=en>

Q – What are evidence summaries?

There are a range of organisations and individuals who all contribute to improving health and well-being in Wales. Evidence summaries are one way in which we can support those who are doing this work so that we can focus our efforts on the types of actions that we know from the evidence will make a difference.

Each summary is a concise overview of evidence available from reliable sources, such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), about actions (interventions) that could affect the public health outcomes and influence the indicators used to measure these outcomes.

Each summary is supported by an evidence map. This includes greater detail about the sources identified and used to compile the summary.

Q – What is in the evidence summary?

Each summary includes:

- The title and reference to the indicator number

- A description of the measure – this is a short explanation of what the indicator measures. More detail is available in the Technical Guide on the website
- The question used to inform the evidence search, map and synthesis, together with the date on which the evidence was sought
- The evidence summary itself, summarising the key points from the evidence map
- Context in Wales – to help interpret the evidence summary.

Q - How have the summaries and evidence maps been produced?

For each of the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators we undertook a systematic search of evidence sources which we know are reliable. By this we mean sources which use appropriate and well executed methods to gather the evidence. Each indicator can be influenced by a number of pathways and actions (or interventions) and thus a wide range of evidence may be relevant. To make the task of gathering relevant evidence manageable we focused our search on secondary sources, i.e. overviews that have examined the original (primary) studies. The reliable sources that have contributed to the development of the summaries include NICE guidance, NICE accredited guidance, and systematic reviews considered to have been produced using a robust and reproducible method such as those published by Cochrane, the Campbell Collaboration and the EPPI centre. Protocols and search technical documents for each summary are available on request.

Q – What is NICE Guidance and why did you use this?

NICE guidance represents a key body of knowledge. It is developed using transparent processes and methods, underpinned by evidence, informed by stakeholder views and experience, and is subject to regular review and update where required. Systematic reviews were also sought in addition to the NICE guidance where needed.

Q – What systematic reviews were included?

In order to capture evidence published most recently and which may not have been included in the development of older NICE guidance, we searched for systematic reviews published from 2012 onwards. Systematic reviews relating to interventions in people with specific conditions have generally been excluded e.g. *Interventions for smoking cessation and reduction in individuals with Schizophrenia*. Systematic reviews that have a focus on setting, gender or specific age ranges have been included.

Q- How complete are the evidence summaries

The search method used means that primary studies have not been sought for these evidence summaries; the summaries have used groups of studies that have been reviewed (appraised) by others. The evidence summary may therefore have an emphasis on specific 'sub-populations', settings or types of interventions as a result of focus of the evidence reviews used and may therefore not cover all the possible interventions. The omission of other interventions from the evidence summary does not mean that there is no evidence available about them but that primary studies assessing their effectiveness have not been the subject of secondary level evidence reviews. A more comprehensive assessment of the evidence on a wider range of possible interventions would require systematic reviews of these to be conducted.

NICE guidance has considered cost effectiveness data, where available, when making recommendations. For interventions or actions not covered by NICE guidance, evidence summaries reflect the strength of evidence of effectiveness alone; cost effectiveness of those interventions has not been sought systematically and may not be available thereby providing limited information on return on investment. Recommendations from NICE have been annotated so that they can be identified.

Q - What should I consider when using these evidence summaries?

These summaries are designed to help identify actions which have an evidence base for effective action, and also highlight where the evidence may suggest a course of action will not be effective. It is recommended that before acting on specific elements of the summaries, the map and original guidance is reviewed.

Many of these outcomes and indicators cannot be achieved in isolation, and are interdependent. Health through the life course is influenced by ways of living which improve health; these in turn are influenced by the living conditions that support and contribute to health now and in the future, particularly the social determinants of health, sometimes called 'the causes of the causes'.

Individual approaches need to be balanced with an awareness that it is through universal approaches, tailored to be proportionate to the needs of communities, that we can hope to start to address whole population outcomes and inequalities.

Because of the nature of collecting robust evidence, much of the strongest evidence available relates to individual level interventions rather than population interventions. The limited availability of robust evidence on population level interventions reflects a lack of evidence not necessarily a lack of effect. In addition, available guidance (e.g. NICE) is variable in how much it addresses some of these wider questions. The absence of evidence relating to an issue does not mean that the issue is of no consequence.

When implementing interventions, services or programmes, especially where evidence is weak or uncertain, it is important to consider how these will be evaluated from the outset. The indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework help us understand what direction we are going in key outcomes, but will not usually provide the detail to understand if a particular intervention has been successful.

Q - Why are there no evidence summaries for some indicators?

Some of the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators do not have evidence summaries, for example those that are 'overarching' and ones related to inequalities. In the case of overarching indicators, these represent the cumulative effect of action across the framework; it is therefore not possible to compile individual summaries for these indicators.

Overarching Public Health Outcomes indicators	
1	Life expectancy at birth
2	Healthy life expectancy at birth
11	People able to afford everyday goods and activities (NI)
35a/b	Working age/older age adults in good health
36a/b	Working age/older age adults free from limiting long term illness
37a/b	Life satisfaction among working age/older age adults
40	Premature deaths from key non communicable diseases

Indicators relating to inequalities also do not have separate evidence summaries; however the Observatory Evidence Service recently published a map of NICE recommended actions related to reducing the health inequalities associated with socioeconomic disadvantage.ⁱ

ⁱ *Map of NICE guidance relating to inequalities: A companion guide to Measuring inequalities* 2016. June 2016. Public Health Wales NHS Trust. Available [here](#).

Public Health Outcomes indicators relating to inequalities	
4	The gap in life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived
5	The gap in healthy life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived (NI)
6a	The gap in mental well-being between the most and least deprived among children and young people
6b	The gap in mental well-being between the most and least deprived among adults
7	Children living in poverty

Q – Are the summaries applicable to Wales?

The evidence summaries are based on internationally available evidence, which has been deemed relevant to the Welsh population. However, to help interpret these in context, most summaries are accompanied by a '*Context in Wales*' section. These have been developed by topic or subject leads from within Public Health Wales who have reviewed the evidence summaries and have provided information about ongoing programmes and activity in Wales to support progress against these indicators.

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Main Project Team

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Context Providers

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