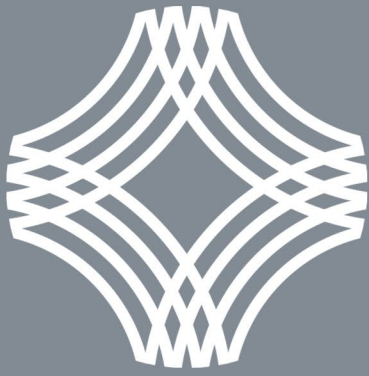




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PUBLIC HEALTH
NETWORK CYMRU



February 2020

Welcome

Welcome to the February edition of the e-bulletin which this month focuses on debt.

We have a busy month ahead as we have a Mental Wellbeing and Resilience in Communities Seminar taking place in Bangor University on the 17 March, and our annual conference takes place on the 24 March at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff entitled The Environment: Our health in the balance. These events are already filling up fast, if you would like further information, please do get in touch.

We are always looking for information and events which we can include in the e-bulletin as well as on the website so please get in touch with us at publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk



Contact us

You can contact Public Health Network Cymru in a variety of ways

Email us

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Call us

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Spotlight on...



Debt

Debt causes worry and stress for thousands if not millions of people. When stress goes undealt with for a long time, it can cause anxiety, depression and other symptoms that indicates mental health is being affected. Debt can impact quality of sleep, which can in turn affect other factors such as energy levels, concentration and mood. Similarly, many people suffer from addictions from things such as alcohol, drugs and gambling. This can either cause debt, be a symptom of debt stress, or both.

[\(Step Change Debt Charity, 2020\)](#)

How advisory services can aid population health

Adam Jones, Senior Policy Officer, Public Health Wales highlights an exploration of the value of advisory services to health

Advisory services such as Citizen's Advice, the Money and Pensions Service and the Money Advice Trust are organisations that people turn to in times of personal crisis. From a public health perspective, these organisations can play a significant role in improving people's health and happiness – through a wider determinants of health lens, advice on employment, housing and relationships are common topics on which people seek advice. For local context, in the year ending December 2019, Citizens Advice data shows that 1,782 Wales-based clients sought advice related to health and community care, whilst through a wider determinants lens, 7,595 clients enquired about housing and 6,906 clients enquired about employment (Citizens Advice 2019).

In a discussion paper to be published shortly by Public Health Wales, we reflect upon the value of such advisory services to population health and well-being, along with evidence of the economic impact of advice. The paper considers the existing evidence base regarding the links between advisory services and health, and details policy considerations and ideas for further research. The existing evidence base is reflected upon within the paper, but for the purpose of this article, three examples from the literature are summarised below:

- A 2015 evidence review of over 140 studies explored the role advice services played on health outcomes. One of the key findings from this review showed that welfare advice provided within health care settings had a positive impact on individual health and well-being, coupled with less demand for health services. Furthermore, it was found that with welfare advice provided within primary care settings, GPs spent an estimated 15% less time responding to such issues with their patients; fewer repeat prescriptions and repeat appointments were also noted (Parkinson and Buttrick 2015).
- In relation to the economic impacts of debt advice, the Money Advice Service and Europe Economics demonstrated that for the estimated £150m-£200m invested in debt advice annually, there was a financial return in the range of £445m-£960m to the UK economy (Money Advice Service and Europe Economics 2018).
- At an individual level, a 2017 study found that for every £1 invested in welfare advice in health care settings, recipients gained £15 (Woodhead et al. 2017).

Amongst the conclusions to our paper, we highlight that enhancing the links between health services and advice services could contribute to a reduction in negative health outcomes, and we identify the need for greater collaboration between advice services and local and national health services.

Advisory services can clearly help to reduce the pressures on healthcare services by providing support to people on issues which may be impacting their mental well-being, their relationships and their housing, to name just some examples. However, evidence is limited, particularly within a Welsh context, so further research is highly recommended.

For more information on this work, please contact publichealth.policy@wales.nhs.uk

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The burden of debt

Claire Pearce-Crawford, Income and Inclusion Manager, Melin Homes

It's the 11th February 2020, it's cold and snow is on the way. As I sit in my warm, cosy home, I pause, to give thought to how lucky, I really am, I shall explain why.....

I will not bore you with my job title, or how busy I am, as truthfully, none of this matters when it comes to the tragedy my team see on a daily basis of those living with debt. 'In work poverty' has risen dramatically in Wales with estimations that 1 in 3 families are just one pay check away from losing their home.

Much of the story I tell today will take you back to the days of 'The Poor Law', work houses, and desperate hunger, yet it's 2020? Right?

What if I told you that in the last month we have supported;

- A lady who was cutting bed sheets up to use as sanitary wear
- A family who sat in their coats at home as they had no heating
- A lady who had terminal cancer, but was still being told to look for work
- A child who had to wait until the next day to eat at breakfast club in school
- A mother who could not afford to buy her baby milk
- A dad who didn't eat two days, as it was half term (yes, holiday hunger exists)
- A student who considered suicide due to pressure from 'student loans'

Every one of these families have significant debt issues. Debt isn't just about 'owing money to another person', it's more than that, it's;

- Choosing to eat or heat your home
- Fearing what the postman may bring
- Being petrified to open your front door as it may be a bailiff
- Feeling hopeless, embarrassed, guilty, stressed
- Suffering anxiety & depression caused by continuous worry
- Considering suicide as the only way out

Suicide is considered by almost 50% of people struggling with debt in the UK, sadly the burden can just become too much. My advisors are all trained in 'Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training' and work with tenants to create a plan that will support their immediate safety.

In my team advice services have increased 100%, the anxiety tenants are suffering about falling behind on bills, and having no family or friends to help, means that mental health conditions are exacerbated too. My team work tirelessly to sustain tenancies and alleviate these adverse experiences, whilst providing a direct link between Health & Social Care, Welfare and Debt. We constantly challenge unscrupulous debt collectors and work with the Department of Work and Pensions to secure correct financial entitlements.

The most important part of my advisors' job is to listen, understand and help our tenants make informed decisions, whilst sustaining their tenancy and family.

I'm extremely proud of the fact in 2018/19 we were the only social landlord that did NOT evict anyone for rent arrears, but we did put £2.5 million pounds in tenants' pockets, and helped 40 tenants find long term work. We are not 'just a landlord'!

If I've shocked you, I apologise, but when I sit in my warm, cosy home, I pause, to give thought to how lucky, I really am.....

For further information please contact: claire.pearce-crawford@melinhomes.co.uk

New free guide to help people deal with their debts

The Money Advice Trust has launched its revamped 'How to deal with debt' guide for England and Wales. The [guide](#) takes people in debt through the steps they need to take to deal with their financial situation from start to finish and draws on behavioural science techniques to keep users engaged and motivated throughout the process.

Developed alongside the Money and Pensions Service, who funded the project, and Ogilvy Consulting Behavioural Science Practice, the new guide builds on the Trust's experience of producing materials and resources for people in debt who want to self-help.

The 'Dealing with debt guide', now on its 22nd edition, is a valued advice sector resource. Last year over 100,000 people used the guide via National Debtline and advice agencies, who make it available to the people they help.

The new version brings together learning and feedback from both Ogilvy Consulting Behavioural Science Practice and comprehensive user-testing with advice agencies and people in debt, undertaken with the Money and Pensions Service. This insight shaped the design, tone, layout, and language used in the guide to maximise the chances of users taking the right action to deal with their debts.

Are the families you work with making the most of the help available to them?

Copies of the [Eat Well, Save Well flyers](#) are available on request to helen.griffith5@wales.nhs.uk for any organisations with the capacity to distribute them to members of the public.



ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST OF THE HELP AVAILABLE TO YOU?

Don't miss out on help that you may be entitled to. A family with 3 children could save **up to £1600** a year by accessing these four food schemes if eligible.

Healthy Start Vouchers

Pregnant mothers and families with children under 4 can get vouchers to spend on milk, formula and fruit and veg. They can also get free vitamin coupons. Visit www.healthystart.nhs.uk to find out more.

Food and Fun (school holidays)

Several schools in Cardiff run Food and Fun Clubs to provide children with healthy food and fun activities during the summer holidays. Check with your school to see if they run the programme.

Free School Meals

Search "Cardiff Council Free School Meals" to find out if you're eligible and to apply.

Primary School Breakfast Clubs

Check with your school to see if your children could have free breakfasts



Learn more about
HEALTHY START



Learn more about FREE
SCHOOL MEALS

Cardiff Council's **Money Advice Team** can help you access all of these great, money-saving schemes. Visit your local hub or call 029 2087 1071 for info

Food Related Benefits Training



Do you work with families on a low income?

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team and UHB Dietetics will be holding **Train the Trainer** sessions for **Food Related Benefits** at various location across Cardiff and Vale, throughout the year.

The information provided covers the various food benefits available, Healthy Start, Free School Meals etc. with an aim of increasing uptake across Cardiff and the Vale. We will also give an overview of the Eatwell Guide and basic nutritional guidelines to support the delivery of messages to the public.

The sessions last 3 hours and aimed at those who will then be able to cascade a one-hour session to their staff/colleagues.

We have developed a training package and resources with details of the various benefits to share with partners in money advice, employment, health or any roles where you are working with families on a low income.

If you would like to register your interest in attending one of the sessions or for more information, please contact Helen Griffith on helen.griffith5@wales.nhs.uk or 02921 836505.



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Cymru
Public Health
Wales



Citizens Advice Cymru

Last year, Citizens Advice Cymru helped people with more than 25,000 issues related to debt. Our data shows that half of our clients have a disability or long-term health condition - and mental health difficulties are the most commonly reported of those health issues. We also know that people with mental health difficulties are much more likely to need advice and support with issues related to debt.

Many of the people we help who report mental health difficulties are at crisis point, needing urgent advice on issues which tend to be more complex in nature than our clients overall. Our advice helps people to become more resilient. 7 in 10 of our clients said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious after seeking support from Citizens Advice. And nearly half reported that after receiving support they were more in control of their finances or had more money in their pocket. In research carried out by Citizens Advice and the Royal College of GPs in 2018, three quarters of GPs said that when patients receive help from advice agencies this has a positive effect on patients health and wellbeing

But we can be even more effective if we reach people before they get to crisis point. And we can help relieve pressure on other, overstretched services. GPs in England and Wales estimate that patients' non-clinical issues take up almost a fifth of their consultation time. There is clearly value in integrating practical support into healthcare settings.

Local Citizens Advice services in Wales are already working in innovative ways to do this. In Rhondda Cynon Taff, the service is providing specialist debt and welfare advice for people receiving support with a Tier 1 mental health diagnosis and substance misuse. In 2018/19, the project saved local services more than £200,000 and helped manage debt of more than £100,000. In Gwent from April, a new service, commissioned by ABUHB, will see caseworkers from Citizens Advice Gwent delivering services in mental healthcare settings.

We were also heartened to see that the new Wellbeing Hub @ Maelfa in Cardiff will provide space for an advice area where third sector groups can provide services. We'd like to see this built into all new healthcare infrastructure - along with funding for the advice services that occupy the space.

As the Welsh Government has acknowledged, demand for advice services in Wales is rising. But pressure on local authority budgets has resulted in cuts to core funding from Local Authorities, meaning that as demand grows, it is increasingly difficult to accommodate everyone who needs our support.

However, it's clear that reducing funding for advice services is a false economy. Last year, our intervention saved government and public services in Wales £28 million, with £161 million in wider economic and social benefits as well as £239 million in financial value for the individuals who come to us for help. It's not a question of whether or not Welsh Government or Local Authorities can afford to fund advice services - the reality is that they can't afford not to.

For further information visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/

Help to keep you warm

Many people find cold temperatures difficult, but it's more extreme for 1 in 10 households who can't afford the energy they need to heat their homes. Cold temperatures can lead to respiratory problems and make other health issues worse.

Fuel debt and Pre-Payment Meters

There are **4.5 million** electricity and **3.5 million** gas pre-payment meter customers in Britain. Some choose to pay for their bills via pre-payment, but many are installed to recover debt. This can lead to further financial pressures, because the recovery rates for pre-payment meters is often very high.

Ofgem, the energy regulator, estimates that **1.2 million Electricity customers** and **0.95 million Gas customers** are in debt to their energy suppliers.

How we can help

Advice from Rhondda Cynon Taff Citizens Advice on keeping your home warm can be a lifeline. That's why we're here to offer free, independent energy advice and support.

We can help with:

- 1 - Winter Fuel Payments** – you could be eligible if you have reached the State Pension Age
- 2 - Cold weather payments** – if in receipt of means-tested benefits, you will receive a payment, if the average temperature in your area is zero Degree Celsius for 7 consecutive days.

Benefits include:

- **Pension credit**
- **Income support**
- **Income based job seekers Allowance**
- **Income based employment and support Allowance**
- **Universal Credit**
- **Support for Mortgage interest**

- 3 - Warm Home Discount** – if your supplier offers this, you could receive £140 off your electricity between September and March.

You can qualify if:

- **You are receiving the guarantee credit part of Pension Credit**
- **On a low income**

Contact your supplier to find out more.

Public Health Cymru Podc

Latest Podcast

Welcome to our new PHNC Podcast Page of the Ebulletin. Here you can listen to the the previously released Podcasts.

The Latest Podcast in the series is on Learning Disabilities

If you are interested in recording a podcast with us in the future, please contact us via email:

publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk

Click to view the Sound
and Vision Pages



Health Network East

Learning Disabilities: Multi-Sport



Arts and Health: Roadshow



Health Impact Assessment: WHIASU



Heart Health: BHF



Nutrition: Early Years with Andrea Basu



International Health: Migrant Health



Community Care: OP who are Neurodiverse



Dementia: World Toilet Day



Sustainability: Sue Toner and Bronia Bendall



Love Activity, Hate Exercise



Sexual Health



Alcohol: Drinkwise Age Well



Sun Safety: Skin Cancer

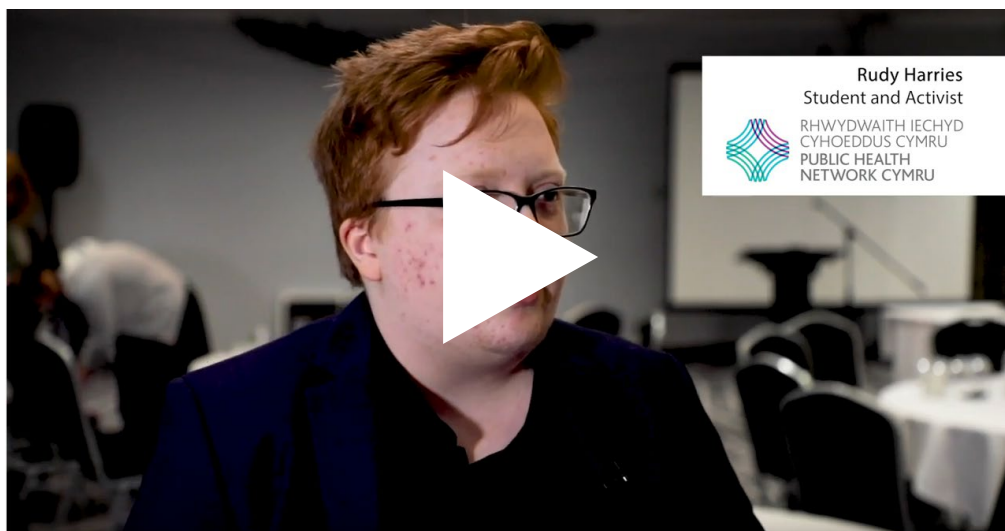


Gambling: The living room



Public Health Cymru Press

Latest Video



Welcome to Press Play, here you can get the latest PHNC videos from youtube! Every month we will add new videos as they get uploaded. We have a number of events planned over the next few months so keep your eyes peeled for the latest streams on our twitter feed or come back and visit Press Play after the event!

Our latest video is from our Homelessness Seminar that was held in Cardiff.

Click to view the Sound
and Vision Pages



Public Health Network Play

Beth Jones - Homelessness



Dr Peter Mackie - Homelessness



Emma Williams - Homelessness



LD Seminar: Simon Rose and Karen Warner



LD Seminar: Sam Dredge



LD Seminar: Ruth Northway



LD Seminar: Karen Everleigh and Hazel Powell



Public Health Network Cymru in Numbers



Shaping our Future: Cat Tully



Shaping our Future: Sophie Howe



Shaping our Future: Highlights



Early Years Nutrition: Highlights



Early Years Nutrition: Andrea Basu



Early Years Nutrition: Judith John



The Grapevine

Vale of Glamorgan Public Sector Organisations sign Healthy Travel Charter

Eight leading public sector organisations which work in the Vale of Glamorgan signed a [Healthy Travel Charter](#) in October 2019, committing themselves to supporting and encouraging their staff and visitors to travel in a sustainable way to and from their sites.

Through fourteen ambitious actions, the charter promotes walking, cycling, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicle use. The actions include establishing a network of sustainable travel champions, developing targeted communications campaigns for staff, offering and promoting the cycle to work scheme and increasing the availability of video-conferencing for meetings to reduce the number of journeys staff need to make across sites.

Between them, the organisations will commit to reducing the proportion of journeys commuting to and from work made by car, and increase the proportion of vehicles used during the day which are plug-in hybrid or pure electric.

Organisations which signed the charter at a launch event at the Vale of Glamorgan Council Civic Offices were: Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Cardiff Airport, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Police, HM Prison and Probation Services, Welsh Government and Welsh Ambulance NHS Trust.

By working together with a view to the long-term, public sector organisations across the Vale aim to increase the proportion of journeys made to and from workplaces which are sustainable, reducing the impact on the environment and health of people in the Vale for current and future generations.

Healthy Travel Wales

[Healthy Travel Wales](#) has grown out of this work which began in Cardiff, and later the Vale of Glamorgan, to develop an approach across the public sector to healthy and sustainable travel. The work is being led by Dr Tom Porter from the Cardiff and Vale Local Public Health Team, working with the two Public Services Boards (PSBs), and other public bodies.

Following the successful launch of the Charter, there has been interest in introducing Charters elsewhere in Wales and in different sectors, with roll out of the Charters more widely commencing during 2020. As the work rolls out, local leads in each area are responsible for implementing the Charter.

Public Health Wales Research and Evaluation Highlights Report

Public Health Wales has published its latest annual [Research and Evaluation Highlights report](#).

This report is brought together by the Research and Evaluation Division, and showcases research from across Public Health Wales and in partnership with a range of institutions and organisations, including: schools, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Welsh Government, the transport and private sectors, Welsh Refugee Council, academia, and Rural Health and Care Wales. The collective research and evaluation across Public Health Wales spans many areas with direct and indirect effects on health, including infectious disease, Brexit, homelessness and access to health services, to name but a few.

Achievements over the year have led to 145 academic publications, 23 active research projects and nearly £1.5m in external income generated. All of this is in support of a number of strategic priorities as we continue to develop the evidence needed to address major public health challenges we are facing.

Public Health Wales Research & Evaluation Annual Conference 2020



Informing Public Health Practice

Join the PHW Research and Evaluation Division for
the 5th annual conference

*Keynote Speaker: Kieran Walshe
(Director, Health and Care Research Wales)*

Poster submissions welcome!

12th March 2020
09:00 - 15:30
All Nations Centre,
Cardiff



To find out more or
register your place
visit:

www.publichealthresearchwales.co.uk/PHREW20

This event is FREE to attend and lunch will be provided



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The Environment: Our health in the balance

24 March 2020

Sophia Gardens, Cardiff

The theme of this conference is the natural environment and health. It will set the scene in the wider policy and legislative context and cover practical approaches to benefit the environment and health.

Objectives:

- To share knowledge on the policy and legal context and current research in relation to the natural environment and health relevant to Wales
- To identify practical tools and approaches for organisations and practitioners to use to improve health through the environment
- To provide a creative space to develop approaches to environment and health, responding to the newly developed area plans.

Learn, make connections and contribute with Public Health Network Cymru

[Click here to visit Eventbrite to book your space](#)



Latest News

Three Horizons Toolkit released

A new easy-to-use guide will help public bodies to think and plan better for the long-term, by keeping a clear vision and taking future trends into account.

[The Three Horizons Toolkit](#) has been developed by Public Health Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner's Office to help public bodies avoid making decisions that don't stand the test of time. It is based on a model developed by Bill Sharpe and the International Futures Forum.

The toolkit can help anyone who is involved in making decisions that need to consider the future, and future generations, including public bodies with duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Click to view the News
Pages



Health Network Lines

Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation
Through Connected Communities



£5.5m to help prevent and reduce obesity in
Wales



Adverse childhood experiences and sport



Organisations commit to protect and improve
health and the natural environment in Wales



This is Sexual Abuse Campaign



Proposal of the Farm to Fork Strategy for
sustainable food



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Obesity



Alcohol



Oral Health



Arts and Health



Physical Activity



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Policy



Gambling



Sexual Health



Health and Social Care



Sleeping and Health



Human Rights



Smoking



International Health



Substance Misuse



Mental Health



Sun Awareness



Noncommunicable Diseases



Violence and Abuse



Nutrition



Communities



Lifestyle



Education



Poverty



Environment



Unemployment



Families and Social Care



Work



Health Inequalities



Early Years



Older People



Maternal and New Born



Children and Young People



Working age adult



Asylum Seekers



LGBT



Carers



Migrants



Ethnic Groups



Parents



Faith Groups



Learning Disabilities



Gender



Prisioners



Gypsies



Veterans



Homelessness





Next Issue

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