

# Summary of key messages

- Every child and young person in Wales has the right to be happy, healthy and safe. The role and influence of the family is absolutely paramount when trying to make improvements relating to children and young people.
- In 2011, there were just under a million children and young people (aged 0-24 years) living in Wales. In the Cardiff and Vale and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg areas, the 0-24 year old populations are projected to increase over the next 20 years. The areas of Betsi Cadwaladr, Cwm Taf and Aneurin Bevan are projected to see small decreases in their 0-24 populations over the same period.
- Low birth weight babies are at a greater risk of problems occurring during and after birth. There is also an association with poor health and increased risk of chronic diseases in adulthood for low birth weight babies. One in 18 babies are of low birth weight in Wales, this rises to one in 15 in Cwm Taf Health Board.
- Breast feeding has health benefits for both mother and baby is recognised as the most beneficial diet for babies. In 2011, 56% of babies were breastfed at birth in Wales. At the local authority level the percentages ranged from 28% to 80%, with the lowest percentages seen across the south Wales valleys.
- Over 1 in 5 (142,600) children and young people aged under 20 live in poverty, ranging from around 1 in 8 in Monmouthshire and Powys to 1 in 4 in the south Wales valleys. Higher percentages of children living in poverty are also seen within the cities.
- Data from the 2011 Census shows that more than 15% (1 in 6) of 16-24 year olds (excluding students) in Wales are unemployed.
- In 2011/12, around 1,250 (45%) of the 2,770 households that were accepted as homeless and temporarily accommodated by local authorities were households with dependent children.
- A strong stable family and good education are key components for a child's health, well-being and future prospects.
- In Wales there are approximately:
  - o 97,500 lone-parent households with dependent children
  - o 28,600 children and young people providing unpaid care, of which 3,500 are providing unpaid care for more than 50 hours per week; a higher proportion than England, or any English region
  - o 5,700 children in the care of local authorities, with a 27% increase in foster care placements over a five year period

- o 2,900 children on child protection registers
- o 70,300 pupils eligible for free school meals
- Approximately 21,000 or 6% of Welsh domiciled students go onto UK Higher Education Institutions annually
- Health and behaviour developed during childhood and adolescence is often carried through into adulthood and can affect health later in life. In Wales:
  - o only 30% of those aged 11-16 eat fruit and/or vegetables each day
  - o only 36% of 5-14 year olds participate in activity for one hour or more each day
  - o only 37% of 16-24 year olds undertake 30 minutes of vigorous activity five or more times a week
  - o almost 3 in 10 children aged 4-5 are classified as overweight or obese
  - o 26% of those aged 16-24 reported smoking
  - o 46% of those aged 16-24 drink above the recommended guidelines
  - o around 1 in 10 children aged 11-16 have tried a drug at sometime in the previous year
- Teenage conception rates in Wales are higher in those aged under 18 compared to England but are similar amongst under 16 year olds. Within Wales, at the local authority level higher rates for under 16's can be seen in Torfaen, Cardiff, Bridgend, Wrexham, Conwy and Merthyr Tydfil. For under 18s, higher rates are again in Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Immunisation is the most effective and cost effective ways to protect children against serious infectious diseases. However, recent figures show that only 82% of children had completed all the recommended immunisations by their fourth birthday which is well below the target of 95% uptake. In addition, there remains a need to ensure that children who have missed out on immunisation previously are offered catch-up vaccinations at every opportunity.
- In Wales, more than 99% of eligible newborn babies have been screened for hearing impairments; this figure meets the national minimum standard of 95% or more.
- Influences on health at a young age will continue throughout childhood and into adulthood; resulting in improved well-being in adults. In Wales:
  - o 30% of males and 27% of females aged 11-16 years report being bullied in the last couple of months
  - o 81% of boys and 74% of girls aged 11-16 rate their health as good or excellent
  - o over 25,000 males (5.7%) and almost 20,000 females (4.3%) aged 0-24 report having a long term health problem or disability
  - o around 4.4% of all live born babies have a congenital anomaly. Over 90% of children born with gastroschisis, Turner syndrome, spina bifida and cystic fibrosis in Wales in the period 1988-2006 survived past their fifth birthday
  - o around 1 in 10 people aged 0-24 were admitted to hospital as an emergency in 2011. Major causes of admission for 0-4 year olds are respiratory disease and infections whereas for 5-24 year olds the most common cause of admission is injury/poisoning

- o each year there are around 15,000 admissions to hospital of 0-24 year olds due to injuries; children from more deprived areas are more likely to be admitted due to an injury

- The loss of a child is a tragedy resulting in life-changing effects on families, carers and friends. The infant mortality rate for Wales is slowly decreasing but there are still improvements to be made. Latest figures (2011) show that each year in Wales there are around:

- o 170 stillbirths
- o 240 perinatal deaths (stillbirths and deaths under 7 days)
- o 100 neonatal deaths (under 28 days, live births only)
- o 130 infant deaths (under 1 year, live births only)

- In 2011 there were 345 deaths of children and young people aged 0-24 years and resident in Wales with main causes of death (by ICD10 chapter):

<1 year	1-17 year olds	18-24 year olds
1. Perinatal conditions	Injury / poisoning	Injury / poisoning
2. Congenital malformations	Nervous system	Nervous system
3. Abnormal findings and ill-defined conditions	Congenital malformations & neoplasms	Neoplasms

- Transport crashes are the biggest cause of death in the injury/poisoning category for children and young people. The highest transport crash death rates are seen in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.
- Whilst improvements have been made in some areas, there is still much more to do. Coordinated interagency action at national and local level is needed to address the health of children and young people and its determinants; working with children and families to build on assets and address weaknesses. Chapter 8 *Actions to improve health and well-being* includes details of effective interventions for some of the topics covered in this report.