



Welcome to the first edition of the North West Public Health Observatory (NWPHO) Health E-News bulletin, designed to update you on key NWPHO reports, data tools and intelligence.

NWPHO outputs are related to key themes in *Choosing Health* including health inequalities, children and young people, alcohol, nutrition, obesity, physical activity, mental health, smoking

and sexual health.

We hope you find this bulletin useful. If you have any comments, please get in touch.

If you would like to know more about NWPHO's work please visit our website at www.nwpho.org.uk for details.

The North West's largest ever Lifestyle Survey finds health and wealth links



Following the Government Equality Bill published in April, NWPHO released its *Health and Lifestyles in the North West* report identifying gaps between the health and lifestyles of those living in poorer and more affluent circumstances across the North West of England.

The survey of 5,448 residents in the region sets a baseline from which reductions in health inequalities can be measured. The study found that individuals living in the poorest areas (compared with the wealthiest) are twice as likely to have suffered angina, 1.7 times more likely to have had depression and 1.4 times more likely to have diabetes.

In addition, those living in the poorest fifth of areas are twice as likely to:

- use lard, ghee, butter or other hard fats for cooking;

- drink whole milk;
- be current smokers.

People in the poorest areas are also more than 1.5 times as likely to:

- eat no fruit and vegetable portions in a day;
- eat white bread;
- be obese.

On a more positive note, around two-thirds of people say that they undertake regular exercise and there is little evidence of variation in levels of physical activity by deprivation.

A series of themed reports will also be released later in the year. These will be based upon the regional survey data combined with data from a series of related local 'boost' surveys carried out on behalf of six PCTs in the region.

Local Alcohol Profiles for England (LAPE)

The profiles contain 23 measures of the burden that alcohol has on local communities



The latest Local Alcohol Profiles for England (LAPE) are available for the third year running from the North West Public Health Observatory.

The profiles contain 23 measures of the burden that alcohol has on local communities including the Government's national indicator – hospital admissions for alcohol related harm (NI 39) – as well as other measures such as alcohol related deaths, crime and Incapacity Benefit claimants.

There were around 800,000 admissions to hospital in England in 2006/07, a 9%

increase from the previous year, or an additional 174 alcohol related admissions every day. These admissions were accounted for by 530,000 individuals, as some had more than one stay in hospital during the year.

While there are variations in trends between local authority areas, 63% showed an increase in hospital admissions in the last year, 31% had less than a 5% change, and only 6% showed a decrease.

Areas which perform poorly on one of the indicators generally also do so on the other measures. For this

reason, NWPHO created a single measure of harm to compare across areas. This measure includes alcohol related ill health, death, crime and poor drinking behaviours. Seven of the ten areas in England with the greatest level of alcohol related harms are in the North West: Manchester, Salford, Liverpool, Rochdale, Halton, Tameside and Oldham.

The latest updates added to LAPE include new NI 39 data by age and by cause. Other updates will be added later in the year. See the LAPE website for further details: www.nwph.net/alcohol/lape

Low price drink promotions fuel increased drinking says the Big Drink Debate

The biggest ever survey on alcohol in the North West revealed that of 30,000 respondents, 80% thought that low prices and discounts are fuelling our unhealthy drinking culture. Launched by Our Life – in partnership with Government Office for the North West and the

Department of Health – the aim of the Big Drink Debate was to gather people's views on drinking and how it affects health, safety and wellbeing in the region. NWPHO both compiled and analysed the questionnaire.

The results from the analysis

were presented at a summit of public sector leaders from across the North West in November 2008.

Details of future consultations around other key public health themes are available from the Our Life website: www.ourlife.org.uk



Characteristics of Cheshire and Merseyside drinkers

NWPHO recently released its *Using geodemographics to segment the market for hazardous and harmful drinkers in Cheshire and Merseyside* report.

Commissioned by Cheshire and Merseyside Partnerships for Health (ChaMPs), the report uses a range of data

sources to profile the lives and characteristics of hazardous and harmful drinkers among the adult population, including details of what, when, where and why people are consuming alcohol. The report also examines people's motivations to drink, their social networks and their

attitudes towards maintaining their general health and wellbeing. Such in-depth information should help health and related professionals to better design and target interventions among those groups most at risk from the negative effects of alcohol.



Evaluating the impact of wellbeing projects in the North West

The Target Wellbeing programme aims to help people live healthier and happier lives by supporting them to adopt healthy lifestyles and behaviours. In the North West, the programme is managed by Groundwork and consists of 87 projects operating in ten areas facing some of the greatest health challenges.

The regional group commissioned NWPHO to undertake an impact evaluation of the

programme. As part of this, NWPHO has helped train project staff to develop their own evaluations as well as contribute to the regional evaluation.

NWPHO has also developed an online database allowing each project to systematically record its activity and build up a picture of the communities they are serving. In addition, information from surveys will be used to measure any behavioural change among

the project's participants.

NWPHO will also produce an annual report about the differences that projects make to health and wellbeing outcomes in the region.

Further information about the Target Wellbeing project and the areas in the North West being targeted can be found at: www.groundworknw.org.uk

Target Wellbeing consists of 87 projects across the North West



NEWS FLASH! NWPHO roadshows

NWPHO will be hosting a series of roadshows again during summer 2009 throughout the North West. The roadshows are designed to raise awareness of the intelligence and data tools currently available from the Observatory and to gain feedback from users.

Feedback from last year's roadshows was very positive including comments such as: "Workshops excellent but too short!"; "Excellent opportunity to get updated"; and "Keep it coming!".

Look out for further details on our web events calendar.



Suicides in non-residential sites in the North West

NWPHO recently undertook an analysis of locations of suicides and attempted suicides outside the home in the North West.

Commissioned by the North West Care Services Improvement Partnership, the project was supported by a multi-partner steering group involving Government Office North West, Samaritans, the Highways Agency and the Fire and Rescue Service, among others.

NWPHO gathered data from primary care trusts across the North West as well as from coroners and a variety of other agencies.

Although the report – *Non-residential suicide sites in the North West* – does not explicitly give suicide prevention recommendations, the evidence from the analysis can be used to begin identifying actions for each local authority to build on with partners. The analysis will also

help to inform regional suicide prevention strategies.

In accordance with guidelines for safe and ethical reporting of suicide methods and locations its contents are too sensitive for general release. However, a public facing copy of the report will be available in coming months.



Weight issues in the North West



The synthesis series of reports bring together policy, evidence and intelligence on specific themes. Previous topics have included work and health, lifestyle surveys and life expectancy.

The seventh and latest in the series, *Healthy Weight in the North West Population* suggests that a fitter, leaner North West is possible despite continuing rises in the number of people who are an 'unhealthy weight' (overweight or obese).

Between 1993 and 2006 the estimated number of adults living in the North West who were of 'unhealthy weight' rose by 600,000 – equivalent to the combined populations of Liverpool and Blackpool. There are also worrying levels of 'unhealthy weight' among North West children, with almost 15,000 4-5 year olds and over 18,000 10-11 year olds classed as overweight or obese during 2007.

The report highlights that

although the most deprived populations have 1.6 to 1.8 times higher prevalence of obesity in children than the more affluent groups, 'unhealthy weight' is a problem across the entire region and cannot be tackled by only targeting deprived areas. Alongside measuring the extent of 'unhealthy weight' in the region, the report summarises a set of actions that are needed to tackle this problem.

NEWS FLASH! Health is Wealth Commission recommends actions

The Health is Wealth Commission's final report of recommendations, including plans to create a North West Works Task Force and a (UK first) Workplace Health Charter is available to download at www.healthiswealthcommission.org.uk. The report is the outcome of over 18 months' investigation into the growing gap between the Liverpool City-region's booming economic performance and its worsening public health status.

NWPHO provided research support to the Commission including the production of an Incapacity Benefit and an Alcohol Profile for the Liverpool City-region, compared with findings nationally and the English core cities group.

North West Health Profiler Online Intelligence Tool

The *North West Health Profiler* online tool www.nwpho.org.uk/health_profiler provides quick access to a wide range of health, lifestyle, deprivation and inequalities measures which can be used to produce bespoke local profiles.

The aim is to support improved commissioning so that the region's

population can live healthier lives and experience reduced local health inequalities. As one Public Health Intelligence Specialist noted: "Our PCT often use the excellent Health Profiler dataset, particularly the life expectancy, all age all cause mortality and alcohol related data."

Indicators are presented at

a range of geographies, including small area statistics such as Middle Super Output Areas and across five inequalities gradients (including deprivation, urban-rural classification and ethnicity). The area profiles can also be used to produce online maps.

NWPHO also provides support in how this data

could be used to identify areas of greatest need and hence where resources may be best targeted.

The North West Health Profiler and all other NWPHO tools are continuously developed to respond to the dynamic commissioning environment that the NHS works in.

About the North West Public Health Observatory (NWPHO)

NWPHO fulfils a regional public health information and intelligence function supporting the work of public health professionals, local authorities and providers of healthcare and further services relevant to the health of the North West population.

The Observatory is also a member of the Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO). NWPHO's lead areas for APHO are alcohol, substance use, violence, dental health and working with the Health Protection Agency.