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Powys Teaching Health Board

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

The greatest wealth is health



2024

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My thanks too for all input from colleagues that Tracey has worked with, and who have produced information to support this report, in particular: the Powys Public Health Team, Health Board Communications and Engagement Team, the Public Health Wales Observatory and Health Protection Service, Powys County Council Health Protection and Environmental Health Team.

In addition, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the people who allowed for their case studies and photos to be shared within the report.

Foreword

My first Annual Report as Director of Public Health in Powys describes the health of the population of Powys and sets out the key health challenges facing our population as a whole, and some of the opportunities I see to address them.

Based on current trends in 15 years' time over a third of population of Powys will be aged 65 years and over, with a decrease in the proportion who are of working age – those who provide the health and social care.

The experiences each of us have as we age will be dependent on our health and wellbeing. As we live longer, more of us are living with chronic conditions that negatively impact on our quality of life for many years. Much of this is preventable provided individuals do as much as they can to make healthy choices, alongside concerted local and national action at population level to support healthy ageing.

In the current economic context, the challenge for us all is to ensure that short term imperatives don't detract from our goal of better health and wellbeing. As such, it's important that we all take action to build good health and to stay well as we age and give our children the best start in life.

'The greatest wealth is health' is a quote attributed to the Roman poet Virgil. We need a concerted and collective preventative approach, one which gives children and young people the best start in life and promotes healthy and active ageing for everyone in Powys.

The report sets out calls for action for individuals and organisations. It's important that we act now. By working together to deliver the actions in this report we can prevent ill health, and live healthier, longer lives.

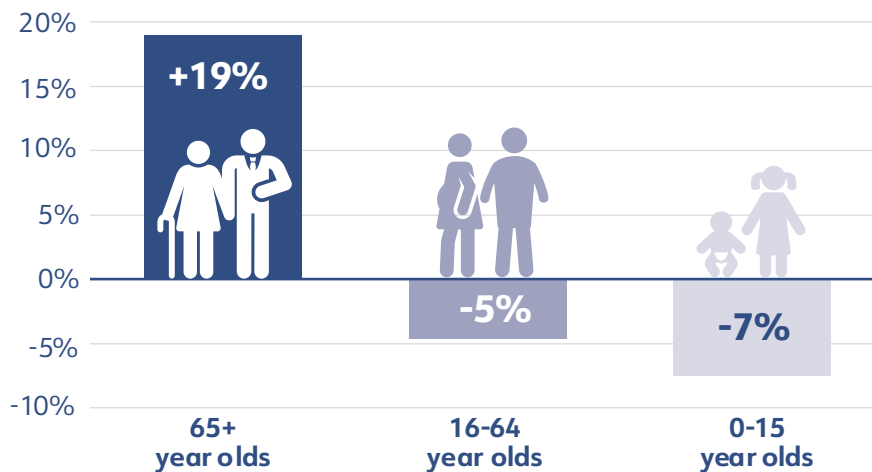
Mererid Bowley, Executive Director of Public Health, Powys Teaching Health Board



Chapter 1 – Health and wellbeing in Powys

Powys is home to 134 thousand people. Although the total population has remained fairly steady over time, and projections suggest little change, the population is ageing. Between 2012 and 2022, there was an increase of 19% - nearly 1 in 5 more people - aged 65 years and over. At the same time there was a decrease in the number of under 65 year olds (figure 1.1).

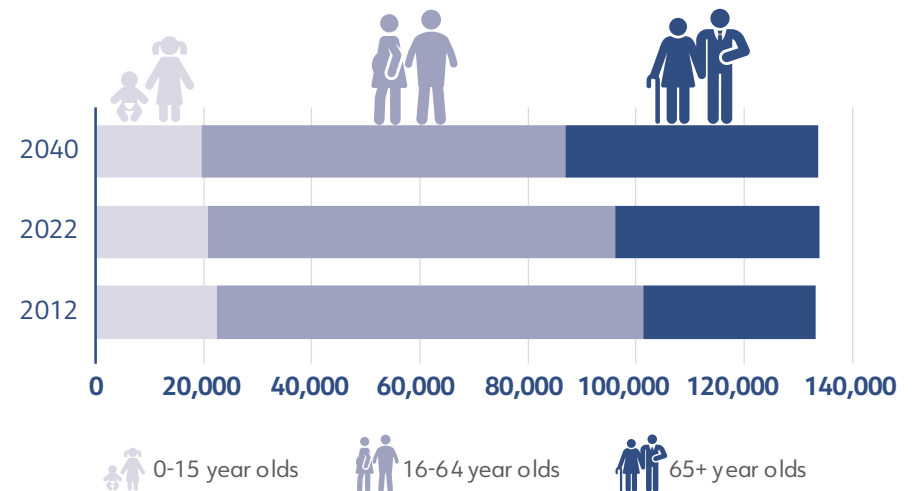
Figure 1.1 Percentage change in Powys population by age group: 2012 to 2022



Source: Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics

There are 38 thousand people aged 65 years and over in Powys, over a quarter of the population. It has the highest proportion of all local authorities in Wales. By 2040 it is projected that people aged 65 years and over will increase by another 9 thousand, and represent over a third of the Powys population (figure 1.2). As the population ages, there will be a fall in the proportion who are of working age, those who provide the health and social care.

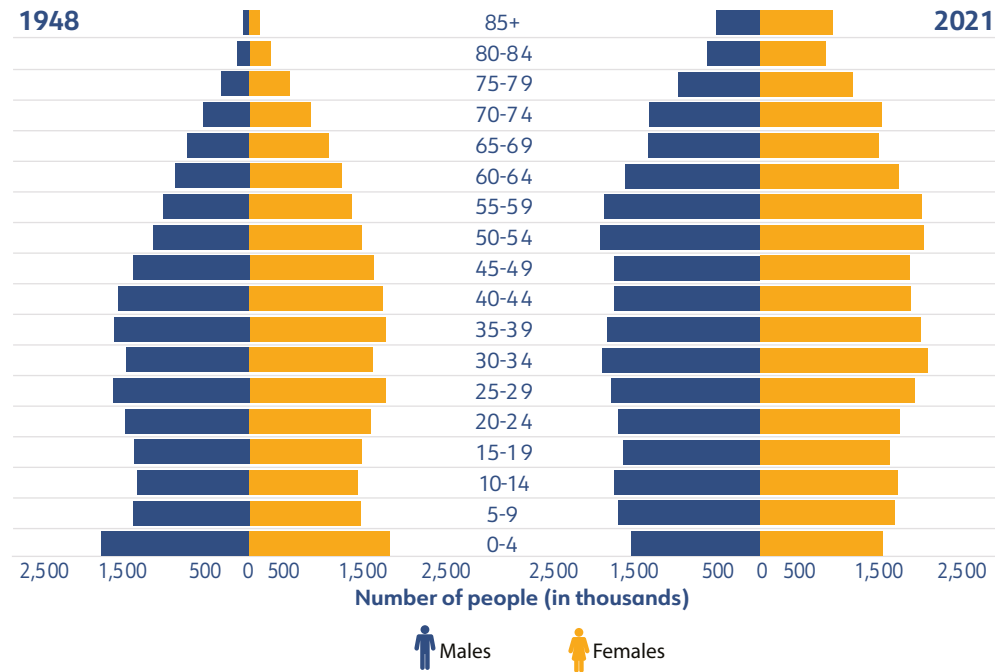
Figure 1.2 Trend in Powys population by age group



Source: Mid-year population estimates and Population projections, Office for National Statistics

When the NHS was created in 1948, the population structure looked different to how it does now (figure 1.3).

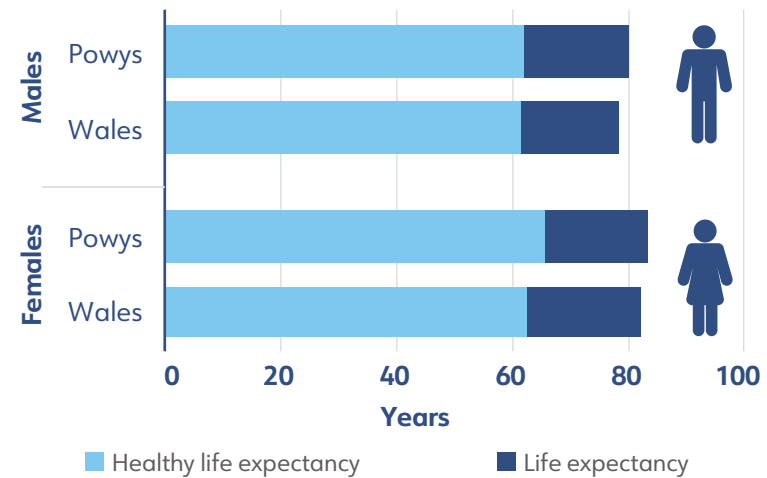
Figure 1.3 Population age and sex distribution in England and Wales: 1948 and 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics population estimates

Better management of conditions is helping more people to live longer. In Powys, life expectancy is higher than for Wales as a whole, but not all those years are necessarily spent in good health (figure 1.4). Women tend to live longer than men, and also to spend more of their life in good health. In later life, individuals tend to experience more ill health, more conditions ('multimorbidity') which brings added complexity.^{1,2}

Figure 1.4 Life expectancy at birth in years: 2018-2020



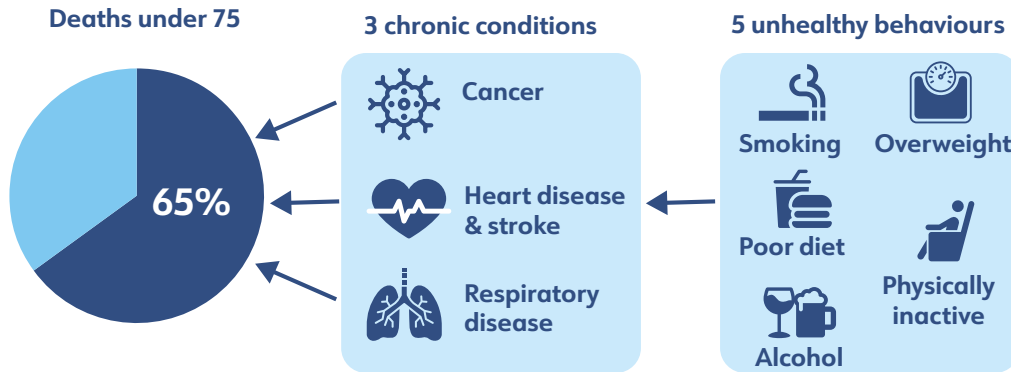
Source: Public Health Wales

With an aging population, for some long-term conditions where age is a key risk factor, such as dementia and some cancers, numbers in the population with these conditions are projected to increase.² However, some conditions are predicted to increase faster than expected than from an ageing population alone.² From 2009/10 to 2021/22, the number of adults in Powys living with diabetes has increased by 40% from 6,600 to 9,200..³

Some conditions have risk factors that can be modified, for example: not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, having a healthy diet, being physically active.

Around 4 in 10 cancer cases could be prevented.
Smoking is the largest cause of cancer in the UK, followed by overweight and obesity.⁴

In Powys, two-thirds of early deaths are caused by 3 chronic conditions. These conditions have some major risk factors which are preventable.



Whilst diseases, long term conditions, and disabilities become more common and accumulate as we become older, they are far from inevitable, even in later years

Prof Sir Chris Whitty¹
Chief Medical Officer for England

Quality of life can be improved if people remain as healthy as possible, by preventing illhealth occurring and helping those with illhealth to live well and manage their condition.⁵ In Powys, *The Health and Care Strategy for Powys - A vision to 2027 and beyond*⁶ includes a focus on tackling 'The Big 4' health conditions: cancer, circulatory diseases, respiratory diseases, mental health.

The population of Powys generally has good health in comparison with other parts of Wales (figure 1.5). There is no room for complacency however, Wales and Powys tend to compare poorly against other parts of the UK and internationally. Powys may have the highest percentage of adults eating five portions of fruit and vegetables daily, but there are still 6 out of every 10 adults who are not eating the recommended amount.

Figure 1.5 Risk factors in the Powys population

Adults aged 16 and over age-standardised percentage: 2022/23			
	Wales	Powys	Comparison with other 22 Welsh local authorities
Healthy weight	36.1%	43.2%	5th highest
Eating '5 a day'	28.5%	41.9%	Highest
Physically active	55.4%	66.8%	2nd highest
Smoke	12.8%	10.1%	4th lowest
Drinking above guidelines	17.2%	13.6%	4th lowest

 Significantly better than Wales  Significantly worse than Wales

Source: National Survey for Wales; School Health Research Network

Adolescents aged 11-16 years: 2021			
	Wales	Powys	Comparison with other 22 Welsh local authorities
Healthy weight	79.1%	83.4%	Highest
Sugary drinks every day	16.4%	12.5%	5th lowest
Physically active	16.2%	18.3%	Highest
Smoke	3.0%	3.5%	8th highest
Using alcohol	40.2%	50.2%	Highest

Figure 1.6 Mental wellbeing in adults aged 16 and over age-standardised percentage: 2022/23

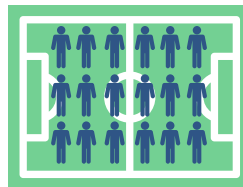
	Wales	Powys	Comparison with other 22 Welsh local authorities
Life satisfaction among working age adults	79.2%	81.2%	7th highest
Life satisfaction among older people	84.4%	88.0%	6th highest
A sense of community (2021/22 data)	63.8%	67.7%	4th highest
People feeling lonely	12.7%	12.1%	12th lowest

Source: National Survey for Wales

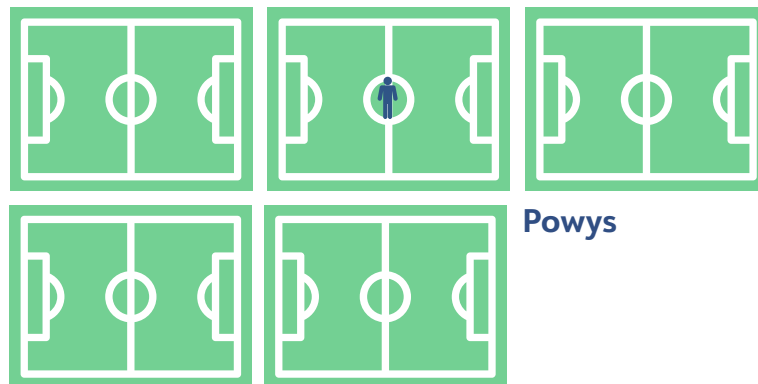
The majority of working age people report being satisfied with life, but this still means that 1 in 5 are not (figure 1.6). Only around 1 in 8 feel lonely, suggesting that there are some strong, well-connected communities in Powys despite the rurality.

Our health is affected by personal characteristics, such as our age or ethnicity. In addition, what helps to keep us healthy is a complex interaction of many factors, such as the environment in which we live and spend our time, social and economic factors, our experience of trauma, education, income etc. These 'wider determinants of health' impact on the options available to us, our behaviours and opportunities to be healthy.⁵

Health inequalities – avoidable and unfair differences in health and health outcomes between different groups of people – can result from differences in the distribution of these determinants. According to the Welsh Index of Deprivation, Powys is relatively equal with only a few pockets of small areas identified amongst the more deprived in Wales, in Ystradgynlais, Newtown, Welshpool and Llandrindod Wells. This is with the exception of access to services, Powys has nearly 90% of its small areas in the most deprived 50% in Wales for this category, which is unsurprising due to the relatively large geography and sparse population.⁷ In Wales there is one person for every football pitch-sized piece of land. Cardiff is the most densely populated local authority area with around 18 people per pitch-size, whilst Powys has 5 pitches per resident. This presents a challenge for services to make sure they are accessible for people.



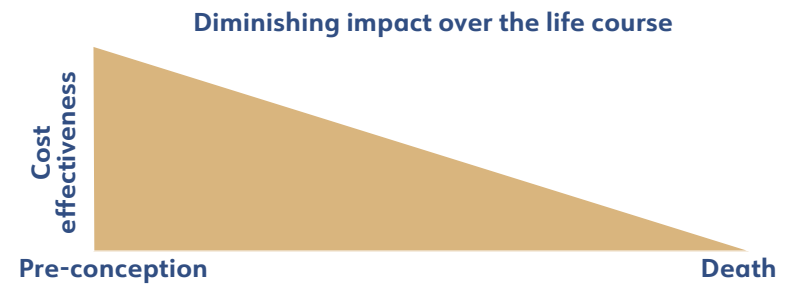
Cardiff



Powys

Inequalities, however, are not always related to where someone lives. Organisations need to consider how they provide services in a way that can reduce inequalities, for example, ensure there are no barriers for people with a disability accessing the service.

Most of the wider determinants lie outside the remit of health services alone, so all of us have a part to play in addressing them. There are diminishing returns addressing things later in the lifecycle, so it is important that we act now to support babies, children and the working age of Powys to have healthy lives and help prevent poor health into older age.



Source: Adapted from Heckman⁸



Opening of new adventure playground, Ysgol Penygloddfa, Newtown

Call to action

Individuals

Individuals need to do as much as they can to make healthy choices. Take opportunities to be active, have a healthy diet, drink alcohol responsibly and to not smoke.

Public sector organisations

Take action to address wider determinants of health.

Give children the best start in life.

Help to address inequalities as 'anchor institutions' providing good employment, and support people to re-enter the workplace after a period of economic inactivity.

As employers support people to stay healthy in work – become exemplar health promoting workplaces.

Health sector

Support individuals to manage and live well with chronic conditions through providing patient education programmes.

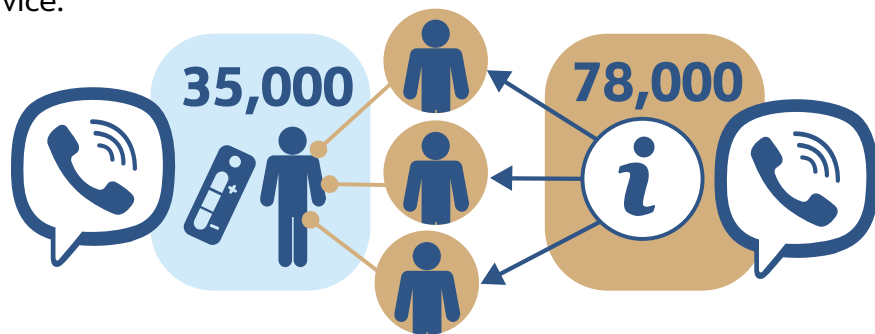
Powys County Council

Enforce smokefree legislation.

Chapter 2 - Protecting the Powys population

The pandemic needed a significant local Health Protection response to help protect the population of Powys. This included the rapid setting up of a Covid-19 Test Trace Protect (TTP) service in partnership between the health board and Powys County Council, and also the development of a Covid-19 vaccination programme.

In the 2 years from June 2020 until June 2022 when community contact tracing ended, over 35 thousand positive Covid-19 cases were successfully contacted in Powys. This led to 78 thousand of their contacts being identified and provided with appropriate advice.



Whilst the TTP programme ended in Wales in March 2023, health boards were expected to work with their local partners to transition towards building agile, integrated Health Protection teams. This is to ensure an ongoing response to Covid-19, but also that we can prepare for and respond to future health protection threats.

The level of response to Covid-19 in terms of testing and contact tracing has reduced and is now focused where there is higher risk of serious outcomes, particularly in support of incidents/outbreaks in vulnerable settings such as care homes and special schools. The Health Protection Team has continued to deliver a testing service to care homes reporting residents having respiratory symptoms and to support the management of incidents/outbreaks.

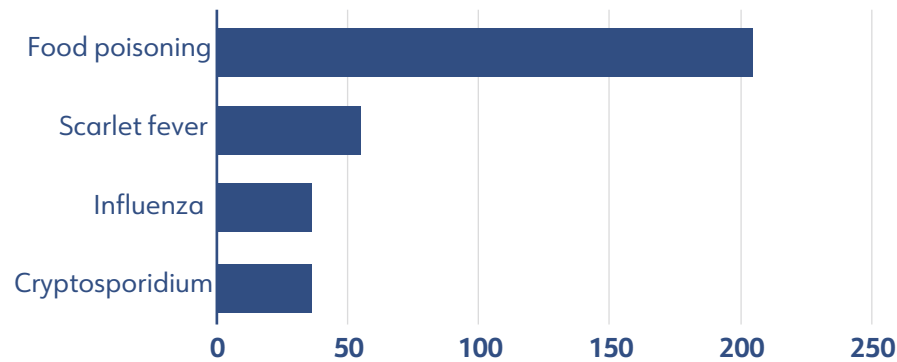
The local health protection model is likely to change over time as we learn to live with the evolving Covid-19 virus, and also in response to any other threats. Alongside this will probably be changing expectations of local roles and responsibilities, and a significant reduction in funding.

The health protection system in Wales is facing challenges in responding not only to Covid-19, but dealing with other infectious diseases too. Winter 2022/23 saw an increase in reported cases across England and Wales of scarlet fever, and more recently an increase in measles cases.

The health board has a role in communicating and engaging with the local population to help manage any threats and outbreaks. The most common notifications of infectious disease in 2023 was food poisoning (figure 2.1).*

*Responsibility for the control of notifiable infections relating to food poisoning sits with the local authority.

Figure 2.1 Number of notifications of the most common infectious diseases in Powys: 2023



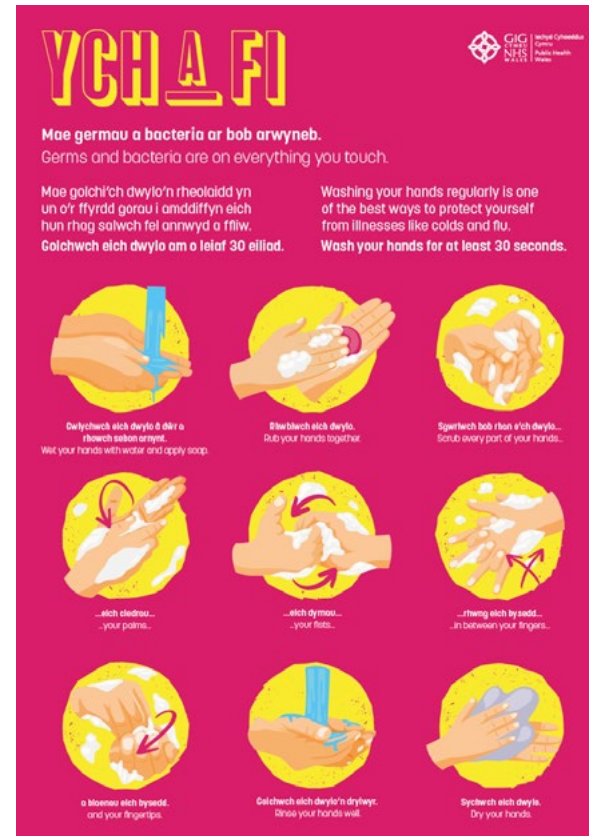
Source: Public Health Wales

The Covid-19 pandemic showed us how easily and quickly a new infection could spread, and there continues to be a risk of other pandemics. The unpredictable nature means that it is important to be alert and to prepare. Pandemic flu is captured on the Dyfed Powys Community Risk Register. Importantly for a rural area like Powys, the Register also recognises the risk of animal diseases that have the possibility of infecting humans, and thus present health risks to the general population.¹

Powys has established a Health Protection Partnership Group, chaired by the Director of Public Health, and which includes representatives from Powys County Council and Public Health Wales. The Group has oversight of the local Health Protection needs, plans and services, to ensure the wellbeing of the Powys population is protected as much as possible.

Key guiding principles for Health Protection work locally

1. Living with Covid-19
2. Plan and respond to a wide range of emerging health protection threats
3. Protect the most vulnerable
4. Address inequities



All of us can help prevent the spread of infection. The good hygiene practices we were all familiar with to help manage the pandemic are still relevant today.

Protecting care home residents

Acute respiratory infections can have serious consequences for vulnerable people, as they are often elderly and frail with underlying health conditions. These infections can spread rapidly in enclosed environments, such as care homes, due to the close contact between residents, staff and visitors.

Autumn/Winter is usually a time where there is an increase in people becoming ill from infections. To help some of our most vulnerable population keep well, the Powys Health Protection Team developed an education and support programme for care homes. The aim is to help prevent, control and manage respiratory incidents/ outbreaks. The training includes Infection Prevention and Control, outbreak management, personal protective equipment (PPE), respiratory testing guidance and throat swabbing, and the importance of vaccination. August to December 2023, two onsite visits were offered and taken up by 28 nursing or residential homes for older adults across Powys. Three types of practical training were offered to staff: correct use of PPE, hand hygiene and throat swab sampling. In total, 70 training sessions were provided, with 265 staff attending at least one.

It was a great session, and very beneficial to all our staff here at Crosfield House.

Emma Shaw, Deputy Manager



Vaccination

One of the most cost-effective ways to protect the population against infectious diseases is through prevention, specifically through a vaccination programme.

Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases.

It's much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and treating them.

Once your immune system knows how to fight a disease, it can often give you lifelong protection.²

The huge success of the Covid-19 vaccination programme led the country to emerge from the emergency phase of the pandemic to a 'new normal.'



To protect our vulnerable population, we continuously review and adapt how the programme is operating locally. The aim is to ensure that vaccination is as accessible and equitable as possible, despite the scale of the programme and narrow time period for delivery.

The programme's success depends on a partnership with the public, relying on individuals to play their role by taking part. This partnership is still needed and will be built upon going forward, so high rates of vaccination across the lifecourse (figure 2.2) can be achieved.

Having a vaccine also benefits your whole community through "herd immunity".

If enough people are vaccinated, it's harder for the disease to spread to those people who cannot have vaccines, such as those with a weakened immune system.²

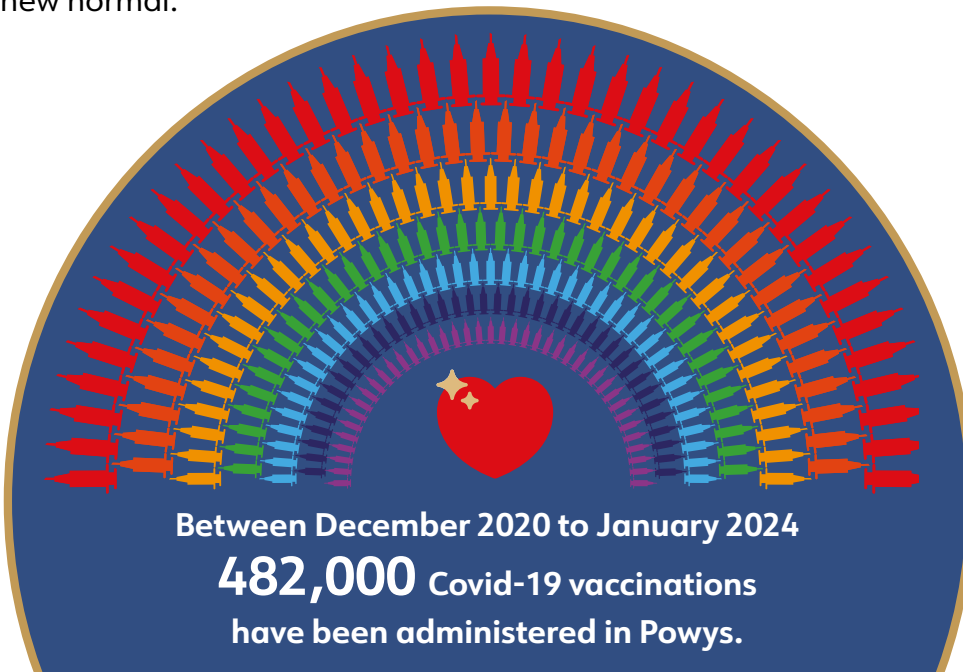


Figure 2.2 Vaccinations across the lifecourse

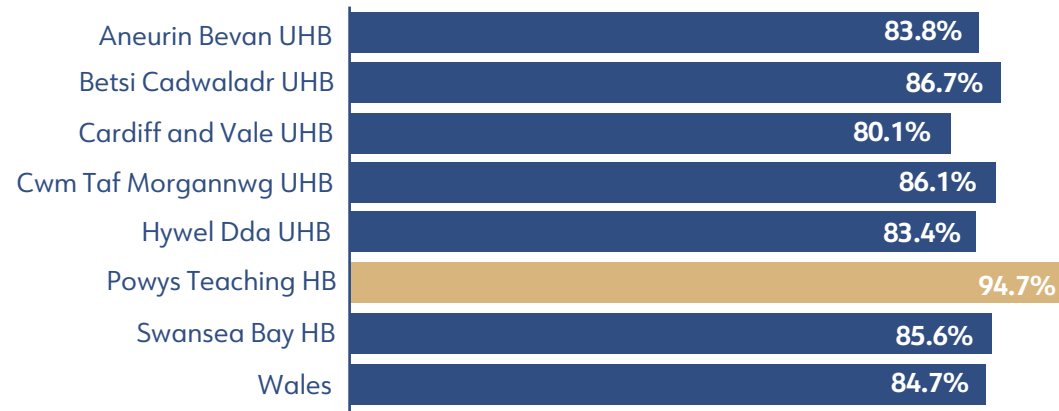
Age due	Diseases protected against
8 weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) and hepatitis B
	Meningococcal group B (MenB)
	Rotavirus gastroenteritis
12 weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Hib and hepatitis B
	Pneumococcal (13 serotypes)
	Rotavirus gastroenteritis
16 weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Hib and hepatitis B
	Meningococcal group B
12 -13 months old	Hib / Meningococcal group C
	Pneumococcal
	Measles, mumps and rubella
	Meningococcal group B
2 nd and 3 years old and all school aged children	Influenza (annually from September)
3 years 4 months old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio
	Measles, mumps and rubella
School year 8 (12 to 13 year olds)	Cervical cancer, some head and neck and ano-genital cancers, and genital warts caused by human papillomavirus (HPV)
School year 9 (13 and 14 year olds)	Tetanus, diphtheria and polio
	Meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y
65 years of age and older	Influenza (annually from September)
65 years of age and older	Pneumococcal (23 serotypes)
65 years and 70 to 79 years old (plus individuals from age 50 who are severely immunosuppressed) ⁵	Shingles

Source: Public Health Wales

The importance of children having their vaccinations is clear from the recent increase in measles cases reported in Wales and the UK. Targeted work in Powys to address the falling rates of MMR vaccination uptake is starting to make a positive difference (figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3 Percentage of children reaching their 4th birthday and up to date with all scheduled vaccines by health board: 01/07/2023-30/09/2023



Source: COVER 148 report, Public Health Wales

Call to action

Parents/guardians

Take your child to have their vaccination when invited. Check with your health visitor or GP if you think they may have missed any.

Individuals

Make sure you are up-to-date with all your vaccinations, and attend your vaccination appointment when invited.

Health Visitors and School Nursing

Check the immunisation status of children and help anyone missing a vaccine to access it.

Powys Teaching Health Board

Monitor uptake of vaccines and take targeted action to reduce inequity in uptake between communities and groups.

Health and Social Care Staff

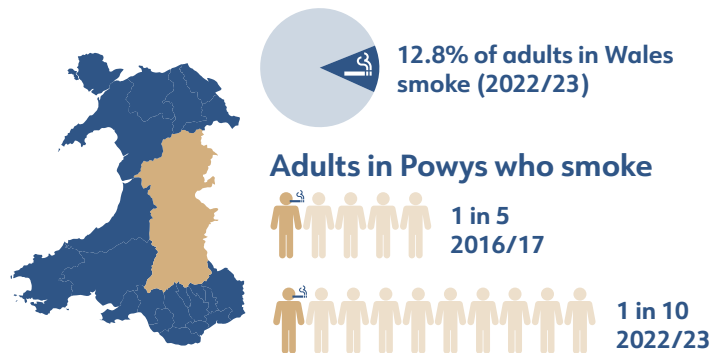
Take up the offer of vaccination to help protect yourselves, your loved ones and the people you care for.

Chapter 3 – Promoting healthy behaviours in Powys

This chapter focuses on two of the public health priority issues for Powys: smoking and alcohol.

Ambition for a smokefree Powys by 2030

The ambition is for Wales to be smokefree by 2030¹ with less than 1 in 20 adults smoking. To do this, our focus locally is on preventing people from starting to smoke and supporting people to give up.



Source: National Survey for Wales

A multi-agency Powys Nicotine Reduction Steering Group oversees the work locally. In July 2023 a tobacco control summit was held attended by representatives from the health board, third sector, Powys County Council and Police. At the summit, vaping was also highlighted as a growing concern, and addressing vaping amongst young people was agreed as a local priority action.



Powys Tobacco Control Summit 4th July 2023

Tackling vaping in young people in Powys

Whilst the vast majority of young people do not vape, data is indicating an increasing proportion of children and young people vaping daily and reporting nicotine dependency. Examples of local work includes:

- An information and guidance resource on vaping was developed to support educational settings in Powys. It was shared in the summer term 2023 with schools and partners working with young people.
- Prevention and treatment services have been working together to develop a pathway to ensure young people can get timely and easy access to support services when needed.
- Engagement work with some local young people has identified messages that would prevent them vaping. This is to inform the development of a communications campaign.



Preventing young people smoking

Most smokers start before the age of 18, so it is important to help prevent young people from starting to smoke in the first place. JustB SmokeFree is a schools-based smoking prevention programme delivered by Public Health Wales. Schools are identified where there is the highest risk of pupils smoking.

In each participating school, a group of influential Year 8 learners (12-13 year olds) are identified by their peers to become Smokefree Ambassadors. These young people attend a two day training course to provide them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to talk to their peers about smoking and being smokefree. This also includes providing them with information on e-cigarettes/vapes and illegal and illicit tobacco.

Three Powys schools completed the programme in 2022-23 academic year:

- Ysgol Maesydderwen, Ystradgynlais
- Brecon High School, Brecon
- Ysgol Calon Cymru - Builth Wells & Llandrindod Wells sites

These schools are again participating in 2023-24, along with:

- Newtown High School - Newtown & Presteigne
- Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, Machynlleth
- Ysgol Gwernyfed, Three Cocks



When approached about taking part in JustB, I knew this would be a great opportunity for our school, and I was not disappointed. Pupil health and wellbeing is very important at our school, and we recognised that taking part would contribute to pupils' physical wellbeing and meets the principles of the new curriculum for Wales.

I was really impressed with the strategy of identifying influential members of the year group, and was intrigued as to how the project would work. It involved a huge range of engaging and educational activities, keeping the pupils on their toes and maximising opportunities for learning. The pupils were all thoroughly engaged. They were able to go back into school, and confidently relay their knowledge to their peers in informal settings.

We have participated in the project for a second year, and our Smoke Free Ambassadors from last year were disappointed when they couldn't take part again!

Ruth Bullions – Assistant Head for Wellbeing Ysgol Maesydderwen

It was an interesting experience, partly because some of it was just having fun and doing fun activities, and then the rest of it was us learning facts and sometimes having serious conversations which is an interesting combination.

Charlotte Robson – Smokefree Ambassador

Stop smoking support

In Wales, stop smoking support is available through 'Help me Quit.' Services were greatly hit during the pandemic, but considerable work is being done to improve the access and range of services in Powys to make it easier for smokers to access support, and to reorientate services to those in greatest need.



As well as telephone support, the local Smoking Cessation Team is providing more face-to-face clinics in a range of settings, such as some GP surgeries. Groups have re-commenced, including an evening group in Brecon Hospital. There are also 22 community pharmacies across Powys now providing a smoking cessation service.

Promotional work is also being undertaken to increase public awareness of these services and how to access them. This has included GPs sending text messages to their patients who are smokers.

A positive difference is being seen; more than 400 smokers made a quit attempt in April-December 2023, 53% higher than the same period in 2022.

Help Me Quit

Through 'Help Me Quit', smokers can get free, confidential and non-judgemental support from stop smoking experts. Different options are available tailored to meet individuals' needs:

- Face to face or over the phone
- One to one or in a group meeting with other smokers in local community venues, health centres or pharmacies.
- Free stop smoking medication to help prevent cravings

People are 3 times more likely to give up if they have support from Help me Quit than attempting to give up on their own.

For more information visit helpmequit.wales, e-mail helpmequit@wales.nhs.uk or call freephone 0800 085 2219.

The Powys Smoking Team can be contacted directly via a dedicated email: StopSmoking.Powys@wales.nhs.uk.

Paul's story

Paul sought help to give up smoking after finding out he had cancer, like many people he thought 'it'll never happen to me'. He successfully gave up with support from Help Me Quit. Paul said:

"I needed to stop... The service provided me with options of different things to help me give up. I also had the option if I needed to talk about it, I could ring up, have a chat about any issues or any problems I was having with it, then have regular weekly meetings to see how I was progressing... [My] sense of smell and taste are completely different to when I smoked. Breathing is better, a lot better than it was. So, for me, giving up smoking was the only choice. I had to give up but I couldn't do it on my own."



Tackling harmful alcohol drinking

Alcohol drinking is generally seen as a normal part of our culture. But there is no safe limit where it does not affect health,² and the harm can be widespread affecting, for example relationships, mental health, people's employment.

Shifting how we see alcohol in a country where drinking alcohol is part of day-to-day life is challenging

Prof Sir Frank Atherton,
Chief Medical Officer for Wales³

Chapter 1 showed that whilst adults in Powys have some of the lowest rates of heavy alcohol drinking in Wales, young people in Powys have the highest alcohol drinking rates.

The evidence suggests that managing the price of alcohol is one of the best ways to get heavy drinkers to drink less, and in Wales in March 2020 this was brought into place through minimum unit pricing.

At a local level we can support people through identifying those who are drinking too much and give them brief advice. Staff on the front line can undertake 'Making Every Contact Count'.

Also, schools and youth services can ensure young people receive support, through providing accurate information and education programmes to give them the skills to have healthy behaviours.

Brief advice is a cost-effective intervention where professionals use their everyday contact with people to discuss and encourage behaviours that will lead to positive changes, including providing information on where to access further help.

Helping to keep young people safe during the Royal Welsh Show week

During the period of the Royal Welsh Show each summer, Builth Wells town centre attracts significant numbers of evening visitors, the majority aged under 30.

The Builth Wells Safety Group brings together a wide range of partners. Working in partnership, the aim is to help ensure the safety of visitors and the wider community in the town centre, and relieve pressure on public services. The Group, building on learning from previous years, used a range of approaches for the summer of 2023 such as:

- Setting up a safe pedestrian walking route
- Night time patrols by Powys Youth Workers and Street Pastors, who were able to signpost and support individuals
- Commissioning additional medical provision from St Johns Ambulance Cymru.
- Developing a 'Have Fun, Take Care, Stay Safe' communications campaign.



As well as a bilingual video for social media, posters and banners were displayed in prominent town centre locations, event sites and licensed premises. Using an agricultural theme, the campaign was targeted at young people to encourage them to think about how much alcohol they were drinking, to think about their behaviour and to look after their friends.

Call to action

Smokers

Contact *Help Me Quit* to start your smoking cessation journey.

Schools

Reinforce school grounds as a smoke-free site, prohibiting vaping as well as smoking.

Take part in the Just B SmokeFree programme when invited.

Everyone

Report anonymously any outlets which are illegally selling vapes to young people via noifs-nobutts.co.uk.

Powys Teaching Health Board

Reinforce all hospital sites as smoke-free.

Frontline staff

Make Every Contact Count by asking patients if they are smokers, provide smoking cessation aid as appropriate and refer to stop smoking services.

Powys County Council

Enforce legislation around smoke-free premises and vehicles, and the illegal and illicit sale of cigarette and vapes.

Enforce legislation around underage sales of alcohol.

Adults who drink alcohol regularly

Be aware of how many units of alcohol you are drinking, and not exceed 14 units per week.

To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level, it is safest not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.

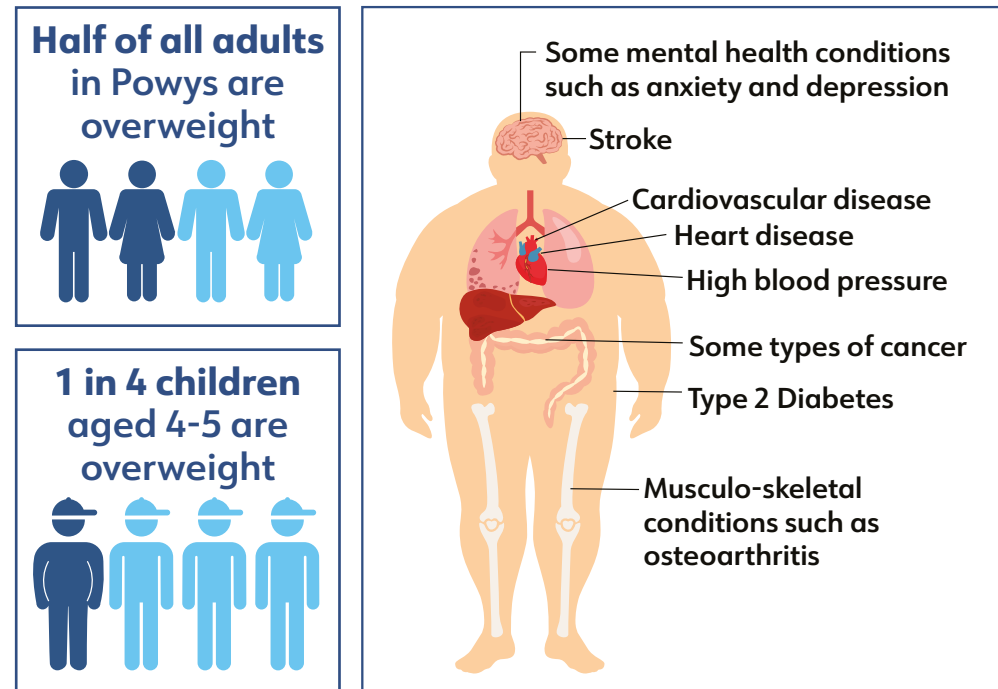
The more someone drinks, the greater the health risks.⁴

**<14 units
per week**



Chapter 4 – Healthy Weight: Healthy Powys

Being overweight increases the risk of developing a range of common health conditions. In Powys half of all adults are overweight or obese.



By the time they are in their first year of school, 1 in 4 children aged 4-5 in Powys are already overweight or obese,¹ approximately 6 children in an average class.

The factors that influence our weight are complex. There are a wide range of interacting environmental, social and economic factors influencing what we eat and drink and how active we are. In Powys we are using a new 'whole system approach' to tackle overweight and obesity. This means that partners are working together to understand and improve the local system in ways that will help people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The Powys Public Service Board has agreed this work as one of its priorities.

A series of workshops, summarised in figures 4.1 and 4.2, have helped to narrow down the priority areas to children (up to the age of five), families and access to healthy food with a focus on:

- Breastfeeding
- Introduction to solid foods (weaning)
- Cooking skills
- Affordability of healthy food.

The whole system approach aligns to, brings together and builds on existing work in Powys, examples of initiatives in place are outlined below. These support people to eat healthily and are aimed particularly at those with the highest needs, such as those living in more deprived communities.

Figure 4.1 Visual minutes from the stakeholder engagement event: December 2022



Figure 4.2 Visual minutes from the stakeholder engagement event: January 2023



The Healthy Start Scheme supports eligible parents on lower incomes by providing financial help to buy healthy food and milk.

Uptake has been lower than expected and varies across Powys. So that more eligible families can benefit, work is underway to address the barriers to uptake identified locally. This includes promoting the scheme with the public, and working with local retailers.

In the first half of 2023, average uptake for Powys was below 60%. However, the trend is showing some promising results, with uptake reaching 81% in the initial target area of Ystradgynlais.

Ydych chi'n feichion neu oes gennych blant o dan 4 oed?
 Gallech gael help i brynu Ffrwythau, llysiau, Codlysiau, Ilaeth a Ilaeth Formiwla i Fabanod.
 Gallwch hefyd gael fitaminau Healthy Start am ddim.

Are you pregnant or do you have children under the age of four?
 You could get help to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula.
 You could also get free Healthy Start vitamins.

www.healthystart.nhs.uk
 @NHSHealthyStart

Eat Smart, Save Better is a free 1-hour course that aims to support people to learn more about eating healthily on a budget. Anyone can attend, but it is particularly aimed at people living in more deprived communities and those managing on a tight budget. A range of partners are involved: the health board's Dietetic Team, Powys County Council Health Protection Team, Bwyd Powys Food and Stori Powys (Powys Libraries).

In November and December 2023, 10 sessions were held in 9 libraries across Powys, with 84 participants in total. January to March 2024, 10 schools were targeted, and a total of 19 sessions held with 111 parents attending.



Promoting healthy weight in early years and educational settings

Early years, schools and other educational settings can play a key role in supporting children to maintain a healthy weight. Examples of local initiatives are shown here.

Bach a lach (Small and Healthy)

started life as our way of delivering the Healthy Preschool Scheme in Powys. It focused on working with preschools to promote physical literacy, physical activity and healthy eating, for example by providing training for staff and resources for settings. Since then, the Bach a lach approach has been introduced to primary schools across Powys, and this aspect of the programme is now delivered through a partnership with Powys County Council's Sports Development Team. Bach a lach is now fully embedded in how we deliver both the Healthy Preschools Scheme and the Healthy Schools Scheme and is helping to ensure that staff in educational settings have the confidence, knowledge and skills to make physical activity and healthy eating part of everyday life for learners.



Foodwise for Life is a nine week weight management course for overweight adults. The health board's Dietetic Team delivered 17 courses over 2023/24.

Foodwise for Life

Is losing weight important to you?

Are you currently feeling motivated to lose weight?

Would you like to join a supportive group to learn more about achieving a healthy weight, share tips and encouragement?

Foodwise for Life is a 9 week weight management programme developed by the Public Health Dietitians in Wales

Learn more about:

- A healthy way to lose weight
- Becoming more active
- Portion sizes
- Food labels
- Changing eating habits
- Dealing with hunger & cravings
- Overcoming barriers
- Healthy food swaps

The Powys Healthy Preschool Scheme is now focusing on the theme of nutrition and oral health. Where possible, plans for the Scheme are being aligned with the whole system approach to healthy weight, such as working with preschools settings to look at their policies for providing food, including snacks and drinks.



Food and Fun is a school-based programme funded by Welsh Government. It provides food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children during the school summer holidays. The programme's aims include improving children's physical activity levels, healthy eating behaviours, mental health and emotional wellbeing, aspirations, educational attainment and school engagement.

Schools in Powys have support to deliver it from Powys Teaching Health Board's Dietetic Team and the Healthy Schools Team, and Powys County Council. In 2023, seven Powys schools took part, although over 40 were eligible. More schools are being encouraged to join the programme, and 10 have signed up for 2024.

Reflecting on his experience with Food and Fun over a number of years, Carl Hyde, Headteacher at Ysgol Calon y Dderwen in Newtown, said:

Having been part of the Food and Fun programme for over 5 years, it's been great to see it build on the experiences we offer each year. Our parents wanted something to engage children over the summer holidays and Food and Fun does just that. Not only does it help to support children to be active, through specially arranged sporting opportunities with local clubs and sports leaders, it also promotes healthy eating behaviours and provides healthy meals. The Summer holidays have traditionally been a time when children spend 6 weeks away from school, during our food and fun programme, their time in school is spent in a very different kind of way, but just as productive.

The programme also helps reduce financial and family stress with children taking part in fully funded activities both in school and through outside providers. We've seen a massive benefit to the school. We found that children are in a better frame of mind to come back to school in September.

Food and Fun has become part of the wellbeing programme that we have developed in the school. We are proud to offer our children many learning opportunities which embrace our outdoor space. These are part of the curriculum as well as extra curricular.

Throughout the year, as part of each school day, all children get around 15 minutes of activity walking around the school in the fresh air, completing up to a mile each time. Another successful initiative we've set up is a bike bus, named F-Ride-Day. Every Friday a group of our children meet at the far end of our catchment estate and cycle into school. It's a great way of building their confidence in cycling, and reduces congestion around the school gate.

Call to action

Powys Teaching Health Board

Promote and support breastfeeding, including joining the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme.
Achieve UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation.

Frontline staff

Make Every Contact Count by raising the issue of weight and signposting to sources of support.

Attend Making Every Contact Count training to increase your skills and confidence.

Pre-school settings

Have healthy and tooth-friendly policies to support children to have a healthy diet and to be active.

Achieve the Gold Standard Healthy Snack award.

Schools

Support learners to have a healthy diet and to be active, including having healthy policies.
Give learners healthy food and drink options, and opportunities to be physically active such as The Daily Mile and promoting active travel.

Only offer healthy options in vending machines.

Sign up to the Food and Fun programme if eligible.

All organisations, including public, voluntary, and private (shops, businesses, cafes etc)

Promote a healthy diet and physical activity for employees and clients.

Provide healthy food and drink options, and encourage uptake. Make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

Provide facilities for nursing mothers and join the Breastfeeding Welcome initiative.

Encourage active travel.

Chapter 5 – Addressing inequities in Powys

Chapter 1 outlined how there are differences in people’s health and wellbeing, which could be down to a number of factors. Public sector organisations in Powys have been working to address the needs of the different sectors of the population. However, the **Socio-Economic Duty**, which came into force in March 2021, has highlighted that there is more that can be done, specifically for those living in less favourable social and economic circumstances. **Actions to embed the Duty should help to reduce inequities and improve health outcomes.**

This chapter also outlines some of the other work being undertaken to tackle inequities.

Guiding future action

Powys Health Equity workshop

In November 2023, the Public Health Team brought together key stakeholders to increase understanding of health equity. Ideas to help improve decision-making in relation to socio-economic disadvantage included:

- engaging with service users to understand the views and needs of those affected by decisions made
- increasing professionals’ understanding of inequalities.

Other work to take advantage of opportunities to reduce inequalities included:

- building on integrated working between services
- reviewing services’ referral pathways.

The Socio-Economic Duty

The Duty aims to improve decision-making to help deliver better outcomes for people and communities who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

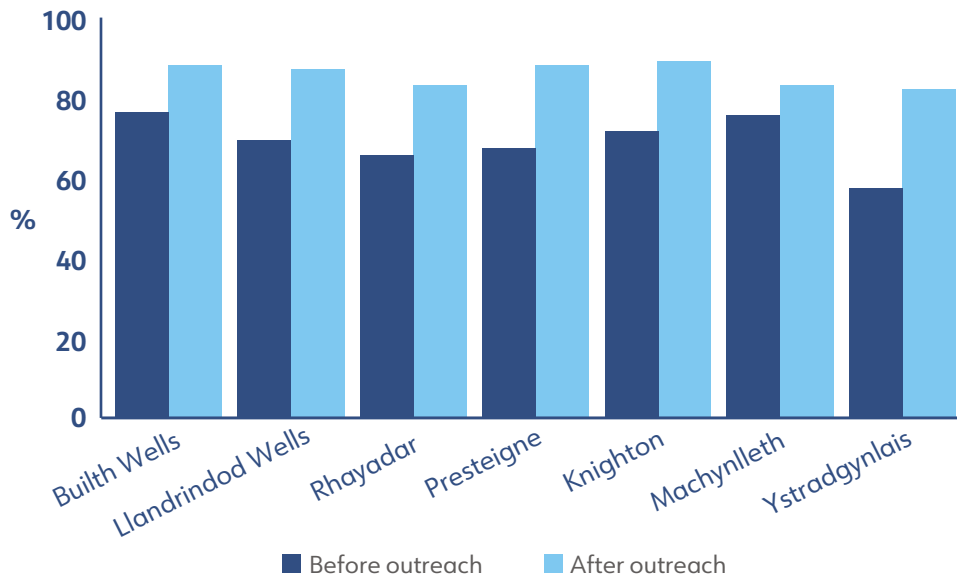
When making strategic decisions, public sector bodies now have a legal responsibility to consider the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

Addressing variations in vaccine uptake

As seen across Wales, there are variations in uptake of routine vaccinations in Powys. Work is being undertaken locally to understand and address this variation. During 2023/24 this included:

- a polio vaccination catch-up programme
- an MMR catch-up programme
- enhanced monitoring of pre-school childhood immunisation lists to inform action
- targeted Covid-19 vaccination outreach sessions in areas with lower uptake (figure 5.1)
- developing a Vaccine Equity Strategy for Powys.

Figure 5.1 Percentage uptake of Covid-19 before and after targeted outreach by area: spring campaign 2023



A place-based approach - Healthy Ystradgynlais

Ystradgynlais is one of the most deprived areas in Powys. Services covering the area are taking a focussed place-based approach to improve outcomes for local residents.

A 'Healthy Ystradgynlais' community well-being event was held in February 2024 in The Welfare Hall, organised by the Health Protection Team of Powys County Council. Over 30 organisations supported the event, sharing information about the services they provide, including: the Department for Work and Pensions, Dyfed Powys Police, Mid and West Wales Fire Service, Freedom Leisure. Powys Teaching Health Board gave flu vaccinations, raised awareness of exposure to blood borne viruses, and offered testing for hepatitis B and C, HIV and syphilis.



Nearly 300 residents attended throughout the day. As well as finding out about the support available to them, residents were able to have a say in future projects taking place in the area through a wellbeing survey.



Armed forces personnel and Veterans

Service life can impact on serving personnel, veterans, and their families in many ways, including disadvantages in accessing healthcare. For example, frequent relocation means that it can be challenging to know what services are available in their new area.

The Powys Armed and Ex-Forces Forum was first established in 2013, and although suspended during the pandemic, it was re-established in March 2023. The Forum includes representation from the armed forces, veterans, Powys County Council, health and third sector organisations. It aims to address the healthcare disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces community and, specifically, to ensure that the health board complies with the Armed Forces Covenant Legal Duty that was introduced in November 2022.

Key areas of focus for the Forum include working towards accreditation of various schemes to ensure quality standards for healthcare services are being met. Future work will include promoting the Armed Forces Covenant Duty to health board staff through policies and training, and improving signposting of veterans to services.



Presentation of plaque for the 'At Ease' garden developed at Bronllys Hospital site.

Quality standards in healthcare

Wales GP practices Veterans Accreditation Scheme

Since the scheme's launch in June 2023, a quarter of Powys GP practices have achieved veteran-friendly accreditation. This includes undertaking specialist training on veterans' health and wellbeing, and promoting fair treatment and respect for people who have served and their families.

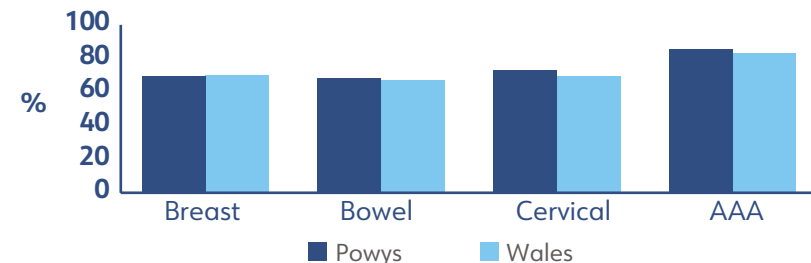
Screening

There are five national adult population-based screening programmes in Wales, which Public Health Wales have responsibility for. Overall, uptake in Powys generally compares favourably with the rest of Wales (figure 5.2). However, within Powys there is some variation, which tends to follow national patterns such as women being more likely to take part than men, people from more deprived areas are less likely to take part.

The programmes were paused during the pandemic, and there have been challenges getting the services back up to full recovery. Breast screening has taken the longest, but different actions to increase the number of appointments include using an additional mobile unit, extended hours including some weekend working, and consolidating sites to avoid moving the mobile unit as moving reduces the number of appointments available.

Work is also underway to allow people to make an informed choice about taking part by addressing barriers for different groups. An example has been the development of information in different formats, including Easy Read and British Sign Language films.

Figure 5.2 Percentage uptake for national screening programmes: 2021/22



Source: Public Health Wales Screening Division

What is Screening?

Screening aims to detect the early stages of disease or prevent disease occurring.

By identifying people at higher chance of having a health condition, more effective treatment options can be offered, or information provided to help them make decisions about their future care.

Screening can also reduce the chance of developing a serious condition, preventing ill-health and the harm that would have otherwise occurred.

Wales Screening programmes	Eligible population	Type of test	Screening Interval
Breast Test Wales	Women and people with breasts aged 50-70	Mammogram (x-ray)	Every 3 years
Bowel Screening Wales	People aged 51-74 (Lowering to 50 in 2024)	Postal home test kit	Every 2 years
Cervical Screening Wales	Women and people with a cervix aged 25-64	Cervical screening ('smear') test	Every 5 years
Diabetic Eye Screening Wales	People with diabetes aged 12 years and over	Photograph of the eye	Every 1 to 2 years depending on risk of diabetic eye disease
Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening	Men aged 65	Ultrasound scan	One-off

For more information: <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/>

Increasing awareness of cancer screening

Lingen Davies Cancer Fund Powys Cancer Champions

This initiative started in Powys in the summer 2023, and focusses on cancer awareness, prevention and early diagnosis.



Volunteer 'Cancer Champions' are recruited from across the community, and supported to have conversations with their family, friends, colleagues and neighbours to increase understanding of cancer signs and symptoms and key prevention messages. It also aims to increase uptake of cancer screening, sharing information about the importance of attending screening, reassuring and encouraging people to attend.



By the end of March 2024, 168 Cancer Champions had been trained from a range of backgrounds and organisations, including: Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations, Freedom Leisure National Exercise Referral Scheme, The Bracken Trust Cancer Support Centre, Cyfle Cymru, GP

practices in Newtown and Machynlleth, Dementia Matters, Care and Repair, Pobl, Young Farmers, Health and Social Care college students.

For further information: www.cancerchampions.co.uk

Improving access to services in Powys

Diabetic Eye Screening Wales

To address inequities in access and reduce travel times to screening for people with diabetes in Powys, Diabetic Eye Screening Wales are developing a team to be based in mid Powys. Being based locally will reduce travel times for staff and allow more options for clinic appointment times.

Building back the DESW service in Powys since the pandemic has been challenging. Some of the clinic venues previously used are no longer available. Clinic locations is something being explored further.

Call to action

Public Bodies

Embed the Socio-Economic Duty, ensuring decision-making considers those who experience disadvantage to enable all individuals to have the best health outcomes.

Frontline staff

Undertake training to support the armed forces community and signpost appropriately.

GP Practices

Register to become a 'Veteran Friendly' GP Practice.

Encourage patients to take up their screening invitation when invited.

Individuals

Consider taking part in screening when invited.

Watch out for cancer signs and symptoms, and seek help if anything is unusual.

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