

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Health Survey (NI) First Results 2016/17



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

Published October 2017

# Health Survey (NI): First Results 2016/17

Authors: Deirdre Corrigan & Mary Scarlett

**Public Health Information & Research Branch, Information Analysis Directorate**

Department of Health  
Castle Buildings, Belfast BT4 3SQ  
☎ Tel: 02890 522 523  
☎ Ext: 22523

✉ Email: [phirb@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:phirb@health-ni.gov.uk)

This publication is a summary of the main topics included in the 2016/17 Health Survey. Following on from this summary report, the Department of Health intends to produce a number of more detailed topic specific bulletins throughout 2017/18. These bulletins will be made available on the Health Survey page on the Departmental website.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research/health-survey-northern-ireland>



## General Health

**73%** reported their **general health** to be **Good or Very Good**

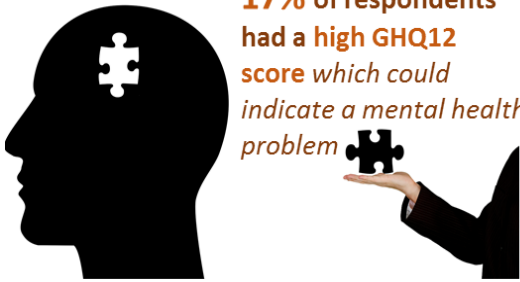


Up from **70%** in 2015/16

**Longstanding Illness - 42%** reported a longstanding illness (30% limiting and 12% non-limiting longstanding illness)

The majority of respondents (91%) believe they can influence their own health by the way they choose to live their life

## Mental Health & Wellbeing



**17%** of respondents had a high GHQ12 score which could indicate a mental health problem

The proportion of females with a high GHQ12 score fell to 18% (from 21% in 2015/16). Males remained unchanged

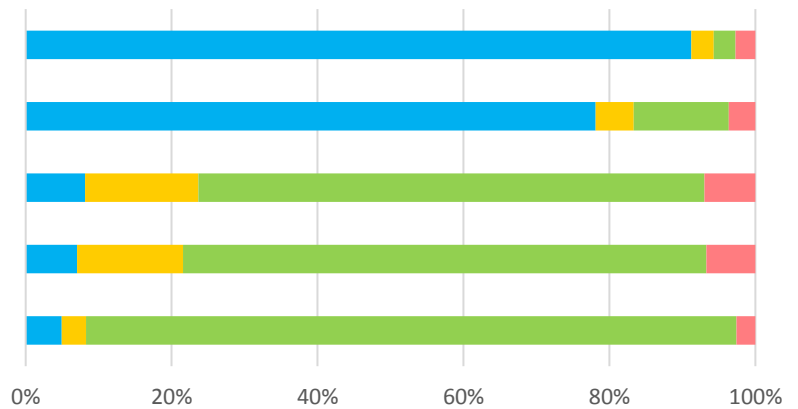
**45%** of those who had mental health concerns felt that their normal activities were affected  
**22%** missed time at work / school / university

**68%** would feel comfortable talking to a friend or family member about their mental health, however a similar proportion (**62%**) would feel uncomfortable speaking to an employer

## Opinion on Mental Health

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

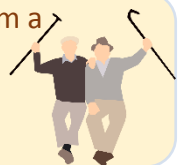
- Virtually anyone can become mentally ill
- Mental illness is an illness like any other
- People with mental health problems should not be given any responsibility
- I would not want to live next door to someone who has been mentally ill
- People with mental illness don't deserve our sympathy



Nearly a third (**30%**) had concerns about their own mental health in the past year

**56%** sought help

- Of these: **84%** sought help from GP
- 43%** from family
- 30%** from a friend



Of those who did not seek help

- The main reason given by 80% of males and 65% of females was... **"I thought I could handle things on my own"**

## Social Support

Four-fifths answered **“Certainly true”** when asked if they had family or a friend who...



...can be relied on no matter what



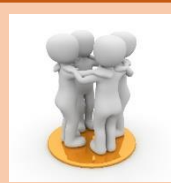
...would see that I was taken care of if I needed to



...make me feel an important part of their lives



...give me support and encouragement



Almost all respondents (91%) saw **family** members on a **weekly** basis, while three-quarters (76%) saw **friends**

**73% of respondents have 3 or more people they can count on**

## Wellbeing

Around two-fifths of respondents reported very high levels of...



life satisfaction



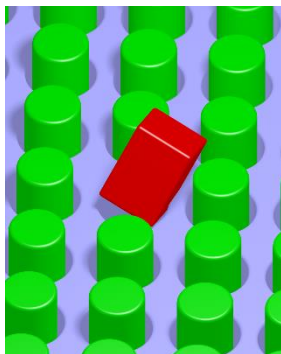
feeling that the things they do in life are worthwhile



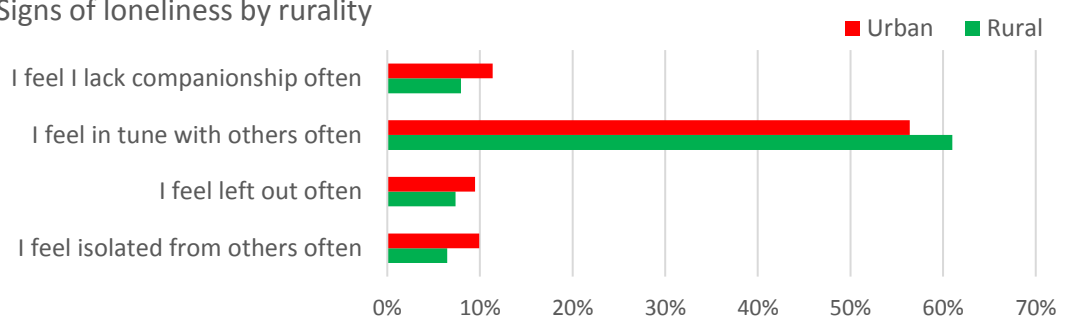
happiness

While around half of respondents report very low anxiety, one in five report high levels.

## Loneliness



Signs of loneliness by rurality



Respondents living in **urban areas** and those in the **most deprived areas** were more likely to report signs of loneliness than those in **rural areas** and the **least deprived areas** respectively

There was no discernible trend when considering sex or age-group

## Smoking and Alcohol Prevalence



A fifth (20%) of adults smoke cigarettes

This fell from 22% in 2015/16

### Prevalence of cigarette smoking 1983 - 2016/17



Smoking prevalence has shown a downward trend since 1983 falling from a third to a fifth of adults



Stopping smoking

- 62% of smokers want to stop
- 75% of smokers have tried to stop

6% use e-cigarettes



No change on previous years

Three-quarters **do not plan to stop** within the next six months



### Alcohol prevalence

- Four-fifths (80%) of adults aged 18 and over **drink alcohol** (Up from 74% in 2015/16)

## 5-a-day / BMI / Physical Activity



43% reported eating **5 or more** portions of **fruit and vegetables** every day (Up from 37% in 2015/16)

36% of respondents were **overweight** and 27% were **obese** (No increase on 2015/16, but general upward trend in obesity over the last decade)



A quarter of children aged 2-15 years were **overweight or obese**

55% reported meeting the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity recommendations



Females (51%) less likely than males (61%) to meet recommendation

## Caring Responsibility



**13%** of respondents have caring responsibilities



Around **70%** received **no monetary reward** for giving this care

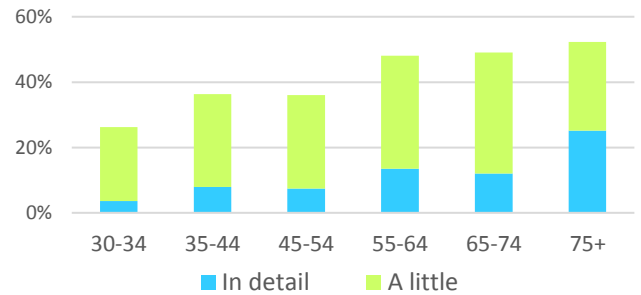


Almost half (**48%**) received **help** from other family members, however **38%** received **no support** from others

## Planning for Social Care

**Females (47%)** were more likely than **males (38%)** to have **thought about who would look after them** in the future should they need any help

Proportion considering how to pay for things needed when older



## Care in the sun



The most popular sun protection method was to **use a sunscreen (71%)** with **the majority (83%)** using one with a **sun protection factor of 15 or more**

**A fifth of respondents (21%)** had **sunburn** in the last year

**A third (33%)** never check their skin for changes that might indicate **skin cancer**



Around half agreed that having a **suntan** "makes me feel **healthier**" (**49%**) or "makes me look more **attractive**" (**51%**)

## Complaints & Compliments

Of respondents who had been in contact with the health & social care system in the last year:

**Nearly half** had given a **compliment**

**7%** written compliment and/or gift

**3%** had made a **complaint** about their care or treatment

## Antibiotics



**83%** knew that it was **FALSE** that...

**Antibiotics work on colds and flus**



High proportion of respondents recognised that it was **TRUE** that...

*If you take an antibiotic when you don't need it then you can become resistant to the antibiotic*

**(85%)**

*Diseases such as pneumonia and meningitis are becoming more difficult to treat because of drug-resistant bacteria*

**(74%)**

*Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections*

**(85%)**

*It is generally expected that you will be assessed by your doctor prior to commencing your course of antibiotics*

**(91%)**