

INFORMATION  
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DIRECTORATE



# Health Survey (NI) First Results 2019/20



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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# Health Survey (NI): First Results 2019/20

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This publication is a summary of the main topics included in the 2019/20 Health Survey. Following on from this summary report, the Department of Health intends to produce more detailed topic specific bulletins and tables throughout 2021. These 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



Almost three-quarters of respondents (**71%**) rated their **general health as very good or good**

- Very good or good self-assessed general health declined with age from 85% of 16-24 year olds to 48% of those aged 75+



*Three-quarters (76%) of those living in rural areas rated their health as good or very good compared with two-thirds (68%) of those living in urban areas*



Three-fifths (**62%**) of those in the **most deprived areas** described their general health as **good or very good** compared with four-fifths (**79%**) of those living in the **least deprived areas**

Almost a fifth (**18%**) of those in the **most deprived areas** described their general health as **bad or very bad** compared with **8-10%** of those living in **all other areas**

## Long-term conditions

**Two-fifths** of respondents (**43%**) have a **physical or mental health condition or illness** expected to last **12 months or more**

- Females (45%) were more likely than males (41%) to report a long-term condition
- Almost half (46%) of those living in urban areas reported a long-term condition compared with less than two-fifths (38%) of those in rural areas

Almost a third (**30%**) of respondents have a **long-standing illness that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities**

- Prevalence increased with age with 17% of those aged 16-24 reporting a limiting long-term condition compared with 52% of those aged 75 and over
- The majority (94%) of those with limiting long-term conditions reported their ability to carry out day-to-day activities had been reduced for 12 months or more



## Mental Health

Around a fifth (**19%**) had a high **GHQ12** score which could indicate a **mental health problem** (18% males; 21% females)

- Over a quarter (**27%**) of those in the **most deprived areas** had a **high GHQ12 score** compared with **17-19%** of those living in **all other areas**
- Almost a quarter (**23%**) of those living in **urban areas** had a **high GHQ12 score** compared with **13%** of those living in **rural areas**

# Wellbeing

More than **two-fifths** of respondents reported **very high levels** of...



Satisfaction with life 40%



Happiness 42%



Feeling worthwhile 45%



Almost half of respondents (47%) reported very low levels of anxiety, while a fifth (20%) reported high levels

Rural		Urban
	46% Very high life satisfaction	37%
	48% Very high worthwhile rating	43%
	48% Very high happiness	39%
	57% Very low anxiety	42%
		

# Loneliness





## A fifth of respondents (21%) exhibited signs of loneliness

by scoring highly on the UCLA loneliness scale

- There was no difference between males and females
- Those living in urban areas (24%) showed more signs of loneliness than those living in rural areas (17%)
- Over a quarter of those living in the most deprived areas (28%) showed signs of loneliness, compared with 14% of those in the least deprived areas



# Most Important Source of Stress

			
Time pressures 24%	Own physical health 14%	Own work 9%	Financial situation 8%

One in seven (15%) reported having **no stress** in their life



This was true for a round a third of those aged 65-74 (30%) and 75+ (34%)

## Alcohol



### Three-quarters (**77%**) of adults aged **18 and over drink alcohol**

- Half (50%) of all drinkers report drinking at least once a week
- Two-thirds (62%) of drinkers had drunk alcohol in the last week with 8% having drunk over 14 units on the day they drank the most \*

#### By sex

#### Male and female drinking patterns differ significantly



#### Four-fifths of males (**80%**) were **drinkers**, with **26%** of males reporting that they drank **above sensible weekly limits**

- **7%** of males reported that they thought they drank **quite a lot or heavily**
- Almost a fifth of male drinkers (**19%**) drank on **3 or more** days per week
- Of those males who drank in the last week, on the **day they drank the most**, **37%** had consumed **up to five units** and **20%** had consumed **over 14 units** \*



#### Three-quarters of females (**73%**) were **drinkers**, with **9%** of females reporting that they drank **above sensible weekly limits**

- **3%** of females reported that they thought they drank **quite a lot or heavily**
- A tenth of female drinkers (**10%**) drank on **3 or more** days per week
- Of those females who drank in the last week, on the **day they drank the most**, **58%** had consumed **up to five units** and **4%** had consumed **over 14 units** \*

#### By age

#### Drinking prevalence decreased with age

- Around **four-fifths** of those aged **64 and under** *drank alcohol*, while this was true for two-thirds (**67%**) of those aged **65 to 74** and half (**50%**) of those aged **75+**

\* Almost a fifth (17%) of drinkers reported they had drunk more than usual in the last week – 18% of males & 17% of females

# Smoking



In 2019/20, **17%** of adults smoked cigarettes

- Although there was **no significant change** from 2018/19, smoking prevalence has fallen from 24% in 2010/11
- The median number of cigarettes smoked per week was **70** in 2019/20

A **third** of smokers (**31%**) rolled their own cigarettes with males (38%) more likely to do so than females (23%)



## By sex



**18%** of males smoke  
(down from **25%** in 2010/11)



**16%** of females smoke  
(down from **23%** in 2010/11)

## By deprivation

**27%** of those living in the **most deprived** areas smoke

down from 40% in 2010/11

**10%** of those living in the **least deprived** areas smoke

down from 14% in 2010/11

## Attitudes to smoking



Almost all respondents (98%) support a ban on smoking in cars when children are present



90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed children are more at risk from passive smoking than adults

## Stopping smoking



**Three-quarters (73%)** of smokers have ever tried to quit smoking

**12%** of smokers **intend to stop** within the next 3 months, however **23%** said they **knew they should but didn't really want to stop** and **18%** said they **didn't want to stop**

## Proportion of smokers smoking inside own home



Around a third (**36%**) of smokers reported smoking inside their own home during the last seven days (down from 50% in 2015/16)

## Main reasons for thinking about quitting

Concern for personal health – 67%

The price of cigarettes – 64%

Setting example for children – 60%

## e-cigarettes



In 2019/20, **6%** of adults were **using e-cigarettes**

- Those living the **most deprived areas** (8%) were more likely to use e-cigarettes than those living the **least deprived areas** (5%)
- Of those that had both smoked cigarettes and used e-cigarettes, the majority (92%) **smoked cigarettes before** they started using e-cigarettes, while 7% started both at the same time

### Reasons for use

- Almost half (46%) of those who use e-cigarettes said they had **helped them to quit smoking tobacco** products completely
- A third (36%) said they enable them to reduce the number of cigarettes they would normally smoke

### Planning to stop

- A fifth (17%) of e-cigarette users are **planning to stop** within the next 6 months
- Two-fifths (38%) of e-cigarette users are **not planning to stop** using them

## Compliments and Complaints during the last year

Four-fifths of respondents (84%) had contact with the **Health and Social Care System** in Northern Ireland

Of these, **81%** were either **very satisfied** or **satisfied** with their experience

One-tenth (**11%**) were either **dissatisfied** or **very dissatisfied**



A higher proportion of respondents living in rural areas (84%) reported being either very satisfied or satisfied with their experience than urban areas (78%)

Almost **three-fifths (55%)** had given a compliment

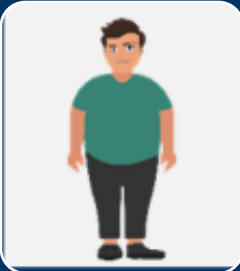
- Most of these (95%) were **verbal**, with 6% giving a **gift** and 6% a **written compliment**

**4%** had made a **complaint** during the last year

# BMI


**65%** of adults were either **overweight (38%)** or **obese (27%)**  
(Up from 62% in 2018/19)

**Females (38%)** had a greater tendency to be **normal weight** than males (28%), while **males (43%)** had a greater tendency to be **overweight** than females (33%)



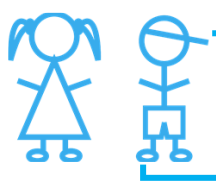
**Two-thirds (63%) of overweight males** thought they were **about the right weight**

- Three-quarters (76%) of **overweight males** were **not trying to lose weight**
- **For obese males** - Four-fifths (79%) thought they were **too heavy** and half were **trying to lose weight**




**Three-fifths (58%) of overweight females** thought they were **too heavy**

- Half (48%) of **overweight females** were **trying to lose weight**
- **For obese females** - Most (87%) thought they were **too heavy** and two-thirds were **trying to lose weight**



Around a quarter (**25%**) of children aged **2-15** were either **overweight (20%)** or **obese (6%)** - Similar to 2018/19

# Fruit & Vegetable Consumption



The proportion of those eating **5 or more** portions of **fruit and vegetables** per day was **44%** (similar to 2018/19)



Half of **females (50%)** consumed **5 or more** portion of **fruit and vegetables** compared with **38%** of **males**



Less than two-fifths (**39%**) of those living in the **most deprived areas** reported eating **5 or more** portions of **fruit and vegetables** compared with over half of those in the **least deprived areas (54%)**

Over four-fifths of respondents (**84%**) knew that the **Department of Health** advises people to eat **five portions of fruit and vegetables each day**



**Information Analysis Directorate (IAD)** sits within the **Department of Health (DoH)** and carries out various statistical work and research on behalf of the department. It comprises four statistical areas: Hospital Information, Community Information, Public Health Information & Research and Project Support Analysis.

IAD is responsible for compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering health and social care.

The statisticians within IAD are out-posted from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and our statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

### **About Public Health Information and Research Branch**

The role of Public Health Information and Research Branch (PHIRB) is to support public health policy development through managing the public health survey function while also providing analysis and monitoring data. The head of the branch is the Principal Statistician, Mr. Bill Stewart.

In support of the public health survey function, PHIRB is involved in the commissioning, managing and publishing of results from departmental funded surveys, such as the Health Survey Northern Ireland, All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey, Young Persons Behaviour & Attitudes Survey, Patient Experience Surveys and the Adult Drinking Patterns Survey.

The branch also houses the NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System which covers a range of different health inequality/equality based projects conducted for both the region as well as for more localised area levels. In addition, PHIRB is responsible for the production of official life expectancy estimates for NI, and areas within the region.

PHIRB provides support to a range of key DoH NI strategies including Making Life Better, a 10 year cross-departmental public health strategic framework as well as a range of other departmental strategies such as those dealing with suicide, sexual health, breastfeeding, tobacco control and obesity prevention. It also has a key role in supporting the Departmental Alcohol and Drug Strategy, by maintaining and developing key departmental databases such as, the Substance Misuse Database, Impact Measurement Tool and the Census of Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services, which are all used to monitor drug misuse and treatments across Northern Ireland. In addition to Departmental functions, PHIRB also support the executive level Programme for Government and its strategic outcomes through a series of performance indicators.