

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Health Survey (NI) First Results 2017/18



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

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Health Survey (NI): First Results 2017/18

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This publication is a summary of the main topics included in the 2017/18 Health Survey. Following on from this summary report, the Department of Health intends to produce more detailed topic specific bulletins and tables throughout 2018/19 and 2019/20. 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



Over two-thirds of respondents (70%) rated their **general health as very good or good**

The majority of respondents (86%) described the **life they lead as very or fairly healthy**

Most respondents (88%) were either **very satisfied or satisfied with life**



Long-term conditions

43% have a **physical or mental health condition or illness** expected to last **12 months or more**



Females (44%) were more likely than males (40%) to have a long-term condition. Prevalence also increased with age with 22% of those aged 16-24 reporting a long-term condition compared with 70% of those aged 75 and over

Three-fifths of those with a long-term condition (59%) felt they **received enough support** from Health and Social Care Services **to help manage their condition**, while 11% said that they didn't need any help

Almost a third (32%) of respondents have a *long-standing illness that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities*

Mental Health

Around a fifth (18%) had a high **GHQ12** score which could indicate a **mental health problem** (17% males; 18% females)

A quarter of respondents (26%) had **concerns about their own mental health**

Three-fifths of these (58%) **sought help**, with 82% of these seeking help **from their GP** and 44% a **family member**

Of those who did **not seek help**, three-quarters (74%) felt that they **could handle things on their own**



The **Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing** mean score was **51.4** (similar to 2016/17)

Compliments and Complaints during the last year

Four-fifths of respondents (81%) had contact with the **Health and Social Care System** in Northern Ireland
Of these, **84%** were either **very satisfied or satisfied** with their experience

Almost **three-fifths (57%)** had given a **compliment** - Most of these were **verbal**, with 6% giving a **written compliment** and/or gift
4% had made a **complaint** during the last year



Wellbeing

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



Satisfaction with life



Feeling worthwhile



A fifth (21%) reported high levels of anxiety, while 45% reported very low levels



Happiness

Use of computers for health



Over half of respondents (56%) used the internet to look up health information

- **Females** (60%) were **more likely** to do so than **males** (49%)
- **Older** respondents were **less likely** to do so than **younger** respondents (10% aged 75+; 77% aged 25-34)

10% ordered or requested a prescription online

6% scheduled an appointment with a healthcare provider online

5% used online health chat groups

2% bought medicines online

3% communicated with a health care provider by email



Smoking



In 2017/18, **18%** of adults **smoked cigarettes**

- Although there was **no significant change** from 2016/17, smoking prevalence has fallen from 24% in 2010/11
- The median number of cigarettes smoked per week fell from 90 in 2010/11 to 80 in 2017/18

By sex

20% of males smoke
(down from **25%** in 2010/11)

18% of females smoke
(down from **23%** in 2010/11)

By deprivation

30% of those living in the **most deprived areas** smoke

down from **39%** in 2010/11

11% of those living in the **least deprived areas** smoke

no change from **14%** in 2010/11

In the home

The proportion of homes in which smoking is not allowed rose to **86%**

In the family car

Similarly **88%** of respondents who own a family car do not allow smoking in their cars

e-cigarettes



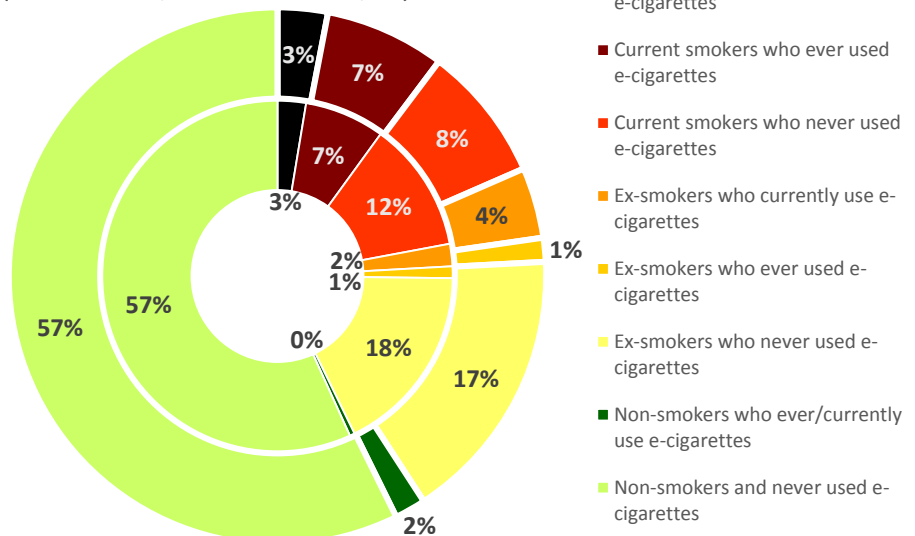
8% of adults currently use e-cigarettes

No difference in current use by males and females.

One in six smokers (16%) & one in five ex-smokers (19%) currently use e-cigarettes, an increase from the 2014/15 findings (12% and 10% respectively).

Around three-fifths of respondents (**57%**) have **never smoked or used e-cigarettes**
2% of adults have **never regularly smoked** but have **used e-cigarettes**

Population smoking status
(Outer - 2017/18 Inner - 2014/15)



Alcohol

Over three-quarters (**77%**) of adults aged 18 and over **drink alcohol**



Male and female drinking patterns differ significantly



A fifth of males (**19%**) were non-drinkers, half (**50%**) drank below weekly limits and a third (**31%**) drank above weekly limits.

A fifth of male drinkers (**20%**) drank on **3 or more** days per week

A quarter of females (**25%**) were non-drinkers, two-thirds (**66%**) drank below weekly limits and **9%** drank above weekly limits.

A tenth of female drinkers (**10%**) drank on **3 or more** days per week



Tattoos & Piercings (other than earlobes) in the last ten years



Females were **more likely** than males **to get piercings** (Females 11%; Males 3%) **and tattoos** (Females 20%; Males 17%)

- A tenth experienced problems such as infection or pain following their tattoo or piercing



*Of those who had tattoos, 27% got their **first tattoo before** the age of **18***

- Half of **males (50%)** got their first tattoo **aged 18-24**, while a fifth (**20%**) got theirs **aged 25 and over**
- Almost two-fifths of **females (38%)** got a first tattoo **aged 18-24**, while more than a third (**36%**) got theirs **aged 25 and over**

Loneliness

A fifth of respondents (20%) showed signs of loneliness

- Females (21%) showed more signs of loneliness than males (18%)
- Similarly those living in urban areas (22%) were lonelier than those living in rural areas (17%)
- More than a quarter of those living in the most deprived areas (28%) showed signs of loneliness, compared with 16% of those in the least deprived areas
- Younger people (aged 16-34) showed more signs of loneliness (21%) than people aged 65 and over (14%)



BMI

64% of adults were either overweight (37%) or obese (27%)



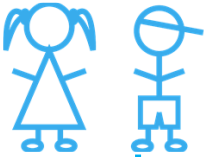
Females - Have a greater tendency to be **normal including underweight** than males
Normal including underweight 43%; Overweight 30%; Obese 27%

Males - Have a greater tendency to be **overweight** than females
Normal including underweight 27%; Overweight 46%; Obese 26%



40% of males and **47% of females** had *changed* their *eating habits* in the past 3 years *to lose weight*

For those who tried to control their weight or eat more healthily, **lack of willpower** was the **main obstacle** encountered



Around a quarter (**26%**) of children aged **2-15** were either **overweight (18%)** or **obese (9%)**

Food choices

Fruit & Vegetables



Three-quarters of respondents (74%) ate **fruit** on most days



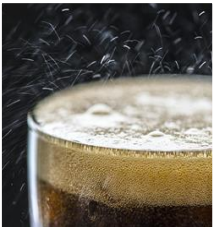
Four-fifths of respondents (81%) ate **vegetables** on most days

The proportion of those eating **5 or more** portions of **fruit and vegetables** per day fell from a high of 43% in 2016/17 to **38%** in 2017/18

Snacks & fizzy drinks



Almost a fifth (18%) drank sugary fizzy drinks on most days with males (21%) more likely than females (15%) to choose these drinks

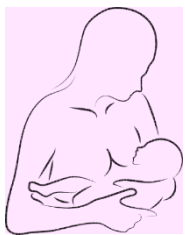


Breakfast

Almost three-quarters of respondents (**73%**) ate **breakfast** on **all five weekdays** and **80%** ate breakfast on **both Saturday and Sunday**



Attitudes to Breastfeeding



36% of respondents were aware of the **Breastfeeding Welcome Here** scheme, with females (40%) more likely to be aware of it than males (29%)

Those in the 25-44 age group were most likely to have heard of the scheme

Proportion who agree strongly / agree that Breastfeeding is...

...Normal
(92%)

...Good for baby (86%)

...Offensive
(2%)

...Distasteful
(4%)

...Embarrassing
(12%)

Proportion who agree strongly / agree with the following statements...

- Breast milk is healthier than formula for babies (62%)
- Formula is as healthy for an infant as breast milk (24%)



- Breastfeeding is more convenient than formula feeding (41%)
- Formula feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding (36%)

The majority agreed strongly or agreed that **“Mums should feel free to breastfeed their babies in public”** (84%) and that **“People should support mums who breastfeed in public”** (82%)

Caring responsibility

13% have caring responsibilities

(10% male & 14% female)

Around three-fifths of carers indicated their own health had been affected by their caring role

The most commonly reported symptoms were feelings of tiredness, stress, and disturbed sleep



Almost three-quarters of carers (73%) **receive no money** for their help

Over half of carers (55%) receive help from other family members, while almost a third (32%) receive no help from others