

Health Equity in England: The Marmot review 10 years on

Inequalities in health since 2010

- Since 2010 life expectancy in England has stalled; this has not happened since at least 1900.
- The more deprived the area the shorter the life expectancy. This gradient has become steeper; inequalities in life expectancy have increased. Among women in the most deprived 10 percent of areas, life expectancy fell between 2010-12 and 2016-18.
- There are marked regional differences in life expectancy, particularly among people living in more deprived areas. Differences both within and between regions have tended to increase. For both men and women, the largest decreases in life expectancy were seen in the most deprived 10 percent of neighbourhoods in the North East and the largest increases in the least deprived 10 percent of neighbourhoods in London.
- There has been no sign of a decrease in mortality for people under 50. In fact, mortality rates have increased for people aged 45-49.
- For women, healthy life expectancy has declined since 2010. The amount of time both men and women spend in poor health has increased across England since 2010.
- PHE survey shows that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White Gypsy Travellers have much lower quality of life than other ethnic groups

Key points

- The slowdown in life expectancy increase cannot for the most part be attributed to severe winters, or problems with the NHS or social care (although declining funding relative to need will have played a role)
- Large funding cuts have affected the social determinants across the whole of England, but deprived areas and areas outside London and the South East experienced larger cuts.
- Despite the cuts and deteriorating outcomes in many social determinants some local authorities and communities have established effective approaches to tackling health inequalities. The practical evidence about how to reduce inequalities has built significantly since 2010.
- The national government has not prioritised health inequalities, and there has been no national health inequalities strategy since 2010. We see this as an essential first step
- We set out a clear agenda for national government to tackle health inequalities
- The goal should be to bring the level of health of deprived areas in the North up to the level of good health enjoyed by people living in affluent areas in London and the South

- Report sets out progress against 5 of the 6 priority objectives set out in the original Marmot report. Ill health prevention not covered, as this has been addressed elsewhere
- Outcomes and actions in England have been disappointing BUT social determinants are increasingly considered/ on the agenda

Proposals to support action on health inequalities

1. **Develop a national strategy for action on the social determinants of health with the aim of reducing inequalities in health.**

Ensuring a strong focus on the social determinants. Establishing a Cabinet Level cross-departmental committee to lead on prioritisation of equity considerations, and implementation.

2. **Ensure proportionate universal allocation of resources and implementation of policies.**

i.e. proportionately greater improvements in the North. Strengthen the deprivation components in the Revenue Support Grant to LAs and the NHS Resource allocation formula.

3. **Early intervention to prevent health inequalities.**

Take action in the 5 areas outlined below. Increase spending on public health to 7% of the NHS budget.

4. **Develop the social determinants of health workforce.**

Police, fire fighters, social care, housing and early years workforces have all developed approaches to tackling health inequalities, by extending and adapting their day-to-day practices and procurement.

Recommend: Development of education programmes focusing on the social determinants for a range of workforces; Development of anchor institution approaches; Develop a health system approach to population health, with partnerships to improve population health among a range of sectors, locally and nationally.

5. **Engage the public.**

The public and political debate on health needs to move towards the social determinants and away from the overwhelming focus on individual behaviours and health care.

6. Develop whole systems monitoring and strengthen accountability for health inequalities.

National government must be responsible for regional and socioeconomic health inequalities and be held accountable for progress. Effective monitoring systems are essential for this. Recommend improving data for ethnicity, as this is currently poor – ethnicity is not recorded at death registration.

Social determinants of health

Give every child the best start in life

- Rates of child poverty have increased since 2010/11 with over four million children affected, and is predicted to continue increasing under current policies.
- Many OECD countries have considerably lower rates of child poverty than England.
- Child poverty rates are highest for children living in workless families - in excess of 70 percent.
- In 2017/18, 45 percent of minority ethnic children lived in families in poverty after housing costs, compared with 20 percent of children in White British families in the UK.
- Funding for Sure Start and Children's Centres, and other children's services, has been cut significantly, with greater cuts in more deprived areas. A 29% reduction between 2010/11 and 2017/18.
- There are still low rates of pay and a low level of qualification required in the childcare workforce.
- Free childcare for 3-4 year olds has been introduced, but at the expense of Sure Start and Children's Centres.
- Greater Manchester has rapidly improved outcomes for children in the early years, a result of concerted system-wide efforts and prioritisation of support for families and children during these years

Recommendations

- Increase levels of spending on early years and as a minimum meet the OECD average and ensure allocation of funding is proportionately higher for more deprived areas.
- Reduce levels of child poverty to 10 percent – level with the lowest rates in Europe.
- Improve availability and quality of early years services, including Children's Centres, in all regions of England.

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- Increase pay and qualification requirements for the childcare workforce.

Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

- Socioeconomic inequalities in educational attainment that were present in 2010 remain.
- Regionally, the North East, North West and East Midlands have the lowest levels of attainment at age 16 and London has the highest.
- Since 2010 the number of exclusions from school have significantly increased in both primary and secondary schools. In 2012, children eligible for free school meals were 4 times as likely to be excluded as those not eligible.
- Pupil numbers have risen while funding has decreased, by eight percent per pupil, with particularly steep declines in funding for sixth form (post-16) and further education.
- Youth services have been cut since 2010 and although overall youth crime has declined, violent youth crime has increased greatly over the period.

Recommendations

- Put equity at the heart of national decisions about education policy and funding.
- Increase attainment to match the best in Europe by reducing inequalities in attainment.
- Invest in preventative services to reduce exclusions and support schools to stop offrolling pupils.
- Restore the per-pupil funding for secondary schools and especially sixth form, at least in line with 2010 levels and up to the level of London (excluding London weighting).

Create fair employment and good work for all

- Employment rates have increased since 2010, but there has been an increase in poor quality work, including part-time, insecure employment such as zero hours contracts.
- The incidence of stress caused by work has increased since 2010, at least partly as a result of poor-quality work.
- Real pay is still below 2010 levels
- The majority of people below the poverty line live in households where at least one adult is working
- Risk of long-term unemployment is greater for minority ethnic groups, women, lone parents, and people with disabilities.

Appendix One

- Lowest employment rate in North East. Highest in South West.
- Nearly half of those in poverty in the UK in 2018 were from families in which someone had a disability. Some ethnic groups also face much higher rates of poverty than others, particularly those who are Black and Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin
- Automation is leading to job losses, particularly for low-paid, part-time workers; the North of England will be particularly affected. Can be an opportunity if boring, repetitive jobs are eliminated and replaced with interesting, fulfilling work.
- Since 2010, conditionalities and tougher sanctions for people who are unemployed have increased. Criticised by a Uni of York welfare study.

Recommendations

- Invest in good quality active labour market policies and reduce conditionalities and sanctions in benefit entitlement, particularly for those with children.
- Reduce in-work poverty by increasing the National Living Wage, achieving a minimum income for healthy living for those in work.
- Increase the number of post-school apprenticeships and support in-work training throughout the life course.
- Reduce the high levels of poor quality work and precarious employment.

Ensure a healthy standard of living for all

- Wage growth has been low since 2010 and wage inequality persists.
- Regional inequalities in wealth have increased
- The National Living Wage has helped raise wages, but it is still too low to meet the Minimum Income Standard (allows an acceptable standard of living as defined by the public).
- The number of families with children who do not reach the minimum income standard has increased.
- Food insecurity has increased significantly. Percent of low-income adults who were food insecure rose from 28 percent to 46 percent between 2004 and 2016.
- Social mobility in England has declined. Policies have undermined, not supported, social mobility.
- Tax and benefit reforms have negatively impacted the poorest 50%, and positively impacted the top 40%. Universal credit has pushed people further into poverty, particularly through delays in being awarded credit.

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- Tax revenues in the UK are below the OECD average. 60% of the UK public in 2018 were in favour of increased tax and increased spend (up from 31% in 2010).

Recommendations

- Ensure everyone has a minimum income for healthy living through increases to the National Living Wage and redesign of Universal Credit.
- Put health equity and wellbeing at the heart of local, regional and national economic planning and strategy.
- Adopt inclusive growth and social value approaches nationally and locally to value health and wellbeing as well as, or more than, economic efficiency.
- Review the taxation and benefit system to ensure it achieves greater equity and ensure effective tax rates are not regressive.

Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities

- The costs of housing have increased significantly, including social housing.
- The number of non-decent houses has decreased, including in the private rental sector, but this sector still has high levels of cold, damp and poor conditions, including insecure tenures.
- In the West and East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, >20% of homes fail to meet the decent homes standard
- 21% of adults in England said a housing issue had negatively impacted their mental health
- Homelessness has increased by 74% since 2010, including more children in homeless families living in temporary accommodation.
- Health harm from climate change is increasing, and will likely affect more deprived communities most.
- On average, pollution levels are worse in areas of highest deprivation
- The government's prioritisation of road and train travel over buses has widened inequalities
- Government targets to increase cycling and walking rates have not been met; inequalities in this have widened and budgets have declined, while road investment budgets have increased.
- Climate change worsens inequalities for a variety of reasons
- Programmes to insulate houses have been cut over the decade

Recommendations

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- Invest in the development of economic, social and cultural resources in the most deprived communities
- 100 percent of new housing is carbon neutral by 2030, with an increased proportion being either affordable or in the social housing sector
- Aim for net zero carbon emissions by 2030 ensuring inequalities do not widen as a result

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