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# Health Survey (NI) First Results 2018/19



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

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# Health Survey (NI): First Results 2018/19

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)

In 2018/19, as part of an ongoing methodological review, a revised weighting methodology has been adopted. For comparison purposes, the trend tables accompanying this report have been updated to reflect the revised methodology.

This publication is a summary of the main topics included in the 2018/19 Health Survey. Following on from this summary report, the Department of Health intends to produce more detailed topic specific bulletins and tables throughout 2020. 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 (**72%**) rated their **general health** as **very good** or **good**

- Very good or good self-assessed general health declined with age from 89% of 16-24 year olds to half of those aged 75+



Three-fifths (**61%**) of those in the **most deprived areas** described their general health as **good** or **very good** compared with four-fifths (**81%**) of those living in the **least deprived areas**

- Almost a quarter (**23%**) of those living in the **most deprived areas** said that their health was **worse than it was a year ago**



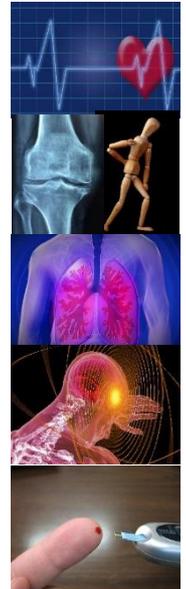
Most respondents (**87%**) believed they led a **very or fairly healthy life**

## Long-term conditions

**Two-fifths** of respondents (**40%**) have a **physical or mental health condition or illness** expected to last **12 months or more**

- Females (42%) were more likely than males (38%) to have a long-term condition
- Prevalence increased with age with 15% of those aged 16-24 reporting a long-term condition compared with 71% of those aged 75 and over
- Around half of those in the most deprived areas reported a long-term condition compared with less than two-fifths of those in all other quintiles

Almost a third (**29%**) 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** (16% males; 20% females)

Over a quarter of respondents (**27%**) had **concerns about their own mental health**

**Three-fifths** of those with concerns (58%) **sought help**, with 78% of these seeking help from their **GP**, 43% a **family member**, and 35% from a **friend**

Of those who did **not seek help**, **70%** felt that they could handle **things on their own**

## Wellbeing

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



Satisfaction with life 44%



Almost half of respondents (48%) reported very low levels of anxiety, while a fifth (19%) reported high levels

Feeling worthwhile 45%



Happiness 44%



### Rural



50%	Very high life satisfaction	41%
50%	Very high worthwhile rating	42%
47%	Very high happiness	42%
55%	Very low anxiety	43%

### Urban



## Loneliness

A **fifth** of respondents (22%) exhibited **signs of loneliness** by scoring highly on the UCLA loneliness scale

- In 2018/19 there was no difference between males and females (both 22%)
- Those living in urban areas (24%) showed more signs of loneliness than those living in rural areas (19%)
- Over a third of those living in the most deprived areas (34%) showed signs of loneliness, compared with 14% of those in the least deprived areas



## Smoking



### In 2018/19, 18% of adults smoked cigarettes

- Although there was **no significant change** from 2017/18, smoking prevalence has fallen from 24% in 2010/11
- The median number of cigarettes smoked per week fell from **90** in 2010/11 to **70** in 2018/19

For the first time, **over half** of respondents (**51%**) reported that they had **never smoked**



By sex



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



**17% of females smoke**  
(down from **23%** in 2010/11)

By deprivation

**29%** of those living in the **most deprived areas** smoke

down from 40% in 2010/11

**12%** of those living in the **least deprived areas** smoke

no change from 14% in 2010/11

In the home



**86%** of respondents indicated that smoking is not allowed inside their home

In the family car



Most respondents (**89%**) who own a family car do not allow smoking in their car

## e-cigarettes

In 2018/19, **7%** of adults were **using e-cigarettes**



- Those living in the **most deprived areas** (10%) were more likely to use e-cigarettes than those living in all other areas (6-7%)
- Of those that had both smoked cigarettes and used e-cigarettes, the majority (92%) **smoked cigarettes before** they started using e-cigarettes, while 8% started both at the same time
- Over two-fifths of those who had used e-cigarettes (45%) said that they had **helped them to quit smoking tobacco** products completely

## Alcohol

Over three-quarters (**79%**) of adults aged 18 and over **drink alcohol**



Male and female drinking patterns differ significantly



Over four-fifths of males (**83%**) were drinkers, with a tenth of males (**9%**) reporting that they thought they drank **quite a lot or heavily**

Almost a fifth of male drinkers (**16%**) drank on **3 or more days per week**

Three-quarters of females (**76%**) were drinkers, with **2%** reporting that they thought they drank **quite a lot or heavily**.

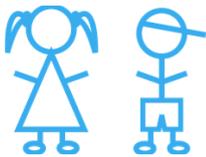
A tenth of female drinkers (**10%**) drank on **3 or more days per week**



## BMI

**62%** of adults were either **overweight (37%)** or **obese (25%)**  
- Similar to 2017/18

**Females (42%)** had a greater tendency to be **normal weight** than males (31%), while **males (42%)** had a greater tendency to be **overweight** than females (32%)



Around a quarter (**27%**) of children aged **2-15** were either **overweight (19%)** or **obese (8%)** - Similar to 2017/18

## Fruit & Vegetable Consumption



The proportion of those eating **5 or more** portions of **fruit and vegetables** per day rose to a high of **46%** in 2018/19



Those living in the **most deprived areas** were **less likely** to eat **5 or more** portions of fruit and vegetables (39%) than those in all other areas (46-50%)

Over four-fifths of respondents (**83%**) knew that the **Department of Health** advises people to eat **five portions of fruit and vegetables** each day

## Compliments and Complaints during the last year

Four-fifths of respondents (79%) had contact with the Health and Social Care System in Northern Ireland

Of these, **82%** were either **very satisfied** or **satisfied** with their experience

Almost three-fifths (56%) had given a **compliment** - Most of these (94%) were **verbal**, with 6% giving a **written compliment** and 7% a **gift**

5% had made a **complaint** during the last year



Respondents reported that a lack of funding / too many cuts, waiting times and not enough staff were the most important issues facing the health and care service nowadays

## Antibiotics

Around four-fifths of respondents knew that...

- Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections (**83%**)
- If you take an antibiotic when you don't need it then you can become resistant to the antibiotic (**82%**)
- Diseases such as pneumonia and meningitis are becoming more difficult to treat because of drug-resistant bacteria (**76%**)
- Antibiotics **DO NOT** work on colds and flus (**83%**)

Over a third of respondents (**37%**) had taken an **antibiotic in the last 12 months**



Respondents were less sure about the statement 'If you take **antibiotics** when you don't need them drug-resistant bacteria can develop and spread to other people' answering as follows...

- True - 45%
- False - 31%
- Don't know - 23%

## Social Care



Over two-fifths (**45%**) knew that **all Social Care Workers have to be registered**

13% had direct contact (either for themselves or someone else) with a Qualified Social Worker in the last year, while 12% had direct contact with a Social Care Worker



Two-thirds of all respondents (**65%**) thought that the **overall quality** of all social care services was **excellent or good** (9% thought it was **poor or very poor**)

Around three-quarters of respondents agreed that **Social Workers and Social Care Workers** treat people **respectfully**, are **trustworthy**, and are **reliable and dependable**



# Sexual Health

Knowledge about protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has declined since 2015/16

Over a quarter (26%) thought that the pill would provide protection (14% in 2015/16)

Almost a fifth (18%) thought that emergency contraception (morning after pill) would provide protection (10% in 2015/16)

Preferred location for STI treatment

- GP - 58%
- GUM clinic - 15%
- Family Planning Clinic - 15%

Almost a tenth (9%) had sought treatment or advice on STIs

Greatest barriers to getting treatment for STIs

- Embarrassment in talking about these issues - 38%
- Concern about confidentiality - 29%
- Staff might know me - 29%

89% of females and 82% of males agreed it would be necessary to use a condom with a new partner even if using another form of contraception

Three-quarters of females (77%) and over half of males (56%) agreed that they would not have sex with a new partner if they did not have any condoms

# Attitudes to online health services

If it was available, proportion who would use ...



Online / internet service to request a prescription refill 47%



An online / internet services to schedule appointments with a health care provider 45%

A health service website to learn more about health condition 45%

A health service website to learn more about managing health condition 42%

One in four respondents (28%) said they **would not use** any of the online services. Of these, over two-fifths (44%) said they would **prefer direct contact** with their health care provider while **36%** said that they **did not have the required technical ability / know-how** to use such methods

Respondents who would not use online services by age

