

Health Inequalities

Health inequalities mean that not everyone has the same chance to be healthy. Some people are healthier than others because of where they live, how much money they have, access to education and information. This page will explain what health inequalities are and why they matter.

Why do health inequalities matter?

Health inequalities are important because they can affect people's lives in many ways. They can lead to shorter lifespans, more sickness, and less quality of life for those who are less healthy. They can also affect families and communities, creating a cycle where some groups continue to struggle with poor health while others thrive.

Causes of health inequalities

Access to health and social care services

Not everyone has the same access to health and social care services. Some people may live further from services, they may not know what types of services are available to them, and many other reasons.

Discrimination

Discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or other factors (known as protected characteristics) can lead to poorer health for those who experience it. This can happen through unequal treatment in healthcare or limited opportunities for good jobs and education.

Health behaviours

Our behaviours that affect our health and wellbeing such as:

- smoking,
 - physical activity,
 - alcohol
 - diet
-

Social Determinants

This could be things that are individual to us such as:

- age,
- gender,
- ethnicity,
- disability.

Other factors that can impact health and wellbeing such as:

- Housing
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Income
 - Social Support
-

Ways to reduce health inequalities

Health inequalities are a problem with many different causes and possible solutions, but there are things we can do to make things better and reduce inequalities.

Supporting Communities

Communities can be supported and support each other to improve health for everyone. This requires organisations, services, local authorities, NHS, businesses and people living in the community to work together. This could be working together to share information, strengths and resources they already have, understand gaps, issues and weaknesses in the community as well as improve social connections across the whole community.

Community Health Champions help make sure people in their local community are able to find, understand, and use health and wellbeing information, support, and services. There are different types of community health champions and they support people by:

- sharing health messages, information and resources to people
- signposting people to the right services
- taking part in community events, or campaigns
- identifying barriers to peoples good health and wellbeing in a group or area of their local community

Read more on InformationNOW about [Getting involved in your local community](#)

Get involved in research and share experiences

There are ways you can share your experience, speak up about health inequalities and be part of research about health inequalities. By doing this you can help improve health and social care services. Having a wide range of people from different communities and backgrounds involved helps health services consider how inequalities affect the use of their services.

[Research+Me](#) is a research registry ran by Newcastle Hospitals. Anyone over the age of 18 can sign up, including healthy volunteers and people with certain conditions. To register, fill in a few details and the research team will be in touch if a suitable study comes up. You can then decide if you'd like to take part.

[Be Part of Research](#) is a national register **to help you find out about health and social care research taking place in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.**

Be Part of Research is a free service which makes it easy to find and take part in vital health and care research across the UK. Simply tell them which health conditions you're interested in. They'll match you to suitable studies and send you information on how to take part.

[Newcastle Health Determinants Research Collaboration \(HDRC\)](#) helps Newcastle Council, Public Health department, Education, Research, VCSE, Housing and other sectors to use research and data to inform their decision making, planning and improvement of services. The HDRC helps these partners to work together in reducing health inequalities.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Having your say about health and care services](#)

Providing Equal Access to Healthcare

Everyone should have access to healthcare when they need it. This means making sure doctors, hospitals, and clinics are available in all communities. Where people live can affect their access to healthcare as there may not be the right health services nearby, they may not be able to travel or have few transport options. Places should be accessible to people with disabilities, long term health conditions, mental health conditions and others. Places should always consider parking, toilets, signage, step free access, hearing loops and quiet spaces at their venue.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Finding accessible venues in Newcastle, Interpreting and translation services, Advocacy support to get your voice heard](#)

Improving health literacy and education

Health literacy means having the skills, knowledge and confidence to access, use and understand health and social care information or services. Services can improve health literacy by having information in plain English and in different accessible formats such as Easy read, Braille, translated into other languages and use of pictures and audio. Education is important for good health. Having resources and programs to teach people as early as possible about healthy habits, like eating well, exercising and self care can help them live healthier lives.

[Newcastle Support Directory](#) is the information website for children, families and children with Special Educational Needs in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Helping asylum seekers and refugees to access health services](#)

Challenging discrimination

Communities and organizations can work together to fight discrimination and create equal opportunities for everyone. This includes awareness of types of discrimination and the law (such as the Equality Act 2010), designing services that include everyone and challenging discrimination when you see it happening.

[Connected Voice Haref](#) provide Cultural Competency training to health, social care and VCSE frontline workers in Newcastle. The sessions focus on how to connect with and deliver effective services to people from any cultural background.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Racial Discrimination](#), [Hate crimes](#), [Age discrimination](#), [LGBTQIA+ rights](#), or [disability rights](#),

Useful Information

GOV.UK's [Fingertips](#) is a large public health data collection website. It gives health inequality information about your local area on Child obesity, NHS Health Checks, Tobacco control, Alcohol treatment, Drug treatment, Best start in life, Sexual and reproductive health, Air Quality.

[Newcastle City Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) is a high-level strategic plan for improving the health and wellbeing of the local population, developed by Newcastle's Health and Wellbeing Board partners across health and social care in the city. This includes [North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board \(ICB\)](#), [Newcastle City Council](#), NHS England, universities, as well as other agencies and organisations involved in health and social care

Core 20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities nationally and locally. There is a [Core20 plus5 approach for children and young people](#) and a [Core20 plus5 approach for adults](#)

The **Core 20** is The most deprived 20% of the national population as identified by the national [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\)](#). **PLUS** are groups of people that may be socially excluded in their local area, (this will be different in different areas of England) such as people experiencing homelessness, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, people with a learning disability. **5** is the 5 clinical areas that need national improvement, for adults these are Maternity, Sever mental illness, Chronic respiratory disease, Early cancer diagnosis

The [Local Government Association](#) have a [Health inequalities hub](#) on their website with resources and case studies from councils across the UK.

[InformationNOW](#) has information articles that cover health inequalities such as:

- [Homelessness](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Smoking](#)
- [finance and cost of living support](#)

- [Employment](#)

Last updated: August 20, 2025

Useful Organisations

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Patient Recruitment Centre: Newcastle

Email: nuth.PRCnewcastle@nhs.net

Website: <https://local.nihr.ac.uk/prc/newcastle/patients/>

Telephone: 0191 282 3655

Address: Campus for Ageing and Vitality, NE5 2QX

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network North East and North Cumbria

Email: nenccommunications@nihr.ac.uk

Website: <https://local.nihr.ac.uk/lcrn/north-east-and-north-cumbria/>

Telephone: 07342 058 139

Address: NIHR CRN North East and North Cumbria, NE3 3HD

Newcastle University

Website: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 208 6000

Address: Newcastle University , NE1 7RU

Newcastle Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC)

Email: hdrc@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <https://new.newcastle.gov.uk/budget-policies-performance-and-data/health-determinants-research-collaboration-hdrc>

Telephone: 0191 208 6000

Health Champion Network

Email: communitychampions@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/community-champions>

Telephone: 0191 211 5055

Address: Newcastle Civic Centre, NE1 8QH

Connected Voice Haref

Email: haref@connectedvoice.org.uk

Website: <https://connectedvoice.org.uk/services/haref>

Telephone: 0191 235 7022

Address: One Strawberry Lane, NE1 4BX

Community Wellbeing Pathfinder service

Email: jake.lightowler@hwn.org.uk

Website: <https://www.healthworksne.org.uk/service/improving-wellbeing/>

Telephone: 0191 272 4244

Address: Health Resource Centre, NE4 8BE

Related Articles

[Get involved in your community](#)

[Having your say about health and care services](#)

[Newcastle Health Champion Network](#)

[Baby, children and young people's health](#)

[Help to use health services for refugees and asylum seekers](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Cancer](#)

[Giving up smoking](#)