JSNA Blackpool

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

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Health Behaviours in Blackpool

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A summary of Blackpool's health behaviours

Health and wellbeing in Blackpool

Healthy behaviours such as the sensible drinking of alcohol, being physically active, eating well and managing stress are known to prevent a wide range of health problems across the life course. Behaviours such as smoking tobacco, misusing drug, poor diets, alcohol and unsafe sex put people at particular risk of ill health and often leading to poor mental health and wellbeing. The foundations for health and wellbeing are often linked to childhood experiences as well as other wider determinants – including education, family life, and deprivation.

This page provides highlights around the prevalence of different health and wellbeing indicators, related conditions, risk factors, protective factors, wellbeing, services, and outcomes. Further information is also available on the individual topic-specific pages.

Addressing negative health behaviours reduces the burden of disease as part of a wider shift from treatment and cure, to prevention and protection. This is relevant as the latest mortality figures show that between 2021 and 2023, over 2,400 people died prematurely in Blackpool (aged under-75 years) and has the worst rates for premature mortality from all causes in England for males and females (2021-23).

Facts and figures

General health

Across Blackpool self-reported levels of health are significantly worse than the national average. From the Census 2021, for adults aged 16 and over, 6.9% (9,777) report having 'bad health' (England 4.0%); 2.2% (3,108) report having 'very bad health' (England 1.2%). Just over a quarter (35,500) state their day to day activities are limited 'a little' or 'a lot' (England 17.3%)

From the Health Survey for England (HSE, 2022) for adults aged 16 and over, the most common self-reported longstanding conditions are disorders of the musculoskeletal system (13% for males and 15% for females), and mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorders (10% for males and 12% for females).

Mental health

Mental health is linked to the wider determinants of health, with many factors affecting a person's sense of positive wellbeing.

Self-reported wellbeing can be a good indicator of a population's health (and potential needs), alongside other measures, including the economy, society and the environment. People with higher well-being have lower rates of illness, recover more quickly and for longer, and generally have better physical and mental health. For Blackpool 29.1% of adults have a self-reported high anxiety score, significantly higher than England (23.3%) (2022/23). For self-reported low satisfaction (6.4%), the rate is similar to England (5.6%) (2022/23).

In Blackpool 1.6% of patients (all ages) registered with a Blackpool GP practice have a mental health condition (schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses) (England 1.0%, 2023/24). This places Blackpool in the highest quintile (highest 20% of all values in England) and showing a worsening trend.

The incidence of depression in people aged 18-years and over is 2.7% (England 1.5%) of the registered population in Blackpool (2023/24). The trend shows no significant change. Depression affects people in different ways, but can result in significantly reduced quality of life for the person, their family and wider society.

A higher prevalence of mental ill health is also linked to deprivation, with 21% of males and 29% of females living the most deprived quintile having probable psychological/mental ill health (HSE, 2022)

Health behaviours

Smoking prevalence remains high in Blackpool, with an estimated 20.6% of the population (18 and over) smoking (2023). This is significantly higher than England (11.6%). Encouragingly, the rate continues to fall, with commissioned stop smoking services providing effective support. This is also reflected in the proportion of pregnant women smoking at the time of delivery (17.5%), which is significantly higher than England (7.4%) but is improving year on year (2023/24). The smoking prevalence for those with a long-term mental health condition is the highest in England (43.6% and 25.1% respectively) (2022/23).

Almost three-quarters of Blackpool's adult population (72.1% aged 18 and over) is overweight or obese (England 64.0%), this is important as obesity is a risk factor for many chronic diseases, can impact on a person's mental health and is linked to a reduced life expectancy. Preventing obesity and supporting those who are overweight is a key priority.

Alcohol misuse (including excessive and binge drinking) is linked to many health conditions, with alcohol-specific hospital admissions (under-18s) (42.5 per 100,000), significantly worse than England (22.6) (2021/22 - 23/24). Alcohol-related admissions for people

Alcohol-related mortality for males (113.0 per 100,000) and females (42.7 per 100,000) are the highest nationally and significantly worse than England (62.1 males; 22.1 females) (2023).

Drug/substance use can take many forms, including illegal psychoactive drugs, opiates, crack/cocaine, cannabis, or misuse of prescribed medication. Evidence shows that drug use is closely linked to deprivation, poverty and a chaotic lifestyle as well as having links to other factors such as poor mental health, having a learning difficulty and alcohol misuse. There is also evidence to suggest that young people who use recreational drugs run the risk of damage to mental health including suicide, depression and disruptive behaviour disorders. Among 10 to 15 year olds, an increased likelihood of drug use is linked to a range of adverse experiences and behaviour, including truancy, exclusion from school, homelessness, time in care, and serious or frequent offending.

The estimated prevalence of opiate and/or crack cocaine use in Blackpool (28.6 per 1,000 aged 18 and over) is three times higher than England (9.5) (2019-20) and is third highest in England. As of 2022/23 there were 1,381 people in specialist drug misuse treatment. Over half (52.8%) of people entering drug treatment who were identified as having a mental health treatment need were receiving treatment for that need. Deaths from drug misuse in Blackpool (20.5 per 100,000) is the highest rate in the country and significantly worse than England (5.5) (2021-23).

There is compelling evidence to clearly demonstrate that an inactive lifestyle has a substantial negative effect on both individual health and public health. There are few public health initiatives that have greater potential for improving health and wellbeing than increasing physical activity levels. Small increases in activity levels can have significant impact on the reduction of premature mortality, help to control many long term conditions and promote health improvement and quality of life. 59.2% of adults aged 19 and over are meeting recommended physical activity levels (England 67.1%) (2022/23), significantly worse than England.

The Blackpool Lifestyle Survey (below) provides historical analysis about the prevalence of different health behaviours across population groups, the characteristics of people with different health behaviours and indicates how many people participate in more than one risk taking behaviour.

Health behaviours in Blackpool 2015 (847 KB)

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