

Sustainable Investment in Population Health and Well-being: Towards a Value-Based Public Health

The WHO CC on Investment for Health and Well-being is leading the way

The World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being (WHO CC) at Public Health Wales is leading an innovative 'Value-Based Public Health' programme of work applying a **Social Value approach**. It aims to:

- Pioneer and promote the use of Social Value methods and tools to help capture the holistic (social, economic and environmental) outcomes and impacts of public health.
- Raise awareness, improve understanding and enhance implementation of Social Value and Social Return on Investment (SROI) across Public Health Wales, the NHS, and public bodies across the UK, as well as Public Health Institutes and health systems internationally.
- Explore evidence and opportunities to develop further the concept, methodology and real life application of Social Value and SROI to improve health and well-being, and reduce health inequity in Wales and beyond.
- Pilot and progress the application of SROI methodology to assess public health services and interventions.
- Utilise national and international best practice, experience and learning to develop a suite of resources to inform and support a Value-Based Public Health as part of Value-Based Health Care in Wales.
- Help build a systems approach based on evidencing Social Value to strengthen the case for investing in population health and wellbeing, and facilitate a balanced and sustainable finance shift towards primary prevention and early intervention.

Why Social Value?

- There has been a growing recognition across public and private organisations of the need to expand the traditional 'value for money' approach and find ways to identify and measure their wider social, economic and environmental outcomes, impacts and value.
- The Coronavirus pandemic has exposed the consequences of under-resourcing of public health and highlighted the clear independence between population health, societal well-being, and the economy.
- The case for targeted investment in people's well-being, health equity and prevention is stronger than ever, requiring coherent action across the NHS and other sectors, to maximise the value and impact of public services and interventions.
- There is an opportunity for a transformative recovery, building sustainable, inclusive, evidence-informed systems, policies and services, embedding social, economic and environmental outcomes into decision-making and budget prioritisation.





What is social value?

Social value is “the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives”¹ and is increasingly important to help deliver the most value for money. Social Value can be embedded in:



Measuring Social Value can enable (public) health organisations to:

- Understand what matters to people, patients, families and communities.
- Assess, measure and track real outcomes and impacts in a systematic and comprehensive way.
- Allocate resources to where they are having the greatest impact (value) on people, specific groups, communities, society, the economy and the environment.
- Invest in high value upstream interventions (primary prevention and early intervention) to protect and improve health and well-being, and to reduce health inequalities.
- Inform and help maximise the value for money, quality and wider benefits of services and interventions.

¹ Welsh Government 2019: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/valuing-our-health.pdf> and National Voices UK 2017: <https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/news-media/news-item/minority-nhs-commissioners-making-active-use-social-value-act>

Measuring Social Value

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

is a relatively novel outcomes-based measurement tool that can support organisations to understand, capture and quantify the social, environmental and economic value they are creating.

SROI examples

Evidence shows that investment in sports and leisure facilities in England (2020) could provide **SROI of £1.20-£3.42 for every £1 invested²** through:

- Reduced risk of heart disease / stroke in active men and women
- Reduced incidence of dementia
- Improved well-being
- Improved social capital
- Better all-round physical health



Evidence shows that investment in Social Prescribing in England (2020) could provide **SROI of £3.51 for every £1 invested⁴**, through:

- Improved mental health and well-being
- Learning through volunteering
- Improved educational outcomes
- Reduction in substance abuse issues



Evidence shows that optimisation of Electronic Medical Record use in Spain (2020) could provide **SROI of €64 for every €1 invested³** through:

- Increased feelings of safety in patients
- Improved conciliation, including reduced readmissions



Evidence shows that optimisation of electronic prescriptions use in Spain (2020) could provide **SROI of €32 for every €1 invested³** through:

- Increased adherence to pharmacological treatment
- Decreased number of visits to obtain prescription
- Reduced work productivity losses



² [Measuring the Social Return on Investment of community sport and leisure facilities \(Davies et al, 2021\)](#)

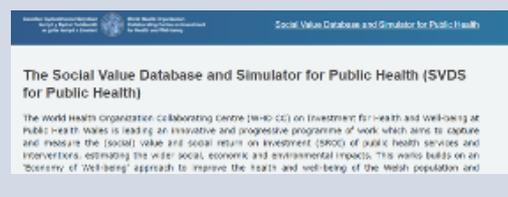
³ [The social return on investment of a new approach to heart failure in the Spanish National Health System \(Merino et al, 2020\)](#)

⁴ [Outcome and Economic Evaluation of City and Hackney Social Prescribing Scheme \(Bertotti et al, 2020\)](#)

The WHO CC building a suite of resources

The WHO CC is creating a diverse and innovative portfolio of products and tools to support the case for sustainable, evidence and value based investment in public health and health equity:

Launching a Social Value Database and Simulator (SVDS) for Public Health (2022): a first of its kind innovative tool, enabling the storage, interactive use and manipulation of health economics (SROI) evidence and data to support decision-making, budget prioritisation and programme improvement.



Making a Difference: Investing in Sustainable Health and Well-being for the people of Wales (2016): a suite of reports and infographics based on research evidence and expert opinion to inform and support preventing ill health and reducing inequalities to achieve a sustainable economy, thriving society and optimum health and well-being for the present and future generations in Wales.

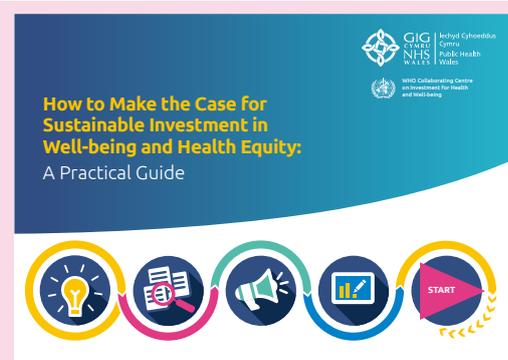


Investment for health and well-being: A review of the social return on investment from public health policies to support implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by building on Health 2020 (2017): a WHO report highlights the growing public health, inequity, economic and environmental challenges that require urgent and priority-focused investment if sustainable development is to be achieved and healthy prosperous lives for all ensured.



Driving Prosperity for All through Investing for Health and Well-being – An Evidence Informed Guide for Cross-sector Investment (2019): an evidence synthesis guide identifying and mapping ten key areas for policy action and investment in Wales to address areas of high burden and cost, delivering economic, social and environmental returns, and supporting sustainable inclusive economic growth.

How to Make the Case for Sustainable Investment in Well-being and Health Equity: A Practical Guide (2019): a step-by-step interactive guide outlining four key phases of how to synthesize, translate and communicate public health economics evidence into policy and practice.



Public Health Wales is the national public health institute for Wales providing professional independent public health advice and services to protect, improve and promote health and well-being and reduce health inequalities. Our purpose is 'working to achieve a healthier future for Wales'.

ISBN 978-1-83766-018-6 © 2022 Public Health Wales NHS Trust

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Acknowledgement to Public Health Wales NHS Trust to be stated.

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