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# Investing in a Healthier Wales: prioritising prevention

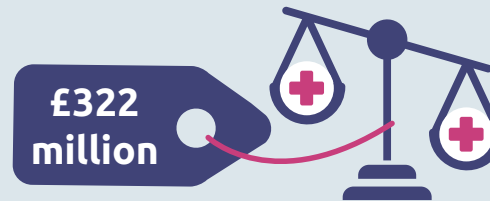
**A strong sustained commitment to prevention can reduce the burden and costs of ill health to the health and care system, with public health interventions offering a return of £14 for every £1 invested** (Masters et al, 2017).

Despite the fragility of public sector finances, now is the time to prioritise investment in people's health and well-being. Such investment can reverse the decline in the nation's health, address the root causes of health inequalities and enable the people of Wales to live longer, healthier and happier lives.

**There is a 17-year gap in healthy life expectancy for women living in the most and least deprived areas of Wales. This gap is 13 years for men**



**The cost of health inequalities to acute NHS services in Wales is £322 million per year**



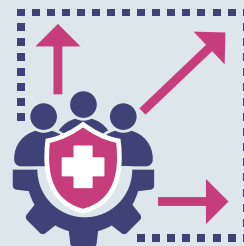
**Poverty is a leading cause of health inequalities**



**Investing in prevention cannot be done in isolation**



**Focus on high impact programmes with significant, scalable potential**



**Long-term commitment to fully realise the impact**



This is an update and adds to the evidence previously compiled by Public Health Wales (Public Health Wales, 2016) and the WHO Health Evidence Network (Dyakova et al., 2017). Taken from: [Investing in a Healthier Wales: prioritising prevention](#). Cardiff: Public Health Wales NHS Trust

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## Early years and children

**The child death rate in Wales is 70% higher for children living in our most deprived communities compared with their most affluent neighbours (RCPCH, 2020).**

Programmes aimed at supporting children and their families to live well can often have the greatest impact on the health and well-being of children through to adulthood.

There are many programmes that have a positive financial return on investment (ROI) as well as impact:

### Integrated services for maternal and parental mental health



Programmes promoting breastfeeding can save the NHS around **£50 million annually** by improving mental health and reducing hospital admissions

### Breastfeeding support to improve the uptake of breastfeeding



### Oral health programmes



After 5 years, targeted supervised tooth brushing yielded **£3.06 for every £1 invested**

### Vaccination and screening programmes

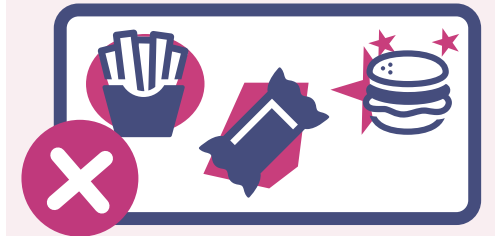


Universal early years education, especially for low-income families can yield **£1.31 for every £1 spent**

### School and community programmes to support healthy childhood development



### Reducing exposure to food advertising



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## Healthy Adults

**People living in our most deprived communities have a much higher chance of death from avoidable causes (3.7 times for males and 3.8 times for females) (ONS, 2019).**

The findings emphasise the need to support healthy behaviours, mental well-being and address the wider determinants of health. The programmes reflect a cross-sector approach providing effective services and supportive, enabling environments.

Example of evidence identified with a positive impact and positive return on investment include:

### Increasing access and uptake of smoking cessation services



### Workplace programmes to improve mental health

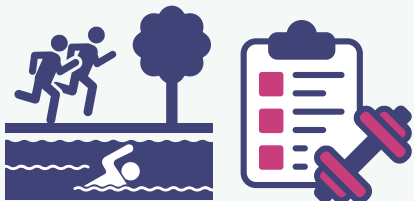


Preventative programmes can return up to **£9 for every £1 invested**

### Reducing the accessibility of alcohol

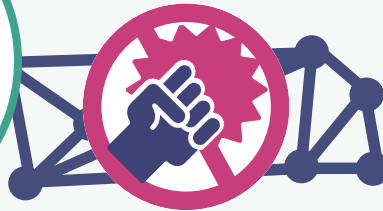


### Physical activity programmes including access to green and blue spaces



### Cross sector programmes aimed at reducing violence

Data sharing between emergency departments and the police can yield **£82 for every £1 invested**



### Primary care programmes including social prescribing



Social prescribing programmes generate a positive ROI, potentially saving the NHS **£4.6m** in healthcare use over five years

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## Healthy Ageing

**There is a 17-year gap in healthy life expectancy for women living in the most and least deprived areas of Wales. This gap is 13 years for men.**

(Welsh Gov, 2023d).

A holistic approach is required to ensure healthy ageing with a recognition of the value of older people and their contribution to society. Social return on investment (SROI) provides evidence for the wider social value of healthy ageing.

Examples of evidence identified with a positive impact and positive return on investment include:

### Falls prevention programmes



Falls prevention programmes can return financial results back within a three year time frame, which is much shorter than many interventions

### Improving housing through heating and insulation upgrades



Housing insulation programmes can provide an ROI of **£1.87 for every £1 invested**

### Promoting independent living for older people



My Life programme for prediabetes, showed an SROI of **£4.23 to £5.07 per £1 invested**



### Prediabetes management programme



### Providing support to carers



### Community based programmes of any type that help to address loneliness and social isolation



Investing in arts and creativity programmes for older adults' health and well-being can generate positive returns

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