

Even though we've lots to look forward to as things start to get back to normal in Sheffield, we know that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected everyone and that the longer-term impact is still with us.

Covid-19 has shone a light on existing health inequalities and exacerbated them. We know that certain health conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes, increase the risk of poorer outcomes from Covid-19 and are more common among certain ethnic groups.

National research has recently highlighted the extent that lockdowns have had on people's eating and physical activity habits, leading to weight gain. Almost over half a stone (4.1kg) was gained on average by those who put on weight, with 1 in 5 (21%) reporting putting on a stone or more. In adults aged 35 to 65 years old, the average weight gain for those who put on weight rises to over 10lbs (4.6kg).

Unhealthy eating habits, like snacking and comfort eating, were reported as the main contributor to weight gain during the pandemic for nearly half (46%) of those who reported gaining weight.

For smokers, although over 1m people have given up since Covid-19 hit, with 41% of quitters stating it was a direct response to the pandemic, a YouGov survey shows that some smokers have increased the amount they smoke and their likelihood of quitting has decreased. Lockdown also saw an increase in secondhand smoke exposure for children at home.

We already know that 40% of avoidable deaths are as a result of tobacco, obesity, inactivity and alcohol harm.

However, there's a mixed picture both here in Sheffield and nationally: -

- **Diet and obesity:** evidence of weight gain, poorer eating habits and increased food insecurity particularly affecting children and young people, the BAME community, those living with disabilities, and low income households.



- **Physical activity:** initial activity levels held up relatively well during lockdown, but familiar inequalities are being exacerbated. As restrictions were lifted, on the whole activity levels are decreasing.
- **Tobacco use:** people have been responsive to messages on quitting. However, some report smoking more.

This is why we've developed a local **Better Health Sheff** campaign which supports the national NHS Better Health campaign.

The overall aim of **Better Health Sheff** is to make it easy for people to make small and simple changes to improve their health. We have excellent local services in communities that support eating well, moving more, quitting smoking, and feeling better. We want to make access to these services easier by bringing them together under this campaign.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the BAME Public Health Inequalities Group who recommended a local campaign and helped us to develop it, and the local people who volunteered to be in the materials. The group have been instrumental in helping us understand local communities needs and have worked tirelessly to support people throughout the pandemic.

Once again, we really need your help to get **Better Health Sheff** messages out into communities. We've prepared a Better Health Sheff Toolkit which contains videos, social media assets and a leaflet which signposts to services on www.sheffield.gov.uk/betterhealth Please use #BetterHealthSheff when sharing.

The campaign launches in August and runs throughout the summer. We'd be grateful if you could support it by using this Toolkit and sharing the information through your channels.

Best wishes



Greg Fell
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