


NHS
Western Cheshire
Your partner for longer healthier lives

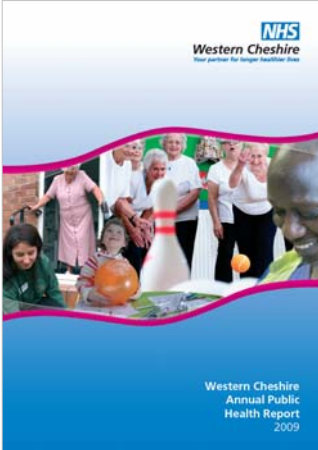
Western Cheshire Annual Public Health Report 2009

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Introduction



It is clear that the global economic crisis which has unfolded over the last year will have enormous consequences for the communities we serve and the funding available to commission public services.

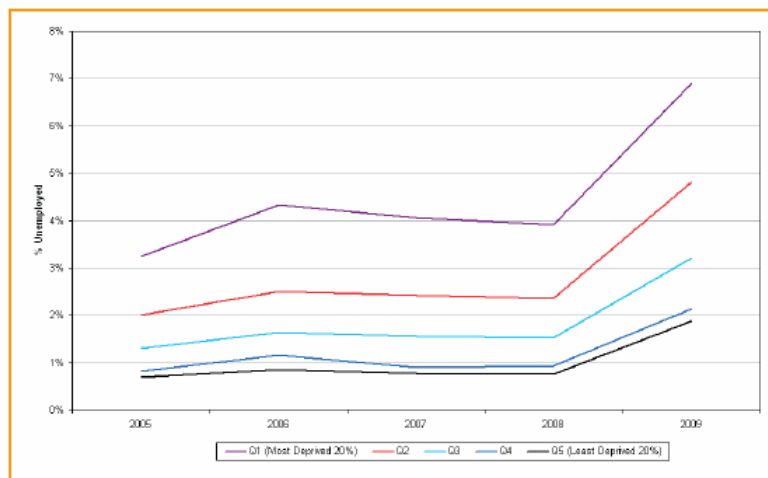


Topics covered in the 2009 Report

- The economic downturn and its impact on health
- Dealing with stress and anxiety: improving access to Psychological Therapies
- Housing and health
- NHS and the need for prioritisation
- Responding to the economic downturn: Summary, Actions and Priorities



Figure 2: Unemployment rate according to deprivation in Cheshire West and Chester – 2005-2009



Source: NOMIS (Official labour market statistics), ONS (Office for National Statistics) Claimant Count Rate (2009) and Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007)



Unemployment in Cheshire West and Chester

- Between June 2005 and June 2009, there has been a large increase in the number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants:
 - by 117% in Chester;
 - by 154% in Ellesmere Port and Neston; and
 - by 148% in Vale Royal.



Chapter 1: The economic downturn and its impact on health

- Lifestyles
 - Reduction in fruit and vegetable consumption
 - Cancellation of gym membership
 - Increase in alcohol abuse and misuse of drugs
 - Smokers may smoke more and delay giving up
- Mental health
 - Increase in stress and anxiety
 - Increase in unemployment is associated with an increase in suicide.
- Inequalities, if ignored, are likely to be made worse once the crisis is over.

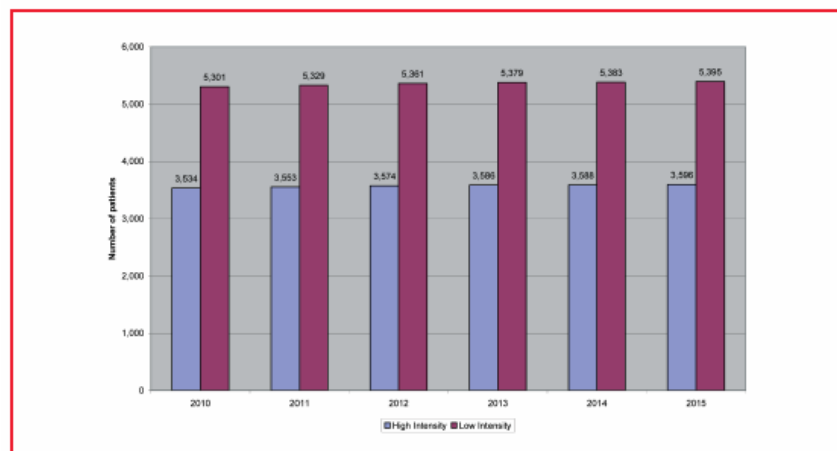


Chapter 2: Dealing with stress and anxiety

- Problems with mental health can severely affect the quality of life for sufferers and those around them
- At least 25,000 people of working age have either depression, anxiety or both at any one time



Figure 2: The predicted need for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies from 2010 -15.





Chapter 3: Housing and health

Many studies have concluded that poor housing is associated with poor health although it is recognised that this relationship is complicated.



Health and housing in the economic downturn

- An increase in households experiencing fuel poverty due to rising unemployment and financial hardship
- An increased number of individuals living in overcrowded properties due to rise in repossessions and family breakdowns.
- Increase in homelessness due to debt and rent and mortgage arrears.
- Changing demographics will impact on type of housing and related support services required.



Chapter 3: Recommendations

NHS Western Cheshire and Cheshire West & Chester Council should develop a health and housing strategy which focuses on the quality of accommodation, fitness for purpose, the needs of the homeless and those struggling to pay rent or mortgage.

Cheshire West and Chester Council should proactively seek elderly and vulnerable people who might be eligible for a range of housing or other benefits.



Chapter 4: NHS and the need for prioritisation

Whilst NHS funding up to 2010/11 is secure, the outlook beyond this time is uncertain. Part of the challenge dealing with this is how the NHS will continue to maintain and improve quality with the same or reduced funding.





Principles of Decision Making

- Evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness
- Equity and fairness
- Health care need and capacity to benefit
- Treatment and opportunity costs
- Needs of the community
- Policy drivers



Responding to the Economic Downturn Actions for the Primary Care Trust

- Commission complementary services – debt advice, family counselling
- Protect spending on public health and primary care
- Reduce spending on least cost-effective services
- Promote more active public participation in discussing measures to mitigate the economic effects.
- Remind employers of mental health problems and suicide risk posed by redundancy. Ensure that workers are directed to appropriate sources of advice.
- Protect health spending, improve effectiveness and efficiency



Action for the Local Authority

- Proactively seek those who have not claimed benefits to which they are entitled from housing and tax records
- Give support to struggling businesses
- Form credit unions
- Support post offices



Overall Recommendations

There is a need for a central co-ordination role to establish what schemes are running and to identify where there are gaps in service provision. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is ideally placed to lead the development of a local strategy in response to the economic downturn.





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