



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

# Accessing information on health and wellbeing (National Survey for Wales): April 2019 to March 2020

Results on where and how people find and access health and wellbeing information for April 2019 to March 2020.

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In 2019-20, the National Survey asked people whether they are able to get the right information, advice and support when they are ill, and on how to lead a healthy lifestyle. People were also asked where they get this information from, and how much they trust what they find.

## Main findings

- 84% of people said that they can access the right information, advice and support both when they are ill and to help them to lead a healthy lifestyle. The following factors are independently linked with people saying they can access the right information:

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- being in good health
  - attending or taking part in arts and cultural events
  - not being lonely
  - being aged 16 to 24 was linked to being more likely to access the right information when ill
- 52% of people use the internet to search for health conditions or symptoms.
  - The most popular website used for information was NHS Direct Wales.
  - When asked how they find health and well-being information on the internet, 72% of people make a general search first and then pick a relevant website. 19% of people go directly to a website they are aware of, 8% do both equally.
  - 79% of people said they find it easy to know whether to trust the information sources they find, with 28% finding it very easy to know.

## Ability to access the right health and wellbeing information

Whether people are looking for information about an illness or on how to lead a healthy lifestyle, 84% of people agreed that they can access the right information, advice and support. 42% of people strongly agreed in both situations.

When controlling for other factors (explained in our [Regression technical report](#)) the following characteristics were significantly associated with people saying that they could access the right health and well-being information, support and advice.

### Age

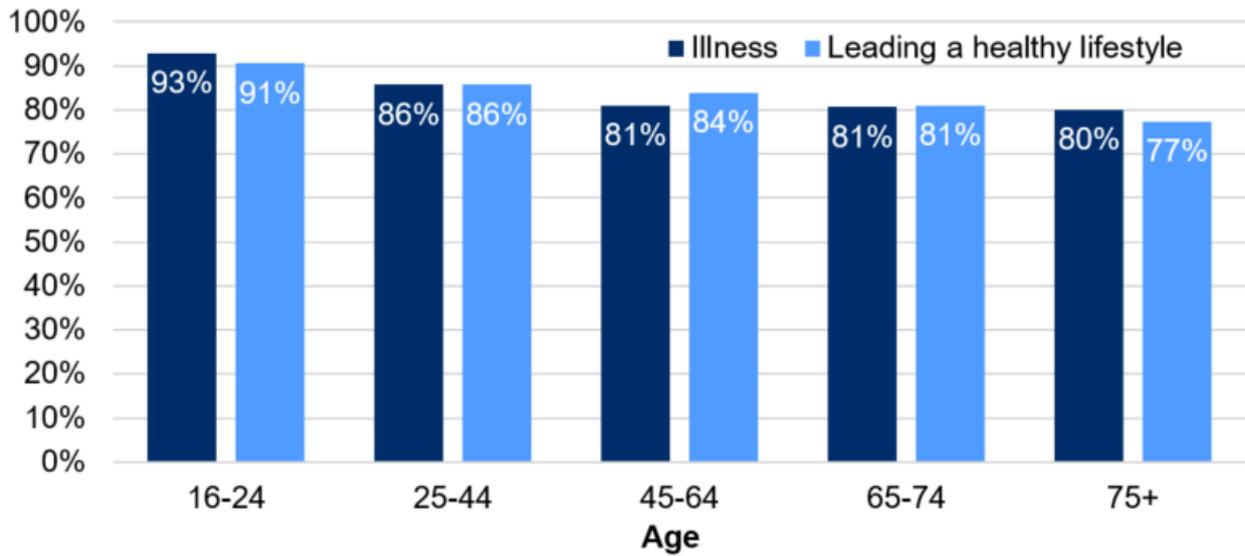
93% of people aged 16 to 24 said they can get the right information, advice and support when unwell or injured, compared with 80% of those aged 75 and over. (Chart 1)

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**Chart 1: Ability to access the right information, when ill and on how to lead a healthy lifestyle, by age**



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

## General health

87% of people who said they are in good general health said they are able to find the right information when they are ill, compared with 68% of those in bad health. Similar proportions of people said they can find the right information to help them lead a healthy lifestyle.

## Attendance at or participation in arts and cultural events

A perhaps surprising result is that 86% of people who take part in arts or cultural events (i.e. those who had done so at least three times in the previous 12 months) can find information when they are ill, compared with 79% of those who did not. Again, the same proportions of people said they can find the right information to help them lead a healthy lifestyle.

## Loneliness

73% of people who said they are lonely reported that they can find information

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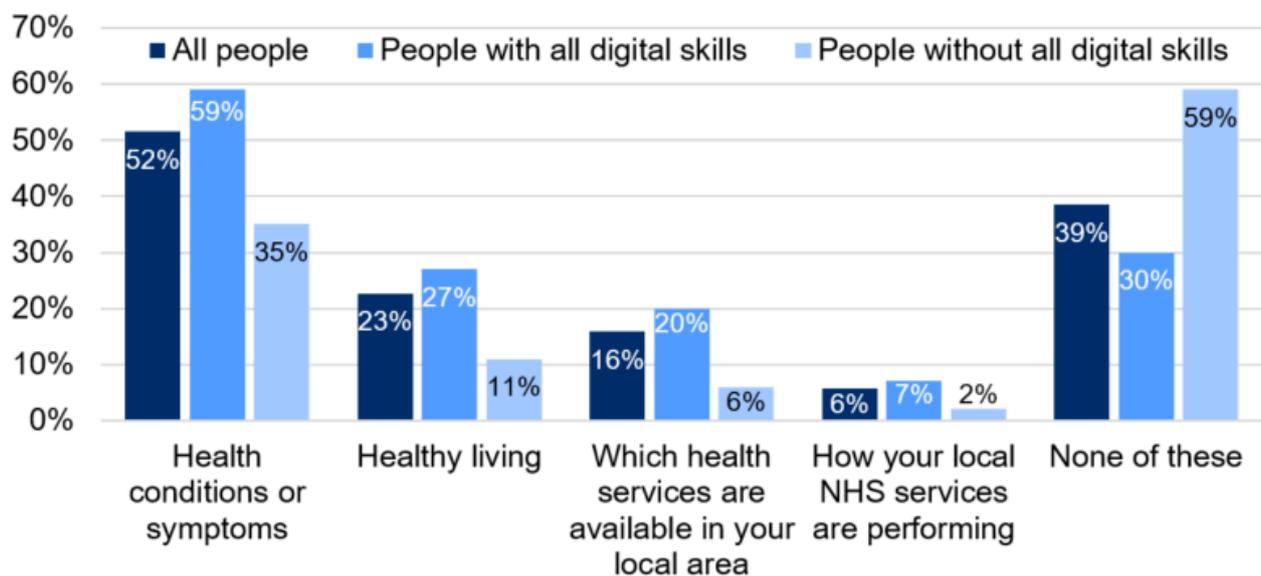
when they are ill, compared with 89% of people who are not lonely being able to do so. Similarly, 75% of people who are lonely said they can find information to help them lead a healthy lifestyle, compared with 88% of people who are not lonely.

## Finding information on health and wellbeing

When asked about using the internet to access health information, 52% search for health conditions or symptoms, while 23% look for information about healthy living. (Chart 2)

As might be expected, people who displayed **all five digital skills in the last 3 months** are more likely to have used the internet to access health information than those with fewer skills. (Chart 2)

**Chart 2: Reasons for using the internet to access health information, by digital skills ability**



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

When asked how they used the internet to find health and wellbeing information, 72% of people search about a health topic and then pick a relevant

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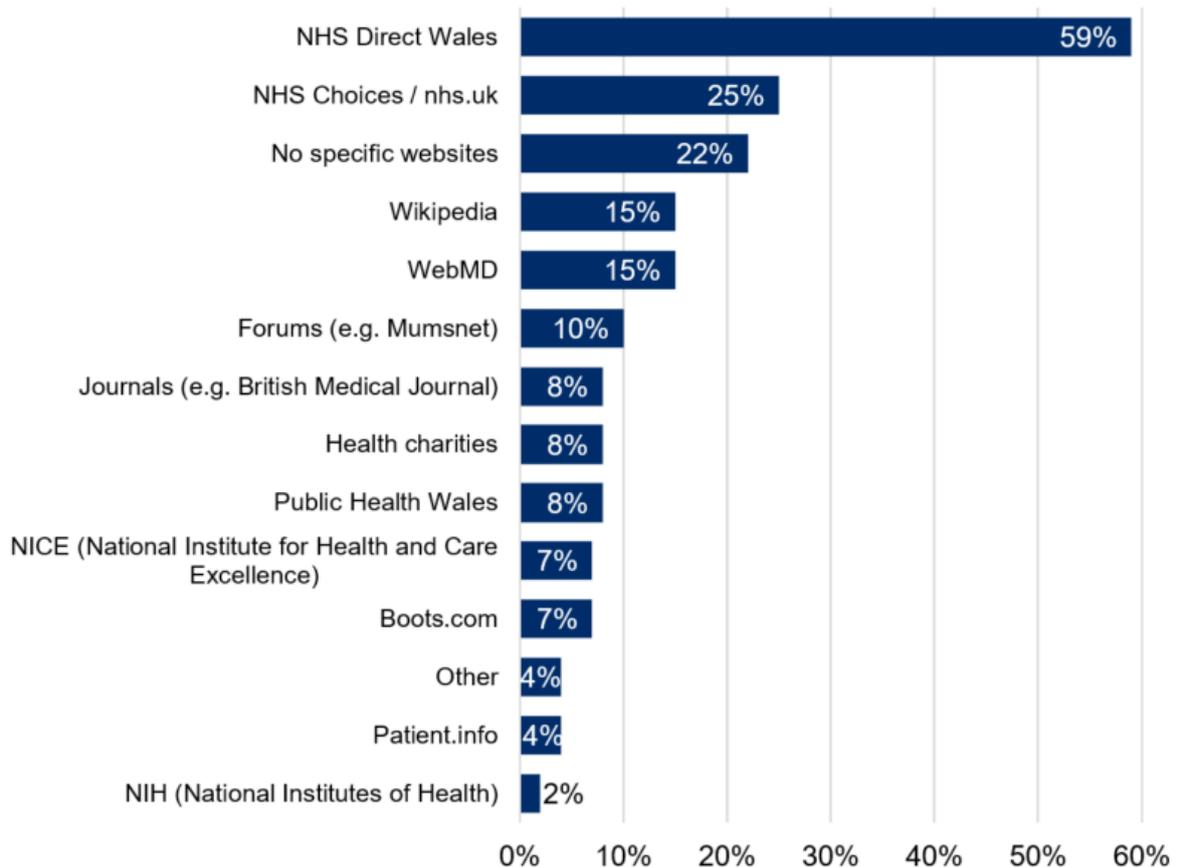
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website. Whereas 19% go directly to a website they know, and 8% do both equally.

Overall, the most popular health and wellbeing websites used are NHS Direct Wales (59%), followed by NHS choices (25%), and WebMD and Wikipedia (both 15%). 22% of people used no specific website. (Chart 3)

**Chart 3: Websites visited for health and wellbeing information**



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

## Trust in online information

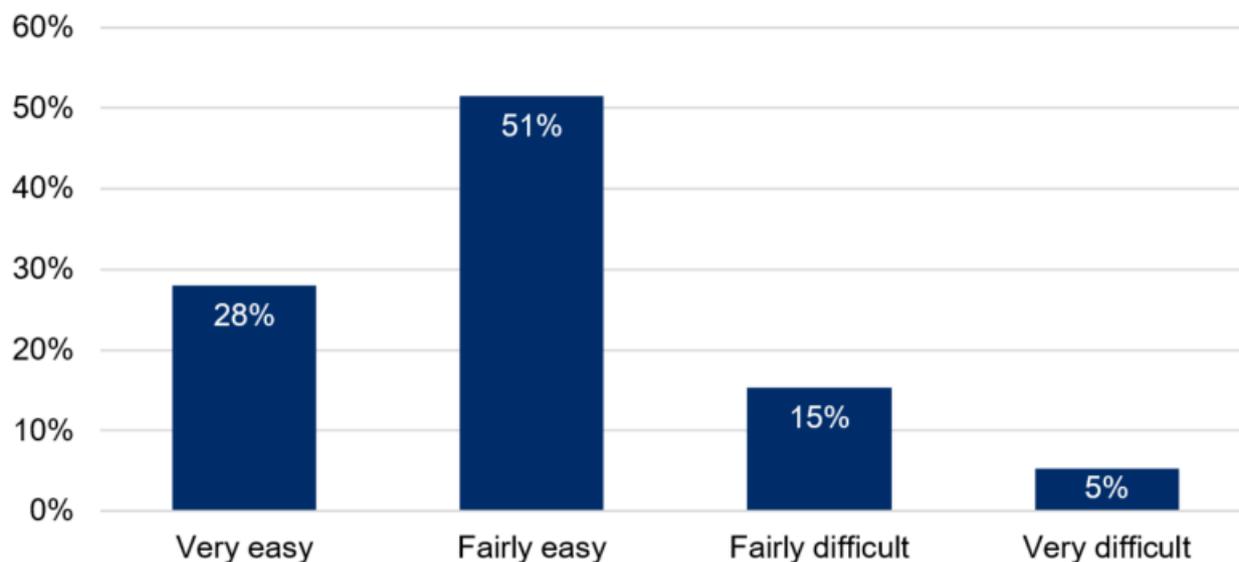
People were asked how easy it is for them to know if they can trust the information on the health and wellbeing websites they personally use. (Chart 4)

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## Chart 4: Ease of trusting health and wellbeing information on websites used



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

- 82% of people in good or very good health said they find it easy to know whether they can trust the online health information they use, compared with 69% of people in bad or very bad health.
- 70% of people who said they are lonely find it easy to know whether they could trust online health information, compared with 82% of those who are not lonely.
- On the other hand, 31% of people in material deprivation find it difficult to know whether they can trust the online health information they find, compared with 19% of those not in material deprivation.

## Impact of COVID-19 on health and wellbeing information

Since March 2020, GPs and hospitals have switched many appointments from face-to-face to telephone or video appointments. Over the same period, the National Survey for Wales has also switched to telephone and a question was

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added on the mode of people's most recent GP and hospital appointments.

- Before the start of April 2020, only 10% of GP appointments were conducted by telephone, compared with 61% of appointments between April and September 2020. GP appointments by video call were also introduced and accounted for 4% of appointments since April.
- Between April and September 2020, 17% of hospital appointments were conducted by telephone, compared with less than 5% before the start of April.
- New results on GP and hospital appointments will be available in March 2021.

## Policy context

The results of these survey questions will help with understanding progress against the following.

**'A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care'**, in which the Welsh Government states its ambition to create an online health and social care platform for citizens. The aim is to help the public to be more involved in their healthcare provision and help them to make informed choices about their own healthcare.

**'Taking Wales Forward'**, which is the Welsh Government plan until 2021 that includes increasing investment in facilities to reduce waiting times and exploit digital technologies to help speed up the diagnosis of illness.

**'Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being (DCW)'**, which is the Welsh Government's digital inclusion and health programme. The programme is designed to provide training and support to front line staff, volunteers and organisations (face to face) to engage with and develop the digital skills of citizens to access services.

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# Quality and methodology information

The 2019-20 **National Survey** was a face-to-face survey of over 12,000 randomly selected adults across Wales running from April 2019 to March 2020.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic we changed to a shorter, monthly telephone survey. From May 2020 onwards telephone interviews were carried out with a random sample of people who had previously taken part in a full-year, face-to-face **National Survey**.

Detailed charts and tables of results are available in our interactive **results viewer**. For information on data collection and methodology please see our **Quality report** and **Regression technical report**.

## National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

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The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in June 2020 following a compliance check by the Office for

Statistics Regulation ([letter of confirmation](#)). These statistics last underwent a full assessment ([full report](#)) against the Code of Practice in 2013.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- provided more detailed breakdowns in the [results viewer](#) and made it easier for users to compare results across years
- updated the survey topics annually to ensure we continue to meet changing policy need
- made regression analysis a standard part of our outputs to help users understand the contribution of particular factors to outcomes of interest

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016. The National Survey collects information for [15 of the 46 indicators](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

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The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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