Our vision is a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases.
This month in Northern Ireland

- 340 people will die from a heart or circulatory disease...
- Around 100 of them will be younger than 75
- 225k people are living with a heart or circulatory disease
- 275 hospital admissions will be due to a heart attack
- 135 people will die from coronary heart disease
- 13 babies will be diagnosed with a heart defect

Quick Links

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Heart and Circulatory Diseases (Cardiovascular Disease; CVD)

Heart and circulatory diseases is an umbrella term for all diseases of the heart and circulation. It includes everything from conditions that are inherited or that a person is born with, to those that are develop later, such as coronary heart disease, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, stroke and vascular dementia.

- Heart and circulatory diseases cause around a **quarter** (23 per cent) of all deaths in Northern Ireland, or around **4,100 deaths each year** – an average of 11 people each day.
- Around 1,200 people under the age of 75 in Northern Ireland die from heart and circulatory diseases (CVD) each year.
- Since the 1960s, CVD death rates in Northern Ireland have fallen by **three-quarters**.
- Death rates have fallen more quickly than the actual number of deaths because people in Northern Ireland are now living longer.
- There are an estimated 225,000 people living with heart and circulatory diseases in Northern Ireland - an ageing and growing population and improved survival rates from heart and circulatory events could see these numbers rise still further.

For more information about heart and circulatory diseases, visit our website

## Deaths from and numbers living with heart and circulatory diseases (CVD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>No. of People Dying from CVD (2020)</th>
<th>No. of People Under 75 Years Old Dying from CVD (2020)</th>
<th>Estimated Number of People Living with CVD (latest estimate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>4,102</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>225,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deaths BHF analysis from latest official statistics (NISRA); ICD-10 codes I00-99, F01,Q20-8, P29, G45
Living with CVD estimates by BHF - based on latest health surveys and GP patient data
• Premature death rates from heart and circulatory diseases (before the age of 75) in Northern Ireland are broadly similar to those for England.

• Death rates take the age structure (demography) of local areas into account to reveal the real differences in statistics. This is very important when there are big variations in the age profile of communities across the country.

• The latest premature (under 75) death rate for CVD in Belfast (85 per 100,000 people) is more than 50 per cent higher than for Lisburn & Castlereagh (55).

• Regional and local UK statistics and rankings for heart and circulatory deaths can be found on our website

### NI premature (under 75 years) death rates, heart and circulatory diseases (CVD) 2018-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority – Top Five</th>
<th>Under 75 CVD Death Rate per 100,000 Population</th>
<th>Under 75 Annual Number of CVD Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid &amp; East Antrim</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry City &amp; Strabane</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armagh City, Banbridge &amp; Craigavon</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Ulster</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Cost of Heart and Circulatory Diseases

Total NHS expenditure on CVD in Northern Ireland in 2014/15 was £412 million
Coronary Heart Disease (CHD; Ischaemic Heart Disease)

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common type of heart and circulatory disease. It occurs when coronary arteries become narrowed by a build-up of atheroma, a fatty material within their walls. The pain or discomfort felt from such narrowing is called angina and if a blockage occurs it can cause a myocardial infarction (heart attack).

- Around 74,000 people are living with CHD in Northern Ireland
- CHD is the one of Northern Ireland’s leading causes of death and it was also the leading cause of death worldwide in 2019.
- In Northern Ireland, 1 in 9 men and more than 1 in 14 women die from coronary heart disease (1 in 11 overall).
- CHD is responsible for around 1,600 deaths in Northern Ireland each year, or an average of around 4 deaths each day.
- Around 600 people under the age of 75 in Northern Ireland die from CHD each year.
- CHD kills twice as many women in Northern Ireland as breast cancer.
- Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of heart attacks.

Linked conditions
- Individuals with coronary heart disease, or who have had a heart attack, are twice as likely to have a stroke.

For more info please visit: [Coronary Heart Disease](#)

Premature CHD death rate by local authority 2018-20

Coronary heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in Northern Ireland
Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarction, MI)

- There are up to **4,300 hospital admissions** for heart attack in Northern Ireland each year: that’s 12 each day or 1 every 120 minutes.

- In the 1960s more than **7 out of 10** heart attacks in the UK were fatal. Today at least 7 out of 10 people survive.

Atrial Fibrillation (AF)

Atrial fibrillation is the most common form of abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia) and a major cause of stroke.

- More than **43,000 people** in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation.

- It is estimated that there are thousands more living with undiagnosed atrial fibrillation.

**Linked conditions**

- People with AF are five times more likely to have a stroke
- AF is a contributing factor to one in five strokes

For more info please visit:
- Heart Attacks
- Atrial Fibrillation
Heart Failure

Heart failure occurs when the heart is not pumping blood around the body as well as it should, most commonly when the heart muscle has been damaged – for example, after a heart attack.

- Around 20,000 people in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with heart failure by their GP.
- Estimates which include diagnoses at hospital show there are thousands more people living with the condition across the nation.

Stroke (Cerebrovascular Disease)

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off, causing brain cells to become damaged. A transient ischaemic attack (TIA) is also known as a “mini-stroke” and is caused by a temporary disruption in the blood supply to part of the brain.

- Strokes cause around 850 deaths in Northern Ireland each year.
- In Northern Ireland there are as many as 1,200 hospital admissions for stroke each year.
- Around 40,000 people living in Northern Ireland today have survived a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA).
- Half of stroke survivors in Northern Ireland are under the age of 75.

For more info please visit:
- Heart Failure
- Stroke

Linked conditions
- People with heart failure are 2-3 times more likely to have a stroke.
- People with diabetes are twice as likely to have a stroke as people without diabetes.
Vascular Dementia

Vascular dementia happens when there’s a problem with the blood supply to an area of your brain. The cells in the affected area of your brain don’t get enough oxygen or nutrients and start to die. This leads to symptoms such as concentration problems and personality changes.

- Vascular dementia causes hundreds of deaths each year in Northern Ireland – numbers could be higher as it can be difficult to diagnose the different types of dementia.
- Vascular dementia is the second most common type of dementia, seen in up to 1 in 5 cases.
- Vascular dementia is estimated to affect at least 150,000 people in the UK.
- By 2050 it’s predicted that the numbers living with vascular dementia could double.

Linked conditions

- People with a history of heart diseases are at least twice as likely to develop vascular dementia
- Vascular dementia accounts for three quarters of dementia cases in stroke survivors
- People with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to develop vascular dementia

For more info please visit: Vascular dementia
Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA)

Cardiac arrest is a critical medical emergency, where the heart stops pumping blood around the body. Unless treated immediately, it leads to death within minutes.

- There are 1,400 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCAs) in Northern Ireland each year.
- Less than 1 in 10 people survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in Northern Ireland.
- Every minute without cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation reduces the chance of survival by up to 10 per cent.
- Performing CPR can more than double the chances of survival in some cases (ventricular fibrillation).
- It’s estimated that public-access defibrillators (PADs) are used in less than 10 per cent of OHCAs.
- The Chain of Survival (below) is a sequence of steps that together maximise the chance of survival following cardiac arrest.

For more info please visit:
- Cardiac arrest
Congenital Heart Disease

Congenital heart disease is a heart condition or defect that develops in the womb before a baby is born.

- Heart defects are diagnosed in at least 1 in 150 births - that’s an average of 13 babies each month in Northern Ireland - with more diagnoses later in life.
- Estimates suggest that in total as many as 1-2 per cent of the population may be affected.
- Before the BHF existed, the majority of babies diagnosed with a severe heart defect in the UK did not survive to their first birthday. Today, thanks to research, more than 8 out of 10 survive to adulthood.

Inherited (Genetic) Conditions

These are conditions which can be passed on through families, affect people of any age and may be life-threatening.

- An estimated 9,500 people in Northern Ireland have an inherited heart condition - these include hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM; 1 in 500 people), dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) and arrhythmogenic right ventricular dysplasia/cardiomyopathy (ARVD/ARVC).
- There are other conditions which can affect the heart and circulatory system, with an unusually high risk of developing heart disease or dying suddenly at a young age, including familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH; 1 in 250, or 7,600 people).
- Every week in the UK at least 12 young people (aged under 35) die from an undiagnosed heart condition.
- Using high-intensity statins can reduce cholesterol levels by half. For many people with FH this will be reduced to a safe level, lowering their risk of death from heart disease.

For more info please visit:
- Congenital heart disease
- Inherited heart conditions

Around 13 babies a month are diagnosed with a congenital heart defect in Northern Ireland

Around 17,500 people in Northern Ireland have a faulty gene that can cause an inherited heart-related condition
Risk Factors

Many different risk factors increase your likelihood of developing heart and circulatory diseases.

High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)

- High blood pressure is the leading modifiable risk factor for heart and circulatory disease in Northern Ireland.
- An estimated 400,000 people in Northern Ireland have hypertension.
- Around 280,000 people are on their GP's hypertension register, meaning up to 120,000 people in Northern Ireland could be undiagnosed.

Linked conditions

- Around half of heart attacks and strokes in Northern Ireland are associated with high blood pressure.

Around 280,000 people in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with high blood pressure.
**Diabetes**

Diabetes is a condition in which blood sugar levels are elevated over a prolonged period of time. This results in damage to the inner lining of blood vessels. Consequently, diabetes is an important risk factor for heart and circulatory diseases (CVD).

- Nearly 110,000 adults in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- Around 90 per cent of those diagnosed are living with type 2 diabetes and 10 per cent have either type 1 or rarer types.
- It’s estimated that thousands of people across Northern Ireland are living with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.

**Linked conditions**

- Adults with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to develop CVD, and are nearly twice as likely to die from heart disease or stroke as those without diabetes.
- In the UK, one third of adults with diabetes die from a heart or circulatory disease.

**High Cholesterol**

- High blood cholesterol is a significant risk factor for developing heart and circulatory diseases.
- Around 1 in 4 deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in Northern Ireland are associated with high LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol.

For more information, visit our website:

- High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
Smoking

- **More than one in six adults** smoke cigarettes in Northern Ireland— that’s up to 250,000 adults
- **Around 2,300 deaths** each year in Northern Ireland are attributable to smoking-related causes
- **Around 18,000 hospital admissions** are attributed to smoking each year.

Overweight/Obesity

- An estimated **27 per cent** of adults in Northern Ireland have obesity and in addition more than a third (38 per cent) have a body-mass index (BMI) defined as overweight
- More than a quarter (26 per cent) of children in Northern Ireland have a BMI defined as overweight or obese.
- In Northern Ireland around 1 in 6 heart and circulatory disease deaths are associated with a high body-mass index.

Diet and Exercise

- An estimated **45 per cent** of adults in Northern Ireland do not achieve recommended levels of physical activity.
- **Over half** (56 per cent) of adults in Northern Ireland do not eat the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables per day.
- **More than one in six** (17 per cent) adults in Northern Ireland regularly exceed national guidelines for weekly alcohol intake; no level of use is without risk

Other Risk Factors

- Each year up to 500 **deaths** in Northern Ireland are attributable to air pollution, with a significant impact on heart and circulatory health.

Other risk factors can significantly increase your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases, including impaired kidney function, age, gender, family history and ethnicity.
About the British Heart Foundation (BHF)

One in four of us in the UK and one in three globally die from heart and circulatory diseases. That’s why the British Heart Foundation funds world-leading research into their causes, prevention and treatment. Advances from our research have saved and improved millions of lives, but heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia and their risk factors such as diabetes still cause heartbreak on every street. With the public’s support, our funding will drive the new discoveries to end that heartbreak.

We are the biggest independent funder of heart and circulatory disease research in Northern Ireland and the UK.

Find out more at bhf.org.uk

More BHF Health Statistics

Including exclusive content and local statistics
Visit our website bhf.org.uk/statistics

This factsheet is compiled by the British Heart Foundation.

Last reviewed and updated August 2022.

Statistics are the latest available from the UK’s health and statistical agencies

For any queries, contact us and we will do our best to help - please mark for the attention of the Health Intelligence team.
## References

### Heart and Circulatory Diseases (Cardiovascular Disease; CVD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CVD ASDRs (death rates)</td>
<td>BHF analysis of NISRA (2018-20) mortality data; map created in Tableau (NB local data ICD-10 I00-99 only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225k living with CVD</td>
<td>BHF estimate based on latest Quality &amp; Outcomes Framework prevalence data from Northern Ireland Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£412m CVD cost</td>
<td>Hospital Information Branch, DHNI 2014/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Linked conditions:** 81% people with CVD have one other condition


### Coronary Heart Disease (CHD; Ischaemic Heart Disease)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHD ASDRs (death rates)</td>
<td>BHF analysis of NISRA (2018-20) mortality data; map created in Tableau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHD biggest killer worldwide</td>
<td>World Health Organization and Global Burden of Disease 2019 estimates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarction, MI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart attack admissions</td>
<td>DHNI Hospital Information Branch (2021). Northern Ireland Episode Based Inpatient and Day Case Activity Data NB volumes have reduced during COVID-19 pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/10 people survive heart attack ~ 1960s estimate</td>
<td>Case fatality rates in Smolina’s 2012 BMJ paper on acute MI mortality (<a href="http://www.bmj.com/content/344/bmj.d8059">www.bmj.com/content/344/bmj.d8059</a>) ~ Goldacre’s 2003 paper on myocardial infarction (Oxon)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Atrial Fibrillation (AF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 times more likely to have a stroke</td>
<td>Marini C, De Santis F, Sacco S. Contribution atrial fibrillation to incidence and outcome of ischemic stroke: results from a population-based study. <a href="www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15879330">www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15879330</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributor to 1 in 5 strokes</td>
<td>Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP). National clinical audit annual results portfolio <a href="www.strokeaudit.org/results/Clinical-audit/National-Results.aspx">www.strokeaudit.org/results/Clinical-audit/National-Results.aspx</a> [select Annual]</td>
</tr>
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<td>STATISTIC</td>
<td>REFERENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HEART FAILURE (HF)</strong></td>
<td>Quality &amp; Outcomes Framework prevalence data from Northern Ireland Department of Health (2021/22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STROKE (CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASE)</strong></td>
<td>Northern Ireland, Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) (2021) – Deaths by sex, age and cause 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospital Information Branch (2021). Northern Ireland Episode Based Inpatient and Day Case Activity Data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB volumes have reduced during COVID-19 pandemic</td>
</tr>
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<td>Quality &amp; Outcomes Framework prevalence data from Northern Ireland Department of Health (2021/22)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BHF analysis of The Health Intelligence Network (THIN) prevalence data, IQVIA/IMRD 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VASCULAR DEMENTIA</strong></td>
<td>Northern Ireland, Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) (2021) –  deaths by sex, age and cause 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alzheimer’s Society  <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/types-dementia/diagnosis-vascular-dementia">www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/types-dementia/diagnosis-vascular-dementia</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150k prevalence; 350k forecast (both UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2924456/">www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2924456/</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3235558/">www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3235558/</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2174783/">www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2174783/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUT-OF-HOSPITAL CARDIAC ARREST (OHCA)</strong></td>
<td>DHIN, Community Resuscitation Strategy Northern Ireland, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/community-resuscitation-strategy-and-reports">www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/community-resuscitation-strategy-and-reports</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resuscitation Council (2021) Resuscitation Guidelines 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.resus.org.uk/library/2021-resuscitation-guidelines">www.resus.org.uk/library/2021-resuscitation-guidelines</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>see also University of Warwick (2020), Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest Outcomes Registry Epidemiology Report (England data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/ctu/trials/ohca/publications/epidemiologyreports/">https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/ctu/trials/ohca/publications/epidemiologyreports/</a></td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 1:150 babies diagnosed


### Survival comparison (pre-BHF/today)

MacMahon BMJ, [http://heart.bmj.com/content/heartjnl/15/2/121.full.pdf](http://heart.bmj.com/content/heartjnl/15/2/121.full.pdf) and British Cardiac Society, [https://heart.bmj.com/content/88/suppl_1/i1](https://heart.bmj.com/content/88/suppl_1/i1)

### 1-2% prevalence

Various estimates including Hoffman & Kaplan, JACC –19 per 1,000 includes BAVs which will eventually need cardiology care


### INHERITED (GENETIC) CONDITIONS

#### 9.5k inherited heart conditions; 17.5k with faulty gene

BHF NI estimate derived from PHG Foundation, Heart to Heart: inherited cardiovascular conditions services (2009); updated to reflect revised FH/DCM prevalence estimates

NB only one third of the burden of dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) is thought to be inherited – that proportion is included here

#### 1:250 with familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH)

NB average recent prevalence is 1:250 but our preferred reference reports 1:273


#### 1:500 with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM)

Priori et al, Task Force on Sudden Cardiac Death ESC, [eurheartj.oxfordjournals.org/content/ehj/22/16/1374.full.pdf](http://eurheartj.oxfordjournals.org/content/ehj/22/16/1374.full.pdf)

### Sudden cardiac deaths under-35s

Cardiac Risk in the Young, [www.c-r-y.org.uk/statistics](http://www.c-r-y.org.uk/statistics)

### RISK FACTORS

#### Hypertension - High Blood Pressure

**Adults high BP**

- **#1 modifiable risk factor**

**diagnosed hypertension**

BHF estimate based on UK health survey data

Global Burden of Disease (GBD) risk burden estimate for CVD in Northern Ireland 2019

Quality & Outcomes Framework prevalence data from Northern Ireland Department of Health (2021/22)


**Linked conditions:** Around 50% of heart attacks and strokes are associated with high blood pressure

Global Burden of Disease (GBD) UK risk burden estimate 2019 – UK and Northern Ireland

**Diabetes**

- **adults diagnosed with diabetes – undiagnosed**

Quality & Outcomes Framework prevalence data from Northern Ireland Department of Health (2021/22)


**Linked conditions:** Adults with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to develop CVD, and are nearly twice as likely to die from heart disease or stroke as those without diabetes


[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2809299/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2809299/)

[www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60484-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60484-9/fulltext)

**Linked conditions:** In the UK, one third of adults with diabetes die from a heart or circulatory disease


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATISTIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Risk Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 13.2% to 17.5% smoke ~ up to 250k cigarette smokers</td>
<td>17.5% Health Survey Northern Ireland: first results 2019/20 and BHF analysis/ONS population estimates – 13.2% from ONS Annual Population Survey. Updated in the 2020/21 survey but with different methodology – those figures are not cited here; see publication for details. <a href="http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/health-survey-northern-ireland">www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/health-survey-northern-ireland - new survey due late 2022</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>air pollution-attributable deaths</td>
<td>Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2019 Northern Ireland estimates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smoking deaths</td>
<td>NI Direct estimate <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/smoking">www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/smoking</a> – NB GBD has a higher estimate (3.3k smoking-related deaths per year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18k hospital admissions from smoking-related causes</td>
<td>Tobacco Control Northern Ireland 2015; Public Health Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity/BMI, 5-a-day, alcohol, physical activity (PA)</td>
<td>Health Survey Northern Ireland: first results 2019/20 (NB PA was last included in 2016/17). Some updates in the 2020/21 survey but with different methodology – those figures are not cited here; see publication for details <a href="http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/health-survey-northern-ireland">www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/health-survey-northern-ireland</a></td>
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