Our vision is a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases.
Today in Wales

Coronavirus is having a devastating impact, and more research is required to understand it, including how heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors affect COVID-19 risk and outcomes. BHF-funded researchers are contributing to these efforts. For info/support visit bhf.org.uk/coronavirus

We are continuing our work to help and support the 340,000 people living with heart and circulatory diseases in Wales.

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Heart and Circulatory Diseases (Cardiovascular Disease; CVD)

Heart and circulatory diseases is an umbrella term that describes 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 develop later, such as coronary heart disease, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, stroke and vascular dementia.

- Heart and circulatory diseases cause one in four (25 per cent) of all deaths in Wales, or around 9,300 deaths each year - that’s an average of 26 people each day.
- Heart and circulatory diseases kill 4,900 men and 4,400 women in Wales each year.
- Since the BHF was established the annual number of heart and circulatory deaths in Wales has fallen by half.
- Since 1961 the Welsh death rate from heart and circulatory diseases has declined by more than three quarters. Death rates have fallen more quickly than the actual number of deaths because people in Wales are now living longer.
- Around 2,800 people under the age of 75 in Wales die from heart and circulatory diseases (CVD) each year.
- There are around 340,000 people living with heart and circulatory diseases in Wales - an ageing and growing population and improved survival rates from heart and circulatory events could see these numbers rise still further in the future.

Deaths from and numbers living with heart & 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>England</td>
<td>137,152</td>
<td>37,353</td>
<td>6.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>17,448</td>
<td>5,148</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>9,340</td>
<td>2,762</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>4,102</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>225,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (2020)</td>
<td>168,319</td>
<td>46,627</td>
<td>7.6 million +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deaths - BHF analysis of latest official statistics (ONS/NISRA/NRS); UK total includes non-residents (ONS data); ICD-10 codes I00-99, F01,Q20-8, C38.0, P29, G45
Living with CVD estimates based on latest health surveys with CVD fieldwork and GP patient data.
• Premature death rates from heart and circulatory diseases (before the age of 75) are higher than in 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 highest premature heart and circulatory death rates in Wales by local authority (2018-20) were for Neath Port Talbot and Newport.

• The latest premature (under 75) death rate for Neath Port Talbot (109 per 100,000 people) is nearly twice as high as for Monmouthshire (57).

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

Wales premature (under 75 years) heart & circulatory diseases (CVD) death rates 2018-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unitary Authority – Top Five</th>
<th>Under 75 Death Rate per 100,000 people</th>
<th>Under 75 Annual Number of CVD Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neath Port Talbot / Castell-nedd Port Talbot</td>
<td>109.2</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport / Casnewydd</td>
<td>104.1</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil / Merthyr Tudful</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaenau Gwent</td>
<td>102.4</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caerphilly / Caerffili</td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost of Heart and Circulatory Diseases

Total NHS expenditure on heart and circulatory diseases (CVD) in Wales in 2019/20 was £553 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 117,000 people are living with CHD in Wales.
- Coronary heart disease (CHD) is a leading cause of death in Wales. It was also the leading cause of death worldwide in 2019.
- CHD is responsible for around 3,600 deaths in Wales each year; that’s an average of 10 deaths each day.
- CHD kills 2,300 men and 1,300 women in Wales each year.
- Since the BHF was established the annual number of CHD deaths in Wales has fallen by more than half.
- In 1961, 9,082 deaths in Wales were attributed to CHD – over a quarter of all deaths that year.
- Since 1961 the age-standardised death rate from CHD has declined by more than three quarters.
- CHD kills more than twice as many women as breast cancer in Wales; it even kills more women prematurely.
- Around 1,400 people under the age of 75 in Wales die from CHD each year.
- 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 as those who haven’t.

For more info please visit:
- Coronary Heart Disease

Around 117,000 people are living with coronary heart disease in Wales
Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarction, MI)

- In Wales as many as 5,000 hospital admissions each year are for heart attacks: that’s 14 each day or 1 around every 100 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.

- Around 79,000 people in Wales have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation.
- It is estimated that there are at least 15,000 people aged over 65 with undiagnosed (or silent) atrial fibrillation in Wales.

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 36,000 people in Wales have been diagnosed with heart failure by their GP.
- Estimates which include diagnoses at hospital suggest that there are thousands more people living with the condition across the country.

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.

- Stroke causes around 1,900 deaths in Wales each year.
- In Wales as many as 7,000 hospital admissions are due to stroke each year.
- Over 70,000 people living in Wales have survived a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA).
- More than half of stroke survivors in Wales are under the age of 75.

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 Wales – 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 around 1 in 4 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.

- Just 1 in 20 survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) in Wales.
- There are around 2,800 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Wales each year.
- 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 around 1 in 150 births - that’s an average of 16 babies each month in Wales - 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 16,000 people in Wales 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 13,000 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.
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 diseases in Wales.
- It’s estimated that around 700,000 adults in Wales have high blood pressure.
- More than 510,000 people are on their GP’s hypertension register, suggesting that as many as 185,000 could be undiagnosed.

Linked conditions

- Around 50% of heart attacks and strokes are associated 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 CVD.

- More than 200,000 adults in Wales 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 more people across Wales are living with undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes.

High Cholesterol

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

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.

For more information, visit our website:

- High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
Smoking
- More than one in six adults (18%) smoke cigarettes in Wales - that’s more than 400,000 adults.
- Over 5,000 people in Wales die from smoking-related causes each year.
- Over 1,000 Welsh deaths from heart and circulatory diseases can be attributed to smoking each year.
- Over 26,000 hospital admissions for adults over 35 are attributable to smoking each year.

Overweight/Obesity
- Around a quarter (25%) of adults in Wales have obesity and in addition more than a third (36%) have a body-mass index (BMI) defined as overweight.
- More than a quarter (27%) of children in reception year across Wales have a BMI defined as overweight or obese.
- In Wales around 1 in 6 heart and circulatory disease deaths are associated with a high body-mass index.

Diet and Exercise
- An estimated 47 per cent of adults in Wales do not meet current physical activity recommendations.
- Only a quarter (25%) of adults in Wales consume the recommended five portions of fruit and veg per day.
- Nearly one in five adults (19%) drink more than the weekly guideline amount of alcohol – but no level of consumption is without risk.

Other Risk Factors
- Poor air quality has a significant impact on heart and circulatory health. Each year up to 1,100 deaths in Wales are attributable to particulate matter pollution.
- Other risk factors can significantly increase your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases, including impaired kidney function (renal failure), 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, treatment and cure. 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 Wales.

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 January 2022.

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

Other factsheets - Global, UK, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and coronavirus.

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

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<tr>
<td><strong>HEART AND CIRCULATORY DISEASES (CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE; CVD)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVD deaths (Wales) [ICD-10 codes I00-I99, C38.0, F01, G45, P29, Q20-Q28]</td>
<td>NOMIS - Office for National Statistics (ONS; 2021) - Deaths registered by cause, gender and age, 2020. <a href="http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/mortsa">www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/mortsa</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVD deaths/year (UK)</td>
<td>BHF analysis of latest UK mortality statistics: ONS/NRS/NISRA (2020 data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVD prevalence (UK)</td>
<td>BHF estimate based on latest Quality &amp; Outcomes Framework prevalence data; NHS Digital/Public Health Scotland/StatsWales/DH Northern Ireland and health surveys with CVD fieldwork; NHS Digital/Scottish Government/ StatsWales/ DH Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVD death rates (Wales)</td>
<td>BHF analysis of Office for Nation Statistics (ONS) Nomis data (2018-20); map created in Tableau (NB local data ICD-10 I00-99 only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CORONARY HEART DISEASE (CHD; ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHD deaths, #1 in Wales, vs breast cancer ~ worldwide</td>
<td>NOMIS - Office for National Statistics (ONS; 2021) - Deaths registered by cause, gender and age, 2020. <a href="http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/mortsa">www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/mortsa</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHD death rates</td>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO) and Global Burden of Disease (GBD) – 2019 global estimates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEART ATTACK (MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION, MI)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5k heart attack hospital admissions</td>
<td>Digital Health &amp; Care Wales (2021). PEDW hospital activity data; correspondence – 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>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AF)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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="http://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>Royal College of Physicians Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP) – select annual data. National clinical audit annual results portfolio <a href="https://www.strokeaudit.org/results/Clinical-audit/National-Results.aspx">https://www.strokeaudit.org/results/Clinical-audit/National-Results.aspx</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **STROKE (CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASE)** | 1.9k stroke deaths | NOMIS - Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Deaths registered by cause, gender and age, 2020.  
www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/morts |
| 7k+ stroke hospital admissions | Digital Health & Care Wales (2021). PEDW hospital activity data; correspondence – NB volumes have reduced during COVID-19 pandemic |
| 75 stroke survivors | BHF analysis of The Health Intelligence Network (THIN) prevalence data, IQVIA/IMRD 2018 |
| Linked conditions: CHD or heart attack more than twice as likely to have a stroke | http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/22/8/983 |
| Linked conditions: People with heart failure are 2-3 times more likely to have a stroke. | http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/42/10/2977 |
| Linked conditions: People with diabetes are twice as likely to have a stroke as people without diabetes | www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5298897/ |
| **VASCULAR DEMENTIA** | deaths; underestimate/diagnoses | NOMIS - Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Deaths registered by cause, gender and age, 2020.  
Alzheimer’s Society  
www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/types-dementia/diagnosis-vascular-dementia |
| dementia types | Alzheimer’s Society  
| 150k prevalence (UK) | Alzheimer’s Society  
| 350k forecast (UK) | Alzheimer’s Society  
| Linked conditions: People with a history of heart disease are at least twice as likely to develop vascular dementia | www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2924456/ |
| Linked conditions: ¾ cases in stroke survivors | www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3235558/ |
| Linked conditions: People with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to develop vascular dementia | www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2174783/ |
| **OUT-OF-HOSPITAL CARDIAC ARREST (OHCA)** | Wales 4.6% survival rate; OHCA volumes | Welsh Government (2021) Press release  
| Welsh Government (2017) Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Plan  
| Every min & CPR doubles survival | Resuscitation Council (2021) Resuscitation Guidelines 2021  
www.resus.org.uk/library/2021-resuscitation-guidelines |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>STATISTIC</th>
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</table>
| 1-2% prevalence                       | various estimates including Hoffman & Kaplan, JACC –19 per 1,000 includes “BAVs which will eventually need cardiology care”  
 (www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0735109702018867) |
| Survival comparison (pre-BHF/today)   | MacMahon BMJ (http://heart.bmj.com/content/heartjn/15/2/121.full.pdf) and British Cardiac Society  
 https://heart.bmj.com/content/88/suppl_1/11 |
| **INHERITED (GENETIC) CONDITIONS**    | BHF estimate for Wales 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 |
| 16k inherited heart conditions; 30k with faulty gene | 1:250 with familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH)  
 NB average recent prevalence is 1:250 but our preferred reference reports 1:273  
 Wald et al, NEJM 2016  
| 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 |
| UK 12 cardiac deaths/week under-35s | Cardiac Risk in the Young  
 www.c-r-y.org.uk/statistics |
| **RISK FACTORS**                      | BHF Welsh prevalence estimate based on latest UK health surveys (England and Scotland data)  
| Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)    | Global Burden of Disease 2019 estimates for Wales – Vasan et al NEJM 2001  
| Adults with HBP – numbers diagnosed by GP | Global Burden of Disease (GBD) risk burden estimates (Wales and UK) 2019 |
| Linked conditions: Around 50% of heart attacks and strokes are associated with high blood pressure | Global Burden of Disease (GBD) risk burden estimates (Wales and UK) 2019 |
 Diabetes UK  
 www.diabetes.org.uk/professionals/position-statements-reports/statistics |
<p>| 200k+ adults diagnosed with diabetes – undiagnosed | Global Burden of Disease (GBD) risk burden estimates (Wales and UK) 2019 |
| 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 | Global Burden of Disease (GBD) risk burden estimates (Wales and UK) 2019 |
| Linked conditions: In the UK, one third of adults with diabetes die from a heart or circulatory disease | Global Burden of Disease (GBD) risk burden estimates (Wales and UK) 2019 |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Risk Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cholesterol; air pollution, high BMI mortality</td>
<td>Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Wales mortality estimates 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Updated in the 2020/21 survey but with different methodology – those smoking figures are not cited here; see publication for details
BHF estimate based on survey data and ONS population estimates; NB ONS Smoking Habits in the UK 2019 has lower prevalence estimate (15.5%) |
| 5k deaths; 1k CVD deaths/year due to smoking | NHS Wales estimate/BHF estimate – NB Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Wales mortality estimates for tobacco/smoking are higher (7k/1.7k)  
~ ASH Wales  https://ash.wales/ |
Some updates in the 2020/21 survey but with different methodology – figures are not cited here; see publication for details |
[the final edition of the Welsh Health Survey was the last all-ages survey – 2015 fieldwork, published 2016] |