

What are health inequalities?

Health inequalities are the unjust differences in health experienced by different groups of people. While health in Fife is improving, long-term health inequalities persist.

Many factors impact on our health and wellbeing - and a wide range of organisations, staff and volunteers can make a difference.

Use this checklist to identify whether you are working in ways most likely to reduce health inequalities.

To find out more, go to:
www.healthyfife.net.

Key points about health inequalities

Fundamental causes

- high level policies affecting the distribution of power, wealth and resources

Social, economic and physical environments

- not everyone experiencing difficult life circumstances, such as poverty, lives in disadvantaged areas
- income, unemployment, work conditions, education and skills, housing, family and relationships and community connections are all areas where we can make a difference locally
- services and support should be targeted and delivered in ways that reach those who need them most
- stronger communities support health

Individual experience

- a complex range of factors can affect people's health and limit their choices
- people differ in the way life circumstances impact on their health and wellbeing
- early intervention and support for individuals and families at risk of poor health will help reduce health inequalities
- there are protective factors that support health and wellbeing

Health Inequalities Checklist

A checklist for partnerships, organisations and services in Fife



3 themes approach

To reduce health inequalities we need to work across 3 themes:

- changing the way organisations work
- creating healthier places and communities
- supporting healthier lives for individuals and families

Use the checklist to make sure you are working across the 3 themes in ways that will help reduce health inequalities.

Activity to reduce health inequalities does not need to cover every bullet point.

Changing the way organisations work

We are:

- looking for opportunities and taking action to reduce inequalities in life circumstances - e.g. education, employment, housing, income
- sensitive, flexible and responsive in meeting the diverse needs of individuals, groups and communities
- collaborating with communities in planning and delivering services
- tailoring services and making them easier to access, so people get the type and level of support they need
- developing staff skills and knowledge around issues that affect health and wellbeing
- working in partnership across sectors, services and organisations
- ensuring workers' health, safety and wellbeing through good quality work
- considering the impact of our policies, plans and services on health inequalities

Creating healthier places and communities

We are:

- enhancing the social and physical environments where children and adults live, work and play
- supporting people to build connections and supportive social networks
- identifying and using existing assets - skills, knowledge, resources and connections within communities
- making services and opportunities available locally
- encouraging communities to identify health and wellbeing issues and participate in developing solutions
- engaging people in decisions about what happens locally
- reducing exposure to things that harm health - e.g. unhealthy food, smoking, alcohol and drugs, traffic, violence, crime

Supporting healthier lives for individuals and families

We are:

- aware of the range of social, economic and environmental factors impacting on the health of individuals and families
- building skills and resources to enable people to improve their own health and wellbeing
- creating opportunities and reducing barriers for people to improve their health and wellbeing - e.g. access to affordable, healthy food; low-cost options to be physically active
- ensuring people have information and support to access services and opportunities that will improve their life circumstances - e.g. money advice, housing, employment support
- ensuring workers and individuals are aware of key risk factors for poor health - e.g. alcohol and drug misuse, gender based violence, mental health issues
- ensuring people at most risk have access to preventative health interventions and other appropriate support