Investment in health & wellbeing in the context of COVID-19: a Welsh perspective

Dr Sumina Azam

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Wellbeing and health equity

Welsh policy context

- Active Travel Act 2013
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015
- Environment Act 2016
- Public Health Act 2017
- Socio-economic duty
Advocating for investment in health and wellbeing
A policy window opens...........

• Investing in insulation and heating to address cold and damp housing could return savings of nearly £35m for the NHS in Wales

• Investing in housing improvements is a cost effective way of preventing ill health & reducing health inequalities
Publications and collaborative working

Making a Difference
Housing and Health: A Case for Investment
2019

Investment in health and wellbeing & COVID-19
**Return on Investment**

**Housing Quality**
- £1 spent on central heating generates 42p in health benefits
- 3.9% reduction in GP visits for respiratory conditions in Nest scheme beneficiaries (compared to 9.8% increase in the control group)
- £1 spent on insulation interventions provides a return of £1.87
- Improving heating and ventilation improves asthma in children and is cost effective
- £1 spent on improving warmth in vulnerable households results in £4 of health benefits
- 39% fewer hospital admissions for cardiorespiratory conditions and injuries in those with upgraded houses

**Unsuitable homes**
- Falls prevention results in pay back in less than 3 years
- Adaptations to reduce falls pay back in 5-6 years in NHS costs
- Home modifications result in 26% fewer injuries requiring medical treatment (caused by falls) per year
- Extra Care schemes reduce NHS health costs by £1,786 per person per year

**Homelessness**
- £1 spent on adaptations prior to hospital discharge generates £7.50 of cost savings for Health and Social Care
- Housing First models for homeless individuals with complex needs returns £3.60 for every £1 spent
- Every £1 invested in moving people out of homelessness generates £2.80 in benefits
- Preventing homelessness results in savings of £9,266 per person compared to allowing homelessness to persist for 12 months
Cold housing – causes 30% of Excess Winter Deaths

• Those living in the coldest quarter of homes have 20% greater risk of winter death compared with those living in the warmest quarter of homes

Interventions associated with improved outcomes

• Housing & energy efficiency improvements
• Financial help to keep warm
• Advice on energy and keeping warm
COVID-19
A transformed landscape........

• Reassess meaning of “home”
• Positive or negative impacts, dependent on the type & quality of housing and access to space
  o Affordability
  o Overcrowding
  o Ability to self-isolate

• HIA on housing security
• HIA on home and agile working
Thinking broadly about investment in wellbeing in the context of COVID-19

- Basic income
- Covid and mental wellbeing
- Addressing other challenges e.g. Brexit, climate change
Discussion and reflections