

**Comisiwn
Bevan
Commission**

Our Health in Our Hands

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Welcome

About this booklet

‘Our Health in Our Hands’ is a partnership between the Bevan Commission and The National Federation of Women’s Institutes– Wales.

The Bevan Commission and NFWI-Wales are engaging WI members in sharing their experiences, knowledge and ideas on health and care and giving them the tools and resources to take their health into their own hands.

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What is Prudent Healthcare?

Prudent Healthcare is about using NHS resources wisely. The Bevan Commission's ambition is to support communities and professionals from across Wales to play their part in making prudent healthcare happen.

Achieve health and wellbeing with the public, patients and professionals as equal partners through co-production.

Care for those with the greatest need first, making the most effective use of all skills and resources.

Do only what is needed—no more, no less—and do no harm.

Reduce inappropriate variation using evidence-based practices consistently and transparently.

There are many ways in which you can be part of making sure the NHS is fit for the future by looking after yourself, your family, your community and your NHS. These include:

- Cancelling appointments if you can no longer make them
- Looking after your own health and wellbeing

This booklet will provide you with more examples of prudent healthcare in practice.



The WI and Healthcare

Health and wellbeing is at the heart of the WI. Several projects and campaigns have been aimed at improving health and wellbeing, including [Carers Welcome](#) and [Link Together](#).



The WI **'Make time for Mental Health'** campaign is another example of WI members taking action for improved health, by encouraging others to talk about mental health.

The WI at 100 Report: Key Findings Relating to Health and Wellbeing...

Members celebrated the achievements of the NHS, yet worry that health and social care services won't be able to meet their needs as they age. While most believe that over their lifetime the NHS has got better at meeting the needs of women, they believe that services aimed at improving mental health - a key concern for the WI - are failing.

55% of carers

In the WI don't have confidence that **NHS and social care services** will be able to meet their needs in the future.

73%

Agree the NHS is excellent at caring for those with physical illnesses

17%

Agree the NHS is excellent at caring for those with mental illness

The WI at 100: A Century of Inspiring Women (2015)



Introducing 'Our Health in Our Hands'

Why is this needed?

Expectations of public services are higher than ever; with the progress of digital and medical technology, many people expect that solutions are available to fix health problems and that the NHS has a responsibility to deliver these.

Such expectations can often be unrealistic and sees the individual as a passive receiver of care rather than active participants in their own health and care.

We are starting a public conversation about how we can make health and care everyone's responsibility.

The vast knowledge, skills and expertise held by WI members is invaluable in helping make prudent healthcare a reality: ensuring that we create the very best health and healthcare services now and for our future generations.

'Our Health in Our Hands' has been designed for WI groups—to give information and to offer examples of the activities that WI groups can take part in to become a part of the solution.



How do I use this Booklet?

The booklet looks at **six** key themes. We encourage you to **work through** each theme, **discuss** the key issues and **write down** what actions you and others will be able to take.

Below are the sections you will see for each theme.

Background

An introduction

Conversation Starters

Use these to start discussions in your group meeting

Group activities

Suggestions of activities you can carry out together in your WI

Practical steps I can take

Actions you can take as individuals

Where can we find out more?

Resources, websites, publications and speakers. There will also be space here for you to record other places for information.

Reflections and steps taken

Your thoughts and the actions you have taken or you will take.





Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well



Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Background

In Wales, we have made great strides in improving the health and wellbeing of the population. We are living longer and fewer of us are dying from infectious diseases.

However, making small changes in your health behaviour can lead to significant increases in life expectancy and your quality of life. Many long-term conditions can be prevented by simple lifestyle changes.

Good health can decrease your risk of developing certain conditions. These include heart disease, stroke, some cancers, and injuries.

Some ideas about staying healthy

There are many ways in which you can improve and look after your health. Here are a few ideas to get you started



Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Get active

Try to be active daily: do at least 150 minutes of **moderate aerobic activity** every week (about 20 minutes each day) such as cycling or walking. You should also do **strength exercises** on 2 days a week. This could include gardening or carrying heavy shopping!

Manage your weight

Stick to a [healthy, balanced diet](#) low in [fat](#) and [sugar](#), with plenty of fruit and vegetables, combined with regular physical activity.

Eat more fibre

Eat plenty of [fibre](#) to help lower your risk of heart disease – aim for at least 30g a day. Eat [fibre from a variety of sources](#), such as wholemeal bread, bran, oats and wholegrain cereals.

Eat more fruit and vegetables

Aim to eat at least **five 80g portions** of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.

Drink less alcohol

To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level it is safest not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis. This is about 6 regular glasses of wine.

Give up smoking

If you're a smoker, quit. It's the single best thing you can do for your heart health.



Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Conversation Starters

- What do you do to keep yourself healthy?
- How many of us have had a flu jab?
- What are your favourite ways to stay active?
- How do you help others to stay healthy and well?

Add your own prompts...

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Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Reflections and steps taken

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Where can we find out more?

- Advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing : [nhs.uk/live-well/](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/)
- Fun ideas, recipes, top tips and activities to help your family stay healthy: [nhs.uk/change4life/](https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/)
- Education Programmes for Patients (EPP Cymru) provide a range of self-management health and well being courses and workshops for people living with a health conditions or for those who care for someone with a health condition.
- Go online to addtoyourlife.wales.nhs.uk/ for a health check. Discover more about your health, learn the simple steps you can take to stay fit and discover local services to help you make a positive change in your life.

Resources that we have found or seen

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Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Reflections and steps taken

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections and steps taken.



Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Practical steps I can take

There are many ways to stay healthy. Here are some ideas:

Keep up to date with any flu jabs or health checks: for example many GP surgeries offer **Well Woman** clinics.

Make a list of the actions you can take to start improving your health—and talk this through with others to see if you have some goals you can work towards together.

Our ideas of steps to be taken

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Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

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Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Group activity suggestions

- Take part in your Federation/ WI walking group or set up your own group to get more exercise—you can count your steps with a pedometer or fitness tracker.
- Set yourselves a daily or weekly step challenge and see who can get the most steps!
- Identify local activities that your group can join in on.
- Go to the British Heart Foundation website to find out how to change your life in just 10 minutes.
- Share healthy recipes.

Our ideas for group activities

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Keeping Ourselves and Others Healthy and Well

Reflections and steps taken

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing



Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Background

Mental wellbeing describes your mental state - how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life.

If you have good mental wellbeing you are able to:

- feel relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem
- feel and express a range of emotions
- build and maintain good relationships with others
- feel engaged with the world around you
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses of daily life

Make Time for Mental Health

The WI 'Make Time for Mental Health' campaign calls on members to take action to make it as acceptable to talk about mental health as it is about physical health.

The NFWI will provide WI members with information so that they can learn more about the different types of mental health problems and the steps they can take to look after their own mental wellbeing as well as support others.

The WI action pack has great ideas and conversation starters for you to get involved. Here are some further tools for you.



Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

The '**Five Ways to Wellbeing**' are a set of actions that can promote good mental health wellbeing. These are simple things you can do in your everyday life:

Connect

Connect with people around you. Building these connections will support and enrich you everyday

Be Active

Discover a physical activity that you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness

Take Notice

Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experience will help you appreciate what matters to you

Keep Learning

Learning new things will make you more confident—as well as being fun to do!

Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger. Volunteer your time. This can be incredibly rewarding and help you create connections with the people around you



Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Conversation starters

- How are you feeling today?
- What do you do to look after your wellbeing?
- Do you spend time with positive people?

Add your own prompts...

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Group Activities

- Take some time to reflect on what helps you recharge and relax.
- Consider setting aside specific times or days of the week for these activities so they become routine and are less likely to drop off at times of increased work demands or other competing priorities.
- Talk to each other in a group about what works for you.
- Try out mindfulness as a group—search online for a guided session
- Arrange for your WI to take a course in mental health first aid

Our ideas for group activities

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Reflections and steps taken

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Practical steps I can take—some suggestions

- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Visit a new place for lunch
- Sign up for a new class
- Spend time doing something you enjoy
- Set up a book club

Our ideas of steps to be taken

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Where can we find out more?

- Mind is a charity which provides advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem:
www.mind.org.uk
- Five Ways to Wellbeing: Fivewaystowellbeing.org

Resources that we have found or seen..

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Looking after our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Reflections and steps taken

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Using our NHS Services Prudently



Using our NHS Services Prudently

Background

When you are unwell, there are many options available to you—you don't always need to see a GP or go to A&E.

Choose Well helps you to decide the best action to take. It helps you decide if you need medical attention when you get sick.

It explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing Well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you don't know which option to choose, you can contact NHS Direct Wales on **0845 46 47**

Where can we find out more?

- Decide what service is best for you: choosewellwales.org.uk
- For Local Services: NHS Direct Wales nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk
- My Medicines, My Health: mymedicinesmyhealth.org.uk/

Resources that we have found or seen..

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Using our NHS Services Prudently

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Using our NHS Services Prudently

Conversation starters

- Can you describe the different services that are available to you when you are unwell?
- How do you look after yourself and your family when you are unwell?
- Where do we normally go for help with our health concerns?
- Who should we call in an emergency? What is an emergency?
- What would you do in an emergency?
- How can we support each other as part of the local community?
- Are there other ways we can look after ourselves when we are unwell?

Add your own prompts...

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Using our NHS Services Prudently

Reflections and steps taken

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing reflections and steps taken.



Using our NHS Services Prudently

Group activities

- Find out about the NHS services local to you—perhaps there is a pharmacy nearby where you could get advice on your health concern? Or a walk-in Physiotherapy clinic?
- Go to mymedicinesmyhealth.org.uk or speak to your pharmacist to find out more about what your local pharmacy can offer and examples of the range of conditions that can be treated by your pharmacist.

Our ideas for group activities

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Using our NHS Services Prudently

Practical steps I can take

- Check that your cupboards are well-stocked with treatments you can give yourself at home such as paracetamol, anti-diarrhoea medicine, indigestion remedies and a basic first aid kit.
- Arrange for your WI group to take part in a first aid course

Our ideas of steps to be taken

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Using our NHS Services Prudently

Reflections and steps taken

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Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together



Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

Background

When you have a concern about your health, you may be offered **tests** and **treatments**. Many tests will find out the cause of problems and suggest a plan of treatment. Many treatments can make life better.

However, tests and treatments may sometimes do more harm than good – which can lead to uncertainty and worry or side effects.

Although healthcare professionals (or clinicians) are experts in diagnosis and treatments, **patients are experts in their own body**, and in what is important to them.

Making Choices Together will help you have...

- Better conversations with your clinicians
- Clearer information to help you make decisions
- Less tests and treatments which might not benefit you



Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

- Conversations with your doctor, nurse or therapist are completely confidential so you can tell them how, and what you are feeling.
- Be honest about your concerns and what matters to you, and they will be better able to help you.
- Tell the clinician what you think the problem may be and what you hope they can do for you.
- You may be worried that your clinician won't like you asking questions, while some may feel surprised, they will be happy that you're taking an interest in your care and you can then help each other to talk openly.
- Clinics are busy and sometimes there won't be time for long conversations. You may need to go back again before making a final decision.

Here are the **four key questions** to ask

- **What are my options?**
- **What are the benefits and harms (of each option)?**
- **Do I really need this?**
- **What can I do to help myself?**

You can ask these questions to any healthcare professional— a Nurse, Doctor, Physiotherapist, Pharmacist or anyone discussing tests, treatments or procedures with you.



Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

Conversation starters

- Have you ever asked for more information about your treatment? Including the risks and benefits and alternative options.
- How do you feel asking more questions about your treatment or tests?
- How would you feel challenging your GP?

Add your own prompts

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Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

Group activities

- Discuss some of the ways in which you can become more involved in the decisions about your treatment or care
- Share your tips and ideas about getting the most from each visit you make to the GP, hospital or clinic. Do you take a notepad with you to help remember what was said? Perhaps you take someone with you? Or do you write down what you would like to ask before you go in to your appointment?

Our ideas for group activities

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Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

Practical steps I can take

- Prepare: write down the **four key questions** ready for the next time you see a healthcare professional at a clinic or hospital.
- Use the NHS Choices website to find out more about your health condition.

Our ideas of steps to be taken

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Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

Reflections and steps taken

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Our Healthcare: Making Choices Together

Where can we find out more?

- Go to makingchoicestogether.wales.nhs.uk to read more. You can sign up to their mailing list or contact them directly to invite a speaker to your WI group. This could be a local nurse, GP, pharmacist or other professional.

Resources that we have found or seen..

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Caring for our community



Caring for our community

Background

- The Bevan Commission believes that good health is everyone's responsibility.
- Achieving better health for the whole population can not be achieved as individual can achieve this alone. We need everyone in a community to play a role. Schools, businesses, local groups and others can work together to support a healthier community.

Our ideas

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Caring for our community

Conversation starters

- How can we play a more proactive role in our local health and care services?
- How do we bring a community together to improve their health?
- How could we better support our community to look after each other?
- How do you think a health cooperative might work?

Our ideas

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Caring for our community

Reflections and steps taken

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Caring for our community

Group activities

- Go to solvacare.co.uk to discover how the local community is coming together to offer social care support to residents.
- Think about what opportunities there are for you to use your skills and experience to support yourself, your family and your friends.
- Find out the ways in which you may be able to get involved in your local health board—there are many forums and groups looking for people to get involved.

Our ideas

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Caring for our community

Practical steps I can take

- Set up a group to discuss health and care services in your area.
- Get together with like-minded people to find a way in which you can get involved in your community

Our ideas

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Caring for our community

Reflections and steps taken

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My Commitments

The story doesn't end here...

We hope that you have enjoyed taking part in the activities in this booklet—and that you have learned some things along the way! On these pages, we encourage you to write down what you have learned and what you commit to doing in the future.

I have learned...

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I commit to...

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We commit to...

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Get in touch

The Bevan Commission is an international community of like-minded people who are committed to improving health and care. A wide range of knowledge and experience is welcomed and shared and there are no limits on innovative ways of working. The Bevan Commission's role is to provide advice more widely, making its expertise and advisory services accessible both within the United Kingdom and worldwide.

The Bevan Commission achieves this through extensive research and report publications to help in its ambitions of building effective healthcare services that meet the needs of Wales.

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