

# Denbighshire Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy

## Executive Summary—Needs Assessment June 2007

### Foreword

Producing a report is the start of a journey. This is especially true when the report concerns vital statistics about the health and well being of Denbighshire citizens of all ages. We have known for a long time that patterns of health and illness are closely linked with such influences as:

- where and how we are educated;
- how healthy we are as children;
- how we live our lives;
- the kinds of houses we live in;
- the incomes we have;
- our race and identity;
- the risks and stresses we face;
- our roles as boys, girls, men and women;
- our supports, especially from families and friends; and
- where we are in the lifecycle.

A report about the needs of a population is not a one-off. It is ongoing because the communities that make up a population change over time – we get older, some of us become disabled, some leave the area and some move in - and because of this, our fact-finding has to be ongoing. Such information tells a story about major influences on the lives of Denbighshire citizens and it is a story we cannot ignore.

This report belongs to everyone in Denbighshire because it describes what we know about Denbighshire people in a way that is understandable. We want it to have an impact. This means that we have to publicise the main findings, including the unsettling findings, and circulate these as widely as possible. As importantly, we have to decide on the actions to be taken by all of us, now and over time. Please tell us what you think about the report – become our co-writers and play a part in shaping our future.

**Cllr Pauline Dobb, Denbighshire County Council**  
**Meirion Hughes, Denbighshire Local Health Board**

This is a report about the lives of people in Denbighshire. It tells you about where we live and how healthy we are. It tells you about what has been done and what is being done to improve our lives whilst we are young and as we get older and as the communities we live in change. This report will help us to decide how to plan for better futures for everyone in Denbighshire



The Needs Assessment is given shape by the diagram by Whitehead and Dahlgren (1991). It begins by looking at Denbighshire’s environment which affects our health and well-being. It goes on to consider housing, the roads and injuries on the roads; employment and education; the communities we are part of; how we chose to live our lives; and what our age, gender and genetic make-up mean for our health and well-being. It will be seen that the diagram illustrates the influences on our health and well being. It shows that it is helpful to think of these influences as layered, or ‘nested’ like the skins of an onion, with one on top of the other.

## Setting the Scene

The Welsh Assembly Government requires Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare a Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy involving local people. The Denbighshire Health, Social Care and Well-Being Partnership (a group of people from health, social care and the voluntary services in Denbighshire) produced the first one in 2005.

Work on the second strategy began in August 2006. The main task was to produce this - a Needs Assessment that pulls together everything that is known about the health, social care and well-being needs of Denbighshire citizens. Afterwards, the main task of the Health, Social Care and Well-Being Partnership will be to share what they have learned and talk to Denbighshire citizens about what the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy should highlight, including some of the priorities identified in 2005. This will compliment the Community Strategy, the Children and Young People's Partnership Single Plan, a Substance Misuse Strategy and a Local Development Plan.

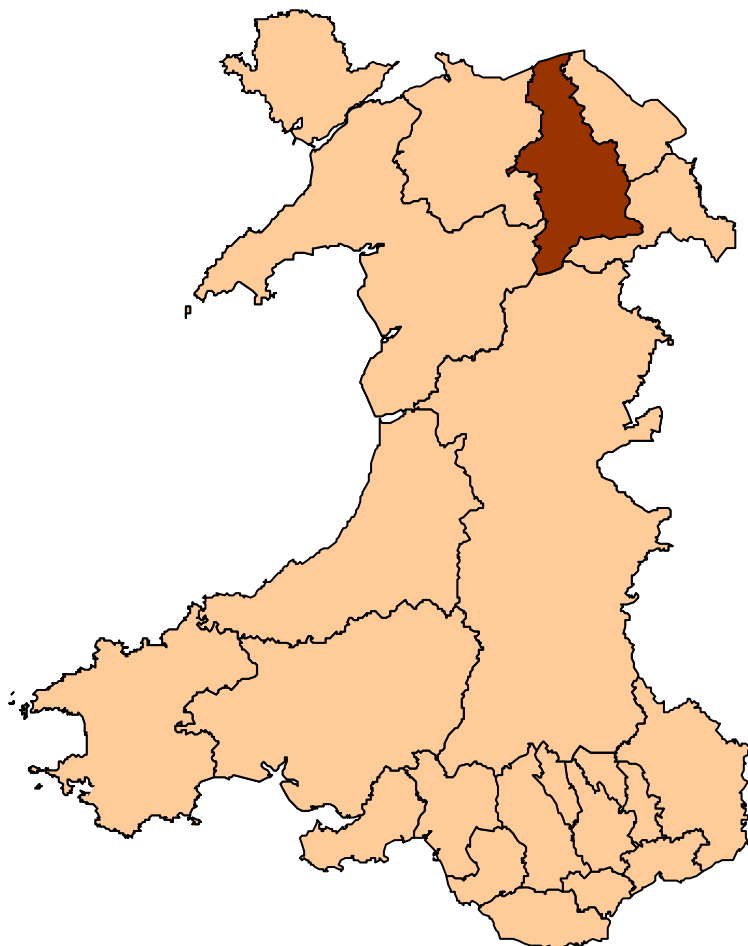
The Needs Assessment draws from information given by people who took the time to share their experiences and research, as well as from information that is collected when we organise or receive services. Its aim is to help us to move forward and take action.

The Needs Assessment tells you about where we live and how healthy we are. It tells you about what has been done and what is being done to improve our lives whilst we are young and as we get older and as the communities we live in change. It will help us to decide how to plan for better futures for everyone in Denbighshire.

Such information is important as it helps us to decide where we should put our energies and resources so that we can take positive action.

The Needs Assessment that we put together in 2003 told us that there are a lot of older people in the County; that families moving into Denbighshire are increasing the numbers of children; that people on low incomes tend to have poor health; that the people living in Rhyl West may have difficult lives; and that a lot of health problems in the County are the result of injuries.

**The health and well being of children, young people, care givers of all ages, older people, people with disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health problems, people with learning disabilities, homeless people, people who misuse drugs and alcohol were important in 2003 and they still are in 2007.**



# The Global Ecosystem and the Natural Environment

The climate and natural environment affect our health and well being. Denbighshire is a rural County with a coastline and mountains and so we have lots of visitors and tourists who need places to stay and eat and want things to do.

How they get around has an impact on our environment. The quality of our air, water and land can affect our health as well as the health of children not yet born. The air quality in Denbighshire is adequate and we check this each year. We are also inspecting land to check that this is not polluted.

A series of studies are making sure that we make the most of our County. We are looking to increase the waste collected for recycling and composting, and we are working to make sure that our historical heritage may be enjoyed by all. Education plays a key part in learning about the environment and the ways it impacts on our health and well being.

Denbighshire schools are becoming more outward-looking and through links with schools throughout the globe are learning about world poverty and what makes a safer and better world for everyone.

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Spring</b><br>Infectious diseases | <b>Summer</b><br>Skin cancer<br>Injuries  |
| <b>Autumn</b><br>Trips and falls     | <b>Winter</b><br>Trips and falls<br>Hypothermia<br>Influenza<br>Emergency admission to hospital<br>Respiratory problems |



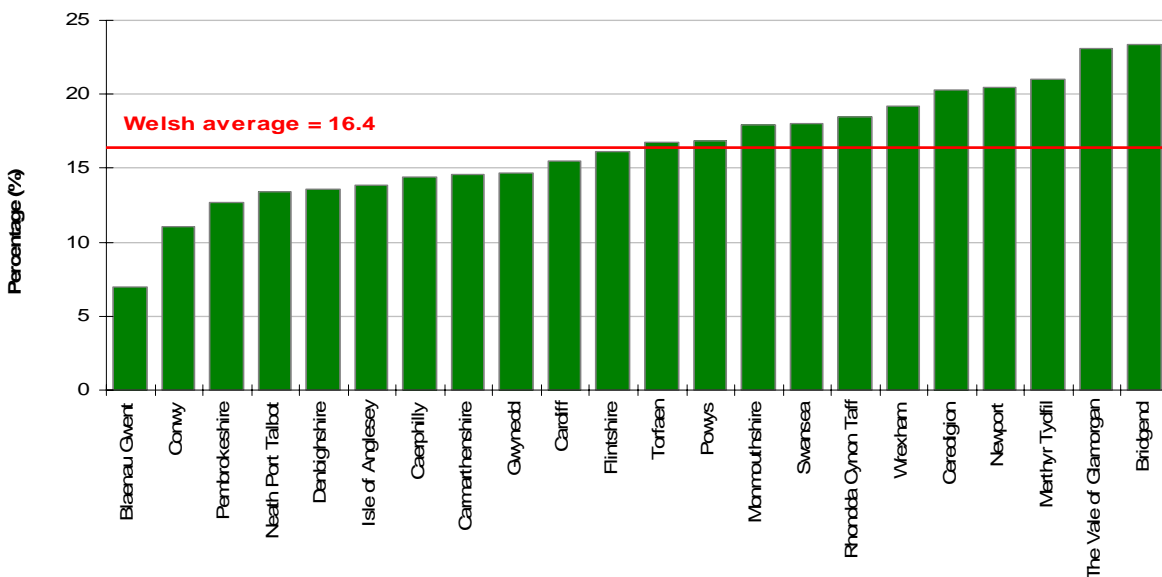
As the weather results in such health dangers as skin cancer in the summer and 'flu in the winter, we have campaigns about seasonal health awareness.

Extreme cold as well as extreme heat can seriously damage our health. More people go into hospital in winter than in the rest of the year.

The average number of winter deaths in Denbighshire is 372. Over 70% of Denbighshire's citizens over 65 years have injections so that they do not get winter 'flu. More people go into hospital in winter than in the rest of the year. The average number of winter deaths in Denbighshire is 372.

**Excess winter deaths (EWD) index for persons aged 65+ by Local Health Board: August 2001 - July 2004**

Source: Annual District Death Extract (ADDE), ONS





## The Built Environment

There is not enough affordable housing in Denbighshire; there are particular difficulties in rural parts of the County; and the private, rented sector is in a poor condition.

Rural housing markets face significant pressures due to: below average earnings; wealthy incomers; above average building construction costs; and local resistance to the development of affordable housing. Such pressures have major implications for the sustainability of communities, local services, the Welsh language and culture.

Denbighshire's population is heavily reliant upon **cars and other vehicles** to travel to and from work and to access basic services and facilities. This is especially so in the more isolated communities in the south of the county.

Child pedestrian injuries in the most deprived areas occurred at 2.5 times the rate in the least deprived, highlighting and confirming the link between social deprivation and pedestrian injuries.

Similarly, pedestrian injuries for older people in the most deprived fifth in Wales occurred at 2.7 times the rate in the least deprived fifth.

Living longer has kept implications for the houses we live in as well as the health and social care services that help us to be as independent as possible.

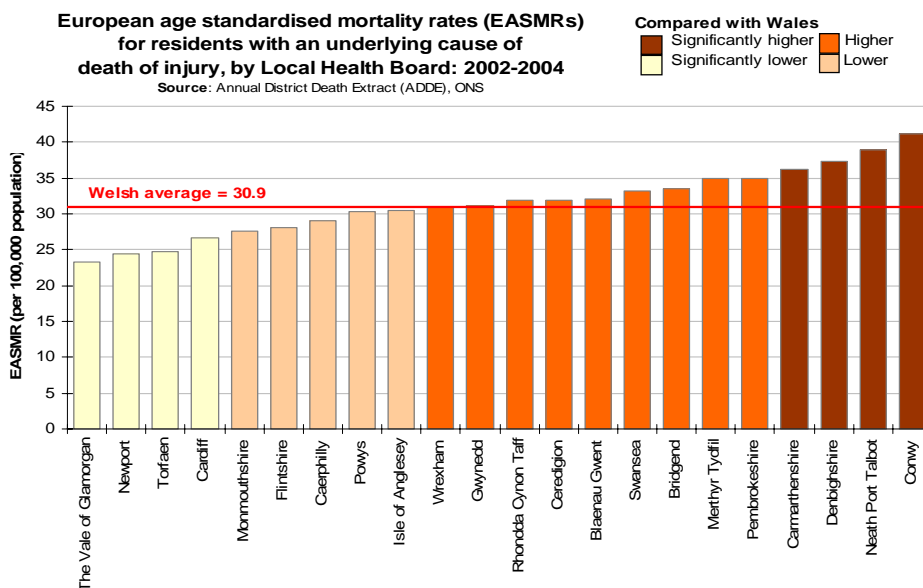
A lot of older people are owner occupiers living in older properties. Such properties are most likely to be in disrepair. We know that older owners are unlikely to tolerate the disruption of housing improvements and repairs.

The reduction in funding for housing renewal has impacted on older owner occupiers, many of whom are living on fixed low incomes. It is increasingly likely that home owners will be expected to fund their own improvements and repairs from housing equity.

A little under a quarter of around 40,000 households have no access to a car (23.7%); 45.7% have one car or van; and a further 24.3% have two cars or more.

Homelessness is an extreme form of the housing problem we face. Most of Denbighshire's population live in Rhyl and Prestatyn. The areas of high deprivation have high crime rates.

There are around 40,000 households in the County. We are improving our housing stock; we have an Affordable Housing Policy; and since 2004, planning permission has been given for 247 new homes. Household Fire Safety Checks have resulted in fewer house fires and in more home fire safety inspections – resulting in valued and life-saving gains for the County.



## The Built Environment

Public transport is patchy with fewer than a quarter of Denbighshire households having access to a car. Even so, Denbighshire has more road accidents and collision casualties than the Wales average; and the Communities First areas of Rhyl West and Rhyl South West are among the localities experiencing the highest numbers of death from injuries. Regional Transport Planning is focusing on routes into the County as well as within Denbighshire. There is little accessible transport for people with mobility problems.

### A Spotlight on Rhyl

Rhyl is the largest town in Denbighshire and the second largest in North Wales. West Rhyl and Rhyl South West have been designated as Communities First areas by the Welsh Assembly Government (in order to combat social exclusion and disadvantage in these areas).

A lot of properties are subdivided containing many single room bed-sits. In hand with boarded up shops and houses, the highly visible discarded rubbish in the back lanes of these houses speak of neglect and decay.

**How safe we feel in our neighbourhoods is not always linked to the incidence of crime. For most of us, it is our daily experience of anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods, streets and estates, or our perception of what is happening locally that shapes our view.**

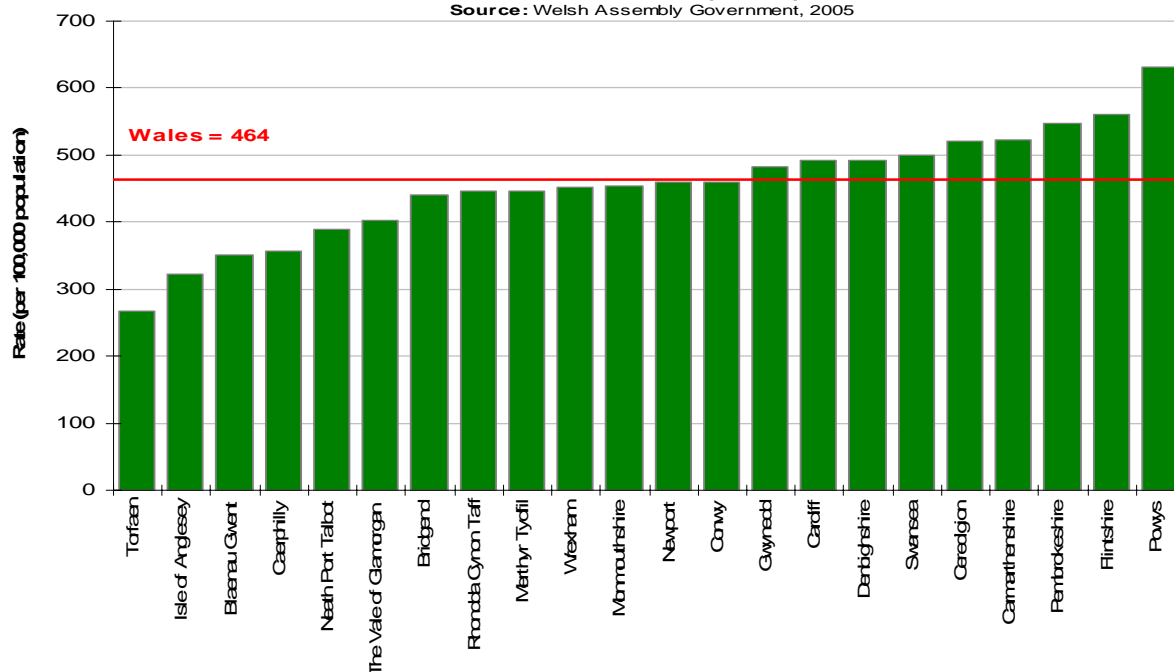


**Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour is key to making our neighbourhoods better places to live. There are currently around 21 incidents of recorded crime per 1,000 people in Denbighshire (which is similar to the rest of Wales).**

The West Rhyl Regeneration Strategy is a designated 'major tourism development area' with a view to bringing about overall improvement in the tourism appeal and attraction of the area.

The Communities First Programme recognises that community development and anti-poverty are linked.

**Rate per 100,000 population of road traffic collision casualties by Local Health Boards (LHBs) : 2004**  
Source: Welsh Assembly Government, 2005



## Activities and Local Economy

Trends in the labour market have major implications for the physical and social conditions in which we live. We know that the creation of jobs results not just in new hope, but also in the improved health and well being of those living in poverty, to those who are homeless and to those requiring Income Support. A slightly lower than average proportion of Denbighshire's areas fall in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales and the majority of Denbighshire's areas are less deprived than the Wales average.

The size of Denbighshire's population rose by over 6% between 1993 and 2003, compared with a rise of nearly 2% in Wales and, compared to the population of Wales, the age profile of Denbighshire is older: 20% are of retirement age.

A higher percentage of Denbighshire's working age population is economically active - 79% compared to 75% in Wales. The median annual pay for full-time workers is just over £19,000 (which is less than the equivalent figure in Wales). Currently, the unemployment rate for the County is low compared with levels experienced over the last 25 years. However there are electoral wards where the rates of unemployment and economic inactivity are significantly higher than the UK average.

- In 2006 the average household income in the UK was £32,342
- In Denbighshire the average household income is £28,124
- Within Denbighshire, Llanarmon Yn Ial/Llandegla electoral division has the highest average household income at £37,900 and Rhyl West has the lowest at £17,200.
- Average household income range from £40,400 in Llanferres to £21,400 in Bodelwyddan
- There are localities where income levels are low e.g. Rhyl South West 1 and Rhyl West 1 (£15,000) along with localities where income levels are high e.g. Prestatyn East 2 (£38,300) and Llanarmon Yn Ial/Llandegla (£37,900)

**Not having a job can mean being poor. The risk of unemployment varies with age, previous employment and gender. The chances of unskilled workers being unemployed for long periods of time are greater than for any other group. It is worrying that**

**Denbighshire has the worst reading skills in Wales and that school leavers are leaving school without the qualifications they will need to get good, secure jobs.**

**Sickness, boredom, sleeplessness and loss of self confidence are all linked with long periods of unemployment. 12% of jobs in the County are tourism related. Over time, it is likely that the service sectors of food preparation, cleaning, health and social care will grow. There are few jobs for people who do not have skills.**



## Communities

This Needs Assessment considers what is known about the lives of family care givers, people with learning disabilities, people with physical and sensory impairments, people with mental health problems, older people, and lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people as it confirms their roles in our communities and the parts they, their partners and families play in supporting each other. Also, it recognises the life-long nature of many people's support needs and our changing interdependencies over time. While these labels suggest clear categories, our sense of identity comes from our sense of belonging.

## Communities cont....

Denbighshire is made up of lots of communities, many of which overlap e.g. a neighbourhood includes people of all ages, some of whom may have moved to the area, others may have remained there since birth; it includes children with special needs; people who are carer givers (some of whom may have support needs themselves); people who attend the same place of worship; people who use the same specialist services; and people whose sexual orientation may be unknown locally.

Around 58% of Denbighshire's residents were born in Wales (that is fewer than the 75% of all Welsh residents born in Wales). In Denbighshire, over a quarter of those aged three years or more can speak Welsh (compared to around a fifth in Wales). The non white ethnic group makes up 1% of the population; and between 2005-2006, 500 National Insurance Number Allocations were made to foreign nationals living in Denbighshire, making up 3% of the total allocations for Wales.

The numbers of people from the Czech Republic and from Poland are higher in the county's electoral information than the numbers recorded in the 2001 census. The electoral information shows 128 people with Polish nationality and 18 from the Czech Republic living in Denbighshire (compared with 36 and 7 respectively recorded by the census). This suggests that the number of people living in Denbighshire from both of these countries has increased significantly.

The aim of lots of services is to help people to remain in their own homes, in their communities. However, we are learning that simple maintenance is not enough. We have to give much more thought to how the services we offer are experienced and whether or not they play a part in nurturing people's sense of identity, purpose and belonging. This includes people's experience of the NHS in Wales as there is disquieting evidence of health inequalities.

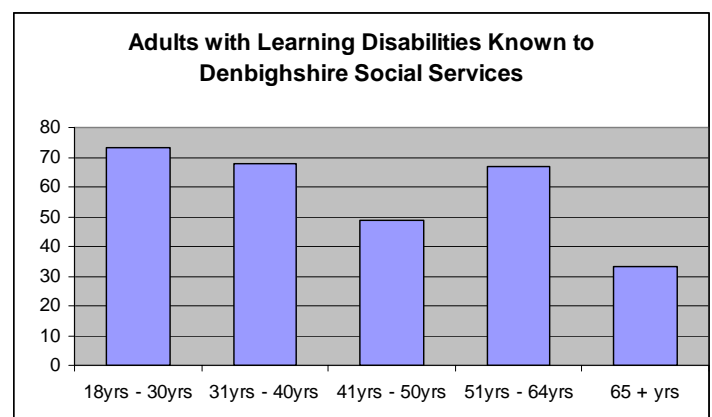


**We know that people with extensive networks are more likely to be 'housed, healthy, hired and happy' – there are significant health benefits for people who feel supported, loved, valued and part of a network.**

Also, there is evidence that the number of people with learning disabilities in adult services is increasing as a result of:

- the increasing numbers of infants and children with learning disabilities
- more children with complex needs surviving into adulthood
- the numbers of adults with learning disabilities living with elderly parents who cannot continue their care-giving roles indefinitely
- people with learning disabilities living longer

It is estimated that the numbers of people with learning disabilities will increase by **11%** for adults under 65 and **36%** for adults aged over 65.



## Lifestyles

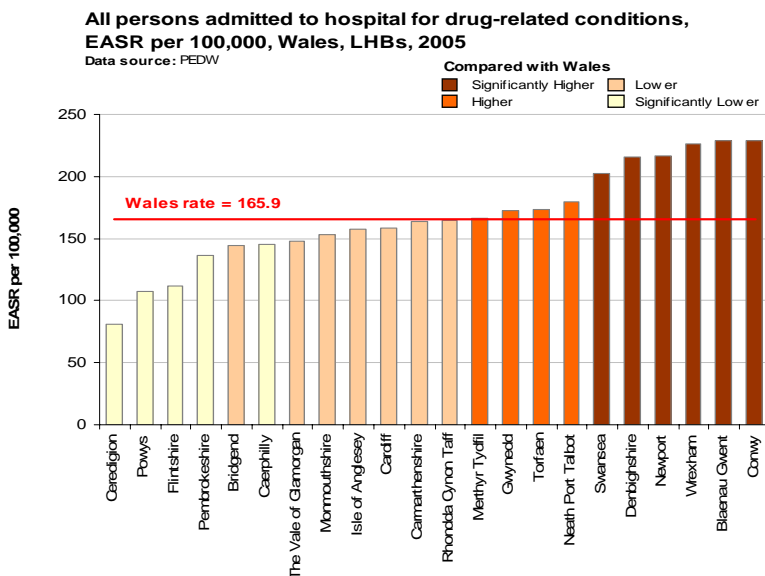
There are lots of benefits from being active: it can make us feel good about our bodies; we are more alert mentally; and as we get older it can help to prevent falls.

While all Denbighshire citizens could benefit from being more active, it is striking that physical inactivity is more common among people in the most deprived parts of the County. This is true for smoking as well. Even though 1 in 5 deaths is caused by smoking, over a quarter of adults in Denbighshire say they smoke and smoking is especially high in the deprived localities.

The growing numbers of overweight children, young people and adults is worrying. Half of the Denbighshire population is overweight because we eat too much and do not exercise enough.

There are increases in the numbers of new cases of HIV being diagnosed and increases in the numbers of people with Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Older people however are vulnerable to malnutrition. While drinking alcohol is recognised as a risk to health, a third of Denbighshire citizens report drinking more than the recommended guidelines. The **problem use of alcohol and /or illicit or prescription drugs** carries many serious health risks. It will be recalled that it is very difficult to do a 'head count' of the people who misuse drugs and alcohol as people who have **substance misuse** problems are not always willing or able to provide accurate information about their circumstances.



## People

The Needs Assessment looks at the lives of people in Denbighshire from birth to death. It includes information about the age related changes which are expected as well as conditions which have the potential to be prevented. Over the life course lots of influences come into play which affect the ways in which we age, most importantly, our genes and our lifestyles.



The proportion of low birth weight babies in Denbighshire LHB is seen to have fluctuated between 1996 – 2005 with an overall upward trend. These babies have a greater risk of developing problems during and after birth as well as having a greater risk of chronic disease when they become adults. Immunisations for babies matter and the uptake rates in Denbighshire are improving.

Oral health is less good with too many children having decayed, missing or filled teeth. Similarly, not enough children and young people in the County are eating fruit every day. These numbers get lower as they get older. It is troubling that the age at which young people experiment with alcohol and drugs is getting lower; and also, that the conception rate among teenagers is higher than in England.

Some of the long term illnesses affecting us include respiratory diseases, such as asthma; circulatory diseases; heart diseases; strokes; different kinds of cancer; diabetes; arthritis and back pain. A lot of older people in Denbighshire go into hospital because they have these conditions. Last year, there were known to be 771 people with dementia in the County. The number of people with dementia is likely to increase over time. Death rates in Denbighshire are lower than the Wales average.

**The implications of this Needs Assessment are that health and social care services have to decide what to do and think carefully about the kinds of services we want throughout the life course.**