

Edwin Chadwick (1800-1890)

He was born in Manchester and became a civil servant. In 1838, after reading a report into the industrial towns he decided to carry out his own research. In 1842 he published his 'Report into the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain'. This proved that life expectancy was much lower in towns than in the countryside. Chadwick's 'Report' challenged the 'laissez-faire' attitude of the time. Chadwick argued that it was possible for the government to improve people's lives by bringing about reform. He was not a 'do-gooder', as some people thought he believed that a healthier population would be able to work harder and would cost less to support.

Chadwick, like many people, believed that disease was caused by air pollution. His ideas on cleaning up towns were a step in the right direction but his conclusions were too general and did not address the specific causes of disease. However, he was the first major figure in public health and his work helped to make later reforms possible.

What medical changes did he bring about?

In 1848, partly through pressure from Chadwick and partly through fear of cholera, Parliament passed the first British Public Health Act, which established central and local Boards of Health. However, the Act only had a limited effect, as it did not force towns to take action so in 1854 the Board of Health was abolished.

John Snow (1813 - 1854)

In the early 19th century it was assumed that cholera was airborne, but Snow was sure this wasn't right. As a doctor he

attended many patients without getting Cholera himself. Second, he argued that the infection always seemed to affect the gut before the patient felt generally ill, and this suggested that it was digested by the victim. He published *The Mode of Communication of Cholera* in 1849 - but many refused to abandon the 'miasma' (bad air) theory.

Towards the end of August 1854, he got the chance to prove his ideas in the most dramatic circumstances. Studying a particular pump in Broad Street Snow found that of the 89 who died by 2nd September, only ten lived closer to any other pump, and in five of those cases he discovered that the dead person actually preferred the water from the Broad Street pump, and sent for it specially. The handle was removed from the pump the next day - and the number of cases immediately started to diminish.

Investigation of the Broad Street pump revealed what had probably been going on. The well below the pump was about 28 feet deep. At 22 feet down, within yards of the well, there was a sewer. Snow was now certain that the well had been contaminated with infected sewage - either from the sewer or the many nearby cesspits

What is important about John Snow is his recognition of the power of statistics. He didn't know what the organism was that caused Cholera, so instead he gathered what might have been thought of as 'anecdotal' evidence - stories. But the cumulative effect of his meticulously gathered data was devastating - and was the beginning of the end for Cholera in Britain.

Octavia Hill

Octavia Hill was born in Wisbech in 1838 into a family active in social work. Earning her living through teaching, Octavia was appalled at the conditions in which most of her pupils lived. Borrowing money, she bought some slum properties and began to manage them in a sympathetic way.

The success of the scheme led to its extension and Octavia became a pioneer of housing reform. Her interest in protecting open space for the enjoyment of all led her to be one of the three founders of the National Trust. Strongly motivated by her faith, she never allowed her growing fame to undermine her personal humility. She continued her work until her death on this day in 1912.

GCSE History: Medicine - Public Health after 1800 Revision

Seebohm Rowntree (1871-1954)

Rowntree came from a family of wealthy confectionary makers and used much of his money to fund investigations into social conditions. His writings include *Poverty, A Study of Town Life* (1900), a study of York. The three Rowntree Trusts, which were founded by his father Joseph Rowntree in 1904, still fund research into housing, social care, and social policy, support projects relating to social justice, and give grants to pressure groups working in these areas.

Charles Booth

Charles Booth was born in Liverpool on the 30th of March 1840. He organised an inquiry into poverty in London which lasted from 1886 until 1903, resulting in the publication of three editions of a survey, "Life and Labour of the People in London" running to seventeen volumes. The work would absorb both Charles and Mary Booth and employ a team of social investigators.

In 1893 Booth joined the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor. In 1904 Booth was made a Privy Councillor and in 1907 he served on the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. In 1908, many years after he first began writing and speaking about the need for state pensions to help poverty amongst the elderly. When the Liberal government passed the Old Age Pensions Act in 1908 he was recognised by many as one of the originators of the pension. On 23 November 1916 he died following a stroke.

David Lloyd George (1863-1945)

Lloyd George was born in North Wales and trained as a lawyer. He became a Liberal MP and an important minister in the government from 1906 to 1916. He was Prime Minister from 1916 to 1922.

In 1899 Britain went to war with the Boers in South Africa. This should have been a short and relatively easy war for Britain, but instead it dragged on for nearly three years. Altogether 500,000 British soldiers served in the war and there was a massive recruiting drive to persuade men to volunteer. For the first time these volunteers had to undergo a medical examination. Many were rejected due to being medically unfit. After the war the results of the medical tests were released. It was shown that, four out of every ten volunteers had been refused for medical reasons. In some inner city areas, the figure was nine out of ten. This was just one of the reasons which led David Lloyd George to put forward a series of welfare reforms in the years from 1906 to 1914.

What did he achieve?

Lloyd George was convinced that the government needed to intervene to try to improve the health and livelihood of people in Britain. In 1906 the government began medical inspections in schools and allowed poor children to be given free school meals. When he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1908, Lloyd George introduced Old Age Pensions. From 1908, people over 70, earning less than £26 a year, received a pension of 25p a week for a single person and 37p for a married couple. Many could now afford to retire and lived longer, staying in better health. Before 1908, old people, especially among the poor, could not afford to retire. They often died in workhouses because they could not pay for themselves once they became ill or too old to work. In 1911 Lloyd George introduced a National Insurance Scheme. Workers and their employers made weekly contributions to a central government fund. The government also contributed. In return they received sickness benefit and free medical attention from a doctor. However, the scheme usually did not cover women and children, the old, the mentally sick or chronically ill.

What was his legacy?

Lloyd George did much to progress the notion of a Welfare State. He established the principle that the government should help those most in need in society. Lloyd George's reforms paved the way for the establishment of the modern Welfare State by the Labour government after 1945.

The Welfare State

What's the idea?

the Welfare State was the result of the Beveridge Report in 1942, which identified five 'Giant Evils' in society: squalor, ignorance, want, idleness and disease.

A series of changes was put in place to deal with these 'Giant Evils' after the Second World War.

Tell me more

the changes meant that the government recognised the responsibility to care for the people of Britain 'from the cradle to the grave' (some prefer 'from the womb to the tomb!'). the Welfare State was a commitment to health, education, employment and social security.

What next?

the classic Welfare State period lasted from approximately 1945 to the 1970s, although many features of it remain today. the British Welfare State is unique in that everyone has free access to a family doctor and most people get free medical prescriptions and treatment.

Since the 1980s the government has begun to reduce some provision: for example, free eye tests for all have now been stopped and prescription charges for drugs have constantly risen since they were first introduced in 1951.

Providing a Welfare State is still a basic principle of government policy in Britain today.

William Beveridge (1879-1963)

What brought him to prominence?

During the Liberal government of 1906 to 1914 Beveridge was asked to advise David Lloyd George on Old Age Pensions and National Insurance. the government of the period began to take action to combat poverty. When, in 1941, the government ordered a report into the ways that Britain should be rebuilt after the Second World War, Beveridge was an obvious choice to take charge. He published his report in 1942 and recommended that the government should find ways of fighting the five 'Giant Evils' of

- Want,
- Disease,
- Ignorance,
- Squalor and
- Idleness.

This led to the setting up of a Welfare State.

Why WW2 led to the NHS and Welfare State

1. The raising of mass armies made powerful people take notice of the health problems of the poor. Also the evacuation of children during the Second World War increased awareness in rural middle England of how disadvantaged many people were.
2. After both world wars people had looked for improvements in society - "a land fit for heroes". Such feelings led to the 1945 victory for the Labour Party. They campaigned with the slogan "Cheer for Churchill, Vote for Labour" - calling for change whilst acknowledging the debt Britain owed to the wartime leadership of Churchill. He was hoping to be re-elected as Conservative prime minister.
3. Air raids, especially the Blitz of 1940, prompted the government to set up the Emergency Medical Service. This provided a centralised control of medical services and offered free treatment to air raid casualties. It proved successful under great pressure.

Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960)

What did he do?

Bevan was born in Tredegar in Wales, the son of a miner. He was familiar with the problems of poverty and disease. When Labour came to power in 1945 after the Second World War, Bevan was responsible for establishing the National Health Service. This was set up on 5th July 1948, the 'Appointed Day', when the government took over responsibility for all medical services so that they were free for anybody who needed help.

Was Bevan's idea popular?

At first there was a great deal of opposition to the idea of the National Health Service. 88% of doctors were opposed to the idea of a National Health Service, frightened that they would lose their independence and be forced to take orders from the government. Bevan was able to win them round by allaying their fears and by listening to their opinions.

What happened next?

Hospital consultants were promised a salary and allowed to treat private patients in National Health Service hospitals. This allowed the consultants to keep a separate private income. By July 1948 90% of doctors had joined the new National Health Service. The NHS took over responsibility for the 1,143 voluntary hospitals and 1545 municipal hospitals in Britain, previously run by Local Authorities and voluntary bodies. Family doctors were provided throughout the country.

In 1951 Bevan resigned from the government. In protest against the introduction of charges for dental care. Already one of the problems facing the National Health Service had emerged. How could the government find the money to pay for it?

Why WW2 led to the NHS and Welfare State

4. The world wars broke down social distinctions and brought people together whose lives had been very separate. The raising of mass armies made powerful people take notice of the health problems of the poor. Also the evacuation of children during the Second World War increased awareness in rural middle England of how disadvantaged many people were.
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The NHS has had Problems from the start

1. Right from the start the demand for NHS services was greater than expected. In 1950 spending was about £350 million - twice the expected. By 1960 it was £726 million.
2. Over the years since the War things have got more difficult. Medical research has produced more and more complex machines and more expensive drugs. Success in the form of longer life expectancies has meant more need for care of the elderly.
3. NHS problems over health service "rationing" can be best appreciated by considering a hypothetical example. Imagine a treatment were invented tomorrow which, when carried out on babies, would make them immune to all forms of cancer. Great! Unfortunately it costs £2 million per child. What do you do? Ban it entirely, make it available only for the very rich, make it the prize in the National Lottery or bankrupt the country?
4. Successive governments have reduced how much of the NHS is free - charges have been reintroduced for things like prescriptions and dental checkups. Aneurin Bevan resigned over prescription charges. Long waiting lists and doubts about the quality of treatment have led many to take out private health insurance, or pay for treatment outside the NHS.