



## Tackling the wider social determinants of health and health inequalities: evidence from systematic reviews

- Synthesising evidence from existing studies and systematic reviews is essential if effective interventions to improve population health and reduce health inequalities are to be identified.
- We know already that there are few evaluations of “wider public health” interventions, such as policies which affect the social determinants of health and health inequalities.
- There is some suggestive evidence that certain categories of intervention may impact positively on inequalities, though further evidence is needed.
- There is evidence that the effects of employment change are experienced differently by employees in different occupational categories, and some evidence about how this may be addressed. This suggests that the workplace may indeed be an important setting in which inequalities may be addressed.
- There is some evidence that housing improvements may positively affect physical health, but the effects may be quite small.
- It is becoming clear that the most important determinants of public health and health inequalities are the wider, upstream determinants; this raises the real possibility that government policies in sectors other than health such as housing, education, transport and employment offer considerable opportunities to improve health and reduce the health gap.
- It is particularly important to assemble new evidence on the *mechanisms* by which policies within the above sectors may affect health; this will help identify points at which to intervene and will provide a framework for the development of new primary research.

### **Details of the research team**

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