

Health Inequalities

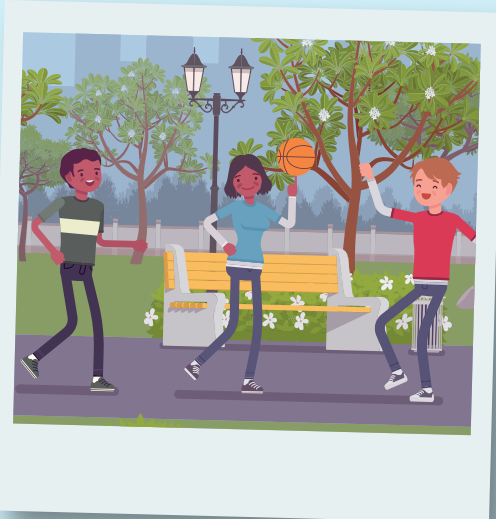
Let's compare two examples:

Example 1: Sruthi, a 65-year-old woman living in Oxfordshire



Sruthi lives with her husband, Amar, and her dog, Beano, in a wealthy area of Oxfordshire. She's reasonably healthy, apart from high blood pressure which she takes tablets for. She does aqua fit classes twice a week at her local gym and she tries to eat a balanced diet, with the odd sweet treat at the weekend.

Sruthi has lived in Oxfordshire for most of her life. Her parents emigrated from India before she was born and settled in a small village where Sruthi grew up with her brother and two sisters. The village had lots of parks and green space where Sruthi played with her friends. Being outside was a huge part of her childhood and even now she spends a lot of time outdoors with Beano.



Sruthi attended university after she finished school, and it was there that she sparked an interest in politics. She worked for her local MP for several years before being elected as a councillor and she held this position until she retired. As part of her work, she helped establish a community allotment where locals can grow plants, fresh fruit and vegetables.

Sruthi found a lump in her breast when she was 53. She knew the signs of breast cancer so visited her GP to get it checked out. She was quickly referred to a specialist who diagnosed her with stage 2 breast cancer and was treated successfully with chemotherapy and a mastectomy.



Her GP referred her to a local support group where she's made lots of good friends and they meet up regularly.

Example 2: Mary, a 65-year-old woman living in Merseyside



Mary is a widow who lives with her adult son, James, in a deprived area of Merseyside. Mary has several health problems herself, including type 2 diabetes, arthritis, back pain and high blood pressure. Her husband, Dave, died after suffering a heart attack when he was 62.



Mary grew up in east London, living in a small flat with her parents. She went to a local school but struggled with reading and writing. She dropped out when she was 16 and quickly found work in a local factory. Mary worked long hours and her job meant she spent a lot of time sitting down in the same position. She noticed she was starting to get pain in her back, but her employer said this was normal when she told them.

Mary met her husband Dave at the factory when she was in her late 30s. After they got married, they moved to his hometown in Merseyside where they bought a small house with a garden. They both worked long hours, so they often ate takeaways and ready meals or went to the local pub.



When their son James was born, he was diagnosed with Down's Syndrome and a heart problem. At times, Mary has struggled to get the right care and support for James in the local area. She regularly has to travel to Liverpool or Manchester using public transport, but the buses aren't very frequent.



As she gets older, she's finding it more difficult to look after James at home on her own but can't get an appointment at her local GP to discuss other options.