

[Report 1923] / Medical Officer of Health, Belford R.D.C.

Contributors

Belford (England). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1923

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/dmhz824g>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Belford

ANNUAL REPORT

Upon the Health and
Sanitary Condition of
the BELFORD Rural
Sanitary District. :: ::

For Year ending December 31st, 1923.

Pneumonia :—Deaths.

Above 65 :—1.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis :—

Above 15 and under 20 :—1.

„ 20 „ 25 :—1.

„ 25 „ 35 :—1.

„ 35 „ 45 :—1.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis : Deaths :—

Above 20 and under 35 :—2.

„ 35 „ 45 :—2.

The efficiency of notification of tuberculosis in the district is generally well maintained.

4. Causes of Sickness.

There have been numerous cases of influenza in the early and late months of the year, but generally speaking the type has been mild, and there were no deaths. In February there was an outbreak of mumps in the North Sunderland district, but it was not found necessary to close the School. In October there were numerous cases of whooping cough, but here also it was not found necessary to close the School.

In February chicken-pox was made notifiable. In July a special report was presented to the District Council in reference to the method of disposal of house refuse in the village of Bamburgh, and a report dealing with the same subject was presented on December 27th.

Upon several occasions during the year I have drawn your attention to the inadequate character of the Small-pox Hospital. I pointed out that there is not a sufficient water supply, there is no drainage, and there is practically no accommodation for the staff. I reminded you that these are all essentials and require your careful and earliest attention.

Early in the year I drew your attention to the marked prevalence of diphtheria in some other parts of the country, and the value of the Schick Test in ascertaining who are susceptible to this important disease.

5. Summary (for reference)

of Nursing Arrangements, Hospitals and other Institutions available for the District.

Professional Nursing in the home is provided by Local Nursing Associations to their members, and such facilities are of great value to the community.

The Rural District Council does not contribute any financial aid to Nursing Institutions in the district. The Guardians however subscribe to the Newcastle Infirmary and have provisional arrangements with the local Nursing Association in regard to Poor Law cases.

There are no certificated midwives.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.—There are no Maternity and Child Welfare Centres nor Day Nurseries. Arrangements are made for the treatment of Venereal Diseases in the Newcastle Royal Victoria Infirmary.

Hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or by the County Council.—The District Council has provided an 8 bed Isolation Hospital for cases of smallpox. The County Council now owns it's own Sanatorium for cases of tuberculosis at Wooley, near Corbridge. There is accommodation for 144 cases, 71 males, 26 females, and 47 children. There are also 38 beds at Stannington Sanatorium which are reserved for children up to the age of 16. Included in this is a small number reserved for surgical cases.

The only institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children is the Poor Law Institution, or where facilities are available for boarding out purposes.

Ambulance facilities for infectious and non-infectious and accident cases :—Arrangements are made for the use when required of ambulances which belong to an adjoining authority.

6. Laboratory Work.

The County Council during the year made bacteriological examinations in reference to Tubercle and Enteric Fever.

Diphtheria antitoxin is kept in store by the Medical Officer of Health for use when required. Antitetanic serum is also available.

List of Adoptive Acts, Bye-laws and Local Regulations relating to the public health, in force in the district with date of adoption.

- (1) Prevention of Nuisances in the Keeping of Animals, 28th Sept., 1893.
- (2) Common Lodging Houses, 18th December, 1884.
- (3) Slaughter Houses, 28th September, 1893.
- (4) Tents, Vans, Sheds, etc., 12th January, 1899.
- (5) New Streets and Buildings, 4th July, 1906.

Regulations under the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order, 1885, were adopted in 1887.

Adoptive Acts.

- (1) Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, 11th June, 1891.
- (2) Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890, 11th June, 1891.

8. Public Health Staff.

The Public Health Officers of the Council are :—

- (1) The Clerk.
- (2) The Medical Officer of Health.
- (3) The Sanitary Inspector (who also acts as Surveyor).

The Sanitary Inspector is a whole time officer. The Clerk and Medical Officer of Health are part time officers. The latter and the Sanitary Inspector are those to whose salaries contribution is made under the Public Health Acts or by Exchequer grants.

The Medical Officer of Health holds a Diploma in Public Health granted to him by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. The Sanitary Inspector is an Associate of the Royal Sanitary Institute. This information is now by the Ministry of Health required to be stated.

9. Housing.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|------|
| (a) Total | ... | ... | 13 |
| (b) As part of a municipal housing scheme | ... | ... | Nil. |
1. *Unfit dwelling houses.*

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) 79

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ... Nil.

(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation Nil.

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 12

2. *Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers 12

3. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs Nil.

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit—

(a) by owners ... Nil.

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners Nil.

(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close Nil.

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... Nil.

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :—

(a) by owners ... Nil.

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners Nil.

C.—Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1909.

- | | |
|--|------|
| (1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ... | Nil. |
| (2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made... | Nil. |
| (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the house having been made fit ... | Nil. |
| (4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... | Nil. |
| (5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... | Nil. |

B.—There have been during the year no noteworthy condition prejudicial to the health of the area, nor any important measures affecting the public health taken. I have recommended strongly that in regard to the provision of hospital accommodation for small-pox cases this should be secured by one conjoint hospital for a group of districts. At the present time when transport by motor ambulance is so easily obtained, this is a measure which seems eminently suitable for rural areas, but so far no action has been taken by the District Council.

There has been no noteworthy occurrence affecting the public health during the year which concerns the sanitary authority or its sanitary staff, nor any important developments of public health administration.

Housing Schemes.—There are signs of private enterprise creating activity in this direction in Belford and North Sunderland. There is a very distinct need for houses which are suitable for the working classes and it is to be hoped that every encouragement will be made to make the building of such houses attractive to private enterprise. The building of larger houses is welcome inasmuch as it reduces unemployment, but it is of the most pressing importance that the needs of *the working classes* are always uppermost in the minds of the local authorities.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

Water Supplies.—The District generally is as a rule, well supplied with water. A large number of farm premises have water laid on, and the others obtain water from wells by means of pumps, etc. All the supplies of the district are constant except in some instances in seasons of unusual drought.

Drainage and Sewerage.—The sewage with few exceptions passes into streams, ditches, or into the sea, and is untreated before doing so. In Belford town most of the houses are drained into sewer conduits and by them into the Belford stream; this should be abandoned and a modern drainage scheme installed. Isolated houses and farm places throughout the district are in many cases drained into cesspools, although in some places the sewage is discharged into streams. Septic tanks are in use in a few instances.

Closet Accomodation.—The ashpit and privy system is generally in use in farm places, and in most of the villages also.

Public scavengers are appointed to remove house refuse in Belford, North Sunderland and Sea Houses, in other places this duty is carried out by the occupiers. An increasing number of houses are now provided with movable ashbins as water closet accommodation is more introduced.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.

During the year visits have been paid by the Inspector of Nuisances and myself to various parts of the District, and enquiries made into the general healthiness, the water supply, the drainage and the condition of dwelling houses. Defective conditions have been reported to the District Council and notices sent to the occupiers or owners. A detailed table of inspections made by the Inspector of Nuisances is appended to this report.

The workshops, slaughter houses, bakehouses and cowsheds have been inspected.

Cowsheds.—In some instances orders have been given to lime-wash, and these have been complied with. Speaking generally they are kept fairly well.

There are 25 Cowsheds on the Register.

Proceedings under the Factory and Workshop Act 1901.

Under the above Act special visits have been paid to the various workshops in the District, and an enquiry made into their sanitary condition in reference to:—

- (1) Cleanliness
- (2) Air Space
- (3) Ventilation
- (4) Drainage and Wet Floors
- (5) Provision of Sanitary Conveniences.

Bake Houses, four in number, have received special attention, and found to be in a satisfactory condition.

The names of tenants of all workshops have been placed upon a Register.

In none of the workshops are any out-workers employed.

The following is a list of the occupations carried on in the various workshops:—

Dressmakers	...	11	Bakers	...	...	4
Bootmakers	...	7	Blacksmiths	...	...	8
Tailors	...	2	Saddlers	...	...	1
Joiners	...	9	Painters	...	...	4
Cycle Agents & Garages	...	6	Herring Curers	...	...	5
Gas Works	...	2	Plumbers	...	...	3
Sawmills	...	2	Millwrights	...	...	1
Sculptors	...	1				

In the great majority of cases I have found the air space to be ample.

In all cases there has been sufficient air space for the number employed during working hours.

The general cleanliness and drainage have been found satisfactory.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1923.

For the Rural District of Belford, on the administration of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, in connection with Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Workshops and Workplaces:

Number of Inspections	...	92
Written Notices	...	Nil
Prosecutions	...	Nil
Workshops on Register (s. 131) at the end of 1922	...	66

Causes of Death in Belford Rural District, 1923, Civilians only.

	Males.	Females.
All Causes	32	31
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	4	0
Cancer, malignant disease	2	5
Cerebral hæmorrhage, etc.	2	5
Heart Disease	9	6
Bronchitis	2	2
Pneumonia (all forms)	0	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	2	0
Suicide	1	0
Other Defined Diseases	10	7
Causes ill-defined or Unknown	2	1
Deaths of Infants { under 1 year. {	Total 4	0
	Illegiti- mate 0	0
Total Births	44	33
Legitmate	43	31
Illegitimate	1	2
Population	...	4950

General Register Office,

Somerset House,

London, W.C. 2.

April, 1924

Schools.—After closure Schools should always be disinfected and an abundant supply of air passed through them. Sanitary conveniences are provided for all the Schools. There are facilities for obtaining drinking water, though in the case of Newham and Ellingham not sufficiently near.

Food.... Attention has been paid to milk supplies by inspections made of cowsheds and cows. Speaking generally, the former are airy and well ventilated, the chief faults found are need for more frequent cleaning of the walls, and attention to the cleanliness of the cows themselves. Regulations in reference to light, ventilation, air space, floor area, and general construction should be carefully fixed.

Number of Slaughter Houses in 1914—5. January 1921—5. December 1921—5. December 1923—6.

No public abattoir has been established in the district but opportunities are afforded of inspecting meat at the time of slaughter.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

No cases of Dysentery, Trench Fever or Enteric Fever were notified.

In cases of Diphtheria anti-toxin is promptly resorted to, and in all suspicious throat cases swabs are taken and sent off for immediate examination at Newcastle.

Tuberculosis.—There is no institution in the district for the treatment of this disease.

Small-Pox.—No primary vaccinations or re-vaccinations have been performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Smallpox Prevention), Regulations, 1917. In May, 1920, I reported to the District Council upon the Small-Pox Hospital, and recommended one central Hospital for all the Northern Districts in the County. This would lead to efficiency as patients can be readily and safely removed considerable distances by motor ambulances.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

The County Council provide lady inspectors who visit mothers and give useful advice in child welfare.

The physical welfare of the child is of paramount importance to the Nation. It is well-known that many of the deaths in children under one year are due to improper care and feeding which lead to atrophy (or wasting) so that when these children are attacked by disease their chances of recovery are small indeed. Excessive diarrhoeal mortality occurs during the summer months especially if the weather is unusually hot, and the close connection between the disease and bottle feeding is too well-known to need comment.

Under the Local Government Board Order in reference to Child Welfare the County Council have appointed Health Visitors for all the districts under the Order. The County Health Committee encourages the formation of child welfare centres and have asked their

Health Visitors to give whatever information and help they can in connection with the above, and have impressed upon them the absolute necessity of carrying with them the co-operation of the local medical officer of health and all other medical practitioners, district nurses and midwives. When consulted about any infant they have been warned to ascertain first whether any medical man is in attendance and if so to give no advice as to food or other treatment ; and in any acute case such as inflamed eyes in new born children (which often leads to blindness) to impress upon the parents the necessity of calling in a doctor at once, and to ask the doctor if he approves of the Health Visitor acting in conjunction with the district nurse in carrying out the treatment.

Jas. G. Macaskie, D.P.H.,

1924.

Medical Officer of Health.



Report of the Sanitary Inspector,

1923.

During the year, 1923, general supervision of sanitary matters has been maintained, and much useful routine work accomplished. But there is much need of more marked improvement in sanitary conditions generally throughout the district, housing and sanitary accommodation being outstanding features.

As reported previously, the general standard of housing is below present day requirements. And until there are more houses of a suitable type for the working classes, the difficulties of sanitary administration regarding housing will remain. The Housing Act, 1923, is already tending to assist in this direction. The scheme put forth by the District Council and approved by the Ministry of Health, provided for 12 houses to be commenced before 31st March, 1924, by means of private enterprise. Up to the end of 1923, plans for 9 houses were approved, 5 at Belford and 4 at Seahouses, all of a type which is badly needed and which has not been built in the district for many years. The advent of private enterprise is a unique event in the history of Belford, and every encouragement should be given to facilitate more building. No additional new houses have been built in Belford for a great number of years, whereas a number, dilapidated, have been closed. The need of houses is even more acute at this date than when previous housing schemes were in hand. During the year, the whole of the town of Belford, formerly in one ownership, was sold, and now individual ownership is general. A number of tenants are under notice to quit, and though there may be some little re-arrangement of occupiers, in some cases outsiders have purchased, and there are no houses available for displaced tenants. The building of 5 new houses under the 1923 Act is therefore to be welcomed as a beginning, and it is hoped this may be an incentive to more work of this class, particularly on behalf of the owner-occupier, a very desirable object. Individual ownership is showing a beneficial effect in Belford, especially in the case of owner occupiers, many of whom have already effected marked improvements.

Building operations are still proceeding steadily at Sea Houses, but one hopes to see more houses of a smaller type erected under the provisions of the 1923 Housing Act.

As regards sanitary accommodation, it is necessary to repeat that this leaves room for much improvement, and will always be more troublesome to deal with until it is made compulsory for one house one complete sanitary convenience. The approximate number of each type of closet are:—Privy ashpits, with privy for one house 661; privy ashpits, with for more than one house 97; pail closets 68; w.c's. 257. Since 1911 some 61 w.c's. have been put in, in place of privies, and it is hoped it will be possible to have more of this class of work effected in the near future.

During the year, the bakehouses, four in number, three with machinery installed, have been inspected periodically and found to be generally well kept. The five slaughter-houses registered, have been kept under observation, and have been found to be well conducted. There are 25 cowsheds on the register, and they have been found fairly well kept, requests for limewashing and thorough cleansing being complied with.

Disinfection is carried out by means of Formaldehyde (using McDougall's Vap lamps). There is no steam disinfecter provided.

The area is not industrial, and it has not been necessary to take any steps regarding smoke abatement.

Special mention should be made of the water supply to Belford, which has been acquired by the District Council. This is a notable step in the public interests, and any extra cost there may be to consumers for the period of the necessary loan is amply compensated by the value of the undertaking and the security afforded.

The following is the list of plans approved during the year, so far as domestic buildings are concerned :—

Additions, White Swan Hotel, North Sunderland.

House at Belford, for Mr J. Aitchison (not yet commenced).

Bathroom, Church Street, Belford.

House and Shop, Sea Houses for Mr R. W. Mackenzie.

Two Houses, near Council Schools, Sea Houses, for Mr T. B. Gregory.

House at Wynding Road, Bamburgh (in course of erection).

Additions to Tughall Hall.

House and Shop, Sea Houses, for Mr Graham

Additions to Spindlestone Mill Cottage.

House at North Sunderland for Mr H. A. McDougle (not commenced yet).

Two Semi-detached Houses, near Council Schools, Sea Houses, per Mr J. Davidson (in course of erection).

Additions to Mr Anderson's property, North Sunderland (not commenced yet).

Hotel at Bamburgh.

Five Cottages at Belford for Mr W. Tully (in course of erection).

House and Shop, Sea Houses, for E. Fordy and Sons (in course of erection).

Bathroom, Church Street, Belford.

Additions to Black Swan Hotel, Belford.

Two Cottages, Crown Street, Sea Houses (in course of erection).

Bathroom, Clark Place, Belford.

Thos. W. Dodd,

A. R. San. I.

Form A.

Amount of Shipping entering the District during the Year 1923.

	Number.	Tonnage.	Number Inspected.			Number reported to be defective.	Number of Orders Issued.
			By the Medical Officer of Health.	By the Inspector of Nuisances.			
FOREIGN (Steamers Sailing Fishing Total Foreign)	Nil						
	Nil.						
	Nil.						
	Nil.						
COASTWISE (Steamers Sailing Fishing Total Coastwise)	2	36					
	0						
	60						
	62	36					
Total Foreign and Coastwise ..	62	36	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.

Form B.

Names of Vessels arriving in the District.		Names of Vessels subjected to measures of rat destruction.			Method employed.	No. of rats killed.
Plague infected.	Plague suspected.	Plague infected.	Plague suspected.	Other vessels.		
Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil		Nil.

Table X.

Birth-Rate, Death-Rate and Analysis of Mortality during the Year 1923.

Provisional figures. Provisional Populations estimated to the middle of 1922 have been used for the purposes of this Table. The Mortality Rates refer to the whole population as regards England and Wales but only to Civilians as regards London and the groups of Towns.

	Birth-Rate per 1,000 Total Population	Annual Death-Rate per 1,000 Population.								Rate per 1,000 Births.		Percentage of Total Deaths.*			
		All Causes.	Enteric Fever.	Small-pox.	Measles.	Scarlet Fever.	Whooping Cough.	Diphtheria.	Influenza.	Violence.	Diarrhoea & Enteritis (under 2 Years).	Total Deaths under One Year.	Causes of Death certified by Registered Medical Practitioners.	Inquest Cases. Uncertified Causes of Death.	
England and Wales ...	19.7	11.6	0.01	0.00	0.14	0.03	0.10	0.07	0.22	0.44	7.7	69	92.0	6.9	1.1
105 County Boroughs and Great Towns, including London ...	20.4	11.6	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.05	0.12	0.09	0.22	0.40	9.9	72	92.2	7.2	0.6
157 Smaller Towns (1921 ad. pop. 20,000-50,000)	19.8	10.6	0.01		0.02	0.03	0.10	0.06	0.21	0.38	6.4	69	92.6	6.1	1.3
London ...	20.2	11.2	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.07	0.09	0.13	0.17	0.45	10.2	60	90.8	9.1	0.1

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report—1923.

Name of District: BELFORD RURAL.	Housing Inspections	GENERAL SANITARY WORK.												TOTAL
		Water Supply.	Drainage			Sanitary Conveniences.			Bakehouses.	Other Workshops.	Other Nuisances.	Houses Disinfected.		
			Defective.	Foul and Choked	Structural Defects.	New W.C's. built.	Foul.	Dairies and Cowsheds.					Slaughter Houses.	
Name of Inspector: THOS. W. DODD.	Structural Defects, Dampness, Sanitary Accomoda- tion, &c.	Unsatisfactory.	4	6	11	5	9	18	25	28	16	56	4	257
Number of Inspections made.	79													
Number of cases where defects found to exist and Informal Notices served.	18		4	6	11	5	9	18	2	3			4	74
Number of cases where defects complained of were remedied.	12		4	6	11	5	9	18	2	3			4	74
Number of Statutory Notices														