**Paper 2 History GCSE Content**

**Public Health in Britain 1800 - 1914**

**Name:** …………………………………………………………………….

**Class:** …………………………………………………………………….

**Public Health 1800 – 1914**

**Public health –** the facilities that everyone has access to that helps to keep them healthy:

* Clean water
* Sewers
* Toilets
* Safe housing
* Clean streets
* Vaccinations to prevent disease

1. **The state of public health of the beginning of the 19th Century**

* **The state of public health at the beginning of the 19th Century (1800s) was not good:**
* Industrialisation – many factories were built
* Urbanisation – many people moved quickly into the cities for jobs
* Growth of factories caused pollution problems (smoke from chimneys)
* Houses built quickly 🡪 back-to-back houses which were unsafe, unsanitary and badly ventilated – this was because there were no housing standards; if you could build it, you could live in it.
* Overcrowding was a huge problem in houses
* There was no sewer system so cities had open drains and sewers in the streets
* There was no system to clear away waste, which led to huge waste piles building up in streets and courtyards – nothing or nobody was there to clean them away
* Most toilets were outside and usually shared between many houses on a street
* There was a high infant mortality – many children died in infancy
* Disease spread very easily – this was because there was no understanding of how disease spreads. (The main killer diseases were tuberculosis, typhoid, influenza, typhus, diphtheria, scrofula. These diseases were ‘endemic’ – this meant they were present all the time. In addition to this, some diseases hit suddenly and then faded away – these are called epidemic diseases, and the most infamous of these was cholera).
* There was no regular or guaranteed supply of clean water and the water available was often polluted
* Slaughter houses and butchers still threw animal waste into streets, and live animals roamed the streets freely including, for example, pigs and chickens.
* The government, meanwhile had a laissez-faire attitude – they believed people should sort themselves out and it was not the responsibility of the government.

1. **Changes to public health in Britain 1800 – 1875:**

* **First Cholera outbreak 1831 – 2**

This was anew disease and the first epidemic broke out in Britain in 1831-2. The disease originally came from China and India and spread across Europe. It caused by a germ that attacks the intestines and leads to diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps, fever and death. It is also a shock disease – this means it can kill someone within 24 hours of catching it! It is spread through dirty water that is infected with the sewage of victims. People had no idea how to stop it spreading. Some people thought it was caused by ‘poisonous miasmas’ and so burnt barrels of tar in the streets to try and ward off the bad air. So many people died that the government were forced to act. By the end of 1832 most places in Britain had been affected by cholera and over 21,000 people had died. Instructions were given that the dead should be buried immediately and graves had to be a certain depth. The disease seemed to die down but was going to return several times in the century.

* **1839 A man called** **William Farr** began collecting medical statistics, focusing particularly on deaths. In particular, he counted the number of deaths in given areas, and set up a way to routinely record what each person had died from. His statistics made it easier to compare death rates and the causes of death in different areas, for example poor and rich areas. His statistics were later used as evidence to support the work of John Snow and Louis Pasteur.
* **1842 A civil servant called Edwin Chadwick** **published a Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain**, that he had begun in 1840**.** His report focused on the living conditions of the poor, and how money could be spent more effectively. **He concluded that poverty was caused by sickness – therefore in order to reduce poverty, they needed to reduce disease, and to do this they would need to improve living conditions.** Chadwick argued that if the towns were cleaner, there would be less disease and people would not need to take time off work. As a result, fewer people would need poor relief and this would save the ratepayers money. It contained evidence from doctors involved in working with the poor all over the country. The information it contained about the awful living conditions in which many working people lived and worked shocked and horrified the wealthy classes. **It made some people, including the government, realise that something had to be done about public health in Britain. Chadwick said Parliament should pass legislation to improve sewage disposal and water supplies.**
* **1848 Public Health Act was finally passed by Parliament**. This followed a lot of debate between two sides - supporters of reform became known as the ‘Clean Party’. Those that opposed reform were called the ‘Dirty Party’. The Act was strongly opposed by the ‘Dirty Party’. They believed in laissez-faire and argued it was not the government’s responsibility to clean up the towns; they believed the poor should help themselves. Furthermore, they argued that cleaning up the towns would cost too much. The poor (working class) also did not have the vote. Finally, although Chadwick’s report clearly showed that there was a connection between dirty living conditions and disease, no one was – yet - exactly what caused these diseases.

The terms of the 1848 Public Health Act were:

* A Central Board of Health was to be set up in London for five years.
* Local Health Boards were also allowed to be set up around the country, but only if 10% of ratepayers (like an early tax) agreed. These boards were given the power to improve the water supply and the disposal of sewage. However, the act was not compulsory.

The impact of 1848 Public Health Act was very limited. Local Health Boards were only set up in 182 towns. Nevertheless, in these places, water supplies and sewage disposal were improved.

* **1848 Meanwhile there was another cholera outbreak.** This helped to persuade many MPs who might have voted ‘no’ to vote for the 1848 Public Health Act.
* **1852 The first compulsory vaccination was introduced in Britain.**
* **1854 The Central Board of Health – set up by the 1848 Public Health Act – was disbanded (gotten rid of)**. It had had many opponents, and they were finally successful in destroying it. In particular, many water companies, landlords and builders had hated its existence because it had taken their business from them and they had lost money. Others still held firm to the belief that it was wrong for the government to interfere in people’s private lives (laissez-faire).
* **1854 Another cholera outbreak**
* **1854 During this cholera outbreak, John Snow deduced that cholera was spread by dirty water.** John Snow was a doctor who lived in London. During this outbreak of cholera, he went to an area of London just off Broad Street, where there was a particularly high death rate from the disease. He went door-to-door collecting information about how many people in the household had died, and where they got their water from. He realised that people had only died if they drank water from the Broad Street pump. The pump was dug up and it was revealed that a cesspit (full of human sewage) had seeped into the water supply. The handle of the pump was removed so that it no longer worked. John Snow had proven that cholera was spread by dirty water, but we still did not understand why or how.
* **1858 The Great Stink.** As there was no proper sewage system in London, much of the human waste in London was thrown into the river Thames. The summer of 1858 was particularly hot and dry and it caused the river Thames to dry up, turned London into a giant cesspit! The stench from the dried up river was so strong that the Houses of Parliament – which sit alongside the river – had to close. As such, the awful public health systems in London had actually stopped the government running the country!
* **1861 Louis Pasteur discovers Germ Theory. People now – finally – understood that disease was spread by germs.**
* **1865 A woman called Octavia Hill** began to campaign for better conditions for the poor. She raised enough money to buy three houses, repaired them, and rented them out. Octavia was a wealth woman, and through this scheme, she first began to get to know her tenants well – who were poor. She insisted on only the highest standards in her rental properties, making sure they did not take in lodgers, which could lead to overcrowding and the spread of disease. She also got rid of bad tenants and improved the homes for the remaining tenants, who then looked after the houses. Octavia’s scheme was a success; her tenants cared for their homes and paid the rent on time. Everyone was better off. **Soon, many people were paying for Octavia to manage their properties for them. With the money she made from this she bought houses for the poor. People began to think that she talked a lot of sense about the poor. She campaigned for better conditions for the poor right up until her death in 1912.**
* **1865 Joseph Bazalgette completed his design and building of a huge sewer system in London**. He had been commissioned to undertake this project after the Great Stink. The sewer system in London today is still based on his design and work.
* **1866 Another cholera outbreak**
* **1867 Working class get the vote.** In 1867 all men over the age of 21 were given the vote. Previously, it had only been people with enough money. This meant the working class – the poor – were given the vote. The working class lived in the worst conditions. Now they had the vote, they would only vote for the political party that would improve their living conditions; this forced the government, and any political party who wanted to be in power, to promise to improve the living conditions of the poor.
* **1873: A man called Joseph Chamberlain became mayor of Birmingham in 1873 and for the next three years introduced a series of reforms to improve the living conditions of people there.** Chamberlain became famous for the changes he made to the city, in particular he made sure the public health facilities (clean water, sewer systems etc.) were good, and began knocking down housing slums and replacing them with better quality housing. He became a national hero for the work he did.
* **1875 Public Health Act.** This was passed by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli’s Conservative government. It terms were: Local Councils across the country were compelled to provide street lighting, clean water, drainage and sewage disposal. Councils also had to employ medical inspectors to ensure that living conditions were healthy enough.
* **1875 Artisans’ Dwellings Act**: Councils were also given the power to buy up areas of slum housing, knock them down and build new houses. Only a few councils, however, took advantage of this.

1. **Changes to public health in Britain 1875 – 1914:**

* **1886 – 1903 A man called Charles Booth, a shop owner and social investigator, carried out a survey into living conditions in the East End of London.** He published his findings in Life and Labour of the People in London. Booth concluded that about 1/3 of people lived on incomes less than 21 shillings a week. In his opinion this was below the poverty line. The people lived in sub-standard housing and had a poor diet. If they fell ill, they could not afford to pay a doctor. Booth said poverty was caused by sickness, old age, low wages and lack of employment – not laziness and drunkenness as many believed. There were no old age pensions. Old people who could not support themselves had only the workhouse – a building where poor people were put to work in exchange for food and shelter – to turn to. Many skilled workers could afford to pay into friendly societies – an organisation to which members pay small amounts of money over a long period so that, when they are ill or old, they can receive money back – and insure themselves against unemployment and illness. Unskilled workers, however, could not afford the subscriptions.
* **1889: Joseph Seebohm Rowntree**, a member of the chocolate-manufacturing family, conducted his own inquiry into the living conditions in York and his findings were very similar to Booth’s. He published his findings in 1901.
* **1898: A man called Sir Ebenezer Howard set up something called the Garden City Movement.** This was a method of urban planning that meant that they layout of all cities was well-planned and surrounded by countryside - "greenbelts" - containing separate housing areas, areas for industry and areas for agriculture. This would enable the people living in the cities to live healthier lives.
* **1902 The nation shocked when 40% of British men who volunteered to right in the Boer War** **were found to be suffering from rickets**, **caused by poor diet**, **which meant they were too unhealthy to fight.** It was clear that ill-health was linked to poverty and government action was needed to raise living standards. Meanwhile, some Liberal MPs were concerned that, if they did not help the poor now, people would vote for the newly formed Labour Party. The Liberals went on to pass a wide range of reforms. These were called the Liberal Reforms because they were passed by the Liberal Party:

**The Liberal Reforms:**

* **1906: Provision of school meals** – local authorities were given the power to provide free school meals for children.
* **1906**: The Workers’ Compensation Act – people now got compensation for any injury they received while at work.
* 1907: School medical inspections were carried out by doctors and nurses to check that children were healthy and had living conditions that would ensure they remained healthy.
* **1908 Children’s Charter:** Punishments were given to those neglecting or treating children cruelly.

Children were sent to disciplinary places rather than adult prisons. Miners – including children = were limited to a maximum of eight-hours per day.

* **1909: Old Age Pensions Act** – people over 70 receive 5 shillings [25p] per week state pension, as long as their income from other sources is not more than 12 shillings [60p] per week.
* 1909: Labour exchanges were set up to help the unemployed find work.
* **1911 National Insurance Act / scheme introduced.** It had two parts:

1. Workers in manual trades earning less than £160 per year are to pay 4d [2p] per week. The employer will add 3d [1.5p] and the government 2d [1p]. Workers are then entitled to receive 10 shillings [50p] per week if they are off work sick, for up to 26 weeks. Free medical treatment is available from a panel doctor.
2. Workers earning less than £160 per year in certain trades, together with the government and their employers, are to pay in 21/2d [1p] per week. These workers can claim 7 shillings [35p] unemployment pay for up to 15 weeks.

* For the first time the state had made a coordinated attack on poverty. However, much of the legislation was not very far-reaching and the government had only made a start. Nevertheless, there was still fierce resistance to these measures:
* To pay for old age pensions, Lloyd-George introduced the ‘People’s Budget’ which aimed to tax the right to provide for the poor. The House of Lords – largely made up of wealth landowners – refused to pass the budget. This issue forced two general elections in 1910. The Liberals were narrowly returned. The budget was then allowed through, but in 1911 the power of the House of Lords to throw out finance bills was abolished by the Parliament Act.
* The Labour Party said pensions should have been made payable at 65, whereas many Conservatives were of the opinion that pensions ‘would profoundly weaken the moral fibre of the nation’.
* The National Insurance Act was also widely condemned because Friendly Societies and private insurance companies said they would lose business. To overcome this, Lloyd George agreed to drop proposals for pensions to be paid to orphans and widows. He also allowed the Act to be administered by private insurance companies, acting as ‘approved societies’ on behalf of the government.
* The Labour Party said that workers should not have to pay any money at all into the scheme, arguing the benefits should be paid entirely from taxes.
* Many doctors opposed the Act. They now had to register with a panel (a local list) and would receive 6 shillings (30p) for each patient under their care. Doctors argued that this meant a loss of independence and would cause medical standards to drop.
* In the fact of such opposition, Lloyd George had to be strong and prepared to negotiate.