



Life Expectancy at Birth: 2005-07

Background

On 30 October 2008 the Office for National Statistics released local authority life expectancies at birth and at age 65 based on mortality data for 2005-07, with annual data back to 1991-93. National Interim Life Tables 2005-07 for the UK and constituent countries were also released. The data for 2005-07 have been based on the ONS mid-2006 population estimates.

Full data and supporting documentation are available at the following links:

- www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14459
- www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=8841

This report presents the main national and regional results and trends for life expectancy at birth together with the latest values for the South East unitary authorities (UAs) and counties, plus comparisons with all local authorities in England and Wales.

Results

For the UK, expectation of life at birth has increased over the last decade:

- males - an increase of 3.0 years between 1995-97 and 2005-07 (to reach 77.3 years)
- females - the increase has been more modest at 2.1 years (reaching 81.5 years).

In 1995-97 female life expectancy was 5.2 years more than for males; in 2005-07 this gap had closed to 4.3 years. At national level for both males and females the highest expectancies were seen in England and the lowest in Scotland.

Within England, the lowest life expectancies are in the northern regions, while the highest are in the south. The South East, South West, East and London have both male and female expectancies higher than those for England as a whole. In the North West expectation of life is only 76.0 years for males and 80.4 years for females – a low value shared with the North East. However these values are higher than those for Scotland.

The highest regional life expectancies are in the South East for males (78.9 years) and in the South West for females (82.9 years). The female life expectancy in the South East at 82.7 years is the second highest. The interregional differences in England in 2005-07 were therefore 2.9 years for males and 2.5 years for females. These ranges are both higher than the equivalent differences in 1995-97. Life expectancy in the South East has risen by 3.1 years for males and 2.2 years for females over ten years. Both of these changes are a little higher than the equivalent national figures.

All English regions have seen increases in life expectancy over the decade. For males this has been more rapid and the lowest regional male life expectancy in 2005-07 is higher than the highest regional value in 1995-97. The regional differentials between male and female life expectancy have closed by between 0.7 and 1.1 years.

The gender gap in the South East was reduced by 0.9 years and at 3.8 years the gap is the smallest amongst the English regions. The regional level of the differential is between 3.8 and 4.5 years. The largest regional increases in expectancy for both males and females were in London, where the gender gap also closed by the greatest amount. However the gender gap is still greatest in London, together with the West Midlands.

Table 1: Life Expectancy at Birth (years), UK, constituent countries and the South East: 1995-97 and 2005-07

		United Kingdom	England & Wales	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	South East
Males	1995-97	74.27	74.49	74.61	73.84	72.26	73.86	75.80
	2005-07	77.27	77.54	77.65	76.77	74.85	76.25	78.88
	Change	3.00	3.05	3.04	2.93	2.59	2.39	3.08
Females	1995-97	79.44	79.61	79.69	79.11	77.90	79.26	80.50
	2005-07	81.54	81.74	81.81	81.19	79.75	81.26	82.67
	Change	2.10	2.13	2.12	2.08	1.85	2.00	2.17
Difference	1995-97	5.17	5.12	5.08	5.27	5.64	5.40	4.70
	2005-07	4.27	4.20	4.16	4.42	4.90	5.01	3.78
	Change	-0.90	-0.92	-0.92	-0.85	-0.74	-0.39	-0.92

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Table 2: Life Expectancy at Birth (years) by region: 1995-97 and 2005-07

	Males			Females			Difference		
	1995-97	2005-07	Change	1995-97	2005-07	Change	1995-97	2005-07	Change
North East	73.1	76.3	3.2	78.4	80.4	2.0	5.3	4.2	-1.1
North West	73.2	76.0	2.8	78.5	80.4	1.9	5.3	4.4	-0.9
Yorkshire and Humber	74.1	76.9	2.8	79.2	81.1	1.9	5.1	4.2	-0.9
East Midlands	74.8	77.6	2.8	79.7	81.6	1.9	4.9	3.0	-0.9
West Midlands	74.2	76.9	2.7	79.4	81.4	1.0	5.2	4.5	-0.7
East of England	75.9	78.7	2.8	80.5	82.6	2.1	4.6	3.9	-0.7
London	74.1	77.9	3.8	79.7	82.4	2.7	5.6	4.5	-1.1
South East	75.8	78.9	3.1	80.5	82.7	2.2	4.7	3.8	-0.9
South West	75.8	78.7	2.9	80.8	82.9	2.1	5.0	4.2	-0.8

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Across all local authority areas, the lowest expectation of life in England and Wales for males is found in Blackpool (73.2 years) and the highest in Kensington & Chelsea (83.7 years). For females the lowest expectation of life is in Hartlepool (78.1 years) with the highest also in Kensington & Chelsea (87.8 years). Glasgow has the lowest values of all UK authorities: 70.8 years for males and 77.1 years for females.

Since 1995-97 all South East UAs have seen increases in life expectancy for both males and females. For males in Slough the expectation of life has risen by an estimated 4.5 years in ten years, this is one and a half times the national average change. The greatest increase in female life expectancy was also seen in Slough, 3.1 years. For both males and females the smallest rises were seen in Reading.

At the county level the highest life expectancies are found in Surrey and the lowest in Kent, although the Kent values are still higher than all of the northern and midland English regions. The best performing county is Dorset with marginally higher expectancies than Surrey, which is second best for males and third, behind Devon, for females. Data for previous years have not been made available at county level.

Table 3: Life Expectancy at Birth (years): South East UAs and Counties: 1995-97 and 2005-07

	Males			Females			Difference		
	1995-97	2005-07	Change	1995-97	2005-07	Change	1995-97	2005-07	Change
Medway	74.0	76.6	2.6	78.6	81.0	2.4	4.6	4.4	-0.2
Bracknell Forest	75.9	78.9	2.0	80.0	83.0	3.0	4.1	4.1	0.0
West Berkshire	76.3	79.3	2.0	80.2	82.9	2.7	3.9	3.6	-0.3
Reading	75.2	77.6	2.4	80.5	81.9	1.4	5.3	4.3	-0.0
Slough	73.4	77.9	4.5	79.2	82.3	3.1	5.8	4.4	-1.4
Windsor & Maidenhead	75.9	79.1	3.2	80.1	82.8	2.7	4.2	3.7	-0.5
Wokingham	77.8	80.8	3.0	81.1	83.6	2.5	3.3	2.8	-0.5
Milton Keynes	74.8	77.0	3.2	79.6	81.5	1.9	4.8	3.5	-1.3
Brighton & Hove	73.7	76.5	2.8	80.1	81.8	1.7	6.4	5.3	-1.1
Portsmouth	74.1	76.7	2.6	79.0	81.9	2.9	4.9	5.2	0.3
Southampton	74.1	77.1	3.0	79.7	82.0	2.3	5.6	4.9	-0.7
Isle of Wight	75.1	78.8	3.7	80.7	83.1	2.4	5.6	4.3	-1.3
Buckinghamshire	-	79.6	-	-	83.1	-	-	3.5	-
East Sussex	-	78.8	-	-	82.8	-	-	4.0	-
Hampshire	-	79.7	-	-	83.2	-	-	3.5	-
Kent	-	78.3	-	-	82.0	-	-	3.7	-
Oxfordshire	-	79.2	-	-	83.2	-	-	4.0	-
Surrey	-	79.8	-	-	83.3	-	-	3.5	-
West Sussex	-	79.0	-	-	82.4	-	-	3.4	-

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Looking at all local authority districts in the region, for males the highest life expectancy is seen in Elmbridge, which at 81.1 years is the fourth best in the country. Hart, Fareham, Wokingham and Sevenoaks take places five to eight. For females Hart is the highest in the region and fourth in the country at 84.7 years. It is joined in the national top ten by Chiltern, Epsom & Ewell and Guildford. The lowest male and female life expectancies in the region are seen in Hastings (75.9 years and 80.3 years respectively) followed closely by Thanet and Swale.

The extent of the estimated percentage change in life expectancy in some districts is also impressive. For males, Rushmoor and Fareham have had estimated increases since 2000-02 that are in the top twenty in England and Wales and are about 2 standard deviations above the mean of all local authorities. For females Slough and Crawley have top ten increases that are also about 2 standard deviations above the mean rate of change. On the other hand, the rates of improvement for males in Arun was the fifth worst in England and Wales. It is estimated that Adur was one of only nine authorities to show a decline in female life expectancy over the decade.

It should be noted that life expectancy estimates are dependent upon the accuracy of both the mortality data and, most critically, the ONS mid-year population estimates by single years of age and gender that underpin them. If the population estimates are generally (across the age groups) too high then the life expectancy at birth will also be too high, and vice versa.

Some retirement areas with a high proportion of the elderly population in residential and other care homes may be statistically burdened with many deaths to residents who have only lived in the area for a short time and who arrived because of the availability of such accommodation. Even if the estimated population age structure of an area is accurate, this can lead to an effective overstatement of death rates at advanced ages and consequently to a lower average life expectancy.

This report has been commissioned by the South East England Regional Assembly from the Greater London Authority.

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