

Statistical bulletin

Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023

Subnational trends in the average number of years people will live beyond their current age measured by “period life expectancy”.

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Release date:
4 December 2024

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Main points

In 2021 to 2023:

- Male life expectancy at birth remained lower than in the last pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period (2017 to 2019) in more than four fifths of Great Britain's local areas; female life expectancy was lower in 70% of them.
- The 10 highest local area male life expectancies at birth were all located in the south of England; the 10 lowest were in Scotland, in the north of England and in Wales.
- The 10 highest local area female life expectancies at birth were also all located in the south of England; the 10 lowest were mostly in Scotland.
- In England, the lowest life expectancy across local areas was in Blackpool (73.1 years for males and 78.9 years for females); the highest life expectancy was in Hart for males (83.4 years), and in Kensington and Chelsea (86.5 years) for females.
- In Scotland, the lowest life expectancy across local areas was in Glasgow City (73.6 years for males and 78.3 years for females); the highest life expectancy was in East Renfrewshire (81.0 years for males and 84.5 years for females).
- In Wales, the lowest life expectancy across local areas was in Merthyr Tydfil for males (75.4 years) and Blaenau Gwent for females (79.0 years); the highest life expectancy for both males (80.4 years) and females (83.9 years) was in Monmouthshire.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had led to increased mortality during 2020 and 2021 and some impact remains in the latest life expectancy reporting period 2021 to 2023.

2 . Period life expectancy in constituent countries of Great Britain and English regions

This bulletin updates the sub-national period life expectancy time series with the period 2021 to 2023 for Great Britain. The commentary refers to life expectancy at birth unless otherwise stated. Life expectancy at other ages, and the time series, can be found in the [accompanying datasets](#).

This release provides estimates of [period life expectancy](#), averaging mortality seen over three years. While the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic disrupted the small improvements in life expectancy observed between 2010 and 2019, it does not necessarily mean a baby born between 2021 and 2023 will go on to live a shorter life than one born between 2017 and 2019. If mortality rates improve in the future, then period life expectancy will increase.

Figure 1: Life expectancy in 2021 to 2023 was highest in southern regions of England and lowest in Scotland and northern regions of England

Life expectancy at birth by sex in 2021 to 2023 for England, Scotland, Wales, and English regions

[Download the data](#)

Among constituent countries of Great Britain, life expectancy between 2021 and 2023 was highest in England (79.1 years for males and 83.0 years for females) and lowest in Scotland (76.8 years for males and 80.8 years for females). In Wales, life expectancy was 78.0 years for males and 82.0 years for females. Within England, there were sizeable regional differences, with male life expectancy in the South East 3.0 years higher than in the North East, and female life expectancy 2.7 years higher in London compared with the North East (Figure 1 and Table 1).

In all constituent countries of Great Britain and all English regions, both male and female life expectancy were lower in 2021 to 2023 compared with 2017 to 2019 (Table 1).

Table 1: Life expectancy in 2021 to 2023 decreased in all constituent countries of Great Britain and all English regions compared with 2017 to 2019

Summary statistics of life expectancy at birth by sex in 2021 to 2023 and changes since 2017 to 2019 for England, Scotland, Wales and English regions

Country or region	Males Life expectancy in 2021 to 2023 (years)	Males Life expectancy in 2017 to 2019 (years)	Males Change (years)	Males Change (months)	Females Life expectancy in 2021 to 2023 (years)	Females Life expectancy in 2017 to 2019 (years)	Females Change (years)	Females Change (months)
North East	77.4	78.0	-0.6	-7.2	81.4	81.8	-0.4	-4.4
North West	77.5	78.4	-0.8	-9.9	81.6	82.0	-0.5	-5.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	78.1	78.7	-0.6	-7.3	82.1	82.4	-0.4	-4.2
East Midlands	78.8	79.5	-0.7	-8.7	82.6	82.9	-0.3	-3.7
West Midlands	78.4	79.0	-0.6	-7.7	82.5	82.9	-0.4	-4.9
East of England	80.0	80.4	-0.4	-4.8	83.6	83.8	-0.2	-2.1
London	79.8	80.4	-0.5	-6.5	84.1	84.4	-0.2	-2.7
South East	80.3	80.7	-0.4	-4.6	84.1	84.2	-0.2	-1.9
South West	80.1	80.4	-0.3	-4.1	84.0	84.1	-0.1	-1.1
England	79.1	79.7	-0.6	-6.6	83.1	83.3	-0.3	-3.1
Scotland	76.8	77.2	-0.4	-4.5	80.8	81.1	-0.4	-4.2
Wales	78.0	78.4	-0.3	-3.7	82.0	82.2	-0.2	-2.3

Source: Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. All differences stated in this release such as change (months) are calculated using unrounded data.

3 . Period life expectancy at local level

Figure 2 shows a clear geographical divide. The 10 highest local area male life expectancies were all located in the south of England, while six of the lowest 10 were in Scotland, three in the north of England (Blackpool, Manchester and Kingston upon Hull) and one in Wales (Merthyr Tydfil).

The 10 highest local area female life expectancies were also all located in the south of England, while seven of the lowest 10 were in Scotland, two in the north of England (Blackpool and Knowsley) and one in Wales (Blaenau Gwent). This means Scotland's areas are overrepresented in the bottom 10 and areas in the south of England are overrepresented in the top 10.

Taking Great Britain as a whole, for the first time since the time series began in 2001 to 2003, Blackpool, not Glasgow City, had the lowest male life expectancy in 2021 to 2023 (73.1 years). Glasgow City continued to have the lowest female life expectancy in 2021 to 2023 (78.3 years), having also had the lowest for the previous seven periods.

Male life expectancy at birth remained lower than in the last pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period (2017 to 2019) in more than four fifths of local areas in Great Britain (288 of 348 local areas); for females it was lower in 70% of local areas (242 areas).

The largest gain in male life expectancy at birth between 2017 to 2019 and 2021 to 2023 occurred in East Cambridgeshire (1.1 years), while the largest fall occurred in Slough (minus 2.1 years). For females the largest gain was in Torridge (1.2 years) and the largest fall was in the Scottish council area of Na h-Eileanan Siar (minus 2.1 years).

Figure 2: In 2021 to 2023, most areas experienced a fall in life expectancy compared with 2017 to 2019

Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by sex across local areas in Great Britain, between 2011 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023

Notes

1. PE is three-year period ending in calendar year.
2. Local areas include lower tier local authorities (LTLAs) in England, unitary authorities in Wales and council areas in Scotland.
3. Isles of Scilly and City of London have been excluded from the map because of insufficient population counts.

[Download the data](#)

Gap in life expectancy across local areas

The gap in life expectancy across local areas refers to the difference between the values located at the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles, to exclude extreme outliers.

The gap in life expectancy across local areas was smallest in Wales in 2021 to 2023 (4.4 years for males and 4.2 years for females) (Figure 3). It was largest in Scotland for males (6.3 years) and in England for females (5.6 years).

Figure 3: The gap in life expectancy across local areas has generally widened since 2001 to 2003, particularly for females

Gap between the 97.5th and 2.5th percentiles of local area life expectancies at birth, by sex and constituent country, selected periods between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023

Notes

1. PE is three-year period ending in calendar year.
2. Local areas include lower tier local authorities (LTLAs) in England, unitary authorities in Wales and council areas in Scotland.

The gap in life expectancy across local areas, within constituent countries, increased for most groups, between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 and 2023. The only group for whom the gap decreased was males in Scotland (0.1 years less in 2021 to 2023 compared with 2001 to 2003). The gap for males increased in both England and Wales, by 0.7 and 0.2 years, respectively.

For females, the gap in life expectancy across local areas has increased between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023 in all three countries, and with larger increases than for males. The gap in 2021 to 2023 was larger than in 2001 to 2003 by between 0.9 years (England) and 1.7 years (Scotland).

4 . Life expectancy for local areas in Great Britain data

[Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 4 December 2024

Period life expectancy at birth and other age groups at regional and local authority levels in constituent countries of Great Britain, between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023.

[Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain, single-year periods](#)

Dataset | Released 4 December 2024

Period life expectancy at birth and other age groups at regional and local authority levels in constituent countries of Great Britain, between 2011 to 2023. These are official statistics in development.

[Life expectancy estimates template](#)

Dataset | Released 4 December 2024

Template designed to provide estimates of life expectancy in five-year age bands for a given population.

5 . Glossary

Period life expectancy

The life expectancy estimates reported in this bulletin are period based. Period life expectancy at a given age for an area is the average number of years a person would live if he or she experienced the area's age-specific mortality rates for that time period, throughout his or her life. More information can be found in our [Period and cohort life expectancy explained methodology](#).

95% confidence intervals

A confidence interval is a measure of the uncertainty around a specific estimate. As intervals around estimates widen, the level of uncertainty about where the true value lies increases. At a national level, the overall level of error will be small compared with the error associated with a local area or a specific age and sex breakdown. Therefore, the widths of the confidence intervals reported in this release will have sizeable differences.

6 . Data sources and quality

The estimates reported in this bulletin are period-based life expectancies, estimated using an abridged life table. [Our Life expectancy estimates template dataset](#) shows how the abridged life table is used to derive life expectancy estimates.

Abridged life tables are used in preference to complete life tables for smaller populations because death counts can be too sparse for examining mortality for single years of age, and because mid-year population estimates are not available or sufficiently reliable to produce these by single year of age.

This statistical bulletin presents estimates of period life expectancy, the number of years people are expected to live, assuming current levels of mortality will continue for the rest of someone's life. These are subnational estimates for local government administrations, including combined authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, as well as regions in England and Welsh health boards in Wales. It also provides national estimates for England, Scotland and Wales for comparison purposes. Our [National life tables - life expectancy in England and Wales: 2021 to 2023 bulletin](#) provides more information on national estimates

Coverage is limited to England, Scotland and Wales using rebased population estimates using the 2021 Census in England and Wales and the 2022 Census in Scotland. Estimates for Northern Ireland will be added following publication of its local government district population estimates for 2023.

This release is calculated based on death registrations in the periods 2018 to 2020, 2019 to 2021, 2020 to 2022 and 2021 to 2023, which include the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period. Life expectancy estimates for 2021 to 2023 are lower for all regions and many local areas compared with 2017 to 2019. This does not mean that a baby born in 2021 to 2023 will go on to live a shorter life.

The reported life expectancies assume that the higher-than-average mortality that we observed in 2021 to 2023 will continue. It is possible that life expectancy will return to an improving trend in the future. A more detailed explanation can be found in our [Has the coronavirus pandemic caused life expectancy in the UK to fall? blog post](#).

The differences in life expectancy between regions or over time that are reported in this bulletin are not necessarily statistically significant. No formal statistical significance testing was applied.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Health state life expectancies, UK quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#).

Accredited official statistics

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in June 2013. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in [the Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

7 . Related links

[National life tables - life expectancy in England and Wales: 2021 to 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 October 2024

Trends in period life expectancy, a measure of the average number of years people will live beyond their current age, analysed by age and sex for the England and Wales.

[Life expectancy in Northern Ireland, 2021 to 2023](#)

Report | Released 3 December 2024

Latest estimates of life expectancy, healthy life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy for Northern Ireland.

[Life expectancy in Scotland, 2021 to 2023](#)

Report | Released 23 October 2024

The latest statistics on life expectancy in Scotland, council areas, health boards and other areas.

[Health expectancies in Wales with inequality gap](#)

Report | Released 9 June 2022

The latest statistics on life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in Wales, including analysis of the inequality gap.

[Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 October 2024

Registered deaths by age, sex, selected underlying causes of death and the leading causes of death. Contains death rates and death registrations by area of residence and single year of age.

[Rebasing of mid-year population estimates following Census 2021, England and Wales](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 November 2023

Rebased mid-year estimates for 2012 to 2021 to align with Census 2021 results. Includes a revised back series of components of population change.

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 4 December 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023](#)