

Statistical bulletin

National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2021 to 2023

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 UK and its constituent countries.

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Next release:
To be announced

Notice

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This release adds single year and three-year period life expectancy figures for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom to the England, Wales, and England and Wales figures that were previously available for 2021 to 2023.

Cohort life expectancy figures for the UK and its constituent countries are available in our [Past and projected period and cohort life tables: 2022-based, UK, 1981 to 2072 bulletin](#).

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1 . Main points

- Period life expectancy is the average number of additional years a person would expect to live if he or she experienced the mortality rates by age of the given area and time period for the rest of their life.
- Period life expectancy at birth in the UK in 2021 to 2023 was 78.8 years for males and 82.8 years for females, while period life expectancy at age 65 years was 18.5 years for males and 21.0 years for females.
- The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to increased mortality in the UK, particularly in 2020 and 2021, and as a result our three-year period life expectancy estimates have fallen.
- The 2021 to 2023 estimates of life expectancy for the UK are the first since the coronavirus pandemic to show a slight increase in life expectancy for males and females compared with 2020 to 2022, the most recent overlapping period.
- The life expectancy estimates for 2021 to 2023 are still below the pre-coronavirus pandemic level for both males and females, and prior to the pandemic there had been relatively little improvement in period life expectancy for several years.
- Average lifespan is determined by changes in mortality rates across your lifetime; improvements in mortality rates in the future would lead to increases in life expectancy estimates.

2 . Data on National life tables – life expectancy in the UK

[National life tables: UK](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2025

Period life expectancy by age and sex for the UK. Each national life table is based on population estimates, births and deaths for a period of three consecutive years. Tables are published annually.

[National life tables: England](#)

Dataset | Released 23 October 2024

Period life expectancy by age and sex for England. Each national life table is based on population estimates, births and deaths for a period of three consecutive years. Tables are published annually.

[National life tables: Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 23 October 2024

Period life expectancy by age and sex for Wales. Each national life table is based on population estimates, births and deaths for a period of three consecutive years. Tables are published annually.

[National life tables: Scotland](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2025

Period life expectancy by age and sex for Scotland. Each national life table is based on population estimates, births and deaths for a period of three consecutive years. Tables are published annually.

[National life tables: Northern Ireland](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2025

Period life expectancy by age and sex for Northern Ireland. Each national life table is based on population estimates, births and deaths for a period of three consecutive years. Tables are published annually.

View all data used in this statistical bulletin on the [related data page](#).

3 . Data sources and quality

National life tables are period life tables and are based on three consecutive years of data. Data in this bulletin are based on 2021, 2022 and 2023. This reduces the effect of annual fluctuations in the number of deaths caused by seasonal events, such as influenza.

Period life expectancy is the average number of additional years a person would expect to live if he or she experienced the age-specific mortality rates of the given area and time period for the rest of their life. Explanation of the methodology used to create the national life tables is available in our [Guide to calculating national life tables methodology](#).

Figures in the commentary in this bulletin are rounded to one decimal place. Calculations in this bulletin have been made using unrounded figures. Life expectancy estimates to two decimal places can be found in the datasets for this release.

Our [National life tables Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#) contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data
- the quality of the output, including the accuracy of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users
- how the output was created

Our national life tables use a complete life table methodology and should be used by anyone making national comparisons of life expectancy. We also publish subnational life expectancies, which use an abridged life table method. National life expectancy estimates are produced as part of our subnational life expectancy release, [Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023 bulletin](#). These will differ slightly to those published in the national life tables because of the different methodologies used. They are published to allow users to compare subnational and national life expectancies produced on the same basis. The [Life Expectancy releases and their different uses](#) article provides more information on the various statistics on life expectancy published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

We have published our [Single year life tables dataset](#) alongside our three-year life tables to meet user need for these data. Single year life tables are suited for analyses that require annual data and need more detailed information about mortality patterns. They can give a more granular and up-to-date perspective on whether mortality patterns are improving, worsening, or staying in equilibrium than our three-year average life tables.

However, single year life tables show figures that are typically more volatile than three-year average life tables. This is particularly the case recently, because of the mortality associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This makes single year life tables a less robust indicator of mortality trends. For this reason, they should not be used alone to draw conclusions about longer-term trends. Additionally, smaller populations, such as the UK constituent nations other than England, are more prone to short-term volatility because single events can have a large effect on an already small population.

Our [Period and cohort life expectancy explained methodology](#) describes the two types of life expectancy: period and cohort. We have recently published projections of cohort life expectancy in our [Past and projected period and cohort life tables: 2022-based, UK, 1981 to 2072 bulletin](#). These projected life expectancies take account of assumed improvements in mortality into the future.

Accredited official statistics

These [accredited official statistics](#) were independently reviewed by the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) in April 2011. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

4 . Related links

[Estimates of the very old, including centenarians, UK: 2002 to 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 March 2025

Annual mid-year population estimates for people aged 90 years and over by sex and single year of age to 105 years and over, and comparisons between UK countries.

[Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 4 December 2024

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

[Life expectancy in Scotland](#)

National Records of Scotland web page

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

[Past and projected data from the period and cohort life tables: 2022-based, UK, 1981 to 2072](#)

Bulletin | Released 14 February 2025

Life expectancy (e), probability of dying (q) and number of persons surviving (l) from the period and cohort life tables, using past and projected mortality data from the 2022-based national population projections (NPPs), for the UK and constituent countries.

[Life expectancy calculator](#)

Interactive tool | Released 14 February 2025

Use our interactive calculator to find out average life expectancy and the likelihood of living to be aged 100 years for someone of your age and sex.

[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.

5 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 18 March 2025, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2021 to 2023](#)