Statistical bulletin

Healthy life expectancy, UK: between 2011 to 2013 and 2022 to 2024

The number of years people are expected to spend in “good” general health in the UK, including subnational areas.

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To be announced

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1 . Main points

In 2022 to 2024:

- Males in the UK could expect to spend 60.7 years (77% of life) in "good" general health, compared with 60.9 years (73%) for females; these were decreases of 1.8 and 2.5 years, respectively, compared with the last non-overlapping period (2019 to 2021).
- Despite modest increases in life expectancy since 2019 to 2021, healthy life expectancy (HLE) at birth in the UK, for both males and females, decreased to its lowest level since our time series began in 2011 to 2013.
- England continued to have the highest HLE at birth among UK constituent countries for both males (60.9 years) and females (61.3 years); Scotland had the lowest for males (59.1 years) and Wales had the lowest for females (58.5 years).
- In England, for both males and females, the South East remained the region with the highest HLE at birth (63.0 and 64.3 years, respectively), and the North East remained the region with lowest (57.0 and 56.9 years, respectively); the North East has had the lowest HLE at birth in every period since our time series began.
- HLE decreased in most of the UK's local areas compared with 2019 to 2021 (in 83% of areas for males and 88% for females); it decreased in a majority of areas within every constituent country and every region of England.
- The gap in HLE at birth across local areas of the UK, measured as the difference between the 97.5th and 2.5th percentiles, was 14.7 years for males and 15.8 years for females; this continued a trend of increasing spatial inequality since the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This release is designated as official statistics in development because of decreasing Annual Population Survey sample sizes. Uncertainty around our estimates is reflected in our 95% confidence intervals. More information is available in Section 6: Data sources and quality.

2 . Healthy life expectancy at national and regional levels

Healthy life expectancy in 2022 to 2024

This bulletin provides commentary on healthy life expectancy at birth. Healthy life expectancy at other ages, and the time series, can be found in our accompanying datasets.

In 2022 to 2024, healthy life expectancy (HLE) at birth in the UK was 60.7 years for males and 60.9 years for females (Figure 1). Males were expected to spend 77% of life in "good" general health, while females were expected to spend 73%.

Among constituent countries of the UK, England had the highest HLE for both males (60.9 years) and females (61.3 years). Scotland had the lowest HLE for males (59.1 years), while Wales had the lowest for females (58.5 years) (Figure 1).

Males in Northern Ireland were expected to spend the greatest proportion of life in "good" general health (77%), with the smallest proportion for males observed in Wales (76%). Wales also had the smallest proportion for females (71%), while England and Northern Ireland had the joint-greatest proportion (74%) (Figure 1).

These estimates of HLE in Northern Ireland use different methods and data sources compared with those produced by the Northern Ireland Department of Health. For more information, please see their Health inequalities annual report 2025.

Figure 1: In 2022 to 2024, for both males and females, healthy life expectancy decreased compared with 2019 to 2021, with the largest decreases observed in Wales

Healthy life expectancy at birth by sex, UK and constituent countries, 2019 to 2021 and 2022 to 2024

Notes

1. 95% confidence intervals are a measure of uncertainty around each estimate; for more information, see Section 5: Glossary.

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In England, there continued to be a clear geographical divide. HLE at birth was highest in southern regions and lowest in northern regions, with a similar pattern for both sexes. The South East, London, and the South West had the highest HLE, whereas the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North West had the lowest (Figure 2).

Figure 2: In 2022 to 2024, compared with 2019 to 2021, healthy life expectancy among females decreased by over two years in every region of England except London

Healthy life expectancy at birth by sex, English regions, 2019 to 2021 and 2022 to 2024

Notes

1. 95% confidence intervals are a measure of uncertainty around each estimate; for more information, see Section 5: Glossary.
2. Geographical boundaries are correct as of August 2025.

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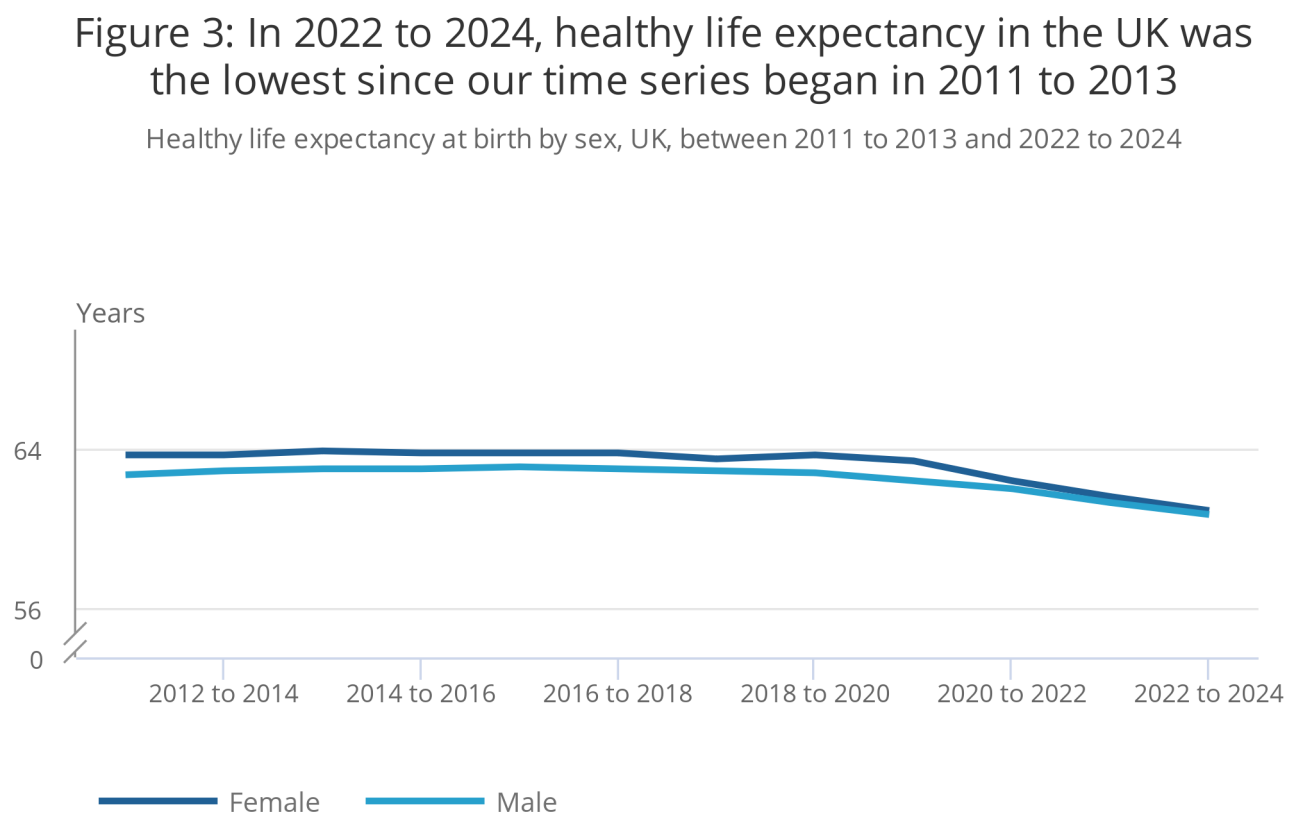
Trends in healthy life expectancy

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to increased mortality during 2020, 2021 and 2022; some negative impact remains in the latest reporting period (2022 to 2024). See Section 6: Data sources and quality for more information.

Despite modest increases in life expectancy since the last non-overlapping period (2019 to 2021), HLE in the UK continued to decrease in 2022 to 2024, to the lowest levels since our time series began in 2011 to 2013 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: In 2022 to 2024, healthy life expectancy in the UK was the lowest since our time series began in 2011 to 2013

Healthy life expectancy at birth by sex, UK, between 2011 to 2013 and 2022 to 2024



Source: Healthy life expectancy, UK from the Office for National Statistics

Compared with 2019 to 2021, HLE decreased by 1.8 years for males and by 2.5 years for females (Figure 1). Both sexes were therefore expected to spend a smaller proportion of life in "good" general health. This decreased by 2.6 percentage points among males, and by 3.3 percentage points among females.

In line with the UK-wide trend, HLE decreased for both sexes in England, Scotland and Wales (Figure 1). Wales had the largest decreases, of 2.2 years for males and 3.3 years for females. The decreases in Northern Ireland were more uncertain; please see our accompanying dataset for the confidence intervals around each estimate, and Section 5: Glossary for more information on confidence intervals.

We estimate that HLE also decreased for both sexes in every English region, although some decreases for males were more uncertain (Figure 2). The North West had the largest decrease among males, of 2.7 years. Among females, HLE decreased by over two years in every region except London. The South West, despite being among the regions with the highest HLE, had the largest decrease among females, of 3.6 years.

3 . Healthy life expectancy in local areas of the UK

Local-level healthy life expectancy in 2022 to 2024

In England, in 2022 to 2024, the local areas with the highest healthy life expectancy (HLE) at birth were concentrated in London and the South East. Richmond upon Thames had the highest HLE for both males (69.3 years) and females (70.3 years), while Sutton had the second highest for males (68.3 years) and Wokingham had the second highest for females (69.4 years).

The English areas with the lowest HLE were more spread across regions. For both males and females, the areas with the lowest HLE were Blackpool (50.9 and 51.8 years, respectively), Hartlepool (52.1 and 51.2 years, respectively) and Sandwell (52.7 and 51.3 years, respectively). Blackpool has had the lowest male HLE across the entire UK since 2016 to 2018.

In Northern Ireland, Lisburn and Castlereagh (65.5 years for males, 65.8 years for females) and Mid Ulster (65.4 years for males, 65.9 years for females) had the highest HLE, while Derry City and Strabane (54.9 and 54.2 years, respectively) and Belfast (56.9 and 56.6 years, respectively) had the lowest.

Figure 4: In 2022 to 2024, the areas with the highest healthy life expectancy were concentrated in London and the South East of England, while areas with the lowest were more spread out

Healthy life expectancy at birth by sex across local areas of the UK, between 2011 to 2013 and 2022 to 2024

Notes

1. Local areas include upper-tier local authorities in England, local government districts in Northern Ireland, council areas in Scotland, and unitary authorities in Wales.
2. Estimates for Northern Ireland's local government districts are available only from 2014 to 2016 onward.
3. Estimates for Isles of Scilly and City of London are excluded because of insufficient population counts.
4. Geographical boundaries are correct as of August 2025.

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Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands had the highest HLE in Scotland for both males and females. These estimates, however, were very uncertain; please see our accompanying dataset for the confidence intervals around each estimate, and Section 5: Glossary for more information on confidence intervals. East Renfrewshire had the next highest HLE, at 67.9 years for males and 68.7 years for females, while North Lanarkshire (52.9 and 52.3 years, respectively) and West Dunbartonshire (53.2 and 53.0 years, respectively) had the lowest.

In Wales, for both males and females, Powys (64.2 and 63.8 years, respectively), Ceredigion (63.3 and 63.2 years, respectively) and Monmouthshire (63.2 and 63.5 years, respectively) had the highest HLE. The areas with the lowest HLE were Merthyr Tydfil (51.7 years and 50.1 years, respectively) and Torfaen (54.1 years and 52.8 years, respectively). Merthyr Tydfil had the lowest female HLE across the entire UK.

Trends in local-level healthy life expectancy

Compared with 2019 to 2021, healthy life expectancy at birth decreased in a large majority of the UK's local areas (83% of areas for males, 88% for females) (Figure 5). This trend was apparent across England, Scotland and Wales, but was more varied in Northern Ireland.

Figure 5: In 2022 to 2024, healthy life expectancy decreased compared with 2019 to 2021 in a large majority of the UK’s local areas

Change in healthy life expectancy at birth by sex, local areas of the UK, between 2019 to 2021 and 2022 to 2024

Notes

1. Local areas include upper-tier local authorities in England, local government districts in Northern Ireland, council areas in Scotland, and unitary authorities in Wales.

2. Changes in healthy life expectancy are calculated using unrounded figures.

3. Geographical boundaries are correct as of August 2025.

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HLE also decreased for both males and females in a majority of local areas within every region of England. In both the North West and South West, HLE decreased in every local area for both sexes. A more varied trend was observed in London, which contained areas with both the largest decreases and largest increases, demonstrating that trends in HLE can be highly localised.

In England, Haringey had the largest decrease in HLE for both males (of 7.3 years) and females (of 9.3 years), while Croydon had the largest increases (of 4.2 years for both sexes). Notable decreases (of 7.2 and 7.5 years, respectively) were observed in Rutland, which had been among the areas with the highest HLE across most of the time series.

Derry City and Strabane had the largest decreases in Northern Ireland for both males and females (of 2.8 and 4.4 years, respectively), while the largest increases were in Mid Ulster (of 2.3 years and 1.9 years, respectively).

In Scotland, the largest decreases were observed in East Lothian for males (of 4.4 years) and in Stirling for females (of 5.7 years). Shetland Islands and East Renfrewshire had the largest increases, but the estimates for Shetland Islands were very uncertain; please see our accompanying dataset for the confidence intervals around each estimate, and Section 5: Glossary for more information on confidence intervals.

Merthyr Tydfil had the largest decreases in Wales (of 5.2 years for males and 6.8 years for females). Caerphilly and Vale of Glamorgan had the only increases for males (of 1.0 and 0.4 years, respectively), while no increases were observed for females.

Gap in healthy life expectancy across local areas

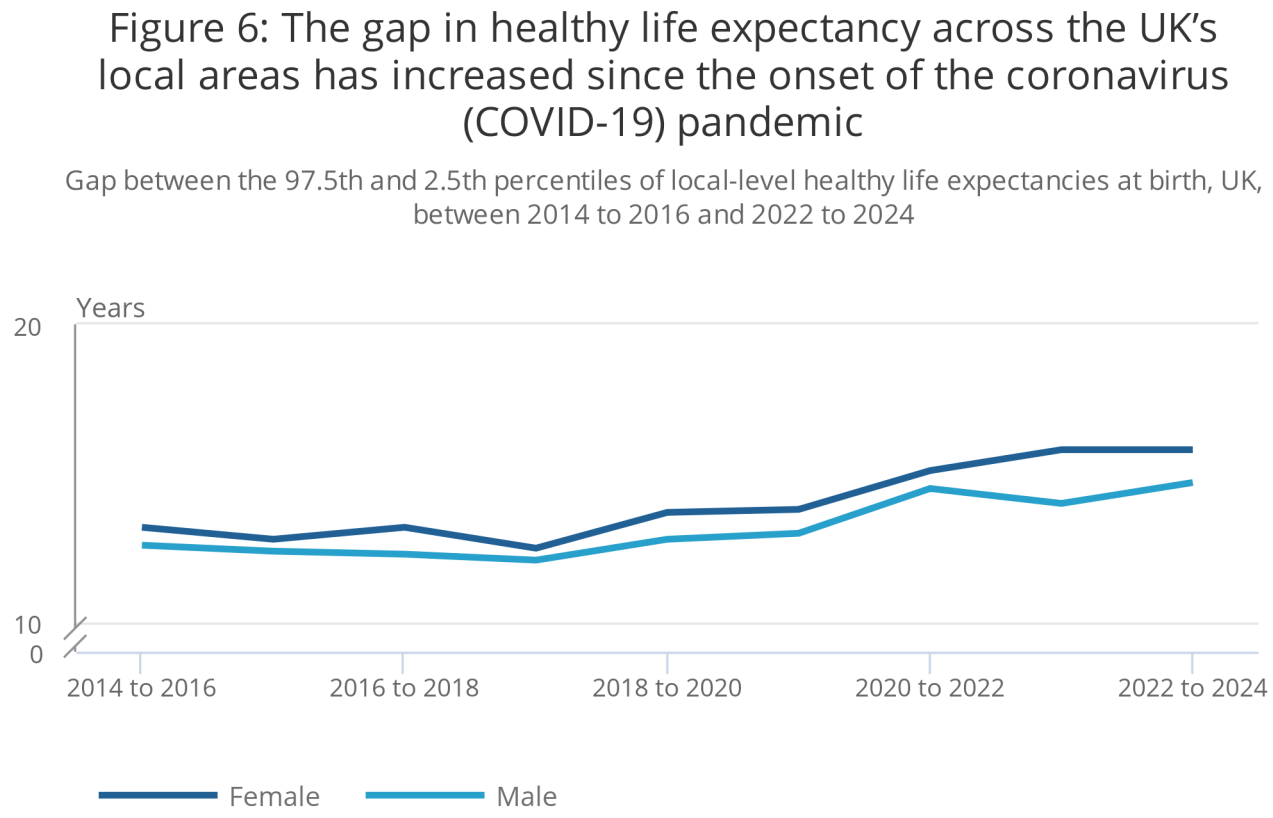
The gap in HLE at birth across local areas of the UK is measured as the difference between the 97.5th and 2.5th percentiles, to exclude extreme outliers.

In 2022 to 2024, the gap stood at 14.7 years for males and 15.8 years for females. Since our time series began in 2011 to 2013, this was the largest gap yet observed for males, and the joint-largest for females (Figure 6).

Having narrowed slightly in the periods preceding the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the gap widened substantially in the periods since. Compared with 2017 to 2019, the gap has increased by 2.5 years for males and by 3.3 years for females.

Figure 6: The gap in healthy life expectancy across the UK's local areas has increased since the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Gap between the 97.5th and 2.5th percentiles of local-level healthy life expectancies at birth, UK, between 2014 to 2016 and 2022 to 2024



Source: Healthy life expectancy, UK from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Local areas include upper-tier local authorities in England, local government districts in Northern Ireland, council areas in Scotland, and unitary authorities in Wales.

2. Periods before 2014 to 2016 are excluded because data for Northern Ireland's local government districts are not available.

4 . Data on Healthy life expectancy, UK

Healthy life expectancy, UK
Dataset | Released 19 February 2026
Healthy life expectancy by age, sex and geographical area for three-year periods, starting from 2011 to 2013.

Inputs for calculating health life expectancy, UK
Dataset | Released 19 February 2026
Census-based adjustment factors, census-based "good" health prevalence and modelled "good" health prevalence used for calculating healthy life expectancy in the UK.

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 they experienced the area's age-specific mortality rates for that time-period throughout their lives. More information can be found in our Period and cohort life expectancy explained methodology.

Healthy life expectancy

A summary measure of health that adds a quality dimension to estimates of life expectancy by dividing expected lifespan into time spent in different states of health. Healthy life expectancy measures health-related wellbeing and represents the average time an individual is expected to live in "very good" or "good" general health, based on how individuals perceive their general health.

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. Confidence intervals around healthy life expectancy estimates are calculated from the variance of health state prevalence. Confidence intervals can be found in our accompanying datasets.

6 . Data sources and quality

This bulletin includes estimates of healthy life expectancy in the UK at national and subnational level. It provides commentary on estimates for upper-tier local authorities in the UK. These are:

- England – unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, non-metropolitan districts, London boroughs
- Northern Ireland – local government districts
- Scotland – council areas
- Wales – unitary authorities

Estimates for other levels of geography, including combined authorities and health boards, are available in our accompanying datasets.

Data sources

Our life expectancy estimates use death registrations data held by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Mid-year population estimates by age, sex and geographical area are used in combination with death registrations to calculate age-specific mortality rates used in life tables.

Period life expectancies for the following periods are calculated using death registrations for years that include the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period:

- 2018 to 2020
- 2019 to 2021
- 2020 to 2022
- 2021 to 2023
- 2022 to 2024

In addition, healthy life expectancy uses data collected as part of the Annual Population Survey (APS) (PDF, 689KB). It also uses data from the 2011, 2021 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and 2022 (Scotland) censuses to obtain health state prevalence rates. The method requires imputation and modelling because survey data are not routinely collected for those aged under 16 years, and only sparsely for those aged 85 years and over. For this reason, data from the censuses are also used to produce imputation adjustment factors and health state prevalence. These figures are available in our accompanying datasets.

Method for estimating healthy life expectancy

Healthy life expectancy estimates reported in this bulletin are period-based and estimated using a tool known as a Sullivan life table (PDF, 928KB). A Sullivan life table is an extension to the abridged life table, partitioning the years lived in "good" health and "not good" health in grouped ages. 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. Our Life expectancy estimates templateshows how the abridged life table is used to derive life expectancy estimates.

The differences in healthy 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.

Quality and methodology information

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our Healthy life expectancy quality and methods guide.

Official statistics in development

The estimates in our current release are official statistics in development because, as explained in this open letter, published on the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) website the accredited official statistics status of ONS outputs using Annual Population Survey (APS) data has been suspended. This release uses a new methodology to estimate the prevalence of "good" health to reduce the effect of the recent decrease in the APS's sample size. More information can be found in our Estimating "good" health prevalence for use in healthy life expectancy outputs article.

7 . Related links

Life expectancy for local areas of the UK: between 2001 to 2003 and 2022 to 2024
Statistical bulletin | Released 10 December 2025
Subnational trends in period life expectancy, a measure of the average number of years people will live beyond their current age.

National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2022 to 2024
Statistical bulletin | Released 10 December 2025
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.

Healthy life expectancy by national area deprivation, England and Wales: between 2013 to 2015 and 2020 to 2022
Statistical bulletin | Released 4 July 2025
Life expectancy and years expected to live in "good" health, using national indices of deprivation to measure socioeconomic inequalities in England.

Estimating good health prevalence for use in healthy life expectancy outputs
Methodology | 12 December 2024
Application of a new interim modelling approach which estimates the probability of general health status for use in health state life expectancy publications.

Healthy life expectancy, 2022-2024
Report | Released 19 February 2026
The latest estimates of healthy life expectancy in Scotland.

Health inequalities annual report 2025
Report | Released 10 September 2025
Analysis of health inequality gaps between the most and least deprived areas of Northern Ireland across a range of health indicators.

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 19 February 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, Healthy life expectancy, UK: between 2011 to 2013 and 2022 to 2024.