

Life Expectancy at Birth

Expectation of life at birth, 2002-2004

On 10 November 2005, the Office for National Statistics released *expectation of life at birth* figures for 2002-2004. These were published for all health and local authorities in the UK, and for regions and countries. Life expectancies are calculated based on the resident population and the number of births in a given geographic area.

Nationally, expectation of life at birth has increased over the last decade; for UK males there has been an increase of 2.57 years between 1992-94 and 2002-04, while for females the increase has been 1.60 years. In spite of the larger rise in life expectancy for males, females are still expected to live longer – 80.69 years compared with 76.25 years for men. However, the gender gap is closing. In 1992-94 female life expectancy was 5.41 years greater than that for males; in 2002-04 this gap has reduced to 4.44 years.

For both males and females, the lowest expectation of life at birth is found in Scotland, where the life expectancy is lower by quite some margin than the next lowest, Wales.

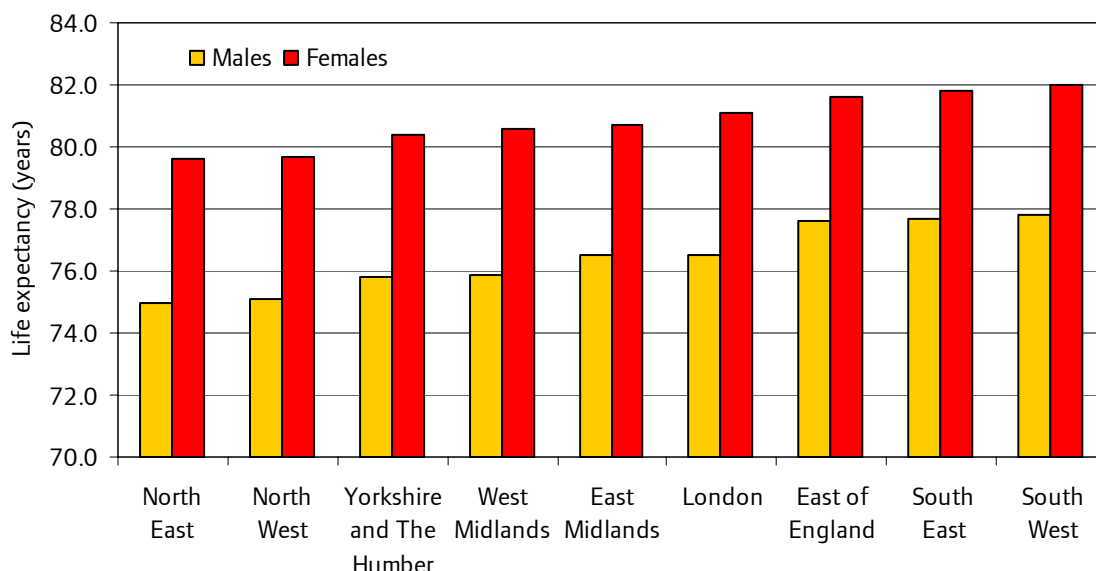
Table 1: Life expectancy at birth, UK and constituent countries

	UK	England & Wales	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Males						
1992-1994	73.68	73.91	74.02	73.44	71.70	73.00
2002-2004	76.25	76.45	76.55	75.81	73.79	75.88
Change	2.57	2.54	2.53	2.37	2.09	2.88
Females						
1992-1994	79.09	79.29	79.37	79.00	77.35	78.80
2002-2004	80.69	80.83	80.91	80.31	79.03	80.58
Change	1.60	1.54	1.54	1.31	1.68	1.78

Source: © Office for National Statistics, Health and Care

Within England, the lowest life expectancies are in the North of England, while the highest are in the South. In the North East expectation of life at birth is 75.0 years for males and 79.6 years for females, while in the South West it is 77.8 and 82.0 years respectively. All regions have seen increases in life expectancy over the decade, the largest being in London for males (2.9 years) and in the North East for females (1.8 years).

Chart 1: Life expectancy at birth by region, 2002-04



As with the UK as a whole, the gender gap is closing for all regions. The greatest difference between male and female life expectancies occurs in the West Midlands at 4.7 years, however, in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and London the difference is only slightly lower at 4.6 years. London has seen the greatest reduction in the gender gap – falling 1.3 years from 5.9 years.

Across local authority areas, the lowest expectation of life at birth is found in Manchester (in the North West region) – 72.3 years for males and 77.9 years for females. Kensington and Chelsea has the highest life expectancy for both males (80.8 years) and females (85.8 years), however for males this is shared with East Dorset (South West).

Since 1992-94 all local authorities have seen an increase in life expectancy, with the exception of Stevenage (East), Blackpool (North West) and Bolsover (East Midlands) where the life expectancy of women fell by 1.2, 0.3 and 0.2 years respectively, and Hounslow and Basildon (East) where there was no change. The smallest rise in life expectancy for men was in Ashfield (East Midlands) – 0.4 years.

The largest increase in life expectancy was in Kensington and Chelsea – 7.5 years for males and 5.9 years for females. The gender gap in Kensington and Chelsea still remains large, even given the high increase in male life expectancy – 5.0 years. These high increases are significantly higher than the next highest – 5.6 years for men in Westminster and 3.7 years for women in Harlow (East).

The GLA produces life tables, and hence figures for expectation of life at birth, for use in GLA work, in particular the projection models. These calculations are based on ONS figures for deaths and the mid-year estimates of population. The most recent GLA calculations were produced in early 2005, for the period 2000-02 (full details of the results and explanation of the methods of calculation are available in *DMAG Briefing 2005-10 Borough Life Tables 2000-02*). On the whole, the ONS life expectancies are higher than those produced by the GLA, however, much of that can be explained by the difference in time period; the increase in expectation of life is a general trend.

Overall for London, the difference between the ONS and GLA life expectancies is greater for males than for females – ONS figures are 0.6 and 0.3 years higher than the GLA figures, for males and females respectively. The largest difference, by quite some margin, is in Kensington and Chelsea; ONS figures show life expectancies to be 2.2 years higher for males, and 1.8 years higher for females. For all other boroughs, the difference between the ONS and GLA figures is much smaller – 1 year or less – with the exception of the males in Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Camden (ONS is 1.1 years higher). In fact, in the majority of cases, the difference was less than half a year. In seven boroughs the GLA figures were higher than the ONS, for either male or female life expectancies. The largest difference was in Barking and Dagenham where the expectation of life at birth was 0.5 years higher for females in the GLA calculations.

Fully detailed tables of data for the UK and constituent countries, Government Office Regions and local and health authorities are available through the ONS website, as well as the November 10 2005 Press Release and information on the methodology used;

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=8841>

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lifexp1105.pdf>

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_other/GSSMethodology_No_33.pdf

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