

Life Expectancy at Birth: 2006-08

Background

On October 21st 2009 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released local authority life expectancies at birth and at age 65 based on mortality data for 2006-08, with annual data back to 1991-93. National Interim Life Tables 2006-08 for the UK and constituent countries were also released. The data for 2006-08 have been based on the ONS mid-2007 population estimates. Full data and supporting documentation for both sets of data are available at the following links:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14459>

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

This *Update* presents the main national, London, regional and London borough results and looks at change over the past decade in life expectancy at birth for males and females separately.

Results

For the UK, expectation of life at birth has increased over the last decade; for males there has been an increase of 3.0 years between 1996-98 and 2006-08 to reach 77.5 years, while for females the increase has been more modest at 2.1 years, reaching 81.7 years. In 1996-98 female life expectancy was 5.1 years more than for males; in 2006-08 this gap had closed to 4.2 years. At national level for both males and females the highest expectancies were seen in England and the lowest in Scotland.

Within England the highest life expectancies are in the south. The South East, South West, East and London have both male and female expectancies that are higher than those for England as a whole. Expectation of life is lowest in the North West at only 76.3 years for males and 80.6 years for females – the latter being shared with the North East. However even these levels are higher than those for Scotland. The highest regional life expectancies are in the South East for males (79.2 years) and in the South West for females (83.1 years). The inter-regional differences in England in 2006-08 were therefore 2.9 years for males and 2.5 years for females. Life expectancy in London has risen by 3.7 years for males to 78.2 years. For females the rise is 2.7 years to 82.7 years. For both males and females London has higher life expectancies than each of the home countries.

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 2006-08 is higher than the highest regional value in 1996-98. The regional differentials between male and female life expectancy have closed by between 0.7 and 1.1 years. The 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 closed by the second greatest amount after the North East. However the gender gap is still greatest in London.

Table 1: Life Expectancy at Birth (years): UK, constituent countries and Greater London: 1996-98 and 2006-08

		United Kingdom	England & Wales	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Greater London
Males	1996-98	74.52	74.74	74.84	74.22	72.43	74.19	74.5
	2006-08	77.53	77.82	77.93	76.98	75.04	76.42	78.2
	Change	3.01	3.08	3.09	2.76	2.61	2.23	3.7
Females	1996-98	79.60	79.76	79.84	79.30	78.06	79.55	80.0
	2006-08	81.74	81.95	82.02	81.37	79.92	81.26	82.7
	Change	2.14	2.19	2.18	2.07	1.86	1.71	2.7
Difference	1996-98	5.08	5.02	5.00	5.08	5.63	5.36	5.5
	2006-08	4.21	4.13	4.09	4.39	4.88	4.84	4.5
	Change	-0.87	-0.89	-0.91	-0.69	-0.75	-0.52	-1.0

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Table 2: Life Expectancy at Birth (years): English regions: 1996-98 and 2006-08

	Males			Females			Difference		
	1996-98	2006-08	Change	1996-98	2006-08	Change	1996-98	2006-08	Change
North East	73.2	76.5	3.3	78.4	80.6	2.2	5.2	4.1	-1.1
North West	73.4	76.3	2.9	78.5	80.6	2.1	5.1	4.3	-0.8
Yorkshire and The Humber	74.2	77.1	2.9	79.3	81.3	2.0	5.1	4.2	-0.9
East Midlands	74.9	77.8	2.9	79.8	81.8	2.0	4.9	4.0	-0.9
West Midlands	74.5	77.2	2.7	79.6	81.6	2.0	5.1	4.4	-0.7
East of England	76.1	78.9	2.8	80.7	82.8	2.1	4.6	3.9	-0.7
London	74.5	78.2	3.7	80.0	82.7	2.7	5.5	4.5	-1.0
South East	76.1	79.2	3.1	80.7	83.0	2.3	4.6	3.8	-0.8
South West	76.1	79.0	2.9	81.0	83.1	2.1	4.9	4.1	-0.8

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Highlighted values are the highest in the column (most negative in the final column).

Across all local authority areas the lowest expectation of life in England and Wales for males is found in Blackpool (73.6 years) and the highest in Kensington & Chelsea (84.3 years). For females the lowest expectation of life is in Blaenau Gwent (78.8 years) with the highest also in Kensington & Chelsea (88.9 years). Glasgow has the lowest values of all UK authorities: 70.7 years for males and 77.2 years for females.

Table 3: Life Expectancy at Birth (years): London boroughs¹ : 1996-98 and 2006-08

	Males			Females			Difference		
	1996-98	2006-08	Change	1996-98	2006-08	Change	1996-98	2006-08	Change
Barking and Dagenham	73.2	76.4	3.2	79.0	80.6	1.6	5.8	4.2	-1.6
Barnet	76.5	79.9	3.4	80.6	84.0	3.4	4.1	4.1	0.0
Bexley	75.9	79.1	3.2	80.4	82.7	2.3	4.5	3.6	-0.9
Brent	74.4	78.9	4.5	80.3	84.0	3.7	5.9	5.1	-0.8
Bromley	76.7	79.7	3.0	81.1	83.6	2.5	4.4	3.9	-0.5
Camden	73.1	77.8	4.7	80.4	82.6	2.2	7.3	4.8	-2.5
Croydon	75.5	78.9	3.4	80.0	82.2	2.2	4.5	3.3	-1.2
Ealing	74.6	78.7	4.1	79.8	83.1	3.3	5.2	4.4	-0.8
Enfield	75.4	78.8	3.4	81.1	82.7	1.6	5.7	3.9	-1.8
Greenwich	73.3	75.4	2.1	78.6	81.7	3.1	5.3	6.3	1.0
Hackney	72.6	75.9	3.3	79.6	82.2	2.6	7.0	6.3	-0.7
Hammersmith and Fulham	72.8	78.3	5.5	79.5	84.3	4.8	6.7	6.0	-0.7
Haringey	73.4	76.3	2.9	79.7	83.1	3.4	6.3	6.8	0.5
Harrow	76.6	80.4	3.8	81.7	84.2	2.5	5.1	3.8	-1.3
Havering	75.3	78.5	3.2	80.3	82.5	2.2	5.0	4.0	-1.0
Hillingdon	75.5	78.1	2.6	80.0	83.2	3.2	4.5	5.1	0.6
Hounslow	74.6	77.4	2.8	79.8	81.6	1.8	5.2	4.2	-1.0
Islington	72.6	75.1	2.5	79.5	81.0	1.5	6.9	5.9	-1.0
Kensington and Chelsea	75.5	84.3	8.8	81.4	88.9	7.5	5.9	4.6	-1.3
Kingston upon Thames	76.2	80.0	3.8	80.8	83.3	2.5	4.6	3.3	-1.3
Lambeth	72.0	75.7	3.7	79.0	81.0	2.0	7.0	5.3	-1.7
Lewisham	72.5	76.2	3.7	78.1	81.0	2.9	5.6	4.8	-0.8
Merton	75.8	79.9	4.1	80.7	83.4	2.7	4.9	3.5	-1.4
Newham	71.8	75.8	4.0	78.3	80.4	2.1	6.5	4.6	-1.9
Redbridge	76.1	79.0	2.9	80.7	82.6	1.9	4.6	3.6	-1.0
Richmond upon Thames	76.5	80.3	3.8	81.6	84.3	2.7	5.1	4.0	-1.1
Southwark	72.9	77.2	4.3	78.8	82.4	3.6	5.9	5.2	-0.7
Sutton	75.7	79.0	3.3	80.1	82.6	2.5	4.4	3.6	-0.8
Tower Hamlets	72.0	75.3	3.3	78.5	80.4	1.9	6.5	5.1	-1.4
Waltham Forest	74.0	76.5	2.5	79.7	81.2	1.5	5.7	4.7	-1.0
Wandsworth	73.7	77.5	3.8	79.2	81.5	2.3	5.5	4.0	-1.5
Westminster	74.6	82.9	8.3	80.8	85.8	5.0	6.2	2.9	-3.3

¹ City of London excluded from results because of the small number of deaths and the small population.

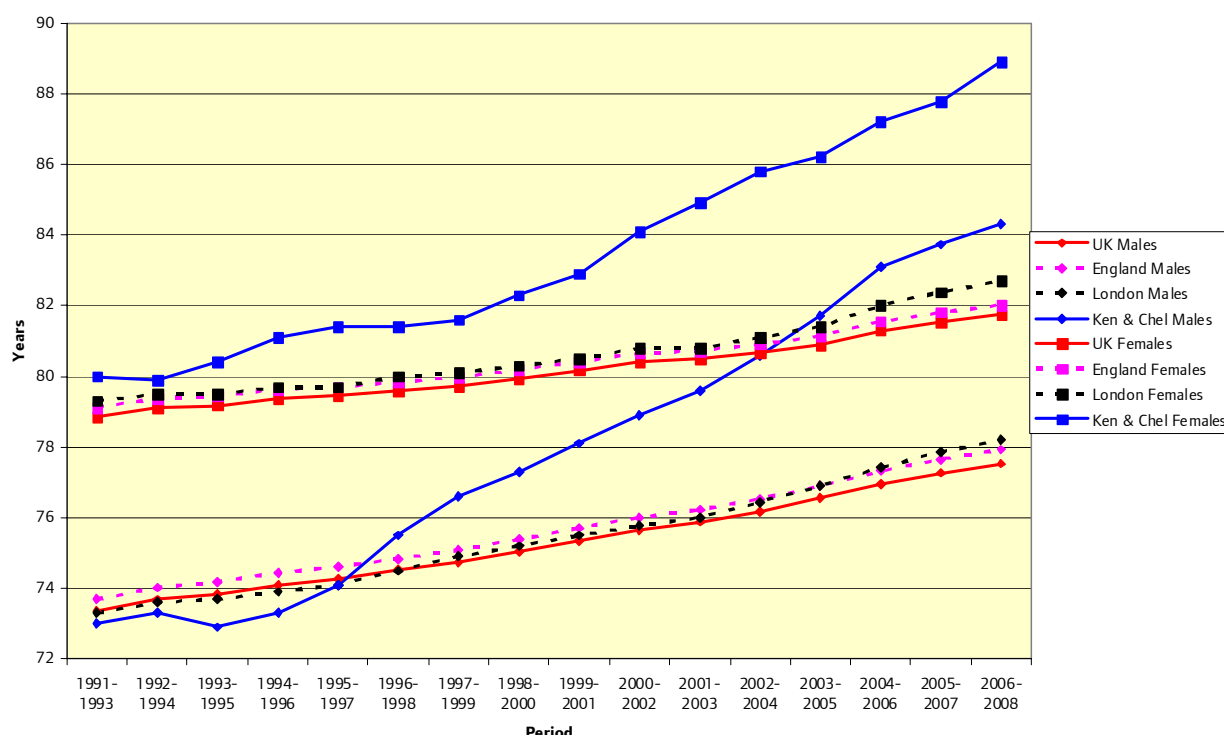
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Highlighted values are the highest in the column (most negative in the final column).

Since 1996-98 all London boroughs have seen increases in life expectancy for both males and females. For males in Kensington & Chelsea the expectation of life has risen by an estimated 8.8 years in ten years, nearly three times the national average change and over twice that of London as a whole. Chart 1 compares the trends in Kensington & Chelsea with those of London, England and the UK and shows the variance of the trends in the Royal Borough from those in other areas for both males and females.

Life expectancy estimates are dependent upon the accuracy of both the mortality data and the ONS mid-year population estimates that underpin the mortality rates. 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. This is not to say that life expectancy has not improved in Kensington & Chelsea since 1996-98 but there could also be problems with the consistency of the population estimates at older ages and the deaths assigned to the borough. Older people moving to care establishments outside the borough late in life, leaving a relatively very healthy elderly population, would not have their deaths assigned to Kensington & Chelsea if they had left the borough more than 6 months earlier.

Chart 1: Male and Female Life Expectancy at Birth (years): UK, England, London and Kensington & Chelsea: 1991-93 to 2006-08



The extent of the estimated change in life expectancy in some other boroughs is also impressive. For males, both Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster have shown increases since 2000-02 that are the top two in England and Wales and are over 4 standard deviations above the mean of all local authorities. For females, Kensington & Chelsea and Haringey have seen the most rapid increases in England and Wales with the former being over 5 standard deviations above the mean rate of change and the latter nearly 3 standard deviations above. On the other hand, the rates of improvement for Greenwich (males) and Barking & Dagenham (females) are the lowest in London. The improvement for Greenwich (males) is more than one standard deviation below the mean of all local authorities.