

Life Expectancy

Key facts for Somerset:-

- Nationally Life Expectancy had been going up steadily over the last 15 years. By 2017-19 life expectancy at birth for men was 79.8 years, up from 79.5 in 2014-6; for women life expectancy at birth was 83.4 years in 2017-19, up from 83.1 in 2014-16.
- In Somerset, Life Expectancy has followed the same general pattern. In 2017-19 life expectancy at birth was 84.5 years for women and 80.5 years for men, both slightly above the England figure.
- Disability free and healthy life expectancies have not kept pace with the general increase in overall life expectancy
- Both sexes are spending larger proportions of their lives in poorer health
- Women have a higher life expectancy than men but disability free and healthy life expectancies are similar for both sexes therefore women are likely to spend more of their life in poorer health.

Issues in detail

1. Life Expectancy

Life expectancy at birth is defined as the number of years a person living in an area could be expected to survive if they were to experience that area's mortality rates (for all people) for the rest of their life. Life expectancy is often calculated using three or five year rolling averages to eliminate any effects of unusually large or small numbers of deaths in any one year.

- In the past 16 years, life expectancy at birth in Somerset has increased by nearly years for men. Latest data indicates that a male born in Somerset between 2017 and 2019 can expect to live 80.5 (+/-0.3 years) years compared to 77.6 in 2001-03.
- A female born at the same time can expect to live to 84.1 years (+-0.3yrs). Life expectancies for both males and females in Somerset are around a year higher than national averages.

Source: [Public Health England – Public Health Outcomes Framework](#)

- The gap between male and female life expectancy is closing slowly. In the last decade in Somerset it has declined from 4.5 years (in 2001-03) to 4 years (in 2017-19).
- Life expectancies for the four Districts vary by about 0.7 years for men and 0.9 years for women.
- Sedgemoor has the lowest life expectancy for men and women
- Mendip has the highest life expectancy for men while South Somerset is highest for women.
- Life expectancy in Somerset can vary considerably from area to area. In the five-year period between 2012 and 2016, the range for men was 8.9 years and for women was 10.7 years. The areas with the highest and lowest life expectancies are as follows:-

MALES	MSOA code	MSOA area	Life Expectancy
Highest	E02006085	Yeovil North Eastern Outskirts	84.9
Lowest	E02006073	Bridgwater South	76.0

FEMALES

Highest	E02006070	Bridgwater Dunwear and Without	89.7
Lowest	E02006073	Bridgwater South	79.0

Source: Primary Care Mortality Database copyright © 2017, re-used with the permission of The Health & Social Care Information Centre. All rights reserved. ONS mid-year small area population estimates 2014-2016.

Further Information:

Public Health England have produced a [Segment Tool](#) which provides information on life expectancy and the causes of death that are driving inequalities in life expectancy at national, regional and local area levels. Targeting the causes of death which contribute most to the life expectancy gap should have the biggest impact on reducing inequalities. A summary report for each local authority showing the charts and tables can be downloaded (in PDF format).

2. Health Expectancies

Health expectancies add a quality of life dimension to estimates of life expectancy (LE) by dividing expected lifespan into time spent in different states of health or disability. Healthy life expectancy (HLE), which estimates lifetime spent in "Very good" or "Good" health, is based on how individuals perceive their general health. The second is disability-free life expectancy (DFLE), which estimates lifetime free from a limiting persistent illness or disability. This is based upon a self-rated assessment of how health conditions and illnesses limit an individual's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. ([ONS](#))

Revisions made to the way data about disability is captured mean that values before, after and including 2013 should not be directly compared. In effect the latest data (2014-2016) should be treated in isolation until newer data are published. This is largely due to a greater emphasis on mental health with mental health conditions explicitly mentioned in the relevant survey since April 2013.

In Somerset, though women have a higher life expectancy, the healthy and disability free life expectancies are relatively similar between the sexes.