



News Release

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LOCAL VARIATION IN AVOIDABLE DEATH RATES PUBLISHED

New website gives local figures for causes of early death

A new website showing significant variation in early death rates has been launched today to drive public awareness and local action to tackle public health problems.

Longer Lives, is a new Public Health England (PHE) website which allows local people to see easily information for local authority areas across Cumbria & Lancashire on early deaths from major killers, like heart disease, stroke and cancer, and how it varies across areas, and the country.

Using a traffic-light rating system, *Longer Lives* ranks areas showing those above average in tackling avoidable deaths as green, while those that still have more to do, are red.

The data and website will provide local areas with information on the number of premature deaths (under the age of 75) from each of England's four biggest killers – cancer, heart disease and stroke, lung disease and liver disease. Local areas will be able to use the data to help them understand their own position and better target efforts to improve the health of the people they serve.

The website contains a range of data that for the first time allows people to easily compare an area's mortality against areas with similar populations, incomes and levels of health. Overall it shows that the north of England has a higher risk of early death than the south, but when comparing areas of a similar socioeconomic status it reveals a more complex picture.

Prof Paul Johnstone, Regional Director for PHE in the North of England, said: "It's important to be clear that there are lots of reasons why discrepancies in levels of health exist. Lots of issues like being in a job, living in safe housing, good town planning with green spaces and leisure areas and access to good education all affect how healthy people are. One of the opportunities in moving public health from the NHS into local government, is to help tackle these wider issues.

"Not everything can be done locally either. Job creation, regeneration and policies on childhood poverty, alcohol consumption, tobacco, educational attainment and promoting healthy eating are also the responsibility of national government. Going forward, we need a joined up approach, across areas and nationally, to look at how by working together we can really turn things round.

“We have seen good inroads made already into driving down early deaths from some of these major killers and narrowing the inequalities gap in some parts of the North of England, but there is no doubt much more needs to be done. PHE in the north will now be supporting and looking at ways we can establish a collaboration with our key partners to address these issues together, involving the whole country where necessary and sharing good practice.”

Dr Jane Rossini, Director of the PHE Cumbria & Lancashire Centre, said: “Longer Lives will support local government in its new role as the champion for their public’s health. It presents a clear picture of health in local areas – where it is good and where there is more to do – so everyone involved can consider and agree how to make improvements from a common basis of the same information.

“The website goes further than just data – it also contains evidence of what needs to be done and case studies of what has been successful elsewhere. Longer Lives has the potential to make a real difference to the health of each and every community in Cumbria & Lancashire, and we’ll be working hard with local authorities and all our partners to bring about the changes we need.

“The evidence is clear - a person’s likelihood of dying prematurely from one of the top four killers varies widely between local authorities due to differences in risk factors, such as obesity, alcohol and smoking and that these are closely linked to economic deprivation.”

Local councils have been given a pivotal role in leading the local health and care system, through their Health and Well-being Boards, to improve the health of their local citizens. Their new public health role was part of the changes to the whole health system in April 2013, part of a move to empower local areas to make real change in people’s lives. To help them deliver these improvements the government has given them £5.46bn of funding.

The *Longer Lives* website provides examples of best practice from other local authorities, guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), and links to NHS Choices so that individuals, families and citizens can learn about these conditions and what they can do to improve their health.

This data is the first information to be rolled out as part of the Government’s plans to provide the public and health professionals in local areas with clear easy accessible information on how health and care services are doing in improving health outcomes wherever we live.

Notes to Editors

- To access the site immediately please visit: longerlives.phe.org.uk
Username: preview
Password: Longerlives1
Please note these details will give you immediate access but information on the site is under embargo until 00:01 on Tuesday 11 June.

- The data provided in *Longer Lives* is from the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF). This is the first time it has been published in this form, making the information easy to access, view and compare. It is also the first time it has been published alongside relevant supporting information, such as the intervention guidance provided by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).
- From May 2013 *Longer Lives* will undergo a process of continuous iteration adding new data and responding to feedback from health professionals and users.
- *Longer Lives* provides peer grouping so local authorities can compare their premature mortality rates with others of similar socioeconomic status. All local authorities are divided into ten groups (each containing fifteen local authorities) by their Index of Multiple Deprivation.

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