



# News Release

Embargoed 00.01 Tuesday 11 June 2013

## LOCAL VARIATION IN AVOIDABLE DEATH RATES PUBLISHED

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*, a new Public Health England (PHE) website, allows people to see local information for Wessex (incorporating Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Dorset) on early deaths from major killers like heart disease, stroke and cancer and how it varies across the area and the country.

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

The website contains a range of data that for the first time allows people to easily compare an area's rate of mortality against those 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.

In Wessex, the picture is mainly good across the seven local authority areas. There are some challenges, particularly in the urban areas, which are recognised and being addressed. It is also important to note that even within local authority areas which have been assessed to have less socio economic deprivation, there can be pockets of real health inequalities. For example:

- Hampshire is ranked in the top five of all 150 local authorities in the country for the lowest rate of deaths from heart disease and stroke and ranks in the top ten for rates of premature deaths overall. But within its category of 15 similar local authorities, rankings are lower for lung disease.
- Dorset ranks number one of 15 similar local authorities and in the top three in the country for its overall low rates of premature death and for low numbers of deaths from cancer, heart disease and stroke. But within its group of similar local authorities, rates of premature deaths linked to liver disease are assessed worse than average.
- Isle of Wight is in the top five of 15 similar local authorities for overall rates of premature deaths
- Bournemouth is in the top three of 15 similar local authority areas for overall death rates but rates of liver disease are assessed as worse than average in the whole country rankings.
- Portsmouth has particularly high levels of premature deaths linked to all major diseases and is ranked 104<sup>th</sup> out of 150 compared to all local authorities but in its

group of 15 similar authorities, it is rated better on heart disease and stroke, lung and liver disease.

- Southampton has particularly high rates of premature death overall and of early deaths linked to cancer among all 150 local authorities in the country. But within its group of 15 similar areas, it is rated better than average on premature deaths associated with heart disease and stroke and liver disease.

The data and website will provide local areas with information to help them understand their own position and better target efforts to improve the health of the people they serve.

Wessex Centre Director Dr Jim O'Brien 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 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.

"The website goes further than just data, it 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 Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Dorset. We'll be working hard with all the local authorities and the NHS across those counties to bring about the changes we need."

Local councils were given the leadership of public health in April 2013 as 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.

Leading the work of the local Health and Wellbeing Board with Clinical Commissioning Group partners, local councils have a pivotal role in piloting the local health and care system to improve the health of their local citizens.

The 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 and families 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.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

To access the site immediately please visit: [longerlives.erpho.org.uk](http://longerlives.erpho.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.**

- Rankings are made in the total 150 local authorities in the country and also in groups of 15 similar local authorities, judged to be similar based on their levels of socio economic deprivation.
- 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.
- For more information please contact the Department of Health on 0207 210 4990 or Public Health England on 0207 654 8400.

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