



News Release

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LOCAL VARIATION IN AVOIDABLE DEATH RATES PUBLISHED

Figures for the West Midlands on 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, a new Public Health England (PHE) website, allows people to easily see local information for the West Midlands 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 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.

Across the West Midlands, the picture is mixed with early death rates varying across the 14 county and unitary local authority areas. For example:

- Shropshire Council and Solihull Council have the lowest rates of heart disease and stroke related deaths in the West Midlands, ranked at 25th and 28th respectively – well below the national average.
- Within a group of 15 comparable local authorities with the same level of deprivation Dudley Council ranks 5th overall in the group and has lower rates of premature death than the group average.
- Herefordshire Council is in the top five local authorities in the country for the lowest rate of lung disease related deaths, ranking 4th out of 150 top tier local authorities.

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.

Dr Sue Ibbotson, West Midlands Centre Director said: “Longer Lives will support local government in its new role as the local leaders for people’s health in their area. It presents a clear picture of an important aspect of health in local areas – where the causes of avoidable death have been tackled 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, and 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 the West Midlands and we’ll be working hard with local authorities and the NHS 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 socioeconomic determinants.

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, 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.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. To access the site before its official launch on Tuesday, please visit:

Test site: **longerlives.erpho.org.uk**

User: preview

Password: Longerlives1

From Tuesday, when the site will be live, please visit: **longerlives.phe.org.uk**

2. 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).
3. From May 2013 *Longer Lives* will undergo a process of continuous iteration adding new data and responding to feedback from health professionals and users.
4. 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.
5. 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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