



London Health Observatory

London's Spearhead areas – progress towards the Health Inequalities National Target

Latest data from the Department of Health¹ reveals current progress on its Public Service Agreement target: by 2010 to reduce by at least 10 per cent the relative gap in life expectancy at birth between Spearhead areas and the population of England as a whole.

Spearhead areas are the fifth of local authorities with the worst health and deprivation scores. There are 70 Spearhead local authorities in England, including a third of London's boroughs.

Latest data for 2006-08 show that:

- Of the 11 Spearhead boroughs in London, 10 are on track to meet the target for males, or females, or both.
- Eight of London's Spearhead areas are on track for both sexes, one is on track just for males, and one is on track just for females.
- One London borough (Hammersmith and Fulham) has not just narrowed its life expectancy gap with England, but closed it completely. Life expectancy for both sexes is now higher than in England as a whole.
- Hackney, Haringey and Southwark have also closed their inequality gaps for females.
- Only one London borough (Islington) is not on track to meet the target for either sex.
- Of the 70 Spearhead local authorities in England, only 12 are on track to meet the target for both sexes and 8 of these are in London.

The tables below show which Spearhead London boroughs are on or off track to meet the health inequality target in 2010 (Table 1), and current life expectancy figures and absolute and relative gaps with the England average (Table 2).

Table 1 - Spearhead London Boroughs: Progress towards the national health inequality target

	On track to meet target in 2010?	
	Males	Females
Barking and Dagenham	On	Off
Greenwich	Off	On
Hackney	On	On
Hammersmith and Fulham	On	On
Haringey	On	On
Islington	Off	Off
Lambeth	On	On
Lewisham	On	On
Newham	On	On
Southwark	On	On
Tower Hamlets	On	On

Table 2 - Spearhead London Boroughs: Current life expectancy results and gaps with England average

	Life expectancy at birth 2006-2008 (years)		Relative gap in life expectancy		
	Spearhead London Boroughs	England	Absolute gap in life expectancy (years)	Baseline (1995-97)	2006-08
Males					
Barking and Dagenham	76.4	77.93	1.5	2.2%	2.0%
Greenwich	75.4	77.93	2.5	1.8%	3.2%
Hackney	75.9	77.93	2.0	3.6%	2.6%
Hammersmith and Fulham	78.3	77.93	-0.4	3.5%	..
Haringey	76.3	77.93	1.6	2.3%	2.1%
Islington	75.1	77.93	2.8	3.2%	3.6%
Lambeth	75.7	77.93	2.2	4.0%	2.9%
Lewisham	76.2	77.93	1.7	3.2%	2.2%
Newham	75.8	77.93	2.1	4.0%	2.7%
Southwark	77.2	77.93	0.7	3.1%	0.9%
Tower Hamlets	75.3	77.93	2.6	4.4%	3.4%
Females					
Barking and Dagenham	80.6	82.02	1.4	1.1%	1.7%
Greenwich	81.7	82.02	0.3	1.1%	0.4%
Hackney	82.2	82.02	-0.2	0.9%	..
Hammersmith and Fulham	84.3	82.02	-2.3	0.5%	..
Haringey	83.1	82.02	-1.1	1.0%	..
Islington	81.0	82.02	1.0	1.0%	1.2%
Lambeth	81.0	82.02	1.0	1.6%	1.2%
Lewisham	81.0	82.02	1.0	1.6%	1.2%
Newham	80.4	82.02	1.6	2.2%	2.0%
Southwark	82.4	82.02	-0.4	1.2%	..
Tower Hamlets	80.4	82.02	1.6	2.6%	2.0%

.. indicates that the life expectancy gap with England has been closed