

# Healthy Life Expectancy in Scotland

Update of trends to 2012

Publication date – 17 December 2013

## About this Release

This is the annual update of the Scotland-level estimates of [Healthy Life Expectancy \(HLE\)](#) on the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) website. The topic is presented in the ScotPHO style of web pages including text and downloadable Excel charts and tables. PDF files of the current (and archived) versions of the HLE text are also available on the [HLE Archive page](#).

The publication includes previously unpublished data on life expectancy (LE) and HLE for 2012 at Scotland level.

Note that HLE estimates for geographies such as NHS board and CHP area cannot be updated until after the 2011 Census data on self-assessed health are released. The next update for these geographies is expected to be Autumn 2014.

## Key Points

**Life expectancy (LE)** is an estimate of how many years a person might be expected to live, whereas **healthy life expectancy (HLE)** is an estimate of how many years they might live in a 'healthy' state. HLE is a key summary measure of a population's health.

- The most recent annual estimates for Scotland are for boys born in 2012 to live 76.9 years on average, 59.4 of these in a 'healthy' state. Girls born in 2012 would be expected to live 80.9 years on average, 62.0 of these years being 'healthy'.
- Underlying trends in both LE and HLE at birth show a general improvement in Scotland over recent years.
- There is a major discontinuity in the HLE series between 2008 and 2009 due to a change in methodology to align with the European Union. This results in estimates of HLE at birth from 2009 onwards being over eight years lower for each sex. These new estimates form the start of a new time trend.
- Time trends show that the gap between the sexes, in both LE and HLE at birth, has narrowed over time. For LE at birth the difference between males and females was 6.4 years in 1980, falling to 4.0 years in 2012. For HLE at birth, the difference between males and females was 3.3 years in 1980, falling to 2.6 years in 2012.

## Background

HLE at birth is a theoretical measure of the number of years that a newborn baby would live in a 'healthy' state if they experienced the death rates and levels of general health of the local population at the time of their birth, throughout their life. It is unlikely to be a true prediction of HLE for any individual, since death rates may increase or decrease during a person's lifetime, and people may move to areas with different mortality risks and views of their own health.

LE and HLE estimates should be interpreted as providing a general indication of these measures over time, rather than precise and robust figures. The results include 95% confidence limits to give some indication of the stability of the estimates.

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## Further Information

The [publication](#) and [further information on methodology](#) can be found on the ScotPHO website. [Metadata and pre-release access information](#) for this publication are also available.

### About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland - and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government Health Department and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

### About ScotPHO

The Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) collaboration is led by ISD Scotland and NHS Health Scotland, and includes the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, National Records of Scotland and Health Protection Scotland. Our aim is to make public health information more accessible and usable to improve health and reduce inequalities in Scotland.

### Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/) [www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/](http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/)