

# Healthy Life Expectancy in Scotland

December 2016

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## About this release

This is the annual update of the Scotland-level estimates of healthy life expectancy on the Scottish Public Health Observatory website. The topic is presented in the web pages and downloadable charts and tables.

The publication includes previously unpublished data on life expectancy and healthy life expectancy for 2015 at Scotland level. It also includes an update of UK comparisons and International comparisons.

## Main points

- The most recent annual estimates for Scotland are for boys born in 2015 to live 76.9 years on average, 59.9 of these in a 'healthy' state. Girls born in 2015 are expected to live 81.0 years on average, 62.3 of these years being 'healthy'.
- Underlying trends in life expectancy at birth for males and females show an improvement in Scotland over time increasing from 68.7 and 75.1 years in 1980, to 76.9 and 81.0 years in 2015, respectively.
- Male and female healthy life expectancy since 2009\* has remained approximately constant (59.9 years for males and 62.3 years for females in 2015).
- Time trends show that the gap between the sexes, in both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth, has narrowed over time. For life expectancy at birth, the difference between males and females was 6.4 years in 1980, falling to 4.1 years in 2015. For healthy life expectancy at birth, the difference between males and females was 3.3 years in 1980, falling to 2.4 years in 2015.

\*Note: see 'Background' section for change in methodology from 2009 onwards.

## Background

**Life expectancy** is an estimate of how many years a person might be expected to live, whereas **healthy life expectancy** 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.

Healthy life expectancy 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 Healthy life expectancy 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.

Life expectancy and Healthy life expectancy 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 intervals to give some indication of the stability of the estimates.

Note: There is a major discontinuity in the healthy life expectancy series between 2008 and 2009 due to a change in methodology to align with the European Union. This results in estimates of healthy life expectancy at birth from 2009 onwards being over eight years lower for each sex. The 2009 estimates form the start of a new time trend. See [technical paper](#) for full details.

## Contact

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## Further Information

The [Healthy life expectancy in Scotland](#) pages and [technical paper](#) (including Metadata and Pre-release access information) can be found on the ScotPHO website.

The next update of this publication will be in December 2017.

## ISD and Official Stats

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. Find out more about our statistics.

## 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.