

News release



Snapshot of health in the North East

A snapshot of health in every local authority area in England including the North East was published by the Government today (Jun 22).

The updated health profiles provide information on a range of issues including life expectancy and smoking.

They are designed to help councils and the NHS decide where to target resources to tackle health inequalities in their local area.

The profiles show that adults in the North East are among the most physically active in the country with Teesdale, Durham and Alnwick all in the top ten.

The region also scored well in the ecological footprint stakes – the amount of land required to support an average resident’s lifestyle – with five areas making the top ten.

But the picture was considerably less healthy as far as binge drinking, smoking rates and life expectancy were concerned.

Eugene Milne, acting assistant regional director of public health, welcomed publication of the health profiles.

He said: “They provide useful summaries of what we know about health and inequalities for local people across a range of important factors.

“They will come as little surprise to local councils and NHS planners, but should help in shaping local decision-making as well as setting priorities for improving health and well-being.

“And it is important to recognise that they contain good news as well as bad.

“The North East is gradually managing to shake off its 'sick-man' reputation. Heart disease and cancer deaths are falling across the region, and are doing so faster than the national average.

“But it will still take many years at current rates to match the national picture.

“We need to accelerate that trend. Our aim is to achieve the best health in the country, and to make it happen sooner rather than later.”

more

Launched last year, the profiles are sent to every local councillor, strategic health authority, primary care trust and MP as well as being available on the web.

They were an essential ingredient of a food and health service review across County Durham and Darlington Primary Care Trusts.

They also proved invaluable in identifying wards in the same area with the highest levels of deprivation based on life expectancy to establish service priorities.

Public health minister Caroline Flint said: "Information about health and wellbeing in your local area is essential for assessing the needs of the local population and monitoring how well health improvement strategies are working. "

The health profiles can be viewed at www.communityhealthprofiles.info

ends

Notes to editors

1. Health profiles are produced for every local authority in England apart from City of London and Isles of Scilly. They are used to support local action to improve health along with other information such as Directors of Public Health annual reports.
2. Health Profiles (HP1) were produced for the Department of Health by the Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO) for the first time in 2006. These profiles were a deliverable of the Choosing Health White Paper.
3. Although all the data exists elsewhere the profiles provide the key indicators systematically organised for each Local Authority enabling comparison locally, regionally and nationally as well as over time.
4. Health inequalities are shown at super output area level to highlight spots of deprivation and help target local funding.
5. The data in the profiles is the most up to date available. Some of the indicators show the same information as last year because the data has not been updated for example, census data is only updated every 10 years.

Issued by Simon Mills on 0191 202 3588.