

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

14 JULY 2017

QUESTION No. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No 36

Tony Cowling to ask the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board:

Men Dying Young in Reading

Why do men in Reading die younger than in any other town or city in the UK? (What is different about Reading?) I would like to see some effort being put in to sorting out why this is and some actions to mitigate the cause(s).

REPLY by the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board (Councillor Hoskin):

On average, men in Reading are expected to enjoy good health to the age of 66.4 years (CI 64.7-68.1). This is significantly better than the England average of 63.4 years and better than most similar Local Authority areas. Healthy life expectancy in Reading has remained consistently above the England average for the last five years.

The Slope Inequality Index in healthy life expectancy suggests a man living in the most well off areas of Reading could expect to live 12.8 years longer than a man in one of Reading's most deprived neighbourhoods (CI 9.4-16.2). The gap is 13.5 for women (CI 14.7-18.5). This is less than the gap seen between the most and least deprived local authority areas nationally (18.9 years for men and 19.6 years for women).

You are correct that premature mortality is an issue in Reading particularly amongst men.

Men in Reading have a life expectancy at birth of 78.7 years (Confidence interval 78.1-79.3) and those aged 65 can be expected to live for another 18.3 years on average (Confidence Interval 17.9-18.1). These are both significantly worse than the England average of 79.5 years at birth and 18.7 years at age 65, although not the worst in the UK (men in Blackpool have the lowest life expectancy at birth in England of 74.3 (CI 73.7-74.9) and men in Manchester aged 65 can be expected to live for another 15.8 years on average (CI 15.6-16.1).).

The mortality rate from preventable causes for males in Reading is 252.8 per 100,000 (CI 228.1-279.5), higher than the England average of 232.5 per 100,000 although not significantly so, but, again, not the worst in England (again, Manchester and Blackpool have the highest rates at 409.4 and 387.1 per 100,000 respectively).

The rates of premature mortality linked to cardiovascular disease and liver disease in men in Reading have consistently exceeded the national averages, although in some periods the differences have not been statistically significant. In the most recent period the number of men committing suicide in Reading has increased (rising from 33 in 2012-14 to 38 in 2013-15).

There is strong evidence that those living in more deprived areas are more likely to die prematurely and more likely to be affected by disability. Prevention interventions, especially those focusing on increasing physical activity and improving diet and weight management, reducing smoking and alcohol use are likely to be effective in addressing many of the common causes of disability and premature death.

Our latest Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out how, over the next three years we aim to tackle some of the above issues, and how we aim to promote healthy lifestyles in a variety of settings so that every Reading resident has a chance to maximise their health and quality of life. We will focus on actions that:

- Deliver the priorities identified within the Healthy Weight Strategy (which sets out opportunities for children and adults to achieve and maintain a healthy weight by supporting them to make healthy dietary choices and choose an active lifestyle)
- Increase awareness of lifestyle and weight management services
- Promote walking and cycling both for leisure and active travel
- Prevent the uptake of smoking - by working with local stop services and promote smoke-free communities to support people to quit and remain smoke free in the long term.