



# Our ELFT population and changes over time



**We cannot continue to accept a Britain where health is determined by wealth, where your postcode matters more than your potential and where deprivation dictates your diagnosis. Together, we can be the generation that closes the gap in healthy life expectancy so that everyone can live well for longer.**

*- Fit for the Future:  
10 Year Health Plan for England*

We provide services to over 2 million people. This includes people living in the East London boroughs Tower Hamlets, Newham and City and Hackney, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton, alongside commissioning responsibilities for North Central East London and providing forensics services across North London.

As noted in our 2024 Annual Population health report, all ELFT areas grew in population size since the 2021 Census data, with this highest in Central Bedfordshire at just over 2%. We are also seeing changes in the age structure of our local area populations, with an increase in the percentage of the population over 65 years old (10.9% in 2023 compared to 10% in 2011) and a small decrease in our younger age population (23.2% in 2023 compared to 24.5% in 2011).

Age changes are different by area. Bedfordshire and Luton are likely to see an ongoing increase in their younger population and older population, whilst ELFT London areas are predicted to see an increase in their older and working age populations and a decrease in the younger population. In Bedfordshire and Luton, forecasts suggest the proportion of populations from ethnicity groups other than White British will increase.

## Population forecasts by age structure using Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid 2023 population estimates

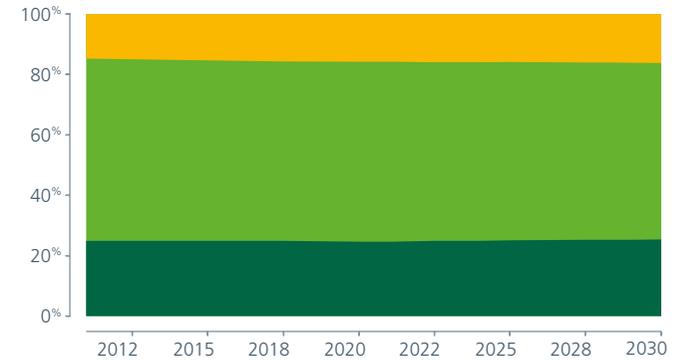


Figure 2: Population Age Structure Over Time, Bedfordshire and Luton

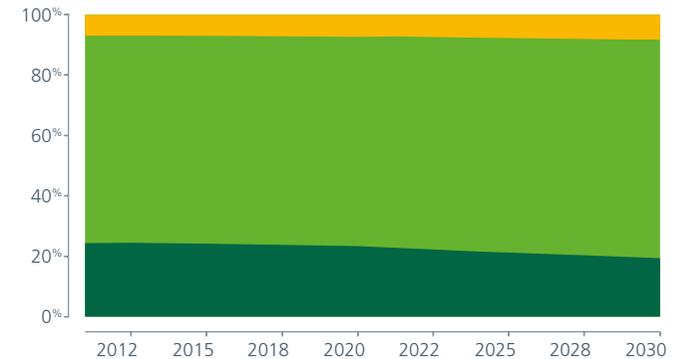


Figure 3: Population Age Structure Over Time, ELFT London areas (Tower Hamlets, Newham and City and Hackney)

**Key** ● 0-18 ● 19-64 ● 65+



Population ageing creates more need for health and care services. Unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes between population groups, often described as health inequities, also creates increased need for health and care support earlier in life.

One way to measure health inequities is by **Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE)** which is the average number of years that somebody can expect to live in good self-reported health. **Years lived in poor health make it more difficult to enjoy life, work and/ or study and also increases demand on healthcare services.**

Across our ELFT areas, there is a **substantial difference in the number of years people can expect to live in good health.** For example, there is a difference of five years for men and nearly five and a half years for women when comparing Bedford to Hackney. There are also big **differences within ELFT service areas.** For example, in Bedford data shows male healthy life expectancy differs by 14.6 years, with the lowest healthy life expectancy in Harpur and the highest in Oakley. This reflects differences between the most and least deprived areas of the borough.

### Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth (2021-23, ONS)

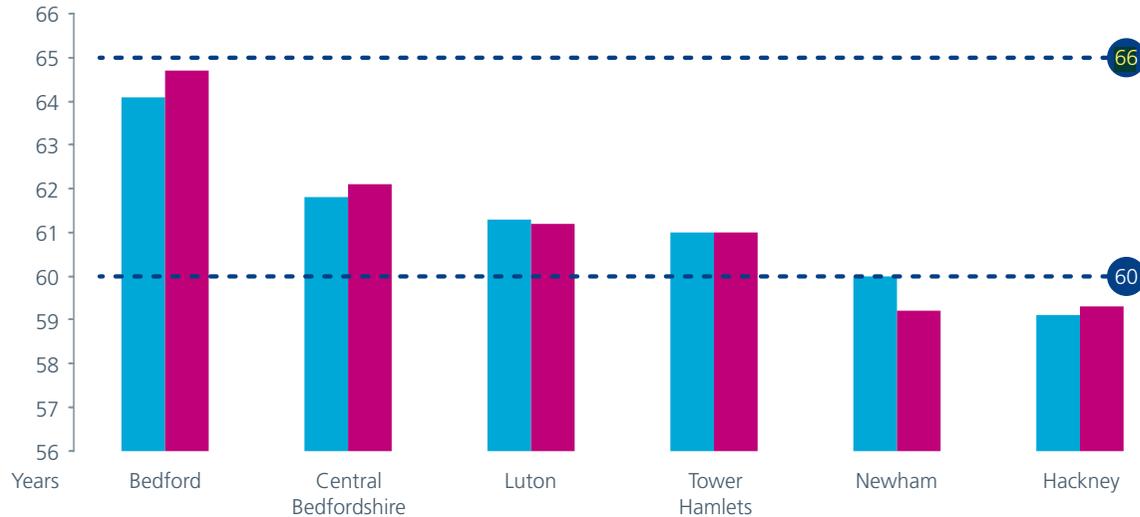


Figure 4: Comparing Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth in ELFT service areas

Key ● Male ● Female

Differences in HLE between places is linked to the number of people with long term health conditions, such as poor mental health, diabetes and musculoskeletal challenges. Ways to prevent and improve long term health conditions include supporting healthy behaviour change— such as reducing smoking, improving what we eat, and increasing physical activity. However, these health behaviours are influenced by the conditions in which we live called the wider determinants of health, for example housing, income and family support. The environment

is also an important contributor to ill health, for example air pollution is strongly linked to respiratory disease.

The relationship between the wider determinants of health and mental health and well-being is seen in the **Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey** published this year.



## Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England 2023/24

[This survey series](#) provides data on the prevalence of both treated and untreated psychiatric disorder in the English adult population (aged 16 and over). Part 1 survey findings include:

- More people identifying themselves as being in poor mental health, with this higher for women and young adults.
- A strong relationship between poverty, debt, unemployment and diagnosed physical health and poor mental health.
- More adults accessing mental health treatment.



Recently published **Indices of Deprivation** (a figure that brings together a range of living conditions including income, employment, education, health and living environment) **helps compare levels of deprivation across the country**. This data is published at a neighbourhood and local authority level.

Two ELFT areas are in the top 10 most deprived local authority districts when **all measures of deprivation** are included: Newham 7th and Hackney 10th. If we focus on the **proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income**, four ELFT areas are in the top fifteen most deprived areas in the country (**see bars in orange in the charts below**). This picture becomes more acute if we focus on the proportion of **children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families** and **aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation**, with ELFT areas the highest affected for both indices sets.





### Fifteen local authority areas with the highest proportion of income deprivation, Indices of Deprivation 2025

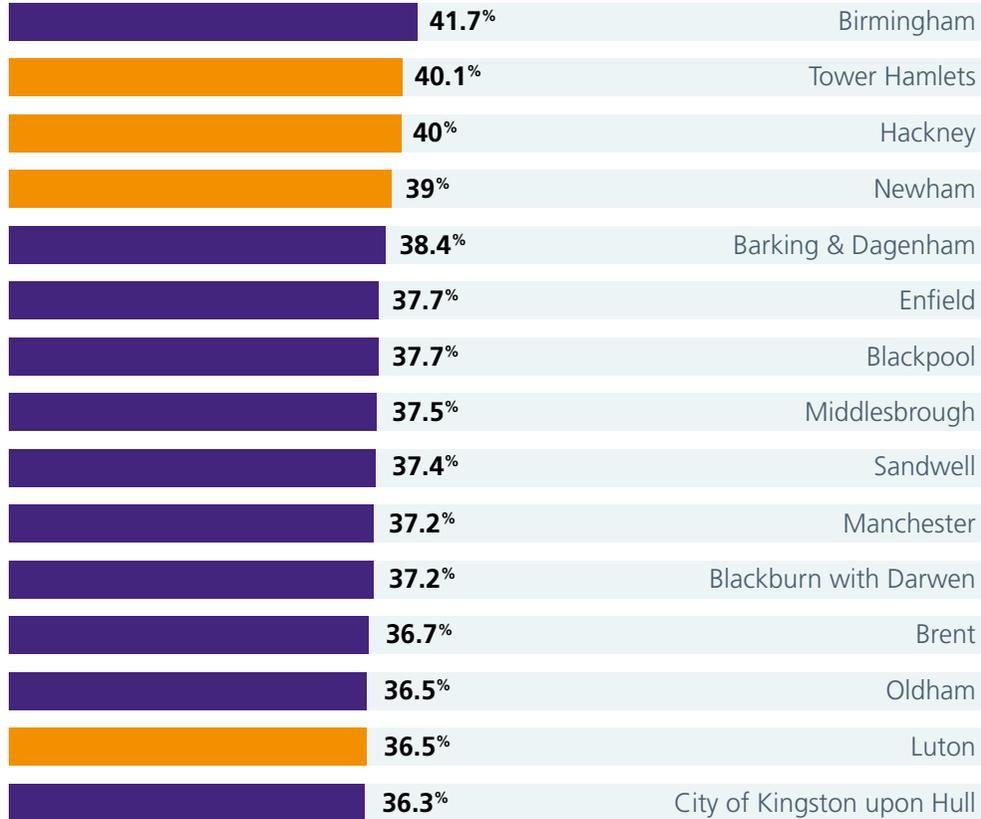


Figure 5: Proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income

### Ten local authority areas with the highest proportion of children living in income deprived households, Indices of Deprivation 2025

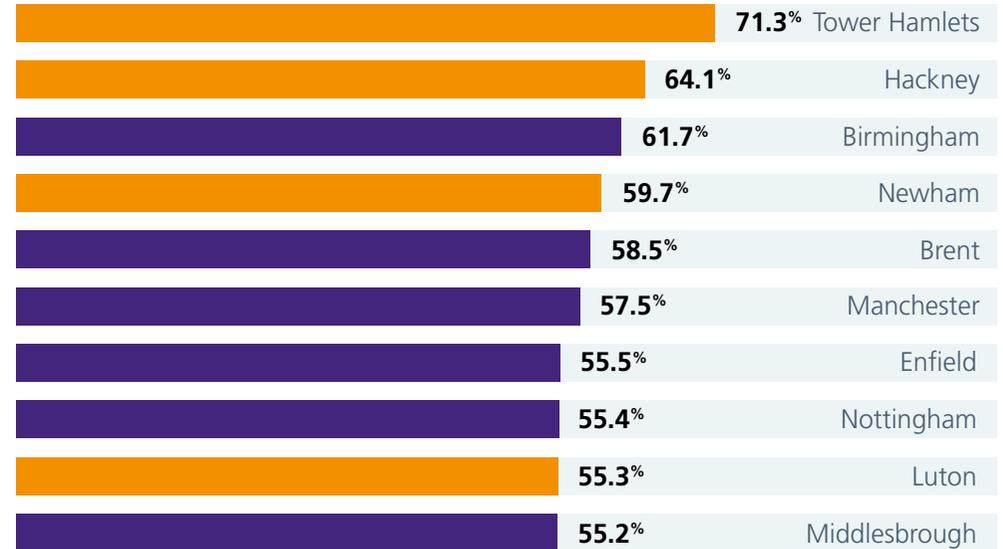


Figure 6: Proportion of children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families

#### Glossary

**Income deprivation:** Both people in work and out-of-work who have low earnings.



## Ten local authority areas with the highest proportion of older people living in income deprived households, Indices of Deprivation 2025

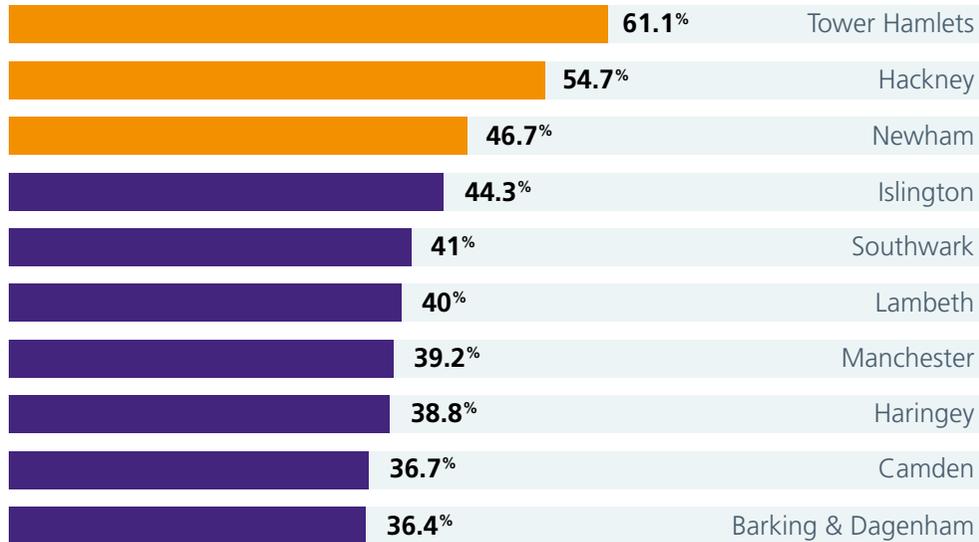


Figure 7: Proportion of people aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation

### Why this matters to us:

ELFT service user and carers are more likely to be impacted by local area deprivation. Trust data from the last 12 months<sup>1</sup> shows 30% of referrals are from the 20% most deprived areas, varying by area (46.8% in City and Hackney to 12.3% in Bedfordshire).

<sup>1</sup> As of October 2025

Throughout this report data helps show why we are focusing on specific projects and programmes. There is more detailed data to help analyse population health in our Trust geographical areas on our [ELFT population health web pages](#).

### What is population health management?

Population Health Management (PHM) is about understanding the health needs of different groups of people in our communities. It helps provide information and data to identify who might need support early, and support work with partners to provide the right care at the right time.

**North East London Integrated Care Board's** developed a **Population Health Management Pathfinder Analytics tool** to help understand population health and care needs and identify opportunities, design and target interventions, and evaluate impact. A high level overview is available at [System | PHM Pathfinder Analytics | Optum](#) and you can join a learning community by emailing at [nelondonicb.phm.nel@nhs.net](mailto:nelondonicb.phm.nel@nhs.net).

In 2024, **Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton published reports focused on population change to 2043** and the potential impacts on health and healthcare utilisation (analysis by the BLMK Population Health Intelligence Unit (PHIU)). Access [here](#).

