

A global city at the heart of the nation's capital



Cities such as Westminster are built on its people – the distinctive communities that breathe life into their neighbourhoods and provide each area with identity and character. This can only happen when we coordinate our services to recognise and meet local communities' specific needs and everyone feels able to contribute to improve local outcomes. For us, a Fairer Westminster is one in which we do everything we can to reduce inequalities at every turn.



Westminster has a large proportion of young working age residents, as well as high levels of international migration. There are significant financial disparities within the borough. Specifically, areas like Queens Park and Mozart Estate (Queens Park), Lisson Green Estate (Church Street), Warwick and Brindley Road Estates (Westbourne) and Churchill Gardens (Pimlico South) suffer from increased levels of deprivation.



211,500 residents

In 2023 there were:



Births 1,909



Deaths 1,053

Where we do well in health and wellbeing



The percentage of residents who say their **health is very good** is among the highest in England. **Life expectancy is among the highest in the country.**



The percentage of pregnant women who **smoke** by the end of their pregnancy is among the lowest in England. The percentage of babies have **breastmilk** as their first feed is the second highest in England. Westminster has the third lowest rate of **teenage pregnancies** in England.



Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate **injuries in young people** aged 15-24 is among the lowest in England.



While we have aspiration to improve, our employment rate for residents with a learning disability is higher than other areas



Westminster has a **low under 75 mortality rate**. The death rate due to cancer in under 75s is the 8th lowest in England. The rate of **hip fractures** in those older than 80 is among the lowest in England.

Our health and wellbeing challenges

We need to tackle health inequalities and reduce the gap in life expectancy

Life expectancy in Westminster is among the highest in the country (86 years for women and 81 years for men). However, the difference in life expectancy between the highest and lowest wards is also high (18 years for men and 9 for women). Whilst many wards have life expectancy above the national average, Westbourne is below the average. The life expectancy gap for men has widened over the past 4 years. This is predominantly driven by increases in life expectancy in the more affluent areas. For women, it has remained stable.

Whilst life expectancy is high, residents spend over a fifth of their lives in poor health.

Westminster has an ageing population: 12% of our population is aged 65 or over. On average men are living around 19 years in poor health and women around 23 years.

Obesity prevalence is high in both children and adults

Almost 2 in 5 children are overweight by the time they leave primary school; this is higher than the London average. Children living in Hyde Park are almost twice as likely to be overweight than those living in Marylebone. Among adults, 1 in 2 is overweight or obese.

Mental health and wellbeing is important across the life course

Over 1 in 4 adults report feeling anxious and 1 in 16 have a GP diagnosis of depression. Depression is more common among residents from a Caribbean, mixed White and Black Caribbean or British background and those living in more deprived areas. 1 in 5 children and young people have mental health needs.

Screening and immunisation rates are among the lowest in the country

Cancer screening, particularly breast, cervical and bowel cancer, is among the lowest in the country. For all types of childhood vaccinations uptake is below the 95% target to protect the community. For example, over 1 in 3 children have not received 2 doses of MMR. Uptake varies within the borough, ranging from 54% in Bryanston & Dorset Square to 84% in Knightsbridge, Belgravia & Hyde Park.

How do we address these challenges?



No single organisation can solve these challenges in isolation. A whole systems approach is required, harnessing the skills and resources of key partners and local communities, and working closely together.

This borough story has informed the 10-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is focussed on reducing health inequalities and is available at [Health and Wellbeing Strategy | Westminster City Council](#). #2035 is a whole system approach organised around community led priorities, with the aim of reducing the life expectancy gap by 2035.

People

Total Population
211,500
45% from a global majority background

0 to 15 yrs Population
26,500
60% from a global majority background

Aged 16 – 64
158,800
45% from a global majority background

Older People (65+)
26,200
30% from a global majority background

Daytime / Nighttime visitors
Up to 1 million

Place

Almost 1 in 3 children live in poverty

1 in 4 households in London are at risk from the cost of living crisis

Unemployment rate of 5.0%

Average annual income varies by area (range £27,000 to £56,000)

2,100 people seen rough sleeping

Life expectancy for people sleeping rough is 30-40 years less than average


Air pollution has reduced


Westminster has over 200 parks and open spaces.

26,810 social rented households

Westminster Housing properties include Queens Park and Mozart Estate, Lisson Green Estate, and Churchill Gardens.

Start Well

Over 1 in 3 children without 2 doses of MMR

Uptake varies from 54% in Bryanston & Dorset Square to 84% in Knightsbridge, Belgravia & Hyde Park.


Over 1 in 4 with decayed teeth at age 5

The biggest cause of hospital admissions for this age group

Almost 2 in 5 overweight by age 11

Children in Hyde Park are almost twice as likely to be overweight than in those living in Marylebone

1 in 5 with mental health needs


Service use has been on an upward trajectory


Many outstanding schools

Average GCSE level attainment is lowest in the most deprived areas


Live Well


3 in 10 residents have a long term condition

Residents of a Black ethnic background have twice the rate of hypertension


1 in 2 adults are overweight or obese

Residents of a Black ethnic background have 3 times the rate of obesity & diabetes


Over 1 in 4 adults report high levels of anxiety

Depression is more common in those living in deprived areas


1 in 7 adults smoke

Most likely in those living in the more deprived areas and from a Mixed ethnicity.

Almost 7,000 residents are at high risk of drug dependence

The most common cause of death in under 50s in deprived areas is drug dependence

Age Well


Residents spend over a fifth of their lives in poor health

Those from Other ethnic groups are slightly more likely to report having a disability

1 in 3 residents aged 65 and over live alone

Westminster residents age 55+ are more likely to feel lonely

1 in 14 aged 65+ live with dementia

Prevalence is highest in residents from a Black or Black British ethnic background

2 in 7 need help with self-care

Those from Other ethnic background are slightly more likely to report being a carer

Among lowest uptake of cancer screening and flu immunisation

Only just under three in five older residents are vaccinated against flu.

By developing this borough story, outlining our collective understanding of local need, we can identify priorities for action and ensure that initiatives and services are delivered in a way that is proportionate to the needs of our communities, including those with protected characteristics.


People

Our residents

Westminster is home to **211,500 people**. The area has a large proportion of young working age residents, as well as high levels of international migration and cultural diversity. Whilst the number of children living in the borough is expected to decline in the next 20 years, the number of **people aged 65 or over is expected to increase**.

In 2023 there were:

 Births 1,909

 Deaths 1,053

A lot of residents move in and out of the borough each year: 22% did not live at the same address as the year before, which is among the highest in England. This is enabled by a sizeable private rental sector (43% of households). International migration is also the highest in England: more than 20,000 Westminster residents arrived in the UK within the past 2 years, which is 10% of the borough's total population.

45% of residents are from a global majority background. From our local data, we have identified **poorer health outcomes in our global majority communities**. For example, residents identifying from a Black ethnic background have almost double the rate of hypertension, and almost 3 times the rates of diabetes and obesity than those from a White background. Rates of depression are higher among residents from a Black and Black British or Mixed (particularly Caribbean) background. People from a global majority background face a range of systemic challenges and barriers which can impact health and wellbeing, including access to services, cultural understanding, racial discrimination, or a lack of cultural inclusivity.

There are 85 languages spoken in Westminster and 26% of residents do not have English as their main language. **Arabic is the most commonly spoken language after English** but there is great variation across all wards. In the 2021 Census, 4% of residents reported that they could not speak English well.

The most common religions are Christianity (37%) and Islam (20%). In the 2021 Census there was **an increase in the proportion of residents who say they have no religion** (from 20% to 26%) Those who identified as Muslim are more likely to say their health is bad or very bad.

A diverse city ...



45% of our residents are from a global majority background



52% of our residents are female



26,500 (13%) are aged 0-15 years, 158,800 (75%) are aged 16-64 and 26,200 (12%) are aged 65+



14% of our residents have a disability



1 in 20 residents identify as being LGBTQ+. The proportion of LGBTQ+ residents is highest in West End and Soho (11%)



65% of residents have a religion.



0.75% (1,329) have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth



32% are married or in a registered civil partnership

Place

Spring 2025

Westminster is a global city at the heart of the nation's capital. The daytime population including tourists can be up to 1 million, which is the highest daytime population of any London Borough, including residents, employees and visitors.

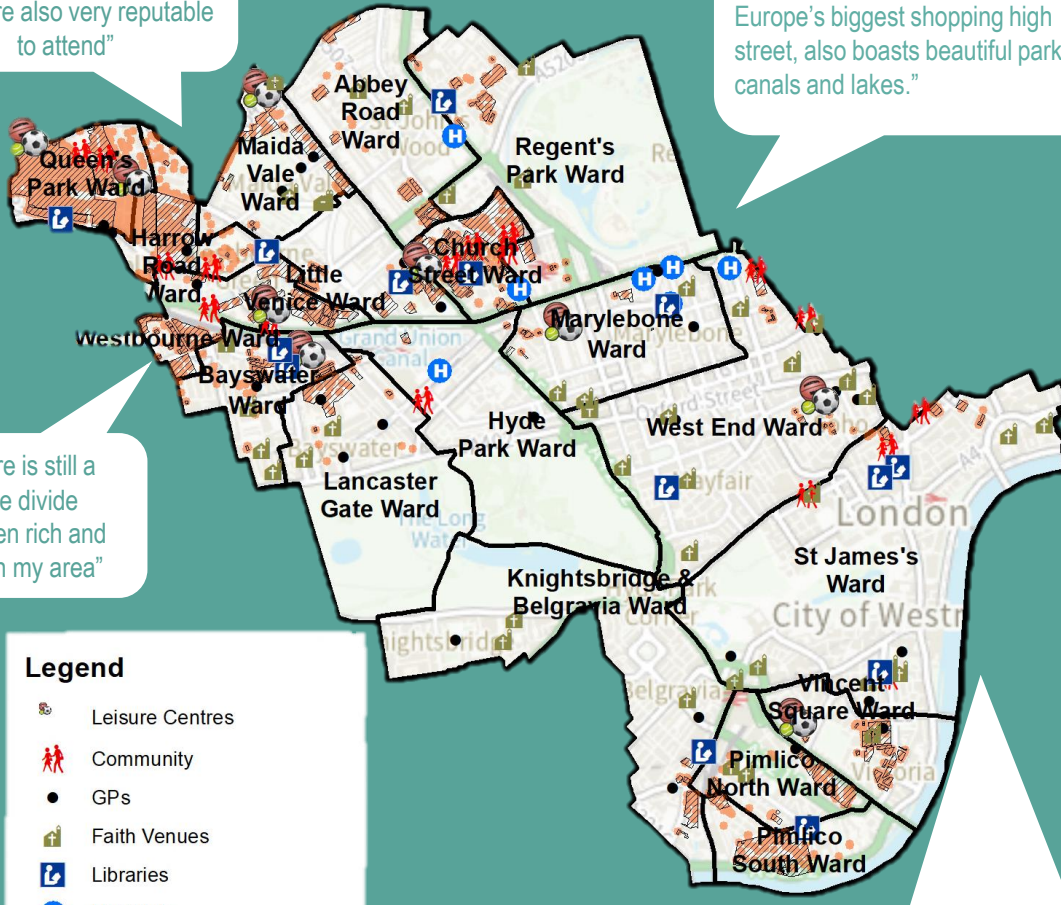


"It's a great area to bring up your children, as there are several local high schools, which are also very reputable to attend"

"A vibrant area littered with amazing restaurants and bars and right by Europe's biggest shopping high street, also boasts beautiful parks, canals and lakes."

"There is still a huge divide between rich and poor in my area"

"The area is really trendy and lively, but those who have lived here for many years have seen the area change and seen local businesses being chased out by drastic rent increases."



At a glance....

- Westminster has over **200 identified parks and open spaces** ranging from large multifunctional areas to small ornamental garden squares and pocket parks.
- There is a busy road network within the borough and **air quality** is a risk to health for all, most particularly for children and those with underlying health conditions. Currently our air quality monitoring sites do not meet World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for levels of particulate matter. Although not legally required to do so the Council has committed to working to meet WHO Guideline levels.
- We estimate that approximately 31,000 households in Westminster on means-tested benefits are acutely exposed to the **cost-of-living crisis**. Local help can be found on the cost of living hub.
- The **life expectancy for someone sleeping on the street is 30-40 years less than average**. 2,100 people were seen rough sleeping in Westminster during 2023/24. On a single night, it is estimated 277 people are sleeping rough.
- We have some of the best schools in London but with **almost a third of children living in poverty**, there is significant disadvantage for families to overcome in order to ensure that children have the best start.
- Lack of access to digital services contributes to health and wellbeing for example by increasing the risk of social isolation, economic exclusion and reducing access to services and support.

Deprivation

Health is closely associated with deprivation. Deprivation is a way to assess the extent to which people living in an area experience conditions which determine a healthy life. The measure of deprivation includes a measure of employment, education, health, crime, and environment.

There are significant financial disparities within the borough. Knightsbridge & Belgravia has some of the most affluent neighbourhoods in the country, whilst Queen's Park, Church Street and Westbourne have some of the most deprived.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation has not been updated since 2019, and the next update is anticipated to be released in late 2025.



Social housing

There are 26,810 social rented households (28%, higher than London average), over half of which (14,392) are Housing Association properties. The remainder are Westminster Housing properties including Queens Park, Mozart Estate (Queens Park), Lisson Green Estate (Church Street), Warwick and Brindley Road Estates (Westbourne), Hallfield Estate (Bayswater) and Churchill Gardens (Pimlico South).



Employment

In 2023, Westminster's unemployment rate was 5.0%, similar to the London average (5.0%).

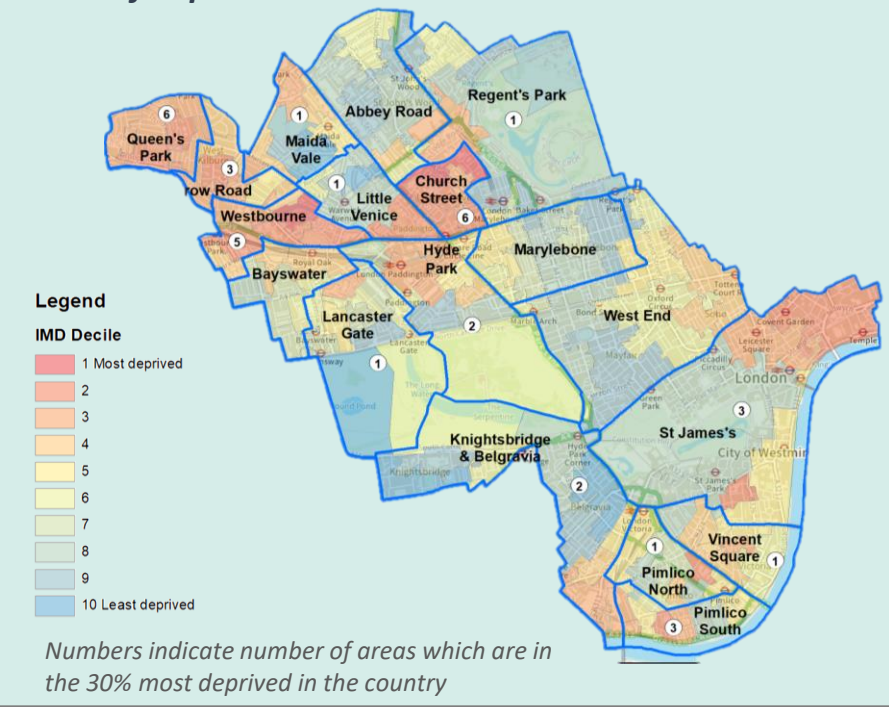


Children living in poverty

Almost a third of our children live in poverty and 8,500 children are eligible for free school meals.



Areas of deprivation



Income

The average annual income in the most deprived wards is £27,000 (Church Street) compared to £56,000 in more affluent areas around Knightsbridge. Even within the same neighbourhood, rich and poor households live in close proximity.

1 in 4 homes in London are at risk from the cost of living crisis; local support can be found on the cost of living support hub.



“A lot going on now, energy crisis, this crisis, that crisis. How are we meant to focus on our health, when there's all these other things going on? Poverty's coming to hit a lot of us hard and its scary, more needs to be done to help us through this.”

Life expectancy

Westminster's life expectancy is among the highest in the country. The average man lives to 81 years (11th highest in the country) and the average woman to 86 years (3rd highest in the country).



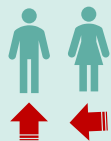
Inequalities in life expectancy

This average disguises the variation in how long and how well residents across the borough live.

Westminster has the highest life expectancy gap in the country for men. The gap for women sees us in line with the national average, but is the third highest in London.

In Knightsbridge and Belgravia ward a man is expected to live 18 years longer than a man in Westbourne ward. A woman is expected to live 9 years longer in Knightsbridge and Belgravia than in Westbourne.

The gap is driven by exceptional high life expectancy in areas of the borough: life expectancy is similar or above the national average in all wards apart from Westbourne. Life expectancy for men in Knightsbridge and Belgravia is the highest in the country (94 years).



How has life expectancy changed?

The life expectancy gap for men has widened over the past 4 years. This is predominantly driven by increases in life expectancy in the more affluent areas.

Over the past 4 years, male life expectancy has increased in the least deprived areas (6.7 years, compared to -0.1 years nationally), while it decreased in the most deprived areas (-0.4 years, compared to -0.5 years nationally).

For women, the life expectancy gap has remained stable.

Causes of death

The top causes of death are similar in both the most and least deprived areas but there are more deaths at younger ages in the deprived areas.

Circulatory causes (including stroke and heart disease) account for 20% of the difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas (20% for women and 19% for men).

Lung cancer accounts for 9% of the difference for men, and other cancers for a further 17%. For women, cancer accounts for 15% of the difference.

In 2020/21, Covid-19 explained almost 20% of the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived areas for men and women.

Start well

What happens in pregnancy, childhood and adolescence impacts on physical and emotional health all the way through to adulthood.

Where our children live, their household income and how they are cared for all impact on the health and wellbeing of our children.


There are 26,500 children under 16 living in our borough (of which 9,180 aged under 5), 60% from a global majority background. In contrast to the older population, the younger population is expected to decrease over the next 20 years.

In Westminster nearly 1 in 3 children are living in poverty and there are 175 looked after children. Almost 2 in 5 children are overweight by the time they leave primary school and 1 in 5 are affected by mental health problems. Working with our communities to codesign activities to embed prevention and healthy lifestyles is key to ensuring we give our children the best start in life.

"I like Westminster for the city life atmosphere it sets, there are many new builds across Westminster. I also enjoy the many green spaces around. However, I feel there should be more places like youth clubs, more help with youth getting into employment as there seems to be a lot of anti social behaviour issues around. There should be more family hubs, places to go for people to receive help they need."

Over 1 in 3 children have not received 2 doses of MMR

For all types of childhood vaccinations **uptake is below the 95% target** to protect the community. For example, **only 64% have received 2 doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) immunisation** at or before the age of five. **Uptake varies** within the borough, ranging from 54% in Bryanston & Dorset Square to 84% in Knightsbridge, Belgravia & Hyde Park.




1 in 5 have a mental health disorder

A 2023 NHS survey estimated that 21% of 8-25 year olds in England have mental health needs: 10,600 children and young people in Westminster. While survey data of self-reported need has been static, service use has been on an upward trajectory. This would suggest that the proportion of children with mental health needs that are getting support is increasing.


Over 1 in 4 five-year-olds have decayed teeth

By the age of five, over 1 in 4 children have one or more decayed, filled or missing teeth (27%). It is a common cause of hospital admission and children who have toothache may have pain, difficulties with eating, sleeping and socialising and may have to be absent from school. **1 in 2 Westminster children have seen a dentist in the past year.** While the majority of Westminster child dentist appointments are check-up only, over 1 in 3 include a mid-range treatment such as fillings, and 1 in 20 are urgent treatments.




Almost 2 in 5 are overweight by age 11

25% of children are overweight or obese when they enter primary school aged 4-5 years old. This rises to **39% of children aged 10-11** leaving primary school. This varies by ward, for example those living in **Hyde Park are almost twice as likely to be overweight than those living in Marylebone.** Children whose parents are obese are more likely to themselves be obese. This highlights the complexity of supporting families to maintain or reach a healthy weight. Boys are more likely to be an unhealthy weight. Being an unhealthy weight is also more likely in children who identify themselves as being from Black or Other ethnic groups at age 10-11. No significant differences by ethnic group are observed in Reception.



Education creates opportunities for better health

We have some of the highest levels of outstanding schools in London. Almost a third of our children live in poverty and **8,500 children are eligible for free school meals.** Education can trigger healthier futures and protect against disadvantage in later life. **68%** of children had a good level of development at the end of reception year and **61%** of children achieved 9-5 in GCSE English and Mathematics (77% achieving 9-4). **Average attainment 8 score was 53.8.** Average GCSE level attainment is lowest in the most deprived areas. **4.3% of children have educational health care plans** and **14.2% of children have special educational needs support.**



The impact of a person's social and environmental surroundings, including employment and housing, and factors such as loneliness and isolation influence the uptake of unhealthy behaviours.

Differences in the lived experience of these wider determinants of health drive inequalities in health and wellbeing in the borough.

There are 158,800 residents aged 16-64 (75%) in our borough, 45% identify themselves as being from a global majority background. There are approximately 2,800 autistic adults living in the borough.

1 in 7 smoke, 1 in 2 adults are overweight or obese and over 1 in 4 feel anxious. As well as health disparities between different locations in the borough, we see different health outcomes among residents from different ethnic backgrounds, with residents from a global majority background more likely to have diabetes, be overweight, impacted by mental health and suffer from hypertension.

The rising cost of living is the biggest issue our residents face at the moment, and can affect our mental and physical health. We must continue to support residents to maximise their income and opportunities, whilst also providing crisis support to our most vulnerable residents.

"Being outside in nature and the sun with the activity has been great and relaxing and more of these would help me manage my weight, mood and chronic pain."

1 in 4 drink more than is recommended

Someone in mid-life who smokes, drinks too much, exercises too little and eats poorly is **four times as likely to die** over the next 10 years than someone who does none of these things. **1 in 4 residents drink more than is recommended and 7,500 residents** aged 18 or over have a **high risk of alcohol related health issues**. Alcohol related hospital admissions are above the London average. 26% of rough sleepers who had their support needs assessed had an alcohol support need.



1 in 2 adults are overweight or obese

Obesity is associated with **reduced life expectancy** and can impact on our mental health and wellbeing. 13,400 of adults are diagnosed obese. There are a wide range of drivers of obesity including access to healthy food, physical activity, social and psychological factors. 1 in 4 residents are inactive. Residents identifying from a Black ethnic background have almost 3 times the rates of obesity than those from a white background.



1 in 7 adults smoke

1 in 7 (14%) residents aged over 18 smoke. Most likely to smoke are those in manual occupations, those living in the more deprived areas of the borough, those from Mixed White and Black Caribbean ethnic backgrounds, people with mental health conditions and people in treatment for drugs or alcohol. The **smoking quit rate** (58%) is above the London average. It is estimated that smoking costs Westminster £205M per year due to productivity loss, social care costs, healthcare costs and fire costs.



4,850 new sexually transmitted infections

In 2023 there were 4,850 new diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as syphilis, HIV, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. This is the fifth highest in England.



Over 1 in 4 report feeling anxious

Over 1 in 4 (28%) residents reported feeling high levels of anxiety the day before. [Add City Survey finding] 1 in 16 have a GP diagnosis of depression; this is higher among residents from a **Black and Black British or Mixed (particularly Caribbean) background**, and those living in more **deprived areas**. Although rates of suicide in the borough are below those for England, on average 14 residents take their life each year.



3 in 10 adults have a long term condition

Over 30% of residents aged 16+ have one or more long term conditions in our borough. The proportion increases with age and is higher among those living in more **deprived areas**. Residents identifying from a Black ethnic background have almost **double the rate of hypertension**, and almost **3 times the rates of diabetes and obesity** than those from a White background. The uptake of NHS health checks (once every 5 years) is among the **top 10** boroughs in London, with 68% of residents taking up the offer.

Drug misuse

7,000 residents aged 18 or over are at high risk of drug dependence. 26% of rough sleepers who had their support needs assessed had a drug related support need. There were 29 deaths related to drugs misuse over 2021-2023 (similar to the London average).



Whilst life expectancy is high, residents spend over a fifth of their lives in poor health.

The number of people in Westminster aged 65 or over is 26,200, and this is expected to increase. 30% identify themselves as being from a global majority background.

There are 522 residents who live in a care home (with or without nursing). Oral health can deteriorate on admission for care home residents, and can lead to pain, difficulty eating, and potentially heart disease, and pneumonia.

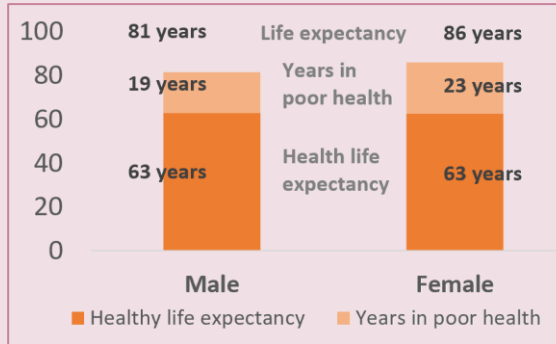
1 in 14 of our older population are living with dementia, and our diagnosis rates are below the London average. Early identification of health conditions, quality of care, and the support of carers helps to maintain the health and wellbeing of residents and ensure they maintain independence for as long as possible.

"Many elderly people, like those with language and digital barriers, are now living in financial crisis and it's causing them physical and mental health issues. It clouds their ability to get vaccinated, prevent other health issues or keep up with their appointments"



Residents spend over a fifth of their lives in poor health

Our lifestyle choices have a significant impact on our health in later life. On average men are living around 19 years in poor health and women around 23 years. Chronic health conditions and multimorbidity are the clearest drivers of poor health. Chronic pain is the largest contributor to health inequality and is projected to increase at a faster rate in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas. People identifying themselves as from an Other ethnic background are slightly more likely to report having a disability.



Lowest uptake of Screening & Immunisations

Cancer screening, particularly breast, cervical and bowel cancer, is among the **lowest in the country**, with those with **mental health needs least likely to access**. Uptake of the flu vaccination in winter by people who are at greater risk of developing serious complications if they catch flu is low. Only just under three in five older residents are vaccinated against flu.



2 in 7 need help with self-care

10,400 adults aged 65 and over are estimated to need help with at least one self-care activity, such as getting in and out of bed. Looking after an adult with a disability or health problem can be tiring, stressful and isolating. Our borough has approximately 3,500 residents providing 50+ hours of unpaid care in a week. Residents identifying themselves as from an **Other ethnic background** are slightly more likely to report being a carer.

1 in 3 residents aged 65 and over live alone



It is estimated that 11,900 people aged 65 and over are living alone in Westminster. In the City survey residents aged 55 years+ were more likely to be lonely, with 1 in 5 reporting this. There are **four life events associated with social isolation among older people: retirement, falling ill, a spouse dying, and going into care.**

1 in 14 residents live with dementia



Dementia is probably the **biggest health care challenge** we face and is now one of the most **common causes of death** in London and our borough. There are an estimated 1,950 patients living with dementia in our borough, with only 1,250 with a formal diagnosis from their GP. Prevalence is **highest in Black or Black British ethnic groups**. Leading a **healthy and active lifestyle can delay** the onset of some dementias.

Dying well

In 2023 there were 1,053 deaths in Westminster. The majority of people died of one of 4 major conditions: cancer (32% of deaths), cardiovascular disease (24% of deaths), respiratory disease (10% of deaths) or dementia (7% of deaths). Almost 1 in 3 people die at home. Three in 5 people who die have at least one emergency admission in the last 3 months of life, and around 1 in 20 have three or more emergency admissions in their last 3 months of life.