

MEN AND BOYS' HEALTH

Office of the Director of Public Health



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper introduces the new Men and Boys' Health Strategy for England¹ and considers its implications for Plymouth. It summarises the national direction, reflects on how Plymouth currently aligns, and proposes next steps for the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Nationally, the Men and Boys Health Strategy sets a 10-year vision to improve the health and wellbeing of men and boys, with a strong focus on prevention, earlier diagnosis of major conditions, improved mental health and suicide prevention, and reducing inequalities affecting disadvantaged groups, aligning itself strongly with the NHS 10-year plan. It emphasises meeting men and boys where they are, making services more accessible and acceptable to men, strengthening sex disaggregated data, and working with employers and community partners to reach men who are less likely to engage with traditional health services.

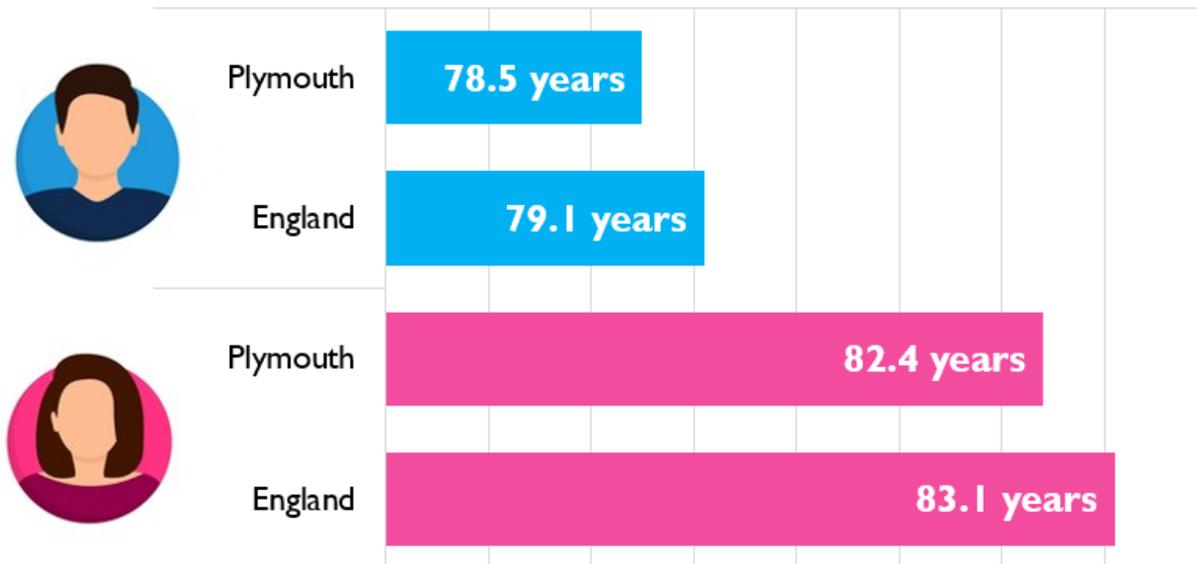
Plymouth has strong foundations that support this agenda. Existing work on tackling health inequalities, including Thrive Plymouth and the city's long-term approach to reducing gaps in health, already contributes to efforts to improve healthy life expectancy for men.

2. BACKGROUND

Across England, men continue to experience significantly poorer health outcomes than women, with 36% of men dying before their 75th birthday and male life expectancy now lower than in many other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

¹ Department of Health and Social Care. *Men's Health Strategy for England*. London: DHSC; 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mens-health-strategy-for-england>.

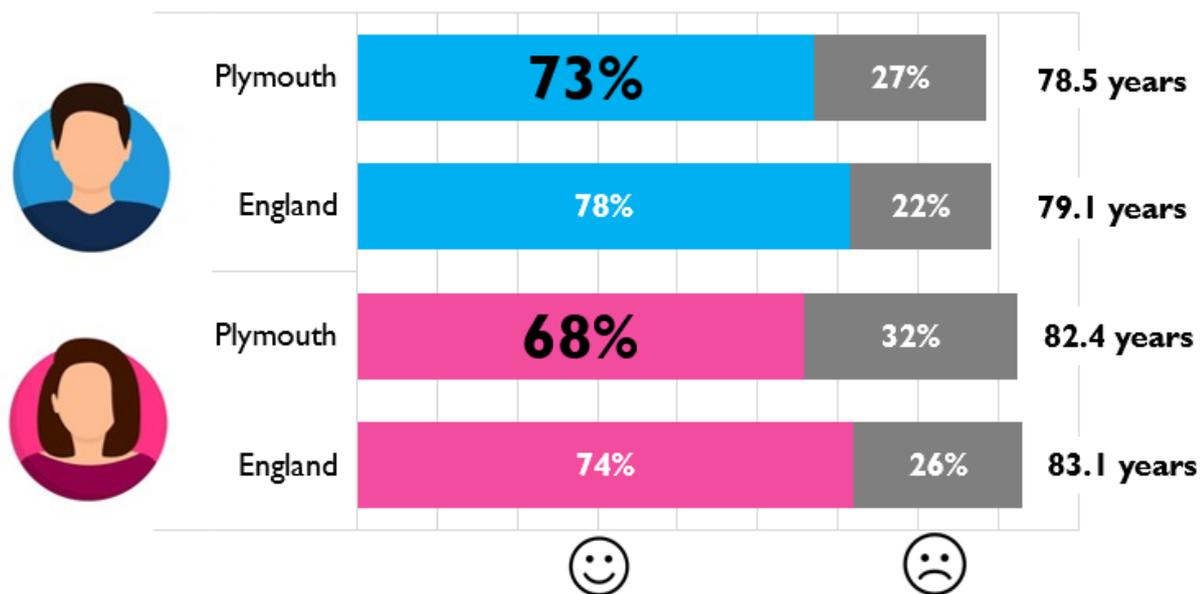
Male and female life expectancy in Plymouth and England (2021-23)



Source: [Fingertips](#), Department of Health and Social Care, accessed 19 Jan 2026

Healthy life expectancy for men has fallen to an average of just 61.5 years, dropping by around one and a half years over the last decade, meaning men typically spend more than a fifth of their lives in poor health. Overall, men live nearly four years fewer than women, highlighting a persistent and widening gender gap in both life expectancy and years lived in good health.²

Proportions of life spent in good and poor health, for males and females, in Plymouth and England



Source: [Fingertips](#), Department of Health and Social Care, accessed 19 Jan 2026.

² Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Segment tool: life expectancy and inequality in Plymouth [Internet]. London: OHID; 2025. Available from: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/segment>

Deprivation has a particularly strong effect on men’s health in Plymouth. The life expectancy gap between the least and most deprived neighbourhoods is 10.4 years for men, substantially larger than for women. Among men, circulatory diseases and cancer are the biggest contributors to this gap, with additional impact from respiratory disease and external causes such as injuries or violence.

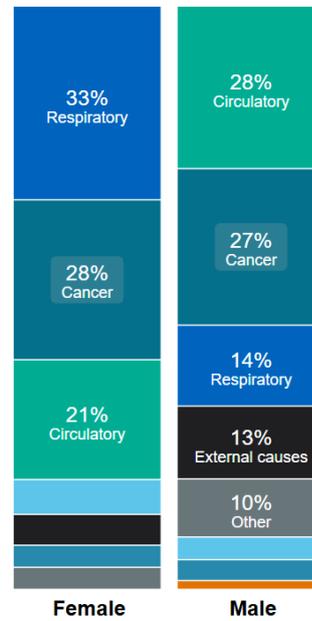
Life expectancy gap by deprivation* | 2021 - 23

Inequalities in life expectancy by deprivation within Plymouth (Slope index of inequality).



Causes of death that contribute to the gap in life expectancy by deprivation

| 2022 to 2023



The chart shows the proportion which each broad cause of death contributes to the life expectancy gap - the gap between the least and most deprived neighbourhoods within Plymouth

Source: OHID. [OHID Segment tool](#). 2025

3. THE MEN’S HEALTH STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND

The Men’s Health Strategy for England sets out a 10-year plan to improve health outcomes for all men and boys, with particular attention to those experiencing the poorest health. It responds to persistent evidence that men are more likely than women to die prematurely from preventable causes, less likely to access services early, and are more likely to engage in harmful behaviours.

The strategy has three broad aims:

1. Ensuring health services engage men and boys and are more responsive to their needs.
2. Building structures which support men and boys to maximise their own health and wellbeing.
3. Creating the conditions on which men and boys’ health and wellbeing can thrive.

The strategy aligns with the NHS 10-year strategy and promotes the shift from hospital to community, analogue to digital and treatment to prevention.

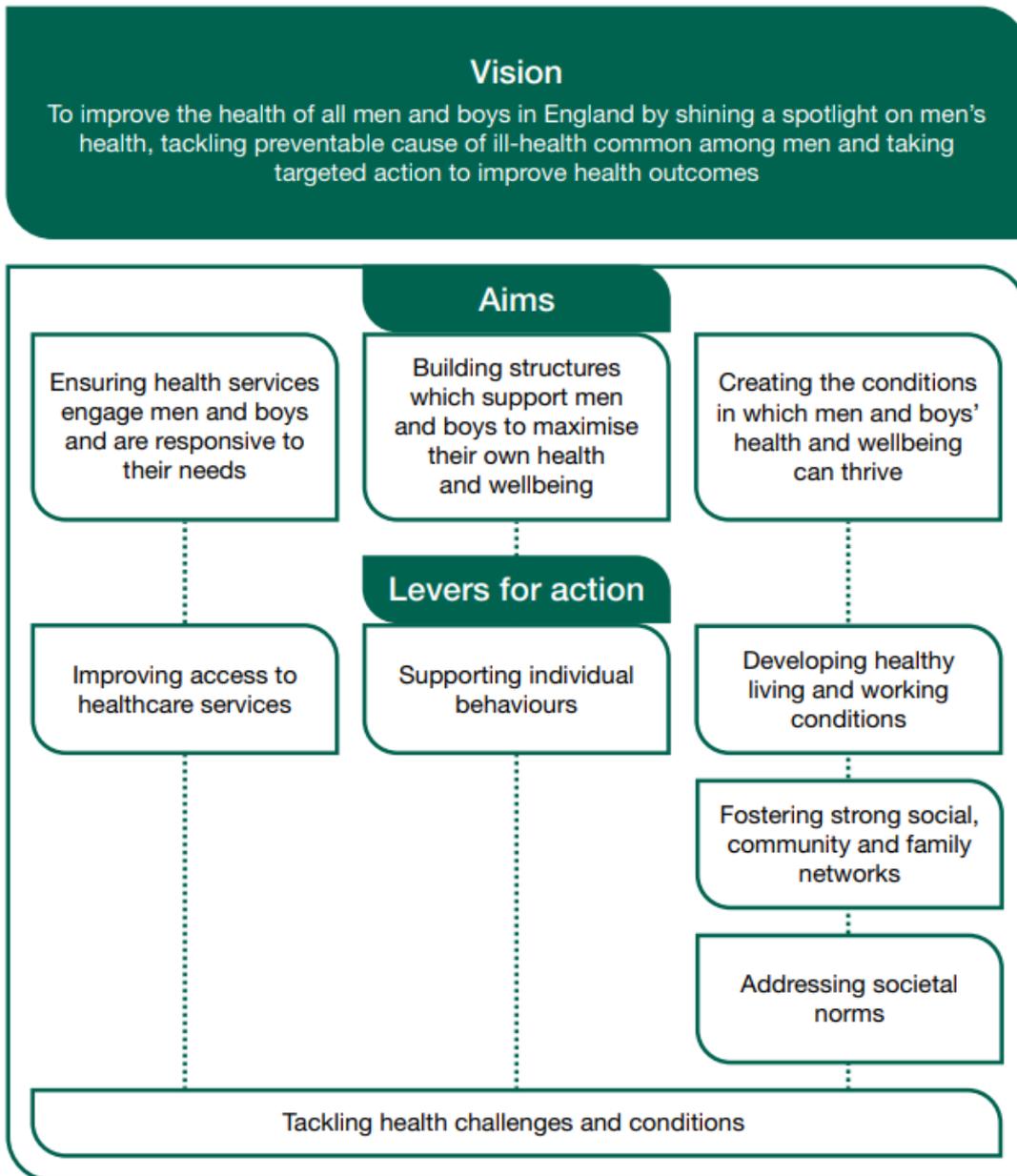
It proposes six levers to achieve its aims:

1. Improving access to healthcare
2. Supporting individual behaviours

3. Developing healthy living and working conditions
4. Fostering strong social, community and family networks
5. Addressing societal norms
6. Tackling health challenges and conditions

Vulnerable groups identified through the strategy include:

- Coastal areas
- Ethnic minority backgrounds
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men
- Men with disabilities
- Boys with special educational needs (SEN) and autistic men
- Men who are homeless and rough sleeping
- Men who are in contact with the criminal justice system
- Care leavers



4. PLYMOUTH ALIGNMENT

Plymouth City Council’s current activity aligns strongly with the Men and Boys’ Health Strategy, with a particular emphasis on prevention, early intervention and community-based support. Suicide prevention remains a core priority, with targeted initiatives for men and boys and training for employers and frontline staff across the spectrum of suicide prevention activity directly aligning with the strategy.

Early intervention for high-risk behaviours is embedded across services, including alcohol liaison teams in the emergency department and cardiovascular disease secondary prevention for men admitted via urgent care, aiming to meet men where they are and directly supporting the individual behaviours contributing to men’s ill health.

Support for boys and young men is strengthened through relationship and sex education in schools, alongside the SEND local offer for those with additional needs, helping to support action to develop healthy living and working conditions and addressing societal norms.

A wide network of community-based provision, including family hubs, wellbeing hubs, youth clubs, sports and activity groups, and diverse men's groups, provides accessible, place-based support for men, boys, fathers and male carers, supported by a digital map to help residents and professionals navigate local offers. These efforts strengthen social community and family connections and creating the conditions for boys and young men to thrive.

Work to improve male health also extends into organisational culture through programmes such as 'Man Culture - It's Time for Change', and through safeguarding and employer training linked to violence against women and girls. This is exemplified through the offer by Plymouth City Council to council employees.

These strengths mean that men and boys' health can be seen as an extension and refinement of existing public health priorities.

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Plymouth has a strong set of opportunities to further embed the Men and Boys Health Strategy across the system. Strengthening the visibility of sex-disaggregated public health intelligence will enable better benchmarking, gap analysis and progress monitoring. While data on life expectancy and some outcomes are available by sex, there is less systematic visibility of indicators that are particularly relevant to men (e.g. cardiovascular risk, screening and vaccination uptake, NHS Health Checks, occupational injuries) to inform planning and performance reporting. Further insight could be achieved through building on existing analytical work by routinely disaggregating key indicators by sex and deprivation.

A proportionate universalism approach can help ensure that vulnerable groups are targeted effectively, addressing the historically low uptake among boys, young men, fathers and men in or out of work. As major employers, Plymouth City Council and partners, including the military, also have a clear role in modelling good practice and improving male health outcomes.

There is significant potential to 'meet men and boys where they are' by engaging through workplaces, welfare and advice services, libraries, family and wellbeing hubs, sports clubs, and criminal justice settings. Stronger links with local sports clubs and community ambassadors offer further avenues for engagement, while expanding work on gambling-harm prevention and online safety, through the prevention arm of the Statutory Gambling Levy, provides an important opportunity to intervene early and reduce long-term risks.

The public health team will implement the recommendations arising from these opportunities. This will ensure all public health work routinely analyses outcomes using a sex-disaggregated lens and maximises opportunities to engage men and boys, particularly where they have been less likely to access services, to improve their health and wellbeing.

Appendix One: Men's support groups

WHAT'S ON IN PLYMOUTH FOR MEN

MONDAY

KPG Men's Shed
09.30-14.30
Keyham Green Places
163 Renown Street
Keyham, PL2 2DT

Andys Man Club
19.00 - 21.00
Rees Centre
Ridgeway
Plympton, PL7 2PS

Andys Man Club
19.00 - 21.00
City Collage
Kings Road
Plymouth, PL1 5QG

Andys Man Club
19.00 - 21.00
Four Greens Community Trust
15 Whiteleigh Green
Whiteleigh, PL5 4DD

Argyle FIT (Fans in Training)
19.00 - 21.00
Argyle Trust
Manadon Sports Hub
Manadon, PL5 3JH

Active Men Cardio Fit
10.00-11.00
Elder Tree
Tothill Community Centre
Tothill, PL4 9DA

Active Men
14.00-16.00
Elder Tree
Plymstock United Church
Plymstock, PL9 7PB

Platform Garden Men's Group (1st & 3rd Monday of Month)
10.00-12.00
Pioneer Project
St Budeaux Station
St Budeaux Square, PL5 1JJ

TUESDAY

Janner Men's Shed
12.00 -16.00
Leigham Community Hall
Thurlestone Walk
Leigham, PL6 8QB

The Great Escape
09.30- 12.30
William Sutton Memorial Hall
6 Shelly Way
St Budeaux, PL5 1QF

Elder Tree - Active Men
10.30-12.00
Onwards House Community Centre
Greenbank, PL4 8PE

Elder Tree - Active Men Walk & Talk in the Park
10.30-12.30
Devonport Park Cafe
Devonport, PL1 4BU

Elder Tree - Active Men
10.30-12.00
St Chad's Church
Whiteleigh, PL5 4AJ

Momentum - Monthly Mens Fry Up 1st Tuesday of Month
07.00 - 09.00
Hideaway Cafe
Cattedown, PL4 0ST

WEDNESDAY

Every Man Matters
18.00-20.00
YMCA Plymouth
Honicknowle Lane
Plymouth, PL5 3NG

Active Men Walking Football
09.30-11.00
Elder Tree
Manadon Community Hub
Manadon, PL5 3FD

Active Men Extra Time
13.45-15.45
Elder Tree
William Sutton Memorial Hall
6 Shelly Way
St Budeaux, PL5 1QF

Men's Supper Club
15.30-17.30
Elder Tree Centre
Cattedown, PL5 4QP

THURSDAY

The Great Escape
09.30- 12.30
William Sutton Memorial Hall
6 Shelly Way
St Budeaux, PL5 1QF

Blake's Who Sing
19.15- 21.00
Mayflower Community Academy
Ham Drive, PL2 2NJ

Man Down
19.00- 21.00
Mayflower Community Academy
Ham Drive, PL2 2NJ

Active Men
10.00-11.30
Elder Tree
Devonport Park Cafe
Devonport, PL1 4BU

Active Men Walk & Talk
10.00-11.30
Elder Tree
Top of Broadway Carpark
Plymstock, PL9 9GH

Active Men
12.00 - 13.30
William Sutton Memorial Hall
6 Shelly Way
St Budeaux, PL5 1QF

Active Men
14.30 - 16.30
Rees Youth & Community Centre
Plympton, PL7 2PS

MANDate
19.00 - 21.00
Chaddlewood Farm Community Centre
Plympton, PL7 2XS

Momentum - Tinside Sea Swim & Coffee
06.50 - 08.30
Tinside Beach
Hoe, PL1 3DE

Momentum - Pie & Pint Night 1st Thursday of Month
19.00 - 23.00
The Waterfront Pub
Hoe, PL1 3DQ

FRIDAY

Devon Mind Men's Support Group
13.30 - 15.00
Ernest English House
Buckwell Street
Plymouth, PL1 2DA

Active Men
10.00 - 12.00
Church of the Holly Spirit
Southway, PL6 6EJ

Active Men
14.00 - 16.00
Walseley Trust,
Community Building
North Prospect, PL2 3BY

SATURDAY

Plymouth Dads and Male Carers Network Group! (1st Saturday of the Month)
Time and Venue Vary
(Check Facebook: @Manorstreetchildrenscentres)
Action for Children
Green Ark Childrens Centre
Fore Street,
Devonport, PL1 4DW

Dad's Group (2nd Saturday of Month)
10.00-12.00
Lark Sure Start
Ham Drive Nursery
Ham Drive, PL2 2NJ

Momentum - Coffee Catch Up
08.00 - 09.30
Pier 1
Barbican, PL1 3DE

Right Path Men's Run Club
07.30
Victoria Park
Millbridge, PL1 5NJ

SUNDAY

Every Man Matters
13.00-15.00
YMCA Plymouth
Honicknowle Lane
Plymouth, PL5 3NG

Momentum - Saltram Walk & Talk Fortnightly
10.00 - 12.00
Saltram Country Park
Plympton, PL7 1UH

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