



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Health Profiles

Questions about the data in the 2015 profiles

Please be aware these questions are not retrospectively updated and so external links might not work.

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Questions about the data in the 2015 profiles

Which indicators have changed compared to the previous profiles?

The indicators in the 2015 pdf profiles (released on 02 June 2015) represent the same topics as the 2014 profiles. However, some have been calculated using slightly different methods and should not be directly compared with those published in previous years. These indicators are identified either by a change of name, or by a dagger symbol next to the indicator name in the spine chart.

Why do the county Health Profiles show different range data from the district or unitary authority profiles?

Health Profiles divide local authorities into upper tier (which includes counties and unitary authorities) and lower tier (which includes county districts and unitary authorities). Unitary authorities are included in both groups, because they have most of the functions of districts and counties.

The pdf Health Profiles for counties present ranges, which include unitary authorities, but do not include counties, because that would mean that county districts' data was counted twice (once as a district, and once within the county). The pdf Health Profiles for districts present ranges, which also include unitary authorities.

The pdf Health Profiles for unitary authorities treat the unitary authorities as districts rather than counties, because unitary authorities are not subdivided into county districts. Therefore the pdf Health Profiles for unitary authorities present ranges, which include county districts and unitary authorities.

The Health Profiles online tool allows users to select upper tier local authorities (counties and unitary authorities) or lower tier local authorities (county districts and unitary authorities). Unitary authorities can therefore be compared with counties or districts according to the user preference. This will affect the range that is presented for unitary authorities.

Why is the breastfeeding initiation indicator not shown for some areas?

The spine chart bar for the breastfeeding initiation indicator is not shown in any of the profiles. This is because data are not currently available for a large proportion of local

authorities (more than 25%), and it is therefore not possible to calculate a valid range. This approach is consistent with the Public Health Outcomes Framework. Some local authorities do not have a local value or local number per year shown for this indicator. The local value is suppressed when it does not meet quality checks by NHS England (which publishes the data). The local number per year is suppressed when the local value is suppressed.

It is still possible to calculate the England average, and to compare this with the local value (where this is available). We cannot display the red/ amber/ green rating on the spine chart (on page 4) because the range bar is not shown and so there is nowhere to show the circle for the local area. However, the comparison is still reported as worse, similar to or better in the front page text where possible. The statistical comparison is also available via the Health Profiles online tool, on the “Overview” and “Compare areas” tabs.

Why is the suicide indicator not shown for district and unitary authority areas?

For districts and unitary authorities, a large number of rates cannot be calculated reliably, due to the number of deaths being less than 25. As 28% of all district and unitary authorities have no rates calculated, the range is too incomplete, and hence the range information is not shown. This is in line with the approach taken in the Public Health Outcomes Framework data tool (where range information is not shown whenever more than 25% of areas have no data). The pdf Health Profiles group unitary authorities and districts together.

Is it possible to show this indicator for counties and unitary authorities, as more than 75% of this group do have rates calculated?

This indicator is available on the Health Profiles online tool when users select upper tier local authorities i.e. “County/UA”.

Why do some indicators have a dagger symbol, showing that they are ‘not comparable with previously released values’?

The following indicators are marked with a dagger symbol:

- Alcohol-specific hospital stays (under 18)
- Hospital stays for alcohol related harm
- GCSE achieved (5A*-C inc. Eng & Maths)
- Incidence of malignant melanoma
- Incidence of TB

This indicates that the methodology used to calculate these indicators has changed from that used in the 2014 profiles and previous years. The values shown using the 2015 methodology should therefore not be compared with previously published values.

More details on the changes are given in the relevant indicator definitions, available from the online profiles tool.