

# 50 Steps to a Healthier Newham

Newham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2025

Executive summary



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# Newham's population

## Key points

- In 2023, Newham had an estimated 373,000 residents.
- Males make up 53% of the population and females make up 47%. Newham is a relatively young borough, with 45% of residents under 30.
- Newham is one of the most ethnically diverse places in the country. Forty-five percent of residents identify as Asian, 28% as White, 18% as Black, 5% as Mixed, and 4% as other.
- Newham is a relatively deprived place. In 2019, Newham was the third most deprived borough in London, with three-quarters of residents living in the 30% most deprived areas in the country. However, it has become relatively less deprived since 2010.
- Newham is amongst the fastest growing boroughs in London. The population is predicted to increase by 19% by 2030, equating to around 71,200 more residents.
- Newham's population is also ageing. The fastest growth is among residents aged 70+.



# Health and wellbeing in Newham

## Key points

- In 2023, an estimated 56% of residents had high or very high life satisfaction, which is an important marker of health and wellbeing. However, a substantial proportion were not satisfied with life, which may reflect health, economic and social factors.
- In 2022, female life expectancy was 83 years and male life expectancy was 78.9 years. These were lower than the London averages and similar to England.
- There are marked inequalities in life expectancy between the most and least deprived parts of Newham. In 2018-20, the difference was 6.6 years in females and 8.1 years in males.
- In 2018-20, healthy life expectancy was 64.6 years in females and 59.5 years in males. This suggests on average females live around 18 years, and males 19 years, with ill health or disability.
- In 2023, 26% of Newham's NHS-registered population had at least one diagnosed long-term condition, increasing from 25% in 2017. Around half had two or more conditions.
- The five most common long-term conditions in Newham in 2023 were hypertension (high blood pressure), obesity, diabetes, depression and asthma.
- In 2023, long-term conditions were most common in the most deprived parts of Newham and least common in the least deprived areas. They were also most common in Asian ethnic groups, followed by Black ethnic groups, with lower rates in White, Mixed and other ethnic groups.
- In 2021-2023, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and cancer were the top three causes of death.



# Giving children and young people the best start in life

## Key points

- In 2024, an estimated 96,300 children and young people aged 18 and under lived in Newham, representing 26% of the population.
- There are around 5,400 births a year in Newham. The number of births annually has fallen slightly in recent years.
- Low birth weight is a key indicator of child and maternal health. In 2022, 4.5% of term babies were born with low birth weight, which was the fifth highest (worst) in England.
- In 2020-22, infant mortality in Newham was similar to the London and England averages. It has greatly improved over the past 20 years.
- In 2023, around three-quarters of newborn babies were breastfed, which was lower than London and England. Breastfeeding rates fell in the weeks following birth. By eight weeks, around one in three babies were breastfed.
- It is important that children are ready to start school in terms of their ability to process information, their speech and language and their social and emotional development. In 2022/23, an estimated 71% of Newham children were ready for school, which was better than London and England averages.
- Special educational needs (SEN) is a priority in Newham. In 2023, an estimated 8,500 school-aged children had SEN, based on the number of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or receiving SEN support.
- In 2022/23, almost 80% of Newham children in reception had a healthy weight, in line with London and England averages. Just over half of year six children had a healthy weight, which was lower (worse) than London and England. Levels of child overweight and obesity in Newham have been relatively constant in recent years.
- In 2021/22, an estimated one in three five-year olds in Newham had dental decay, which was higher than the London and England averages.
- In 2023, the council estimated that under half of young people aged 16-24 felt safe in the local area. Although Newham has a relatively high rate of first time offending, it substantially improved between 2017 and 2021.



# Promoting good mental health

## Key points

- In 2023, over one in five 8-19 year-olds in England had a probable mental illness. If the picture was the same in Newham in 2024, it would suggest around 11,600 local 8-19 year-olds had a diagnosable mental health condition. Only a small proportion of these had a diagnosis.
- The number of 0-19 year-olds in Newham with diagnosed anxiety or depression increased significantly between 2017/18 and 2023/24, in line with national trends.
- Around 12% of adults in Newham had diagnosed anxiety or depression in 2023, equating to around 42,000 people.
- Depression (diagnosed) is increasing among adults in Newham. Between 2017 and 2023, it rose by 34%, from 4.7% to 6.3%.
- Common mental illness (anxiety and depression) does not affect all groups equally. For example, in 2024 common mental illness was significantly higher in females than males from age 10 upwards. It was also higher in White ethnic groups compared to other ethnic groups, although this is likely to reflect under-diagnosis – and therefore potentially unmet need – in residents from Asian, Black and other minoritised ethnic groups.
- In 2022/23, around 1% of Newham residents had a diagnosed complex mental illness, such as schizophrenia or bipolar, which was similar to London and higher than England. Prevalence has been stable in recent years.
- There are long-standing ethnic inequalities in complex mental illness. Prevalence is higher in Black ethnic groups than most other ethnic groups across the country, including in Newham. This inequality is thought to be due to complex factors including racially based social and economic disadvantage, experiences of racism and discrimination, and inequalities in access, quality and experiences of healthcare and other public services.
- Over the period 2020-22, 57 Newham residents died by suicide. This was a similar rate to London and significantly lower than England. Suicide is consistently higher in males than females.
- In 2022/23, an estimated 11% of Newham adults were lonely 'always' or 'often'. This was higher than London and England.



# Preventing illness and providing high quality health and care services

## Key points

- In 2022/23, an estimated 63% of Newham adults had overweight or obesity. This was higher than the London average and similar to England.
- Around 9% of adults in Newham had diabetes in 2022/23, which was higher than London and England averages. The trend has been relatively stable in recent years.
- Hypertension (high blood pressure) is the most common long-term condition in Newham, affecting around 10% of the population in 2023. It has been relatively stable since 2017.
- Levels of coronary heart disease, which affected around 1.7% of residents in 2023/24, declined over the past decade, which may be linked to falling smoking rates and better treatments. Despite this, cardiovascular disease remained the leading cause of death and premature death in Newham in 2021-23.
- Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are the two most common long-term respiratory conditions in Newham. In 2022/23, 4.5% of residents (aged 6+) had asthma, which was lower than London and England averages and had been relatively stable over recent years. Under 1% of the population had COPD, which was similar to London and lower than England. COPD fell between 2017 and 2023, which may reflect declining smoking rates.
- Respiratory disease was the second largest cause of death in Newham in 2021-23. Respiratory mortality has declined in Newham in recent years, although it remains significantly higher than the London and England averages.
- In 2022/23, around 1.3% of residents were living with cancer, which was lower than London and England. Cancer prevalence increased in Newham, London and England between 2018/19 and 2022/23.
- Cancer was in the top three leading causes of death in Newham in 2021-23. However, cancer mortality fell between 2016-18 and 2020-22, which suggests diagnosis, treatment and survival may be improving.



## Executive summary

- Long-term conditions affect different population groups differently, reflecting health inequalities. For example, Newham's Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Other Asian and Indian populations experienced the highest rates of diabetes, and Caribbean and African groups had the highest levels of hypertension in 2023. There are also inequalities in relation to sex, age and other characteristics.
- In 2023/24, the top three reasons for unplanned admissions to Newham Hospital in adults were pneumonia, sepsis and injury from a fall. For children, the main reasons were lower respiratory tract infections (including pneumonia and bronchiolitis), neonatal jaundice and viral infections.
- Screening helps identify cancers early and reduces deaths. With the exception of cervical screening in women aged 50-64, uptake of cervical, breast and bowel screening in 2023 were below the London and England averages, and uptake of cervical and breast screening was falling.
- In 2022, around 4,000 residents had a new sexually transmitted infection (STI), which was a lower rate than London and higher than England. STIs increased between 2021 and 2022, reversing a previous downward trend.
- In 2022 around 1,600 Newham residents had diagnosed HIV, which was a similar prevalence to London and higher than England. HIV prevalence was relatively constant between 2011 and 2022.
- Late HIV diagnosis is a key concern in Newham. It is linked to poorer outcomes and inequalities. In 2020-22, 38% of all residents with a new HIV diagnosis were diagnosed late, up from 19% in 2017-19 and increasing faster than London and England.
- In 2023, around 5,200 residents were accessing adult social care services. There are notable disparities in use of social care. For example, service-users from Caribbean, Other Black and White British ethnic groups were over-represented and those from Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani and African ethnic groups were under-represented. Use of services by people aged 65+ living in Newham's most deprived areas was six times that of the least deprived areas.

# Addressing smoking and substance misuse

## Key points

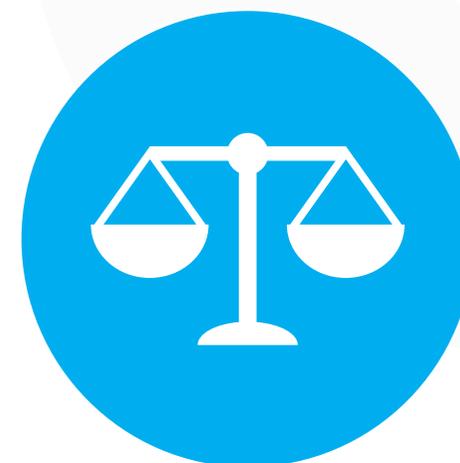
- Smoking is the largest cause of preventable illness and early death in England. In 2022, an estimated 11% of Newham adults smoked, which was similar to London and England. Smoking appears to be falling faster in Newham than in London and England.
- In 2022, 82 Newham residents died of alcohol-related causes, which was a similar rate to London and England, and similar to previous years. The same year, there were 1,500 hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions in Newham, which was a better rate than London and England.
- In 2022, completion of opiate and non-opiate drug treatment was lower in Newham than in London and England. Completion of treatment fell between 2018 and 2022, falling faster than London and England.



# Creating an inclusive borough

## Key points

- In 2023, around 22% of Newham residents were aged 50+. The 50+ population is growing faster than other age groups – expected to increase by 25% by 2030 – which means Newham’s population is ageing.
- In 2024, over 70% of residents aged 50+ had one or more long-term health conditions, and this proportion increased with age. Over 40% of those aged 65+ had frailty.
- In 2021, an estimated one in three residents said that Newham is an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ place to grow older. This suggests Newham has strengths and assets that help some residents age well, while things can be improved so all residents have the opportunity to be healthy and independent into later life.
- In 2021, an estimated 17.5% of Newham residents were disabled, which was higher than London and similar to England. This was disproportionately high given Newham has a young population.
- In England, an estimated 2.5% of children and young people and 2.2% of adults have a learning disability. If these levels are the same in Newham, it suggests around 2,300 children and young people and 8,000 adults had a learning disability in 2024. Only 0.4% of residents were recorded as having a learning disability by their GP, which might mean some people with a learning disability are not getting the support they need.
- In 2023, around 2% of 0-19 year-olds in Newham were known to be autistic, which was roughly in line with national estimates. Newham had the second highest rate of autistic children known to schools in North East London.
- 0.3% of residents aged 20+ had diagnosed autism, suggesting there is substantial under-diagnosis among adults, which is a pattern seen across the country.
- ‘Inclusion health’ relates to population groups that are socially excluded, for example, people experiencing homelessness, vulnerable migrants and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These groups typically experience poor health outcomes. In the UK, women in inclusion health groups have an estimated mortality rate almost 12 times that of the general population, and men are estimated to have almost eight times the rate. This is why inclusion health is a public health priority in Newham.



# Protecting residents from threats to their health

## Key points

- Immunisation is a highly effective public health intervention, yet uptake of most vaccines in Newham is low. For example, in 2022/23, 68% of five year olds in Newham were fully vaccinated with MMR, which was lower than London and England averages and well below the national target of 95%.
- Newham performs well in uptake of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, with almost 80% uptake in males and females, consistently higher than London and England averages.
- Newham has the highest incidence of TB in England, with 436 people diagnosed in 2020-22. Incidence slightly fell between 2016-18 and 2020-22.
- In 2021, Newham had the fifth highest incidence of acute hepatitis B in London. However, incidence in Newham fell faster than London and England between 2017 and 2021.



# Creating a healthier food environment

## Key points

- In 2022/23, an estimated 21% of adults in Newham were eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. This was significantly lower than London and England.
- Access to healthy and unhealthy food varies across the borough. For example, there are large numbers of hot food takeaways in some areas and many neighbourhoods have limited access to healthy food.
- Newham has the longest running universal free school meals scheme in the UK. In 2024, over 90% percent of pupils, almost 35,000 children, were taking up the offer.
- In 2021, Newham was estimated to have the second highest level of food insecurity of all London boroughs. The Newham Food Alliance supports residents who can't afford the food they need. In 2023/24, in partnership with the Felix Project, it distributed over 40 tonnes of food a week, where each tonne produced approximately 2,800 meals.



# Making Newham a place for people and planet

## Key points

- Newham is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. For example, it is the second most vulnerable area to extreme heat in the UK and one of the six London boroughs most likely to be affected by 'catastrophic' flooding.
- In 2022, an estimated 7.5% of deaths in Newham were attributable to particulate air pollution. This was similar to the London average and higher than England. Since 2018, estimated deaths linked to air pollution have fallen, reflecting steadily improving air quality.
- In 2021, an estimated 36% of Newham adults walked at least five times a week, and 4% cycled at least five times a week. Both were similar to the London average.
- The Healthy Streets Approach enables people to walk, cycle and use public transport for travel, which has many health benefits. In 2023, Newham ranked 12th out of all 32 London boroughs (where 1 is best) for its overall Healthy Streets score.
- Between 2020/21 and 2021/22, the number of Healthy School Streets in Newham more than tripled from six to 19. Air quality improved around the schools – on average, nitrogen dioxide fell by 29% during school hours, PM2.5 fell by 19% and PM10 fell by 25%.
- Newham has relatively low levels of green space. In 2022, the borough had 0.71 hectares of publicly accessible green space per 1,000 population, which was substantially below the London and England averages.
- Libraries are integral to communities. There are over a million visits to Newham's libraries a year and over a million books are borrowed every year, with primary age children being the most frequent borrowers.



# Promoting health through housing

## Key points

- An estimated 39% of Newham households (and over half of all residents) live in private rented accommodation, 33% of households live in owner-occupied properties, and 28% live in social housing.
- In 2022/23, the estimated average rent for private rental accommodation in Newham was around 65% of average wages. This was the fourth highest in London and significantly more expensive than the England average of 30%.
- In 2021 an estimated one in four Newham households were overcrowded, which was the highest in England.
- Newham has the highest rate of homelessness in England. It is estimated that one in 22 people in Newham are currently homeless, including people living in temporary accommodation or on the street.
- In 2023, almost 6,400 Newham households were in temporary accommodation, the highest rate in the country.
- An estimated 18% of Newham households were experiencing fuel poverty in 2021, which was the highest in London.



# Increasing participation in leisure and sport

## Key points

- In 2021/22, an estimated one in three children and young people in Newham were doing enough exercise. This was lower than the London and England averages.
- An estimated 58% of Newham adults were doing enough exercise in 2022/23, which was below London and England averages.
- There are inequalities in physical activity. For example, females in Newham are less active than males, and disabled residents get less exercise than non-disabled residents.



# Building an inclusive economy

## Key points

- Newham is a relatively deprived place. In 2019, Newham was the third most deprived borough in London, with three-quarters of residents living in the 30% most deprived areas in the country. However, it has become relatively less deprived since 2010.
- In 2022/23, an estimated 38% of all Newham residents, and 44% of children, were living in poverty when taking housing costs into account. Both were significantly higher than the London averages.
- In 2022/23, around 75% of residents aged 16 to 64 were employed, which was similar to London and England, and relatively unchanged over the past five years.
- In 2022/23, men were more economically active in Newham than the London and UK averages, while women were less active. There was a 19% gap in employment between Newham residents with long-term physical or mental health conditions and the general population.



# Partnerships rooted in the community

## Key points

- Well Newham aims to create a diverse, thriving and sustainable landscape of services and programmes that support residents around their health. In less than a year, over 20,000 residents were referred to a local service through the Well Newham Directory of Services to meet a health need.
- The council, NHS, voluntary, community and faith organisations, schools, businesses and many more all have important roles to play in making Newham a health-promoting place – and have greater impact by working together. In 2024, over 800 organisations were working together to improve outcomes in the borough.
- Newham residents speak over 100 languages and an estimated 65% of residents speak English as their main language. Of those for whom English is not their main language, an estimated 25% cannot speak English well or at all. This underscores the need for inclusive communication in promoting and delivering services.



# Driving quality across our health and care partnership

## Key points

- As described throughout the JSNA, Newham has marked inequalities in health outcomes. This includes inequalities between Newham and other places, and inequalities within Newham.
- Newham's fast-growing population means there will be growing demand for health and care services in coming years.
- The Newham Health Equity Programme is focused on achieving cultural and practice change in health and care services to ensure Newham residents receive fair and effective services.



## To find out more...

Read Newham's health and wellbeing strategy, *50 Steps to a Healthier Newham 2024-2027*, to find out more about what we are doing to improve health and reduce health inequalities in Newham.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Newham Health and Wellbeing Board (2024)  
[50 Steps to a Healthier Newham 2024-2027](#)