

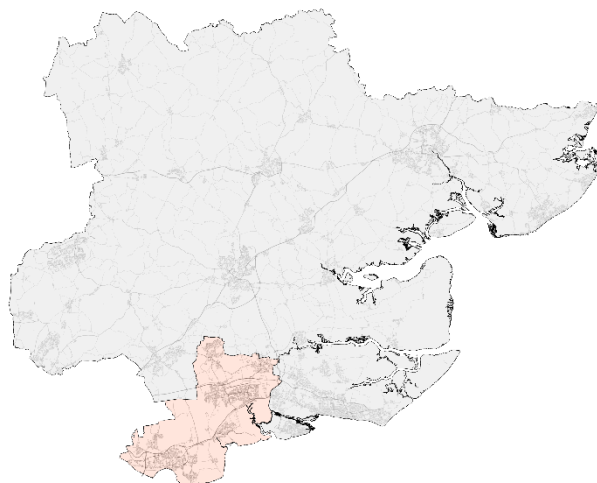
Greater Essex Area Profile

South-West Essex Unitary Authority

Public Health Intelligence
Research & Citizen Insight
Policy Unit

South-West Essex Unitary Area Profile

This profile gives a high-level picture of the health of a new South-West Essex Unitary Authority, made up of the current Basildon and Thurrock districts. The report looks at demographics, mortality, disease prevalence, early years, and socioeconomic factors. Area profiles are updated annually by Essex County Councils Public Health Intelligence team. The PHI team have also produced a comprehensive [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) suite of dashboards, which covers the topics in this report and the wider determinants of health. These dashboards are regularly updated and are the best source of local health data.



Demographic characteristics

South-West Essex UA area is home to c.360k residents (19% of the Greater Essex population). The population is projected to grow by 9% in the years to 2040, with the fastest growth being seen amongst the 65+ age group. The area is less ethnically diverse than England as a whole.

The health of the population

Life expectancy in South-West Essex UA is 82 years for females and 78 years for males, broadly similar to figures for England as a whole. The preventable mortality rate is significantly lower than England, but this varies across the patch. Thurrock has higher levels of preventable mortality compared to Basildon, particularly in preventable cancer deaths.

Inequalities

There are inequalities within the area. Women born in the most deprived parts of South-West Essex die 7.6 years earlier than in the least deprived areas. For men the gap is 7.2 years. Deprivation in South-West Essex is high, with pockets of very high deprivation across the area. There is a high demand for housing in South-West Essex, and the median house price is circa 7 times the median salary.

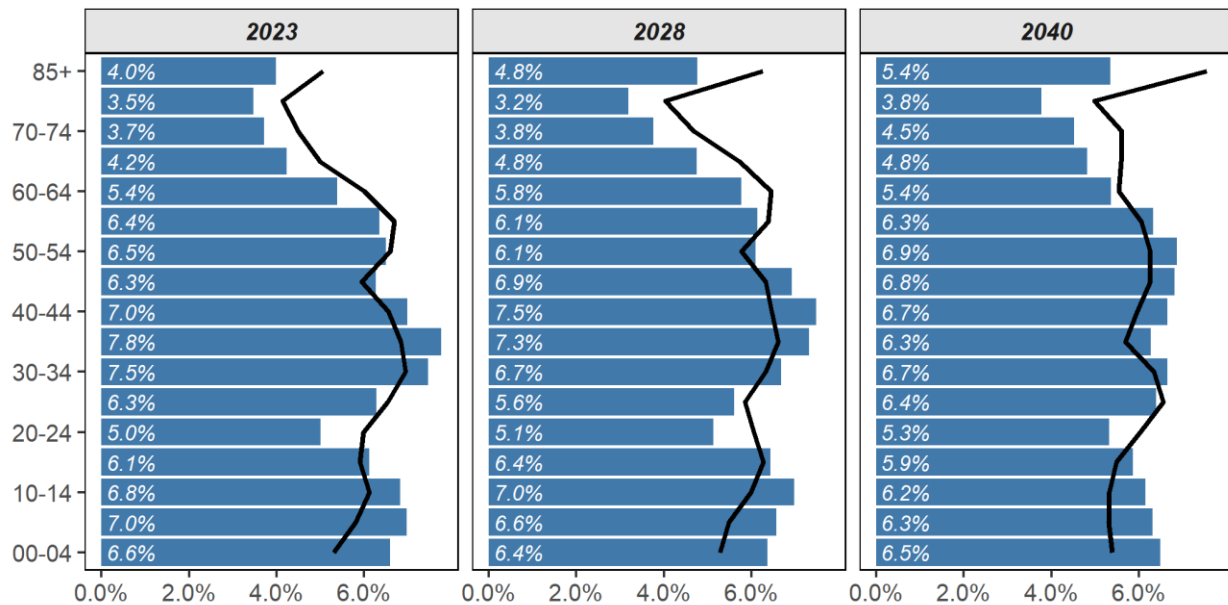
Demographic characteristics

South-West Essex has a population of 363,590 according to the latest 2023 ONS population estimates. This is 19% of the Greater Essex population. The population is set to increase to 378,115 and 396,589 in 2028 and 2040.

78,552 (21.6%) residents are aged 0-15, 229,281 (63.1%) are age 16-64, and 55,757 (15.3%) are age 65+.

Current & future population structure

Black line is England



The median age in South-West Essex is 37, lower than the England median age (40). There is a roughly equal sex split with females making up 51.2% of South-West Essex residents.

93,090 (25.6%) of residents in South-West Essex identify as an ethnicity other than White British. This is lower than England, where 26.5% identify as an ethnicity other than White British. 91.9% of residents speak English as their main language.

After English, the three most common languages spoken in South-West Essex are 'Any other European languages' (13,130, 3.8%), Polish (3,400, 1.0%), and 'Any other South Asian languages' (1,840, 0.5%).

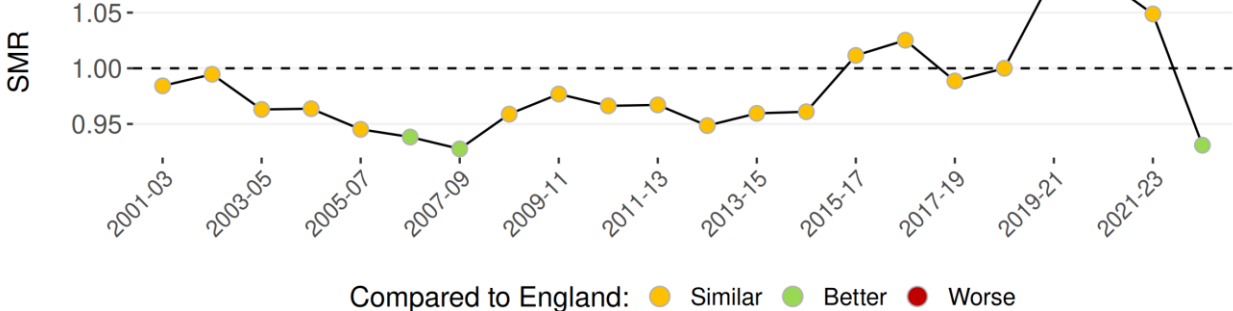
Mortality

Mortality is an important measure of the health of a population. Some key indicators are preventable mortality rates, suicide rates, and child mortality.

The charts below show the standardised mortality rate (SMR) for preventable deaths in South-West Essex. The SMR shows if South-West Essex sees more or fewer preventable deaths than we would expect, based on England’s overall rates. SMRs account for differences in the age and sex profile of the local population to make this a fair comparison. A SMR greater than 1 means that preventable deaths are higher than expected, and lower than 1 means preventable deaths are lower than expected. If the preventable mortality rate is significantly higher than England, the point is shown in red. Mortality rates which are lower or similar to England may still represent important public health issues – for example if there has been year on year increases locally which haven’t been seen nationally.

Standardised preventable mortality rates, residents aged under 75

Values above 1 indicate higher than expected mortality



Compared to England, South-West Essex has a lower level of preventable mortality. Preventable deaths can be grouped into four main causes – deaths which are considered preventable due to cancer, circulatory disease, liver disease, or respiratory disease. Trends in preventable mortality are shown on the next page, split by the cause of death and current LTLA.

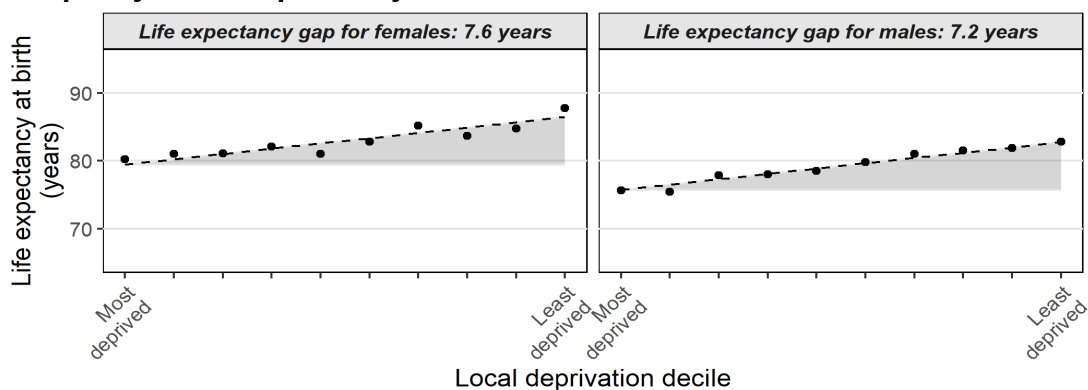
South-West Essex has seen a reduction in preventable mortality due to cancer and cardiovascular disease. Preventable cancer mortality is significantly higher in Thurrock compared to England. There has been a general increase in preventable liver disease mortality, though the overall rates for preventable liver disease mortality are lower than England as a whole.

Preventable mortality rates per 100,000 residents aged under 75



Preventable mortality is concentrated in deprived areas. People living in the most deprived parts of South-West Essex die roughly 7 years earlier than people living in the least deprived areas.

Inequality in life expectancy within South-West Essex



In the chart above the area is split into 10 groups based on their index of multiple deprivation decile. Life expectancy is calculated for each area. If there is no inequality then the dotted line on the chart will be flat. The chart shows that life expectancy generally increases as deprivation decreases.

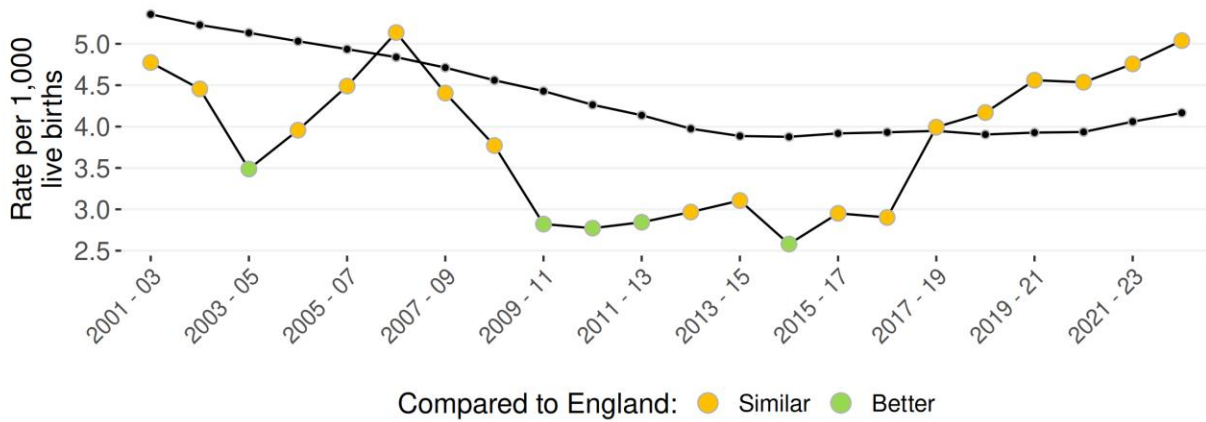
Infant mortality is influenced by the ‘upstream determinants’ of health such as social, economic, and environmental conditions. Infant mortality can be thought of as an indicator of the general health of an area.

Similarly suicide is high level indicator of the mental health of an area. The drivers of suicide are complex and can vary person to person. Some of the nationally recognised risk factors for suicide include poor mental health, loneliness and isolation, history of self-harm, and (in adults) long term unemployment. There is also a link to physical health and distressing events, such as being recently diagnosed with a terminal illness.

The charts below show infant mortality and suicide rates in South-West Essex:

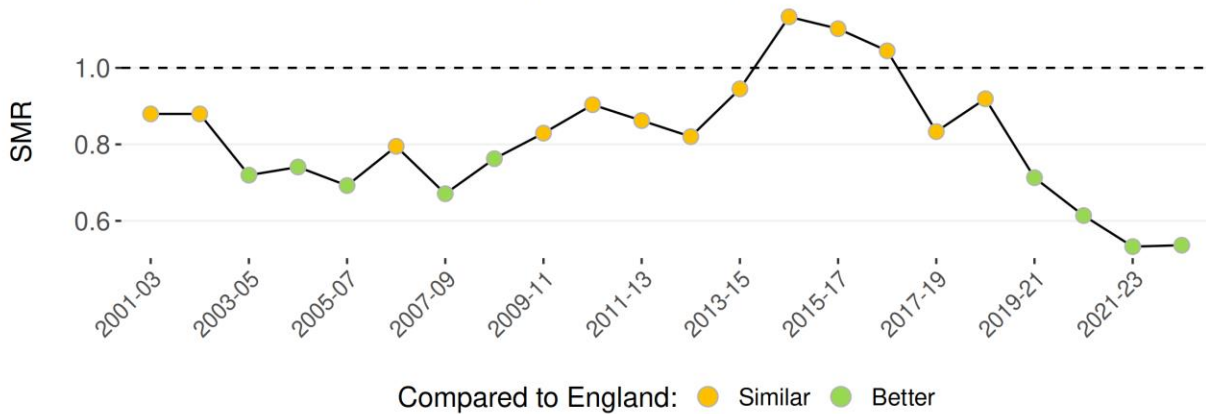
Infant mortality rate

Black line is England



Standardised suicide mortality rates

Values above 1 indicate higher than expected mortality



Disease prevalence and hospital activity

GPs maintain registers of their patients who have been diagnosed with certain conditions. This data can be used to estimate the disease prevalence of some common conditions in South-West Essex (table below). South-West Essex has lower estimated prevalence for Asthma, and Osteoporosis. Estimated prevalence is higher for Rheumatoid Arthritis.

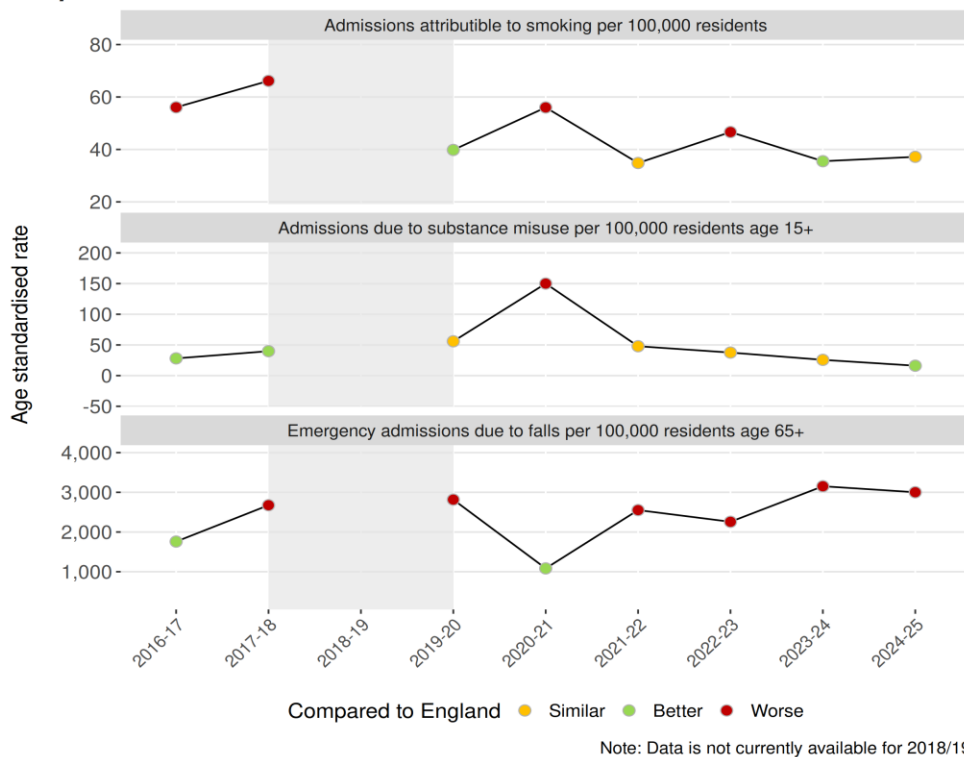
The prevalences in the table above are based on people who have been diagnosed with each condition. This will miss people who have the condition but haven't been diagnosed, so the true prevalence is likely higher than the figures in the table.

Condition	Residents diagnosed	South-West Essex %	England %
Asthma	23,075	6.1%	6.6%

Condition	Residents diagnosed	South-West Essex %	England %
COPD	7,602	1.9%	1.9%
Osteoporosis	761	0.6%	1.2%
Rheumatoid Arthritis	2,906	0.9%	0.8%

Hospital admissions due to smoking, substance misuse, and (in older people) falls are largely preventable. Older people who fall usually present to hospitals as emergency admissions, which are typically more expensive compared to other admissions. Public health interventions such as smoking cessation, drug and alcohol services, and strength and balance programmes can all help to reduce demand on health care services. The charts below show admission rates for these three causes in South-West Essex:

Hospital admission rates in South-West Essex



Early years

A child's early years can have a lifelong impact on their health behaviours and outcomes in later life. Some indicators in this area include childhood obesity, admissions to hospital due to injuries, oral health, the proportion of children who are living in poverty, and educational attainment and attendance.

- The proportion of **year 6 children in South-West Essex who are overweight or obese between 2022/23 - 24/25 is 37.2%**, similar to the England proportion

(36.2%). Since 2008/09 - 10/11 the proportion of children who are overweight or obese has **increased by 3.9%** (compared to 3.1% in England).

- **24.0% of South-West Essex 5 year olds have visually obvious dental decay in 2023/24**, similar to England (22.4%). Since 2007/08 the proportion has **decreased by 9.6%** (compared to 8.5% in England).
- There are **15,027 (18.4%) children living in absolute poverty** in South-West Essex in 2024/25 (defined as households with a total income below 60% of the 2011 median income, adjusted for inflation). This is similar to England (19.8% of children live in absolute poverty). Since 2021/22 the proportion of children living in absolute poverty in South-West Essex has increased by 0.7%.

Socioeconomic

The area a person lives in, their employment, and their financial situation all influence health. This section looks at affordability of housing, average weekly earnings, and violent crimes in South-West Essex.

Median weekly earnings have increased by £256 between 2011 and 2025 in South-West Essex. Over the same period median earnings for England increased by £242. In 2025 the median gross weekly earnings in South-West Essex was £679, compared to £632 for England.

The chart below shows the ratio of median house prices to median gross annual earnings. This is a indicator of housing affordability – a value of 2 for example means that the median house price is twice the median income. The higher this ratio is, the less affordable houses are. In 2024 the median South-West Essex house price in 2024 was £342,500 and the median annual gross income was £40,703, giving an affordability ratio of 8.4. England's affordability ratio was 7.7 – **houses in South-West Essex are less affordable compared to England.**

Since 2014 the housing affordability ratio in South-West Essex has increased by 27.4%, faster than England (over the same period England's ratio increased by 8.7%).

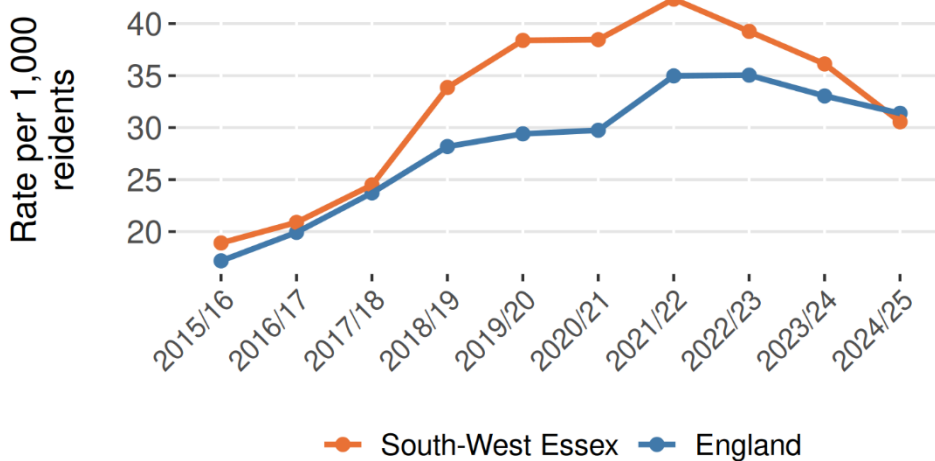
Housing affordability ratio

Higher values indicate lower affordability



Violent crime rates have been increasing across England – this is due to a combination of an increase in the number of crimes, and improvements in crime reporting. In 2024/25 the violent crime rate in South-West Essex was 30.553, similar to the England rate (31.375). The chart below shows how the violent crime rate has changed over time.

Violent crime rate



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