

The UK Health Crisis: early 2020 update

Danny Dorling

28 February 2020, Radical Statistics Conference, London

On 22 January 2020 in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister said ‘The discrepancy in life expectancy in this country is a disgrace. None the less, it is coming down, and it will come down. Life expectancy overall is at an all-time high’.

This is not true. According to the Office for National Statistics, life expectancy peaked in 2014, and has not yet returned to this level. In addition, the infant mortality rate in England and Wales has now risen for 3 years in a row and, if the UK had achieved the average for the European Union then five fewer babies would have died in the week that the Prime Minister spoke.

Eurostat has helpfully begun reporting how the UK compares with the EU-27 on a range of measures. Protection of the health of its people is one of the most important roles for a government. These data will reveal whether the UK is succeeding in the difficult years ahead.

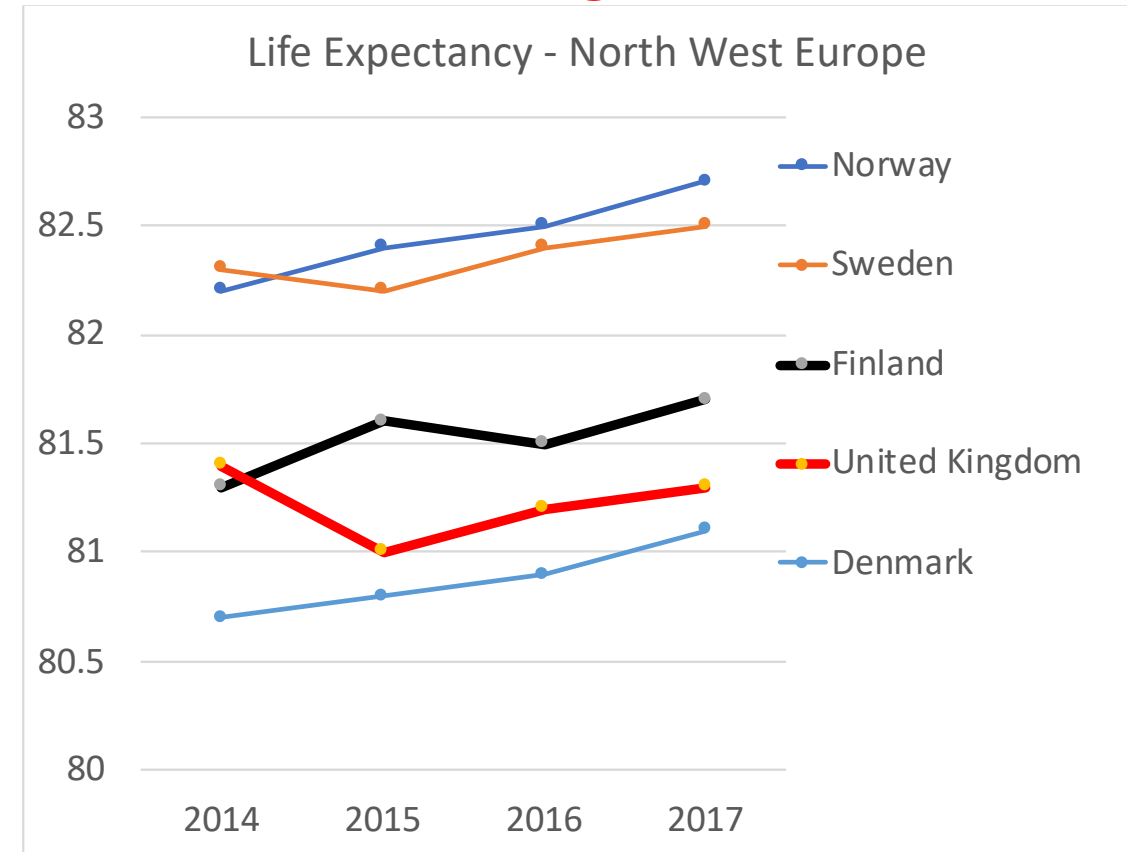
Infant mortality rate	2016	2017
Eurostat data (February 2020 release)		
European Union - 28 countries (2013-2020)	3.6	3.6
European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)	3.6	3.5
Finland	1.9	2.0
Sweden	2.5	2.4
Spain	2.7	2.7
Italy	2.8	2.7
Portugal	3.2	2.7
Ireland	3.0	3.0
Germany including former GDR	3.4	3.3
Greece	4.2	3.5
France	3.7	3.9
Romania	6.8	6.7
Norway	2.2	2.3
Belarus	3.2	3.2
Switzerland	3.6	3.5
United Kingdom	3.8	3.9
Ukraine	7.4	7.7
Armenia	8.7	8.2
Georgia	9.0	9.6
KOSOVO (under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99)	8.5	9.7
Azerbaijan	10.4	11.8

One report, issued in November 2019, implied that life expectancy had not fallen and if it were to, it would be a 'subgroup' issue:

“No government wants to see the life expectancy of its population fall on its watch. However, the risk of this happening is very real – particularly within specific subgroups of the population. This can only be prevented through coordinated, wide-ranging, long-term action, led from the centre of government.”

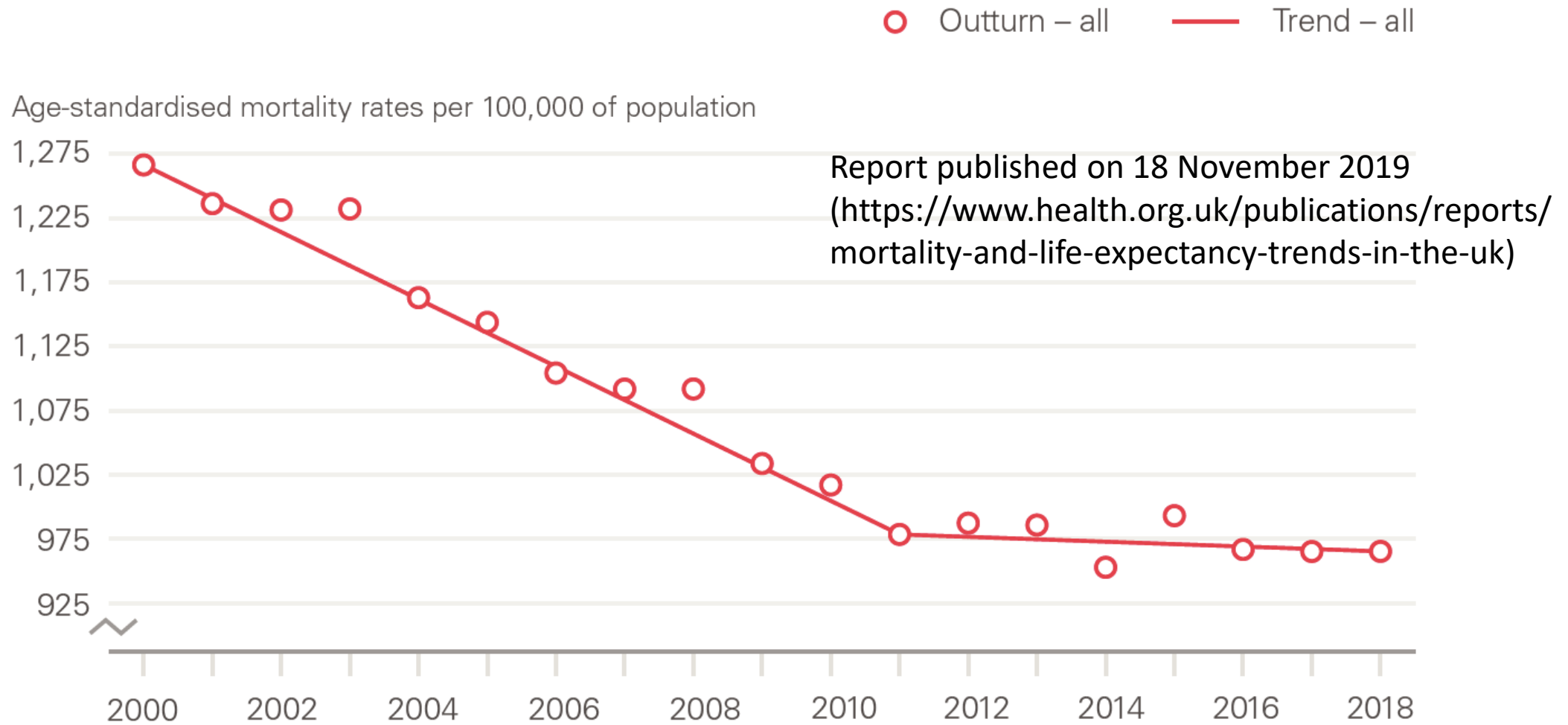
Report emailed out 18 November 2019
(<https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/mortality-and-life-expectancy-trends-in-the-uk>)

However, it did fall in the UK in 2015 and in 2018 remained below its 2014 high:



[Data Release, 18 November 2019
\[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_03_10/default/table?lang=en\]\(https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_03_10/default/table?lang=en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_03_10/default/table?lang=en)

Figure 6: The changed trend in mortality rate improvements: England and Wales, 2000–2018



Source: Health Foundation analysis using ONS, Deaths registered in England and Wales, 2018.

Infant mortality has risen in England since 2014 – significantly (E&W last line estimate)

IMR(/1000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Scotland	4.1	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	
England	4.2	4	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9		
Difference	-0.1	-0.3	-0.5	0	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6		Total
Babies	72	219	349	0	349	348	407		1745

Hiam, Lu., Dorling, Danny, McKee, Martin (2020) Things fall apart: The British Health Crisis 2010-2020", British Medical Bulletin, February.

Or just over 1100 since 2014

	Life Expectancy at birth				Change 2014-2018			
	2014		2018		Years		Days of life	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
England	79.51	83.23	79.55	83.20	0.04	-0.03	15	-11
Northern Ireland	78.61	82.38	78.84	82.44	0.23	0.06	84	22
Scotland	77.32	81.34	77.05	81.01	-0.27	-0.33	-99	-121
Wales	78.79	82.61	78.23	82.19	-0.56	-0.42	-205	-153
UK	79.25	82.99	79.24	82.93	-0.01	-0.06	-4	-22

Life expectancy at birth for males and females, 2014 and 2018. Source: ONS (2019) Single-year life tables, UK: 1980-2018, released 25 September 2019, for the UK and all its separate countries:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/datasets/singleyearlifetablesuk1980to2018>

In contrast, the lowest IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) in the world has been recorded recently in Finland, where life expectancy also continues to rise rapidly

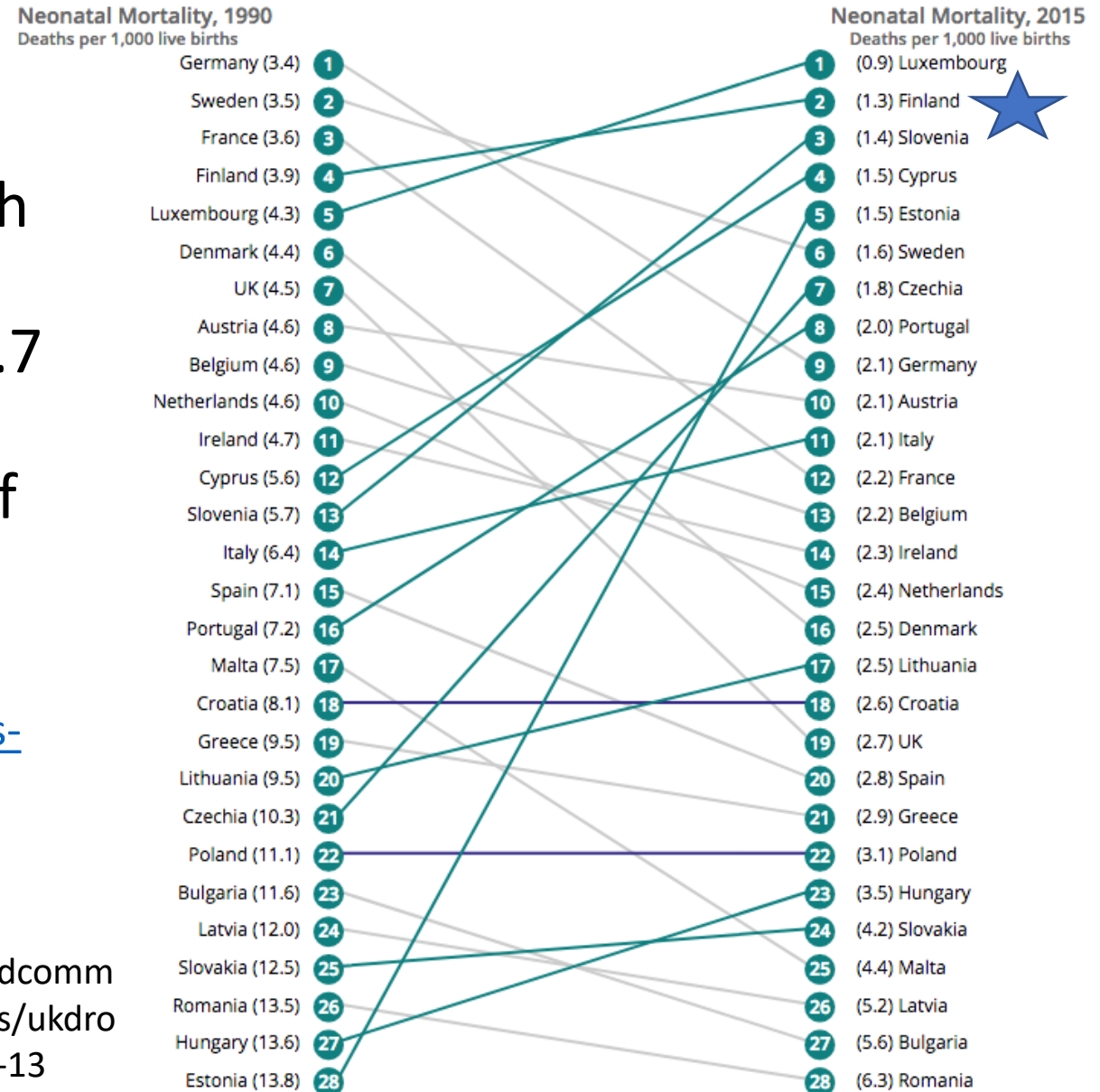
"Finland has long been a country with low maternal and infant mortality. In 2015, the infant mortality rate was 1.7 deaths per 1,000 live births: only 97 children died during their first year of life. This was the lowest figure ever recorded in Finland."

<https://blogi.thl.fi/finlands-low-infant-mortality-has-multiple-contributing-factors/>

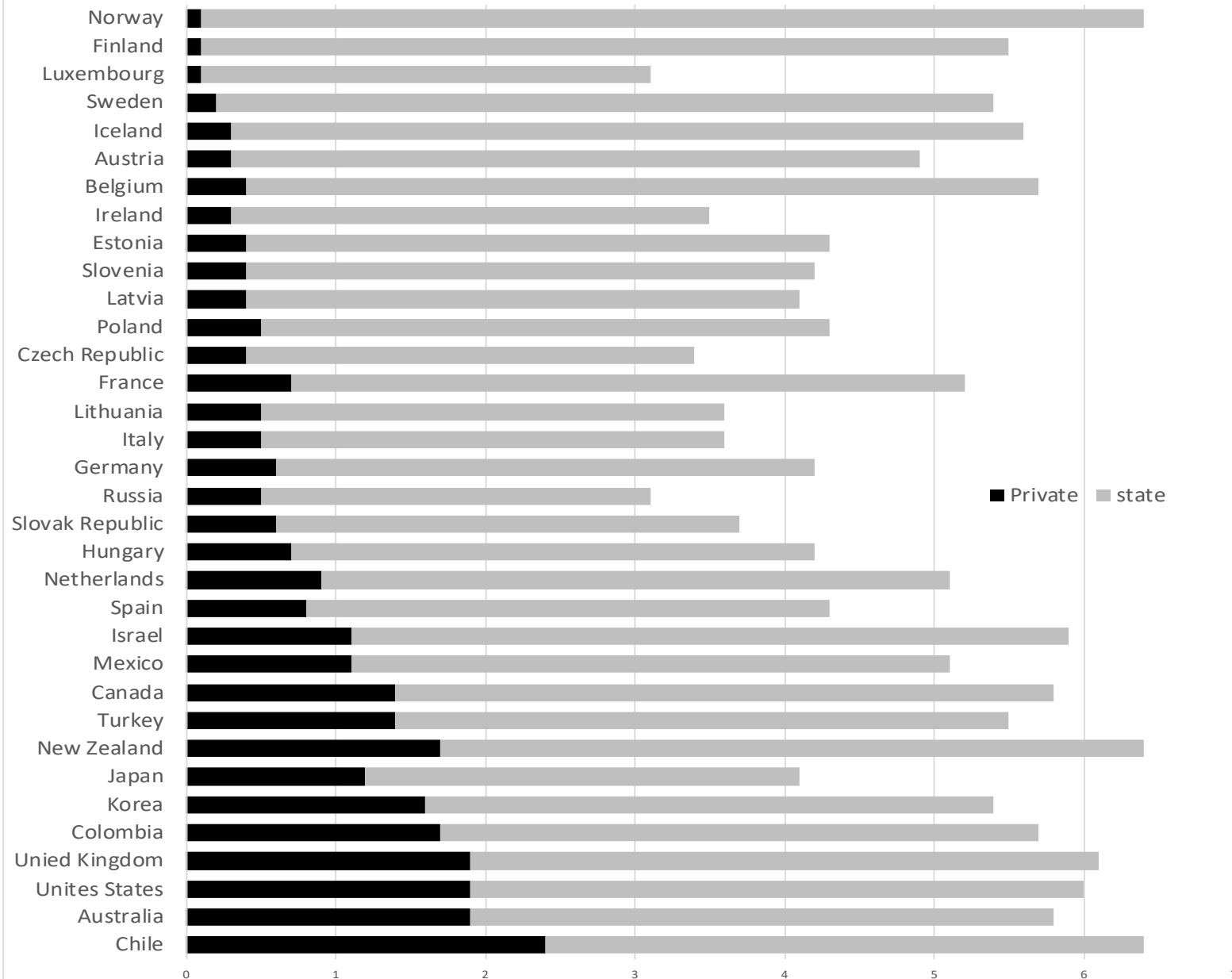
Possibly the lowest worldwide

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/childhealth/articles/ukdropsineuropeanchildmortalityrankings/2017-10-13>

Neonatal mortality rankings, European Union countries, 1990 to 2015



Proportion of GDP (%) spend on state and private education (all levels)



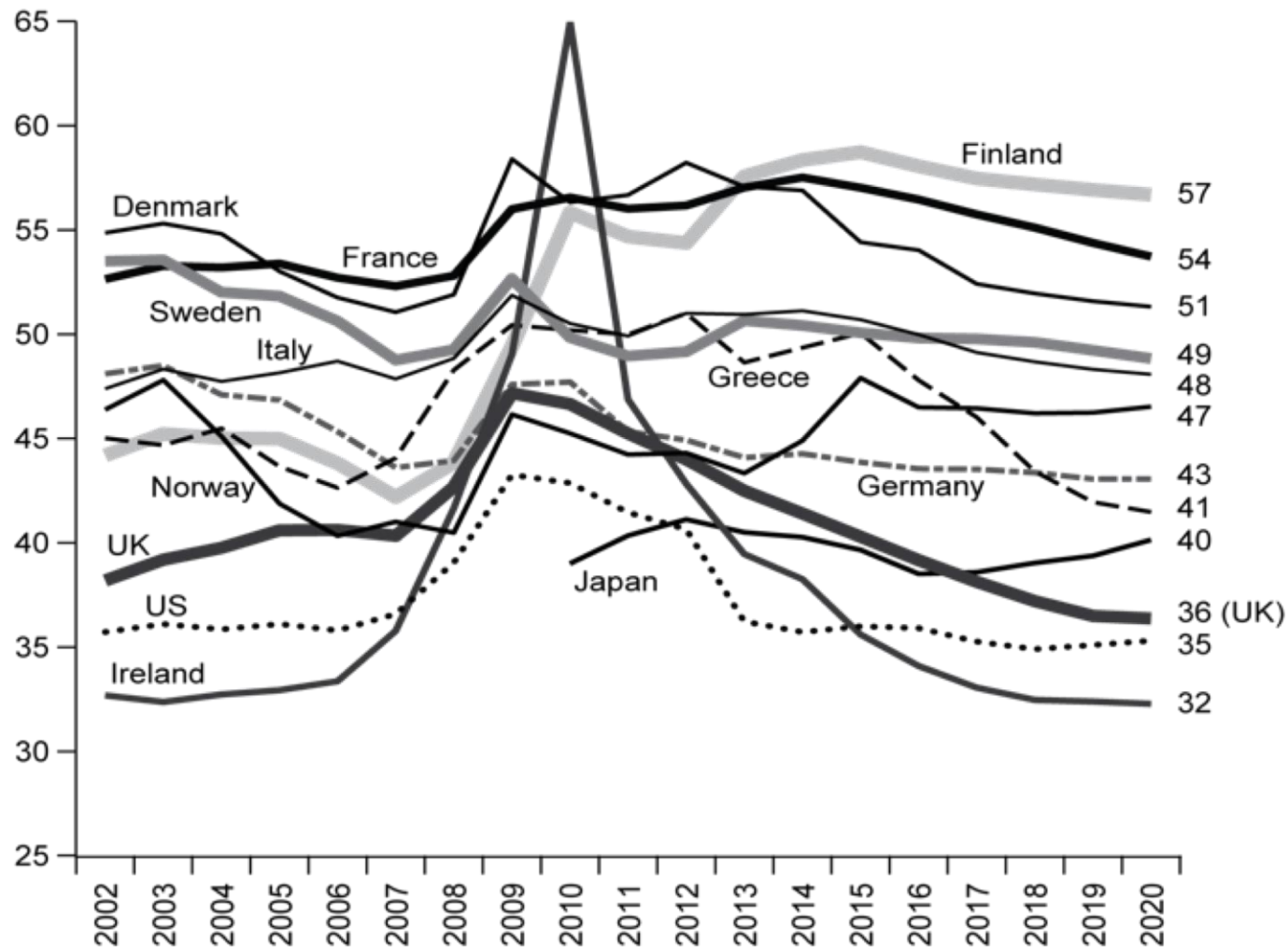
EU countries now contrast greatly with Colombia, the UK, USA, Australia and Chile

Note: Data for Denmark, Greece and Switzerland is missing from the OECD table released in September 2019, countries sorted by % private education of the total amount.

Source: OECD (2019) Education at a Glance 2019, 10 Sep 2019, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019_f8d7880d-en

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019_f8d7880d-en#page289

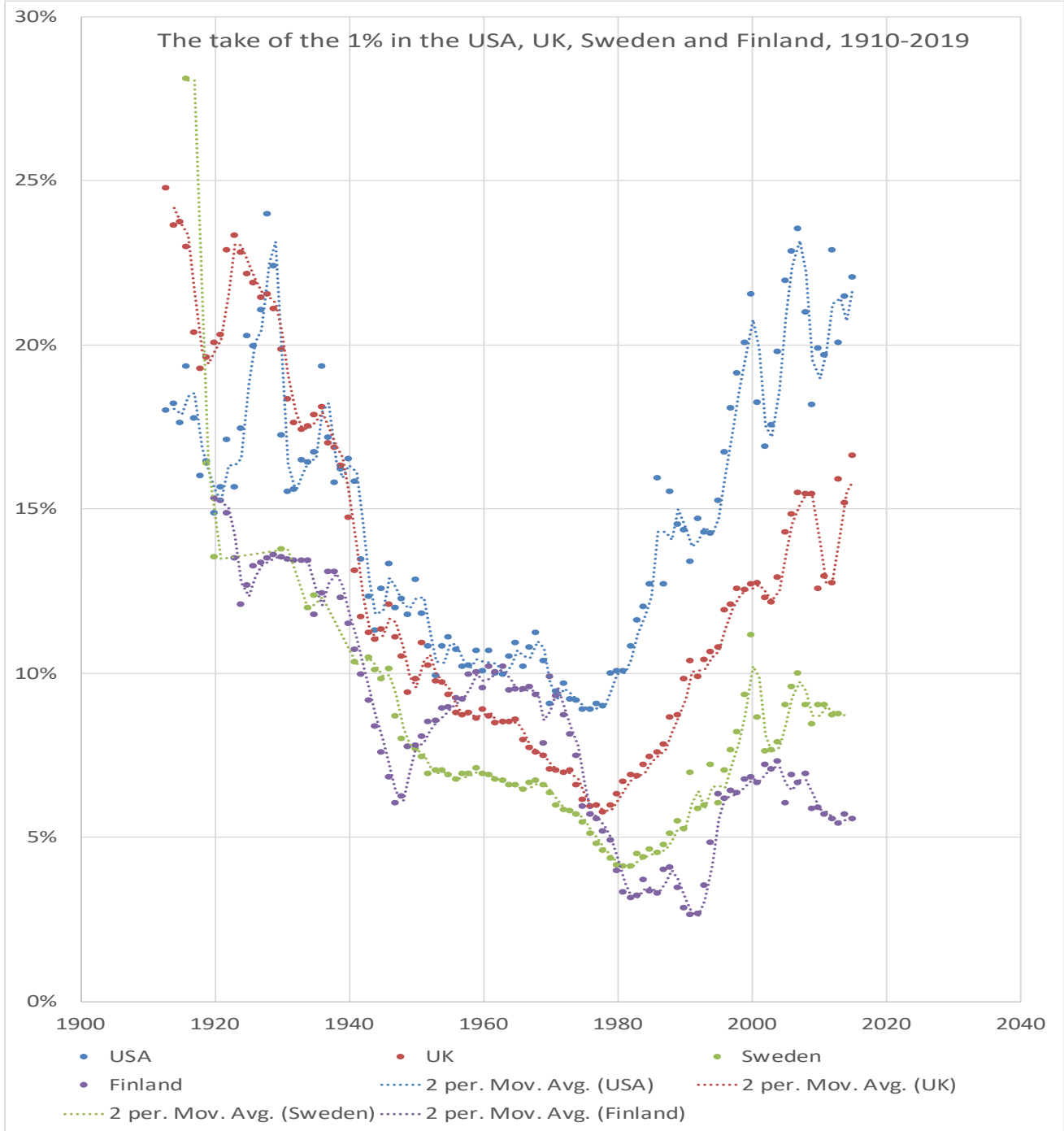
Figure 2: State spending as a proportion of GDP, twelve rich countries 2002–2020 (%)



Source: The 2010, 2012 and 2015 IMF database, projections after 2014



The UK is a low tax
low spend OECD
country



The take of the 1%

World Inequality Database, accessed 15 November 2019 for three of the countries and, for the UK, the data series detailed in Dorling, Danny (2019) *Inequality and the 1%*, London: Verso (third edition).

Note: fiscal data for tax units in the USA (1913-2015) and Sweden (1916-2013). For Finland tax units 1920-1969, individual from 1970-1979, and post-tax 1980-2016. For the UK the data is for 1910-2019, pre-tax, however estimated rates of tax evasion and avoidance by the top 1% are so high in the UK that this is a comparable time series to the post-tax Finish data from 1980 onwards.

Turning back to the UK

On the day of the EU referendum data from the ONS revealed there had been 52,400 more deaths in the year to June 2015 as compared to the same period a year before.

Death rates in England and Wales rose overall by 9% and by 12% for those aged 90+; by 10% for those aged 85-89; 7% for those aged 80-84; 5% for those aged 75-70; and by 3% for those aged 55-74. These rate rises were unprecedented.

They were attributed to dementia and Alzheimer's, with influenza being suggested as a contributory factor. Austerity "almost certainly" played a major role. It was those with long term care needs who were dying earlier. The health and social services crises will worsen further as national finances worsen and as it becomes harder to recruit and retain staff from the European mainland (death rates only fell for adults aged 25-29).

Videos



Boris Johnson on EU referendum result: no need for haste – video

Guardian News

YouTube - 24 Jun 2016

This is what a flu epidemic looks like when you have a severe epidemic in England and Wales

870 D. M. Fleming and A. J. Elliot

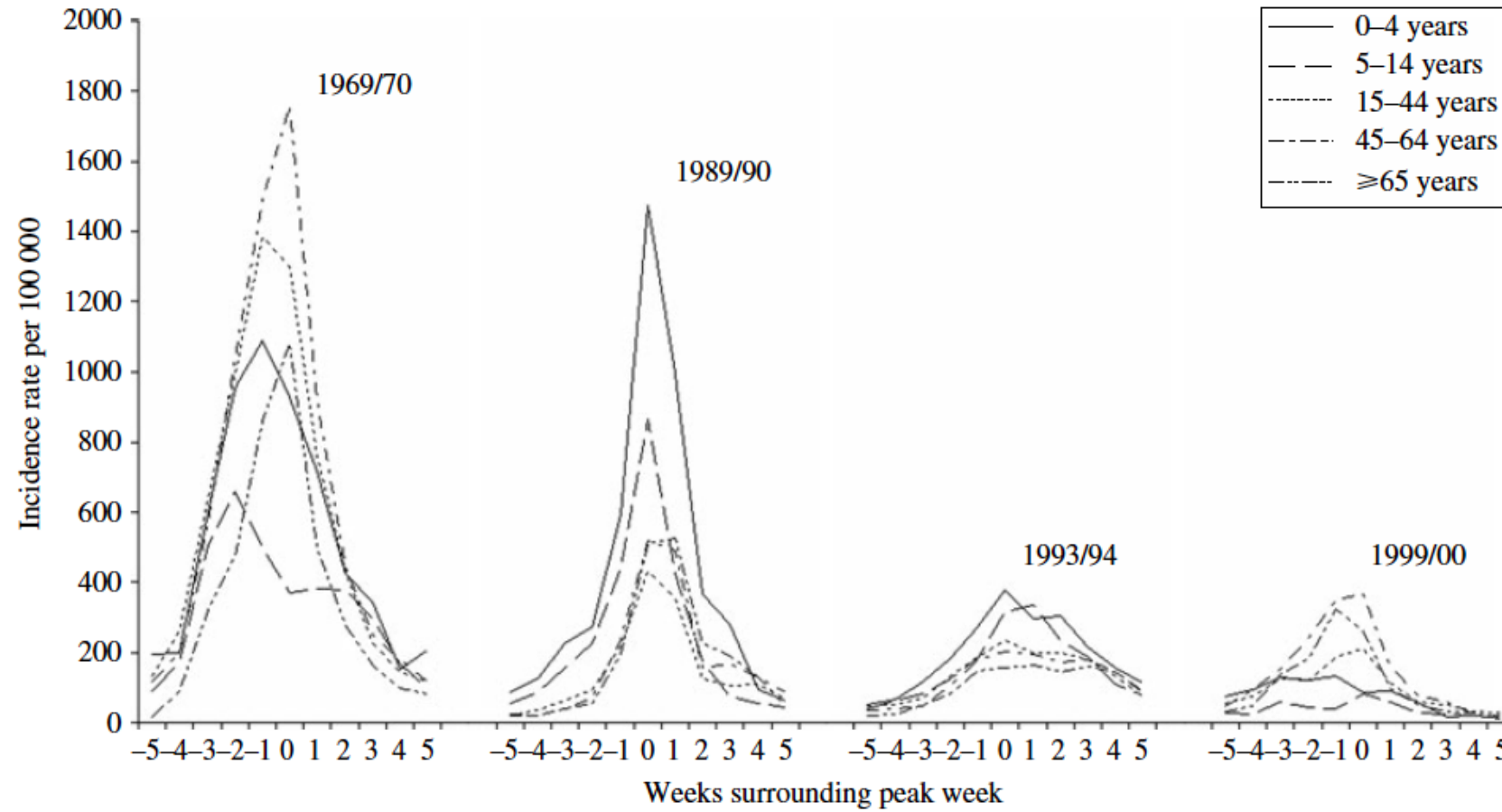


Fig. 2. The weekly incidence of Influenza-like illness (ILI) described by age for a selection of the more severe epidemics over the last 40 years. Age-specific rates are presented for the weeks surrounding the peak week of all-age incidence (week 0).

- 24% 1918 1. Influenza (pandemic)
- 16% 1940 2. War
- 15% 1929 3. Very Cold winter
- 13% 1895 4. The Great Frost
- 10% 1846 5. Cholera
- 9% 1849 6. Cholera
- 9% 2015 7. **What?** (7% rise calendar year)
- 8% 1911
- 8% 1915
- 7% 1931
- 7% 1890
- 7% 1863
- 7% 1847
- 7% 1951
- 6% 1878
- 6% 1927
- 6% 1857
- 6% 1858
- 6% 1851 (Flu)
- 6% 1943
- 6% 1904
- 6% 1924
- 6% 1968 23. Flu

The largest single year rises in mortality in England and Wales 1840-2015 (relative increase in mortality rate on the year before

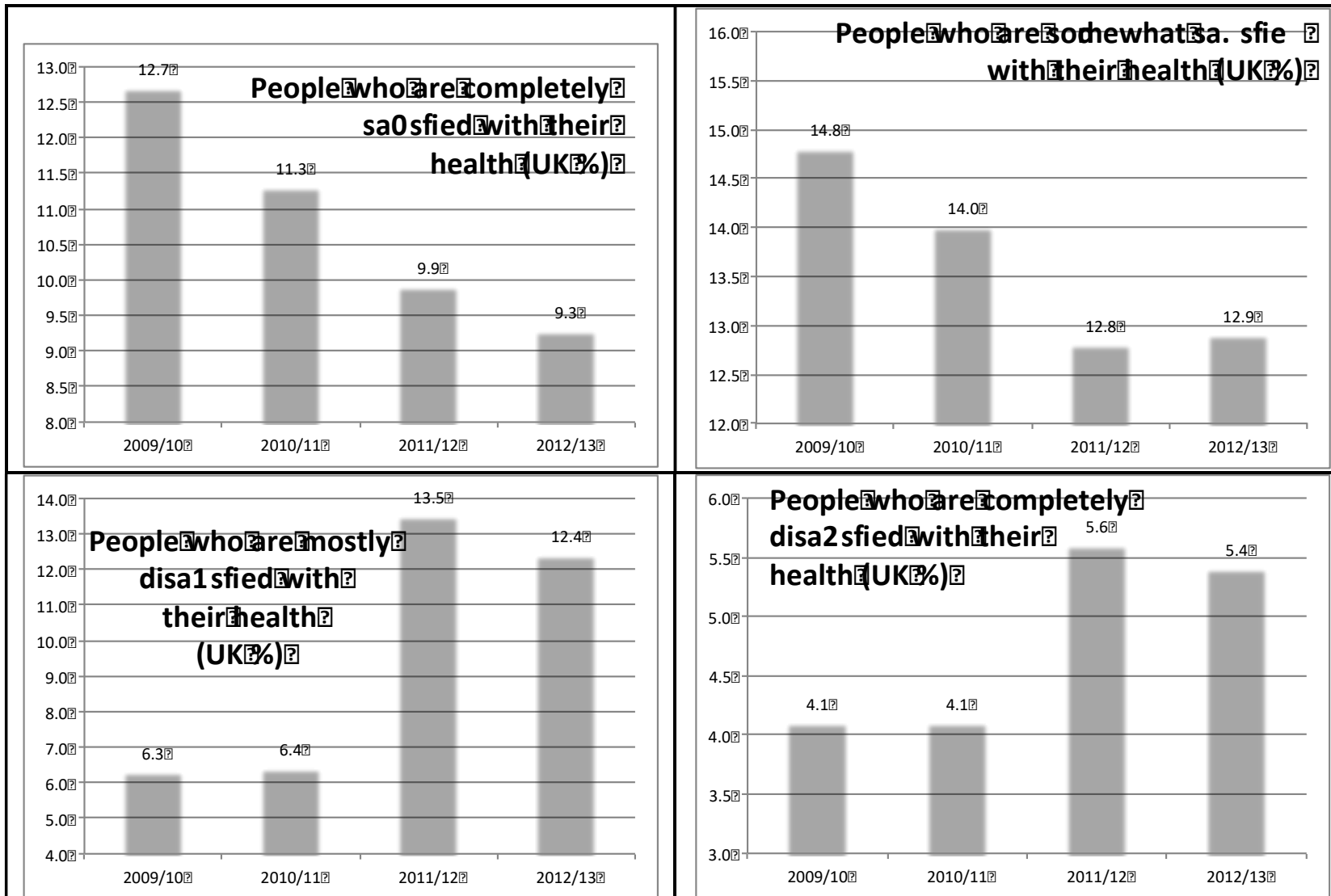
	Persons	Males	Females
2015	57,885,413	28,554,847	29,330,566
2014	57,408,654		
2013	56,948,229		

Population	Deaths(MY)	Rate	Rise
57,885,413	530,381	0.92%	9%
57,408,654	484,281	0.85%	
56,948,229			

The rise in the overall death rate between the calendar years 2014 and 2015 was 7% - the last time a calendar year rise was as big as that was 1951 (When more people died of Flu in Liverpool than in the 1918 pandemic). Source of that claim: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/12/4/05-0695_article

Before the great rise in deaths we had some warnings – dismissed as artifact....

Trends in self-reported health used by ONS in annual well-being reporting



Lucinda Hiam and Martin McKee: The deepening health crisis in the UK requires society wide, political intervention, March 8, 2019: *“These are not just numbers, these are lives”*

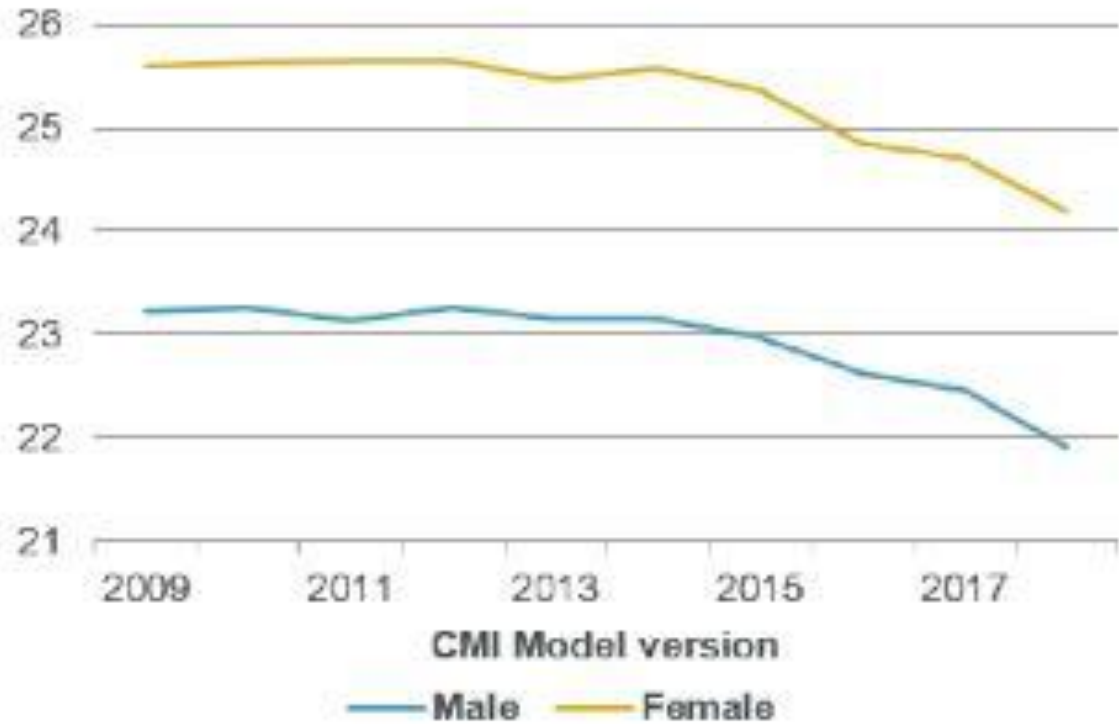


Figure 1: Cohort life expectancies as at 1 January 2019 at age 65.

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2019/03/08/lucinda-hiam-and-martin-mckee-the-deepening-health-crisis-in-the-uk-requires-society-wide-political-intervention/>

What did the June 2019 ONS 'MYE' data release tell us about life expectancy?

- On 26 June 2019 the annual midyear estimates of the population of the UK were released. The headline figure on mortality was that there had been 623,000 deaths, 20,000 more than the previous year, a 3% increase. However, the UK is also ageing so to what extent did the rise in mortality matter?
- The BBC ran the story with the headline: *“UK population growth rate stalls, official estimates show”* and then quoted the spokesperson of the lobby group “Population Matters” (which used to be called “The Optimum Population Trust”) who said: *“our already unsustainable population is continuing to rise and that will continue until a positive strategy is put in place to address it”*.

- The Guardian newspaper lead with a story about migration saying that: *“At 275,000, this net number of immigrants was 6,000 higher than the average for the past five years and 45,000 higher than last year.”* And the Express newspaper reported that: *“The surge is the equivalent of adding a city the size of Coventry to the country.”*
- The data released by ONS was very detailed. For instance in Coventry the number of men aged 86, 87, 88, 89 and 90+ who died in the most recent year was revealed to be 49, 45, 33, 49 and 254 respectively. The numbers of those ages who had died the year before was, in turn: 46, 42, 27, 39, and 216. In each case more had died, but of course that could just be down to chance (and it partly was – **but not for England as a whole**).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/26/uk-population-rises-to-664-million-but-rate-of-growth-slows>

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1145955/uk-population-office-for-national-statistics-ons>

age	deaths 2016/17	deaths 2017/18	rise (count)	rise (%)	rise (per million)	Change in mortality in England for men by age (most recent data)
0-4	1585	1497	-88	-4%	-39	
5-9	118	137	19	14%	9	
10-14	137	135	-2	-4%	-4	
15-19	385	403	18	7%	16	
20-24	723	801	78	12%	46	
25-29	1018	1019	1	-1%	-3	
30-34	1291	1401	110	9%	59	
35-39	1829	1927	98	3%	32	
40-44	2636	2717	81	6%	87	
45-49	4511	4576	65	2%	54	
50-54	6629	7079	450	6%	204	
55-59	9110	9847	737	5%	273	
60-64	12850	13156	306	1%	48	
65-69	19397	19014	-383	3%	400	
70-74	27119	28524	1405	-4%	-968	
75-79	32187	33076	889	2%	635	
80-84	40317	41980	1663	2%	1107	
85-89	41693	43621	1928	1%	1803	
90+	39278	41396	2118	1%	3459	
Total	242813	252306	9493	3%	287	

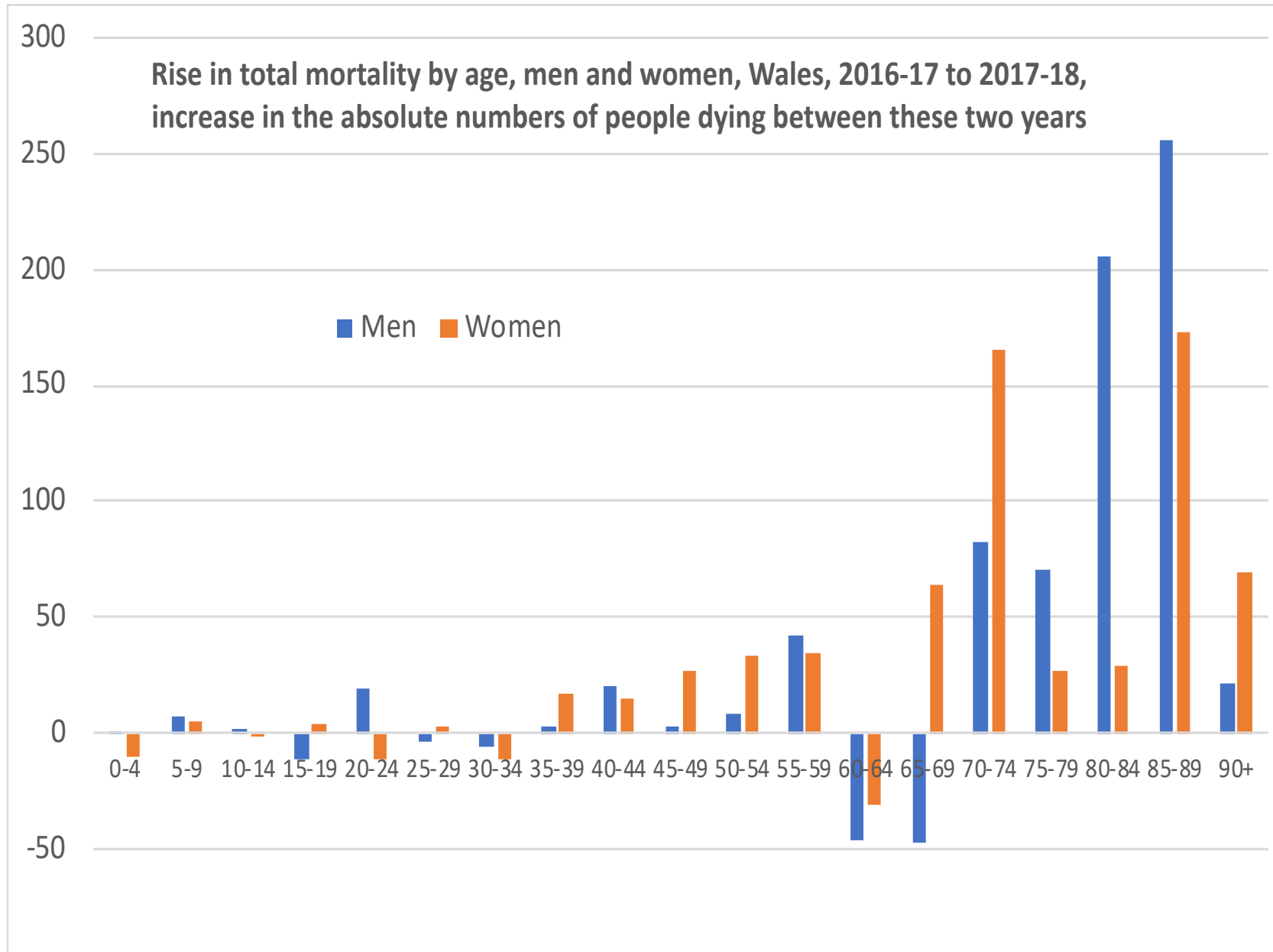
Source: analysis of ONS mid-year estimates as released on June 26 2019.
 [Note: coloured red if number or rates of death are rising for age group]

age	deaths 2016/17	deaths 2017/18	rise (count)	rise (%)	rise (per million)
0-4	1281	1149	-132	-9%	-70
5-9	106	108	2	0%	0
10-14	118	105	-13	-14%	-11
15-19	204	195	-9	-3%	-3
20-24	303	312	9	4%	7
25-29	459	473	14	3%	7
30-34	774	683	-91	-12%	-50
35-39	1167	1158	-9	-3%	-22
40-44	1671	1618	-53	-1%	-5
45-49	2913	3004	91	4%	60
50-54	4650	4636	-14	-1%	-28
55-59	6196	6643	447	4%	146
60-64	8711	8958	247	1%	64
65-69	13311	13231	-80	4%	346
70-74	19753	20555	802	-5%	-739
75-79	25823	26589	766	2%	561
80-84	37499	38507	1008	1%	668
85-89	50320	51463	1143	1%	1019
90+	77995	80499	2504	3%	6358
Total	253254	259886	6632	2%	181

**Change in
mortality
in England
for women
by age
(most
recent
data)**



Rise in total mortality by age, men and women, Wales, 2016-17 to 2017-18, increase in the absolute numbers of people dying between these two years



Other key data is hard to find (countries with data up to 2016: female life expectancy change, 2 year)

	"08-10"	"09-11"	"10-12"	"11-13"	"12-14"	"13-15"	"14-16"	
	0.66	0.52	0.33	0.05	0.32	-0.05	-0.15	UK
	0.35	0.34	0.07	0.05	0.51	0.31	0.04	Sweden
	0.19	0.39	0.26	0.16	0.69	0.54	0.07	Norway
	0.20	0.30	0.10	0.10	0.50	0.10	0.10	Switzerland
	0.70	0.48	0.08	0.41	0.54	-0.13	0.19	Spain
	0.18	0.58	0.16	0.13	0.45	0.03	0.22	Austria
	0.63	0.85	0.39	0.24	0.63	0.43	0.33	Poland
	0.51	0.26	0.13	0.40	0.21	-0.13	0.35	Australia
	0.47	0.61	0.28	0.39	0.81	0.31	0.36	Czech Republic
	0.29	-0.47	0.13	0.70	0.40	0.42	0.37	Japan

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/articles/changingtrends inmortalityaninternationalcomparison/2000to2016>

See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc521/international/chart12/datadownload.xlsx>

For men the worse effects come later

(countries with data up to 2016: **male** life expectancy change, 2 year)

	"08-10"	"09-11"	"10-12"	"11-13"	"12-14"	"13-15"	"14-16"	
	0.81	0.75	0.60	0.22	0.29	0.04	-0.07	UK
	0.67	0.48	0.48	0.58	0.30	-0.04	0.18	Australia
	0.82	0.68	0.32	0.64	0.75	-0.02	0.19	Spain
	0.84	0.91	0.61	0.62	1.04	0.52	0.19	Poland
	0.43	0.46	0.35	0.30	0.49	0.22	0.21	Sweden
	0.07	0.69	0.60	0.38	0.66	0.17	0.23	Austria
	0.41	0.50	0.63	0.53	0.78	0.60	0.43	Czech Republic
	0.30	-0.10	0.41	0.77	0.55	0.56	0.50	Japan
	0.50	0.50	0.30	0.20	0.50	0.20	0.50	Switzerland
	0.53	0.40	0.57	0.65	0.61	0.71	0.58	Norway

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/articles/changingtrends inmortalityaninternationalcomparison/2000to2016>

See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc521/international/chart12/datadownload.xlsx>

To begin to conclude – it is interesting to look at the age distribution of voting versus rising elderly mortality rates

Third 'the young' The 2019 General election: how people fitted in

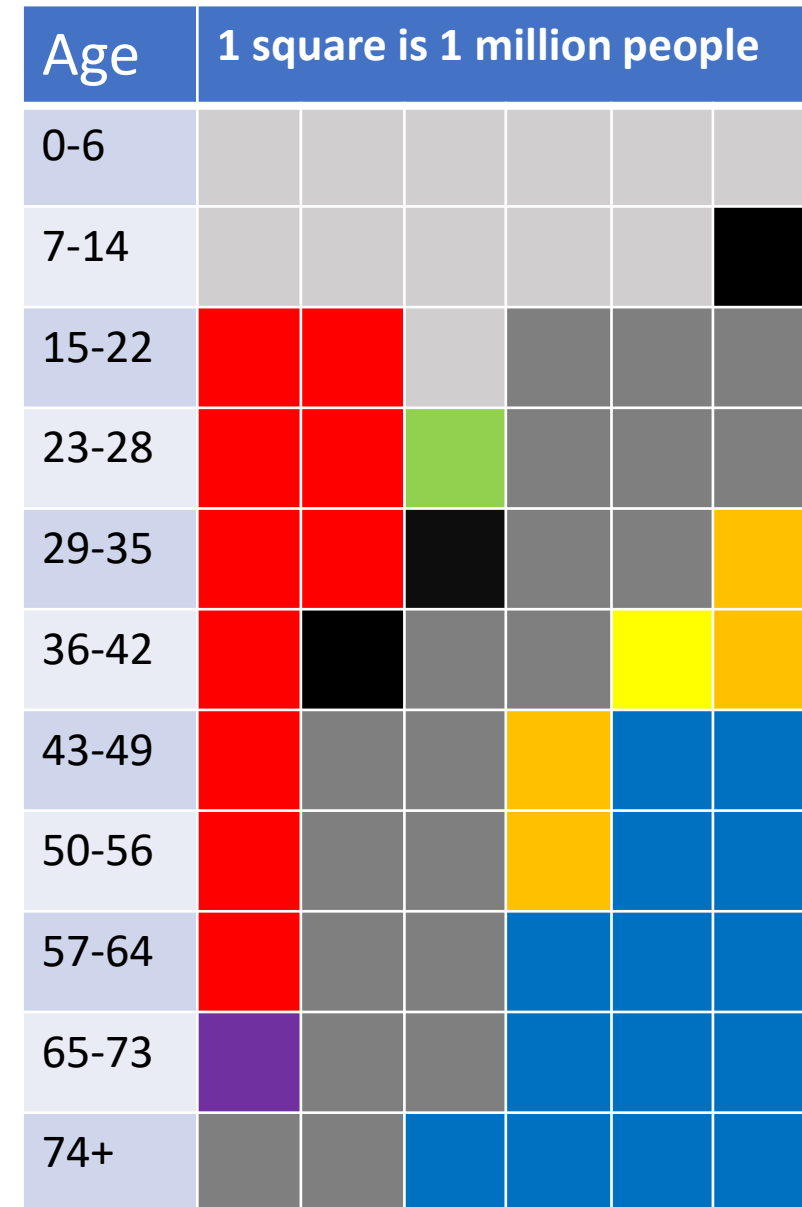
Of the 66 million people living in the UK

- 20 million did not vote or were eligible but not registered to vote ●
- 14 million vote Conservative (365 seats of 650) ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
- 12 million were children (and UK citizens) ●
- 10 million voted Labour (203 seats) ●●●●●●●●●●
- 4 million voted Liberal (11 seats) ●
- 3 million were not UK citizens●
- 1 million voted in Northern Ireland (18 seats) ●
- 1 million voted Scottish National Party (48 seats) ●●
- 1 million voted Green/Plaid or other (5 seats) ●

These 9 groups approximately assigned to 11 equal sized age groups >

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2019-election>

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/young-cosmopolitans-and-ge2019/>





BBC news – 27 December 2019

A "vulnerable" woman gave birth in the centre of Cambridge on the day before Christmas Eve, it has been confirmed.

Cambridge News reported twins were delivered in Sidney Street, near Trinity College, on 23 December.

...

"Accommodation had been provided to her and her partner for several weeks before the birth, along with other practical support to relieve their homelessness.

"We are not clear why this accommodation was not being used."

...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-50926784>



26th February 2019

**Homeless deaths: Oxford
second worst in country - 33 in
5 years...**

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17458981.homeless-deaths-oxford-second-worst-country---33-5-years/>

...

“In one electoral ward alone – Carfax – there were 91 premature deaths [2002-2016]. This number had almost doubled since we last looked at these issues in the 1980s. In Carfax, deaths amongst the homeless population accounted for 88% of all deaths under age 65 between 2014 and 2016. The majority of these homeless deaths were males. Homelessness not only cuts short lives; it increasingly dominates the profile of who dies young in Oxford.”

<https://blog.geographydirections.com/2019/12/05/who-dies-young-in-a-rich-city-increasingly-the-homeless/>