

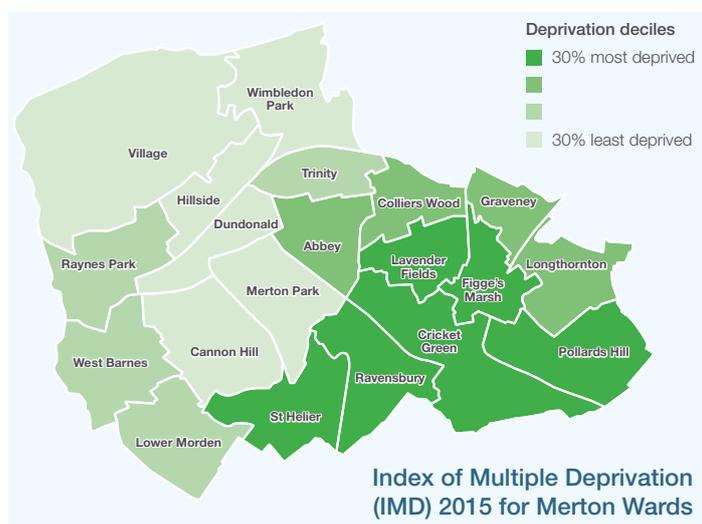
Highlights of the Annual Public Health Report 2018

This year's [Annual Public Health Report](#) is a resource to tackle Health Inequalities in Merton and measure our progress.



Why Do We Need It?

There has been a long-standing difference in health and wellbeing between people living in East and West Merton that is unfair and avoidable. Merton Council, the NHS and partners are committed to bridging this gap.



Information available to measure the gap and to show whether we are improving can be confusing and makes it harder to find the best solutions.

This report tries to help: it describes what works to improve health inequalities, the different ways of measuring the gap and what we know about how the gap has changed over time in Merton. We have also put together a list of reliable measures to track our progress in the future.

Making Sense of Health Inequalities

Health inequalities are not only influenced by access to health services. Even more important are the conditions in which we are born, live, work and age – for example education, employment and housing.

This means we have to tackle all of these causes together. There is no single most important intervention to reduce health inequalities.

We need to take action across the whole population and all ages to have an impact on everyone, but at the same time we must target more effort on the groups with most need.

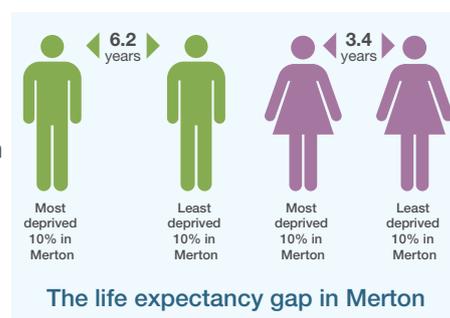
We must engage with the people and communities we serve and find solutions together.

In this report, we measure Health Inequalities in relation to where people live, comparing people's health in East and West Merton, and in the most deprived (poorest) and least deprived areas in the borough.

The Picture in Merton

Almost all measures of health and wellbeing in this report show worse outcomes for people living in East Merton and in the most deprived areas of the borough.

For example the gap in life expectancy for men is 6 years and for women 3 ½ years. Both men and women living in the East of the borough spend 9 more years in poor health than those living in the West.



There has been some improvement over time: the gaps in life expectancy for women, and school readiness for children have narrowed, as a result of improvements in East Merton.

There has also been some closure of the gap for the wrong reasons. For example, in West Merton, self-reported wellbeing and mental health problems have worsened, causing the East/West gap to narrow, but this is not progress.

These and many other measures are included in the full [Annual Public Health Report](#).

They confirm that the problem of health inequalities in Merton is ongoing and requires concerted effort from all partners to tackle it.

We need to be realistic about timescales in which we can expect changes in the inequality gap in Merton to occur; different types of interventions will take different amounts of time to show an impact. We need to consider this when setting targets. Otherwise we might stop good work too soon.

You can learn more about Health Inequalities

The [Annual Public Health Report](#) sets out full information and data sets.

merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/publichealth

We welcome your feedback:

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