

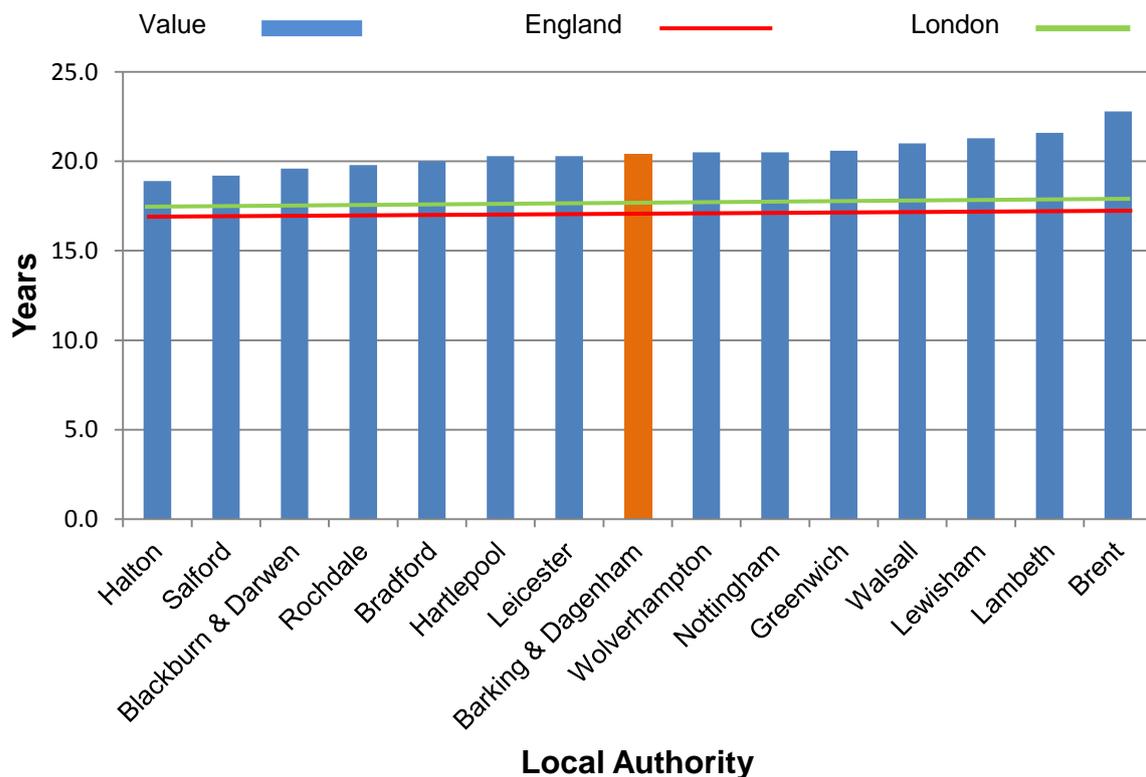
7.4 Active ageing

Contributors: Andy Knight & Emma Gillan

The World Health Organisation defines active ageing as the ‘process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age’¹. Active ageing helps to ensure longer healthy life expectancy and quality of life for all people as they age, regardless of their physical ability or disability and their care needs. Being physically active can enhance the later years and help prevent loneliness and depression together with maintaining the ability to continue to undertake everyday activities.

Life expectancy for both men and women living in Barking and Dagenham remains amongst the lowest in London² (Figures 7.4.1 and 7.4.2). At age 65, men can expect to live another 17.4 years and women another 20.4 years. Only one London borough, Tower Hamlets, has lower life expectancy for men (17.0 years) and Barking and Dagenham has the lowest rate in London for women (20.2 years) at age 65 years. The London average is 19.2 years for men and 22 years for women.

Figure 7.4.1 Life expectancy for women at age 65, years, Barking & Dagenham and statistical neighbours 2012 - 2014

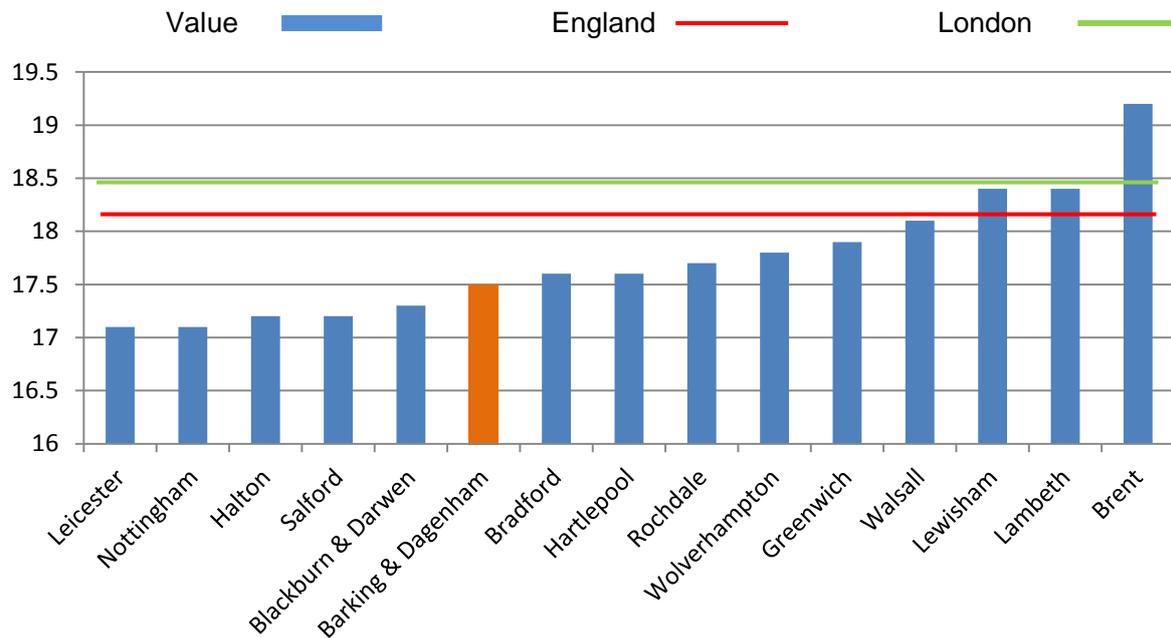


Source: Office for National Statistics November 2015

¹ Active Ageing, A Policy Framework, World Health Organisation, 2002
http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/who_nmh_nph_02.8.pdf

² HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION CENTRE. (2014) *Indicators portal*. [Online] Available from: <https://indicators.ic.nhs.uk/webview>. [Accessed: 30th September 2014].

Figure 7.4.2 Life expectancy for men at age 65, years, Barking & Dagenham, London and England 2012 - 2014



Source: Office for National Statistics November 2015

Remaining physically active is key to maintaining good health in older age. Table 7.4.1 is taken from Sports England Market Segmentation Data³ (refreshed in 2010), and shows the percentage of particular profile groups of older people not participating in any physical activity.

³SPORT ENGLAND. (2014) *Market segmentation* [Online] Available from: <http://segments.sportengland.org>. [Accessed: 6 October 2014].

Table 7.4.1: Older people profile groups and participation in physical activity, 2010

Profile	Percentage in Barking and Dagenham	Number in Barking and Dagenham	London Average	Percentage in B&D not participating in any physical activity	Interpretation
56-65 year old in social housing Not interested in healthy eating	7.7%	9,356	3.4%	68.3%	Very low participation rates; higher proportions of this group within borough than regional average
56-65 year old Mortgage free Eats traditional home cooked meals	4.5%	5,468	2.9%	77.8%	Lowest participation rate in age band for men and women
65+ Comfortably off	0.3%	365	2.8%	69.7%	Low participation rates as expected for age group - very low proportions in borough
66+ Likely smoker Not health conscious	3.5%	4,523	2.0%	78.2%	Low participation rates as expected for age group but low proportions in borough
66+ Widowed / Retired Lives in sheltered accommodation. No longer able to drive - has to walk or get the bus	8.7%	10,571	5.0%	85.1%	Lowest participation rates in any age group, higher proportions within Barking and Dagenham than regional average

Source: Sport England⁴

Table 7.4.1 demonstrates that participation rates are low in all of the profile groups. Locally, the priority groups to address are the '56-65 year old in social housing' group and '66+ Widowed / Retired' group because of the high numbers of residents included in these groups.

⁴SPORT ENGLAND. *Market segmentation* (2014) [Online] Available from: <http://segments.sportengland.org>. [Accessed: 6 October 2014].

Addressing older people's participation in physical activity

The borough's Older People's Strategy and accompanying action plan draws together much of the good work underway to support older people to be active. To improve older people's participation in physical activities, from April 2010, people aged 60 and over were given free access to the borough's leisure centres. The offer was open to all residents of Barking and Dagenham, Monday to Friday (9.00am-5.00pm) and all weekend. Free access includes swimming, racket sports and fitness classes. In April 2015 the Ageing Well membership was introduced for residents for £52 per year to also include activities taking place around the Borough in the Active Age Centres as well as maintaining the hours that were available within the leisure centres.

Over 80 classes take place each week in the borough's leisure centres and 6 Active Age Centres around the Borough. In the last year, new activities including line dancing, Zumba, Tai Chi, ballroom dancing, swimming lessons and short mat bowls were introduced for older residents. In addition, the elderberries sessions provide a range of activities aimed at those over the age of 50⁵.

In 2015/16, there were 2,031 active members registered aged 60 and over on the Ageing Well membership across the leisure centres and Active Age Centres, which resulted in 114,195 visits in the same time period. 84,971 visits were made to the leisure centres, an increase on the previous year of 4,932 and 29,224 visits were recorded to the Active Age Centres, an increase of 7,749 on the previous year.

The Healthy Walks programme continues with four walks taking place in the borough every week. The walks take place at Mayesbrook Park, Central Park and Eastbrook End Country Park. Visits to the Active Age centres averaged approximately 562 visits per week. Activities offered include darts, tai chi, yoga, snooker, bowls and keep fit, first aid and cookery classes, together with coffee mornings and arts and crafts.

In order to ensure that the activities on offer in leisure centres are accessible and suitable for all people aged 60 and over, a number of low impact classes have been introduced across all three sites, including Tai Chi and line dancing. The council also provides a series of healthy lifestyle programmes as part of a referral pathway in the leisure centres and other facilities around the Borough., into which residents can be referred by their general practitioner to help improve health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, , coronary heart disease risk factors and mental health problems including depression, anxiety and stress. Clients referred to the pathway programme have an initial assessment with a qualified fitness instructor who will then develop a 12 week programme suitable for their needs.

All activities at the borough's leisure centres and active age centres are inclusive and aim to be attractive to all residents of the borough. There is limited information about the religion of those who have participated in the activities on offer, and

⁵LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM. (2013) *Active age programme*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/LeisureArtsAndLibraries/ActiveLeisureHome/Documents/Active%20Age%20Programme.pdf> [accessed 30 September 2014].

consideration is being given to whether more culturally specific activities need to be developed.

A programme is in place to strengthen and develop the range of sessions offered by the Active Age centres. The aim is improve the experiences of those who currently attend and attract additional membership, in particular from the 'younger' older age group.

Recommendations for Commissioners

The Ageing Well membership for those over the age of 60 has been successful in attracting residents and increasing their participation in physical activities across the whole borough in both the leisure centres and the Active Age Centres and should continue.

The programme should ensure that activities support an outcomes based approach. Particularly relevant outcomes are 'having things to do' and 'staying healthy'.

The Older People's Strategy Improvement Plan should be updated annually, with progress against actions monitored by an Older People's Board. This will support a more integrated approach and help to address the needs of carers and the need for culturally sensitive activities, as well as an overall increase in membership of the Active Ageing Programme.