

Statistics fact sheet

Fact sheet last updated December 2017

[EXTERNAL VERSION](#)

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Glossary of terms

Cancer prevalence – the number of people living with and after cancer, i.e. people who have been diagnosed with cancer and who are currently living with cancer at a given point in time. Cancer prevalence can be expressed as a number or rate (per head of population).

Cancer prevalence may be presented as:

- a 'total' or 'complete', i.e. the 2.5 million, all people living with (and after) cancer, at a point in time;
- or time limited duration, e.g. '21-year' prevalence, all people diagnosed in the last 20 years and still alive at a point in time).

Cancer incidence – the number, or rate (per head of population), of new cases of cancer in a specific population within a specific period of time, usually a year. It usually refers to primary cancers (secondary cancers or recurrences are not included).

Cancer mortality – the number, or rate (per head of population), of deaths from cancer in a specific population within a specific period of time, usually a year. It is usually deaths where cancer is mentioned as an underlying cause of deaths on death certificates.

Cancer survival – the consequences of cancer and its treatment. The percentage of people still alive after a specified amount of time, often 1, 5 or 10 years after a diagnosis of cancer at a specific time. It usually refers to primary cancers (secondary cancers or recurrences are not included).

Median survival – is the length of time from the date of diagnosis that half of people diagnosed with cancer are still alive (or half have died). It is the time since diagnosis when relative survival is at 50%.

Net survival – is the estimate of the number of people who survive their cancer, after removing the effects of a person dying from other causes (which is often referred to as background mortality).

Registration of non-melanoma skin cancer – The policies and practices for the registration of non-melanoma skin cancer have varied widely across the cancer registries and over time. The incidence figure for 'all malignant neoplasms' therefore exclude non-melanoma skin cancer.

Macmillan and statistics

Statistics are important to Macmillan because they help us represent a lot of complicated information in a way that is easily understood. They add credibility to an argument or advice. For example, we believe cancer care must improve in the UK because we know it's something which will affect most of us.

To explain the extent of the cancer population a number of key statistics are included in this fact sheet:

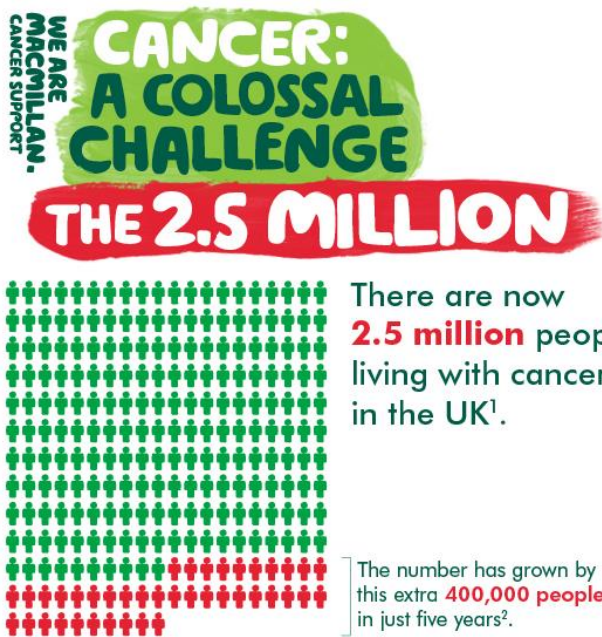
- [People living with cancer](#) – cancer prevalence
- [New cases of cancer](#) – cancer incidence
- [People dying with and from cancer](#) – mortality
- [Surviving cancer](#) – cancer survival, and the consequences of cancer and its treatment
- [Variations](#) – difference in cancer incidence by ethnicity and deprivation
- The [reach](#) of Macmillan services

For further support or if you have any queries, please contact: evidence@macmillan.org.uk

People living with cancer – cancer prevalence

Headlines

- There are an estimated 2.5 million people living with cancer in the UK in 2015, rising to 4 million by 2030¹.
- The number of people living with cancer in the UK in 2015 has increased by almost half a million people in the last five years^{1,2}.



See our full infographic '[Cancer: A colossal challenge – the 2.5 million](#)'.

You can also view a [text-only version of this infographic](#).

These [FAQs](#) will help explain the figures and how you can use them in more detail.

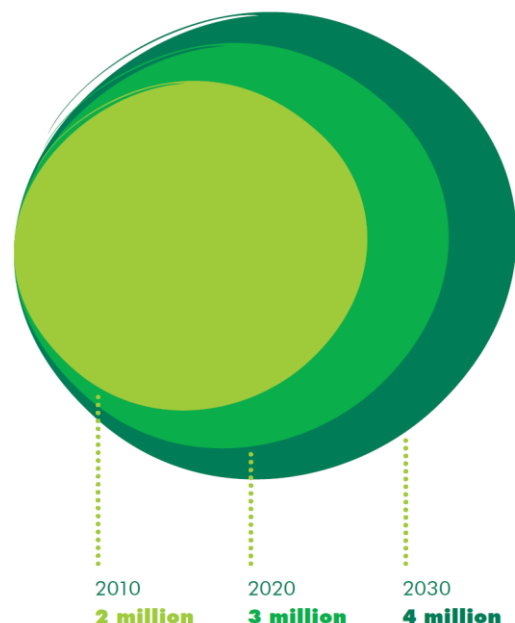
¹ Maddams J, Utley M, Møller H. Projections of cancer prevalence in the United Kingdom, 2010-2040. Br J Cancer 2012; 107: 1195-1202. (Projections scenario 1). Macmillan analysis based on extrapolation of 2010 and 2020 projections that the number of people living with cancer will hit an estimated 2.5 million in 2015.

² 'Five years' refers to 2010-2015.

Changes over time

- The number of older people (aged 65 and over) living with cancer has grown by 300,000 (or 23%) in the five years to 2015³.
- The number of people who have survived five or more years since diagnosis has increased by over 260,000 (or 21%) in the five years to 2015³.
- The number of people living with cancer in the UK is increasing by 3% every year⁴.
- The number of cancer survivors in the UK is projected to increase by approximately one million per decade from 2010 to 2040; resulting in four million people living with cancer in 2030⁴.
- See also the '[The Changing story of cancer](#)' infographic.

Number of people living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK



Estimated number of people living with cancer: by nation, at the end of 2010, 2015, 2020 and 2030³

	2010	2015	2020	2030
England	1,700,000	2,000,000	2,400,000	3,400,000
Wales	110,000	130,000	160,000	220,000
Scotland	190,000	220,000	260,000	360,000
Northern Ireland	53,000	63,000	74,000	100,000
UK	2,100,000	2,500,000	2,900,000	4,000,000

Note: UK totals may not sum up due to rounding.

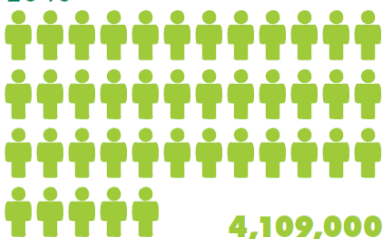
Older people

Number of older people (65 and over) living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK

2010



2040



 = 100,000 people

The number of older people (aged 65 and over) living with cancer has grown by 23% in the five years to 2015³.

The number of older people (aged 65 and over) living with cancer is set to treble between 2010 and 2040⁴.

More than three times as many older people (aged 65 and over) will be living with cancer by 2040 – 1.3 million in 2010 to 4.1 million in 2040⁴.

The number of older people currently (2015) living with cancer has already increased by 300,000 since 2010³.

By 2040 older people will account for 77% of all people living with a cancer diagnosis, an increase from the 2015 figure of 66%⁴.

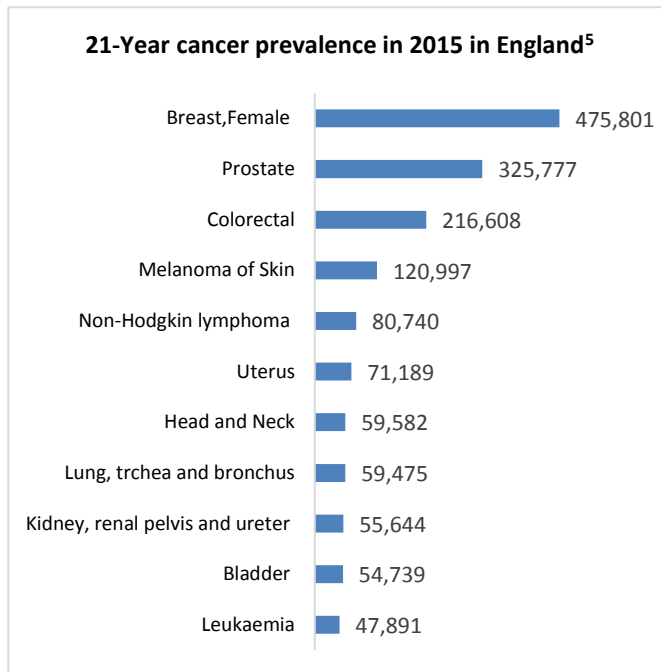
For additional statistics on older people living with cancer please refer to the 'Prevalence of older people living with cancer' [here](#).

³ Maddams J, Utley M, Møller H. Projections of cancer prevalence in the United Kingdom, 2010-2040. Br J Cancer 2012; 107: 1195-1202. (Projections scenario 1). Macmillan analysis based on extrapolation of 2010 and 2020 projections that the number of people living with cancer will hit an estimated overall 2.5 million in 2015

⁴Maddams J, Utley M, Møller H. Projections of cancer prevalence in the United Kingdom, 2010-2040. Br J Cancer 2012; 107: 1195-1202. (Projections scenario 1).

Additional detailed cancer prevalence data

England



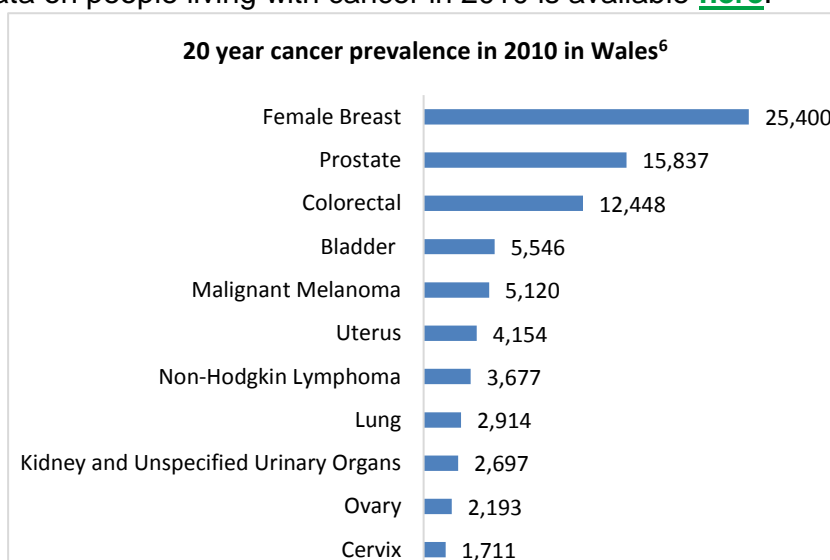
A partnership project between TCST, Macmillan and NCRAS, PHE has given us the number of people living up to 21- years post a cancer diagnosis in England in 2015. The data is split by demographics and local areas. This is available [here](#).

The CCG data for 2015 and estimated projections to 2030 will soon be added to the [Local Cancer Intelligence](#) website. This website may be shared freely with external contacts.

⁵. Transforming Cancer Services Team for London, NHS, National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service, PHE and Macmillan Cancer Support. 2017. Cancer Prevalence in England: 21 year prevalence by demographic and geographic measures http://www.ncin.org.uk/about_ncin/segmentation

Wales

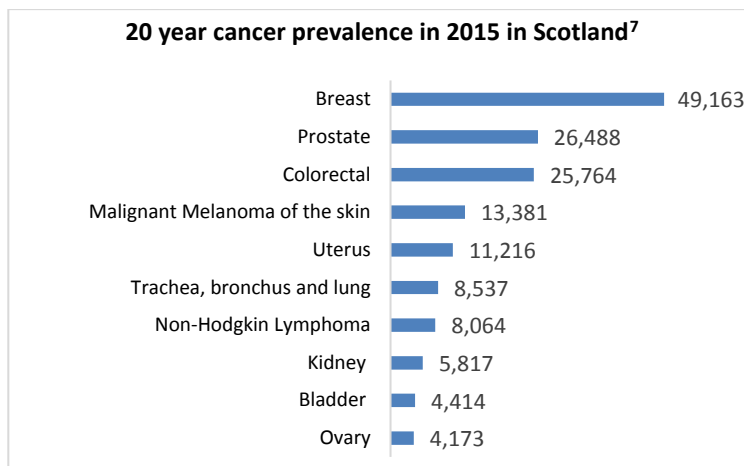
Detailed prevalence data on people living with cancer in 2010 is available [here](#).



6. Macmillan cancer support and PHE partnership released on June 2016, 20-year cancer prevalence across the UK nations by age and deprivation <http://www.ncin.org.uk/view?rid=2955>

Scotland

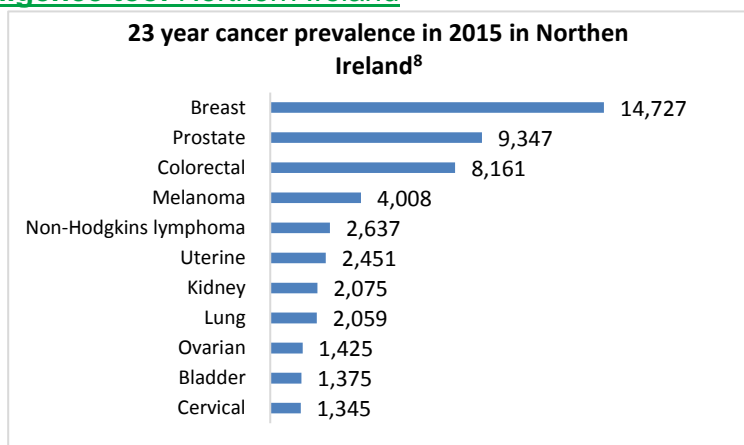
Up to date data is published on the [Information Services Division \(ISD\) Scotland website](#) and detailed prevalence data on people living with cancer in 2015 is available [here](#).



7. ISD Scotland released march 2017, 20 year cancer prevalence across multiple cancers, age and gender <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Cancer-Statistics/Skin/>

Northern Ireland

Up to date data can be found on the Northern Ireland registry website [here](#) and will soon be published on the [Local Cancer Intelligence tool Northern Ireland](#)



8. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/CancerInformation/official-statistics/BySite/#>

UK

For detailed prevalence data on the number of people living with a cancer up to 20 years after diagnosis across the UK by up to 47 cancer sites, then you can use outputs from the Macmillan-NCIN UK Cancer Prevalence Project which are available from [here](#).

Our [project page](#) also contains additional data, on complete cancer prevalence in 2013 for the UK and each nation. This includes breast cancer, prostate cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, all other cancers and all cancers combined, and is broken down by time since diagnosis and by broad age group.

New cases of cancer – cancer incidence

Latest official cancer incidence statistics

The latest officially published incidence figures for the UK are for 2015 and tell us:

- Almost 360,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with cancer every year⁹.

Number of new cases of cancer: by nation, 2015⁹

	Every day	Every week	Every month	Every year
England	822	5,750	24,990	299,920
Scotland	86	600	2,620	31,470
Wales	52	370	1,590	19,090
Northern Ireland	25	180	770	9,260
UK	986	6,900	29,980	359,730

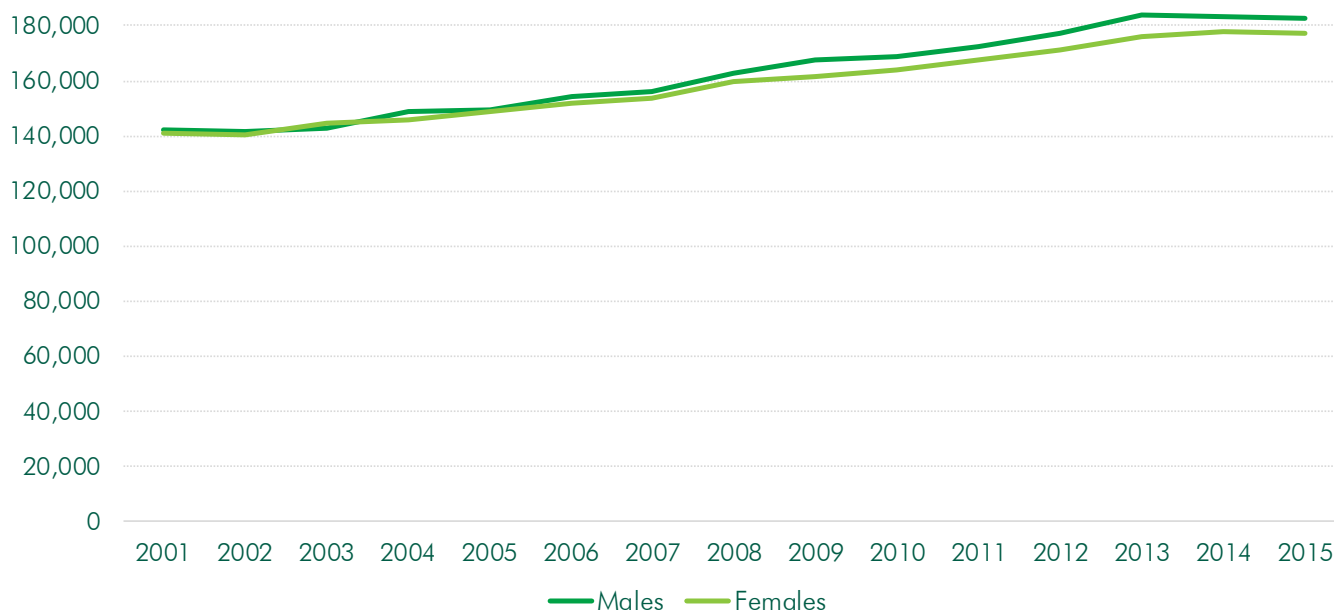
Note: Numbers have been rounded.

This figure is for 2015, the latest year for which cancer incidence data are available. Figures include all malignant neoplasms excluding non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) (ICD-10 codes C00-97 excl. C44. Scotland does not use C97). Figures are calculated by dividing annual incidence figures by 12 for a monthly figure, by 365 to get a daily figure, then multiplying by seven to get a weekly figure. Totals have been rounded as this makes figures more accessible. UK totals may not sum up due to rounding.

- The number of new cancer diagnoses in the UK per year is increasing, and has risen by more than 27% since 2001⁹:

Number of new cancer diagnoses in the UK, 2001 - 2015

Sources: Office for National Statistics, ISD Scotland, Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit and Northern Ireland Cancer Registry



⁹ 2001 - 2015 incidence figures compiled for each nation from Office for National Statistics, ISD Scotland, Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit and Northern Ireland Cancer Registry

How many people get cancer?

- One in two people born after 1960 in the UK will be diagnosed with some sort of cancer during their lifetime¹⁰.
- The odds of developing cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin) in Northern Ireland, in 2011-2015, before the age of 75 was 1 in 3.6¹¹.
- By 2020, almost one in two people (47%) will get cancer at some point in their lives¹².
- By 2020, almost four in ten people (38%) who have had cancer will die from another cause¹².

¹⁰ Ahmad AS, Ormiston-Smith N, Sasieni PD. Trends in the lifetime risk of developing cancer in Great Britain: comparison of risk for those born from 1930 to 1960. *British Journal of Cancer*. 2015;112(5):943-947. doi:10.1038/bjc.2014.606. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4453943/> [accessed February 2017].

¹¹ Northern Ireland Cancer Registry. Average number of cases per year and incidence rates by sex: 2011-2015 - odds of developing the disease before age 75. Available at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/CancerInformation/official-statistics/BySite/All-Cancers-excl-NMSC/> [accessed November 2017]

¹² Macmillan Cancer Support (2013). Cancer mortality trends: 1992–2020. Estimated based on prevalence, incidence and mortality trends for full details see [here](#) [accessed December 2014]

People dying with and from cancer – cancer mortality

- In England and Wales, cancer was the leading cause of avoidable deaths, across broad cause groups, with an age-standardised rate of 77 per 100,000 population¹³.
- Cancers accounted for 39% of all deaths from preventable causes in England and Wales¹³.
- In the UK, cancer was the most common cause of death, by broad disease group, in 2013 for both men and women. This was a change from a decade earlier, where circulatory diseases (including heart disease and stroke) were the most common cause of death¹⁴.

¹³ Office for National Statistics. Avoidable mortality in England and Wales: 2015. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/avoidablemortalityinenglandandwales/2015> [accessed August 2017]

¹⁴ Office of National Statistics. Mortality in the United Kingdom, 1983-2013. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/mortalityintheunitedkingdom/19832013> [accessed February 2017]

Latest official cancer mortality statistics

The latest officially published mortality figures for the UK are for 2015 and tell us:

- Almost 164,000 people in the UK die from cancer every year¹⁵:

Number of people who die from cancer: by nation, 2015¹⁵

	Every day	Every week	Every month	Every year
England	369	2,580	11,220	134,680
Scotland	44	310	1,330	16,010
Wales	24	170	730	8,700
Northern Ireland	12	80	350	4,260
UK	448	3,140	13,640	163,650

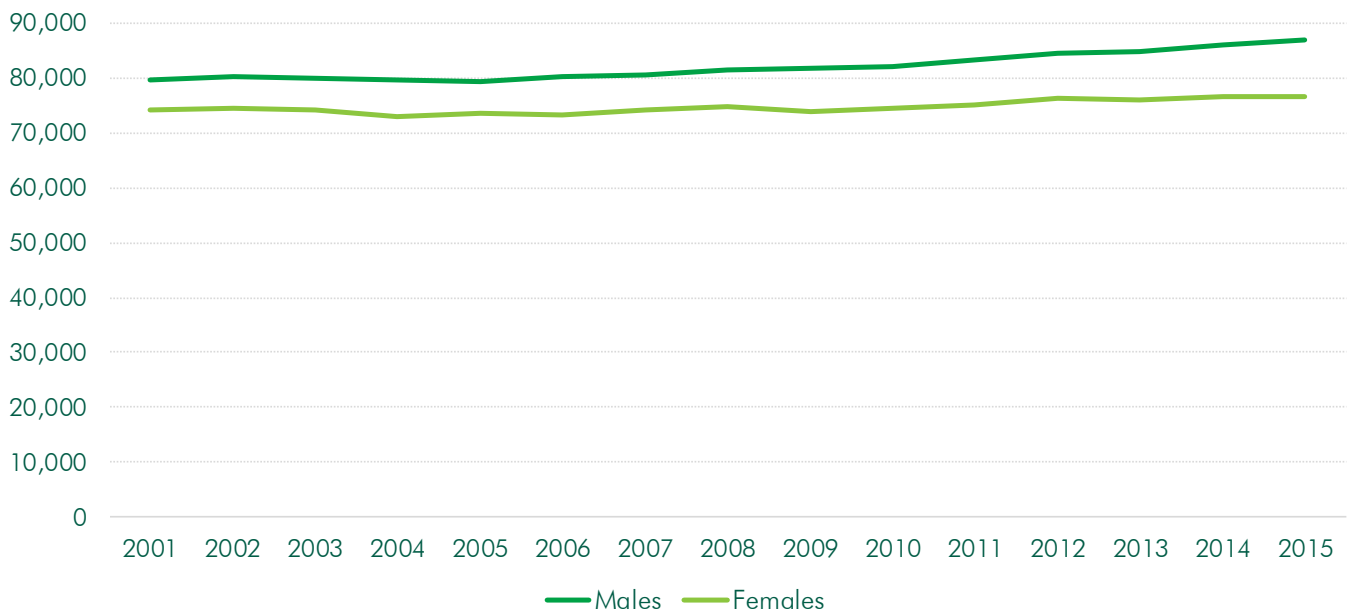
Note: Numbers have been rounded.

This figure is for 2015, the latest year for which cancer mortality data are available. Figures include malignant cancers excluding non-melanoma skin cancer (ICD10 codes C00-C97, excl. C44). Figures are calculated by dividing annual mortality figures by 12 for a monthly figure, by 365 to get a daily figure, then multiplying by seven to get a weekly figure. Totals have been rounded as this makes figures more accessible. UK totals may not sum up due to rounding.

- The number of deaths from cancer in the UK per year are increasing slightly, and has risen by 6% since 2001¹⁵:

Number of deaths from cancer in the UK, 2001 - 2015

Sources: Office for National Statistics, ISD Scotland, Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit and Northern Ireland Cancer Registry



¹⁵ 2001 - 2014 cancer mortality figures compiled for each nation from Office for National Statistics, ISD Scotland, Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit and Northern Ireland Cancer Registry.

Surviving cancer – cancer survival, the consequences of cancer and its treatment

Median Survival

- In the early 1970's the median survival time after diagnosis was one year, by 2007 it was six years and by 2011 it was ten years¹⁷.

¹⁷ Macmillan Cancer Support (2011). Living after diagnosis median cancer survival times. Macmillan identified median survival times based on research by the Cancer Research UK Cancer Survival Group at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine research up to 2007.

Net Survival

- For those patients in England diagnosed with cancer in 2006 there was a 46.7% chance of surviving cancer for at least ten years¹⁷.

In England:

- Cancer survival is usually higher in younger people than older people¹⁸.
- Pancreatic cancer has the poorest survival (for 1 and 5-year survival) for both men and women across 25 common cancers¹⁸.
- 1-year survival is above 80%, for the following cancers: testicular, female breast, melanoma of skin, prostate, uterus, cervical, vulva, myeloma, female non-Hodgkin lymphoma, Hodgkin lymphoma, thyroid, larynx and rectum cancer¹⁸.
- 5-year survival remains poor, and is below 25%, for cancers of the brain, liver, lung, Mesothelioma, oesophagus, pancreas and stomach¹⁸.
- 5-year survival is above 80%, for: women diagnosed with breast cancer, prostate cancer, Testicular cancer and thyroid cancer, Hodgkin lymphoma and melanoma of the skin¹⁸.
- Predicted 10-year survival (measured for seven cancers) is 80% or higher for cancers including, breast and prostate cancers¹⁸.

¹⁷ ONS Cancer survival index [accessed on November 2017]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/datasets/table10to161yearcancersurvivalbyclinicalcommissioninggroupinenglandwith95confidenceintervals/current/referencetables2000to2015cancerindextables10to16.xls>

¹⁸ Office for National Statistics. Cancer survival in England: Patients diagnosed between 2011 and 2015 and followed up to 2016. 1-year, 5-year and 10-year net survival for adults in England diagnosed with 1 of 25 common cancers between 2011 and 2015 and followed up to 2016. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/datasets/cancersurvivalratescancersurvivalinenglandadultsdiagnosed> [accessed on November 2017] [accessed on February 2017]

Consequences of cancer and its treatment

While it is clearly good news that more people are surviving cancer, progress can be a double-edged sword. [‘Throwing Light on the Consequences of Cancer and its Treatment’](#) (and the accompanying lay summary report [‘Cured – But at What Cost?’](#)) reveals another vital aspect of the changing cancer story.

- We estimate around one in four (25%) people in the UK face poor health or disability after treatment for cancer¹⁹.

¹⁹ Macmillan Cancer Support (2013). Throwing light on the consequences of cancer and its treatment. See [here](#)

Variations – differences in cancer incidence by ethnicity and deprivation

Ethnicity

Overall the incidence of cancer in the black and minority ethnic (BME) population is lower than that in the white population²⁰.

However, this varies for different BME groups and cancer types:

- Asian, Black, Chinese and Mixed ethnic groups have significantly lower risk of getting any of the four major cancers (breast, prostate, lung and colorectal) compared to White people²⁰.
- Males and females in the Asian, Chinese and Mixed ethnic groups are between 20% and 60% less likely to get cancer than those from the White group²⁰.
- Black females are between 10% and 40% less likely to get cancer than white females; in contrast, there is no evidence that black males have differing risks compared with white males²⁰.
- Black males are up to three times more likely to get prostate cancer than white males²⁰.
- Black people are nearly twice as likely as white people to get stomach cancer²⁰.
- Asian people are up to three times more likely to get liver cancer than the white population²⁰.
- Black and Asian females aged 65 years and over, are at higher risk of cervical cancer compared with White females²⁰.

Note: Data are for England only. There are several limitations to the analysis presented here. Ethnicity information for almost a quarter of the cancer patients included in the analysis is missing. The methodology in the source report makes use of a number of relatively crude procedures to assign these patients to specific ethnic groups for incidence data. However, despite these limitations, this report has been able to provide a first look at the overall pattern of cancer incidence by ethnicity in England.

²⁰ NCIN (2009). Cancer Incidence and Survival by Major ethnic group. England, 2002-2006.
<http://www.ncin.org.uk/view.aspx?rid=75> (accessed March 2016)

Further statistics by ethnicity are included in the National Cancer Intelligence Network Cancer and Equality Groups: Key Metrics 2015 Report, and is available [here](#).

Deprivation

Overall, for England, the cancer incidence rate in the most deprived groups is higher than the cancer incidence rate in the least deprived group²¹.

In England:

- If overall cancer incidence rates for the most deprived group were the same as the least deprived group there would be 15,000 fewer cancers diagnosed each year²¹.
- In general, differences in cancer incidence by deprivation have not improved over time²¹.
- People from the most deprived group are more likely to get lung cancer, laryngeal cancer, oesophagus cancer, stomach cancer, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, oral cavity cancer or pancreatic cancer, and women from the most deprived group are more likely to get cervical cancer²¹.
- Men from the least deprived group are more likely to get prostate cancer or testicular cancer; women from the least deprived group are more likely to get breast cancer (in females), and people from the least deprived group are more likely to get skin cancer²¹.

²¹ NCIN (2014). Cancer by Deprivation in England Incidence, 1996-2010.
http://www.ncin.org.uk/about_ncin/cancer_by_deprivation_in_england (accessed March 2016)

More recent analysis has shown that across the UK²², and for each nation in the UK, there are significant trends for:

- Lung cancer, with incidence rates increasing with deprivation levels in both men and women²².
- Stomach cancer, with incidence rates increasing with deprivation levels in both men and in women (except for Wales where there was no significant trend for women)²².

- Prostate cancer, with incidence rates higher amongst the least deprived groups²².
- Significant trends for malignant melanoma (skin cancer) with incidence rates higher amongst the least deprived groups²².

²² NCRAS (2016). Deprivation and cancer: in search of a common measure across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland, Based on cancer incidence and mortality data, 2008-2012. <http://www.ncin.org.uk/view?rid=3278> [accessed February 2017]

The reach of Macmillan services

In 2016, we helped over 1.4 million people with personal support through our face-to-face and phone services. This 1.4 million includes:

- 1.1 million people with a cancer diagnosis
- 0.1 million carers of people with cancer
- 0.2 million other people affected by cancer (including family, friends, colleagues, and worried well)²³

We also helped many more through our information and support resources – both printed and online:

- We reached an estimated 3.7 million people affected by cancer through our printed Macmillan information resources.
- We reached an estimated 5.1 million people affected by cancer in the UK through the ‘source of support’ sections of our online website²³

²³ Macmillan Cancer Support estimates.



Analysis of new survey data indicates that 69% of people helped by at least one Macmillan service used more than one Macmillan service in 2016.

Our reach figure was calculated by adding up the number of unique people helped by each of our services. This figure was then adjusted to take into account people using more than one of our services. In 2016, the adjustment was a discount factor of 13% for personal services (note that this is different discount factor, compared to last year, as this now only includes personal interactions), based on the analysis of survey data asking people what Macmillan services they had used.

We now estimate that we are reaching 89% of people living with cancer through all of our services. It is important to remember, though, that we are reaching most people through non-personal support, such as website and information resources. Our next challenge will be to reach people in ever more relevant and personalised ways, at the times that they really need us. Our analysis shows that currently we are reaching 45% of people living with cancer through personal support.

For more information see our ‘Reach of Macmillan’s Services fact sheet’ [here](#) and Macmillan’s Annual Report and Accounts [here](#).

[1] 'Interaction' meaning when someone has been helped by or got in touch with one of our services