

United Kingdom

Despite advances, cancer remains a significant public health challenge in the United Kingdom

Cancer is the leading cause of mortality in the United Kingdom, and one in four premature (before age 75) deaths (27%) will be due to cancer between 2023 and 2050. In total, there will be an estimated 50 000 premature deaths from cancer every year, and the average population life expectancy will be 2.2 years lower than if there were no cancer.

1 in 4

premature deaths are due to cancer

Infographic 1. Cancer will place a major burden on individuals, health systems and society in the United Kingdom



On average over 2023-2050, cancer will lead to an additional 6 800 cases of depression per year



Health expenditure is GBP 14.4 billion per year higher than if there were no cancer¹



Lower participation and productivity due to cancer reduce the workforce by the equivalent of 170 000 full-time workers



The total annual workforce output is GBP 6.5 billion lower than if there were no cancer

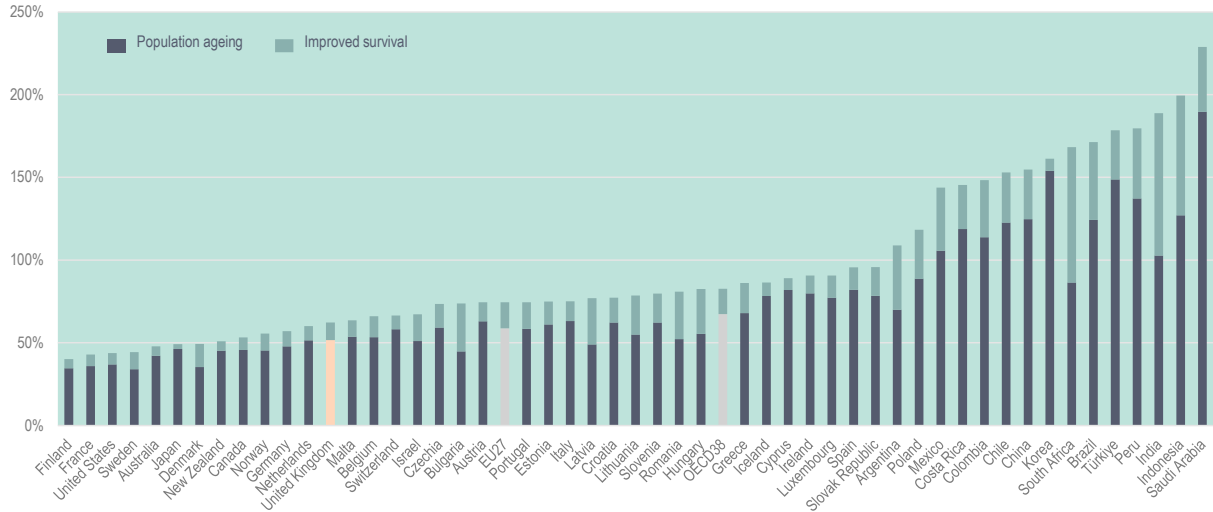
¹ Estimates are calculated by comparing the baseline scenario to a hypothetical scenario in which there is no cancer, and therefore take into account the cost of other diseases. As people who do not develop cancer live longer and develop other diseases, this can lead to an overall increase in health expenditure for some countries.

Cancer costs are expected to grow in the future

At least three factors will drive up cancer health expenditure in the future. First, the risk of cancer increases with age. As the United Kingdom's population ages, this will lead to a 52% increase in per capita health spending on cancer between 2023 and 2050, all other things being equal. Second, efforts to reduce variation in cancer outcomes across countries could mean people survive for longer, require treatment for

longer, and can develop cancer again. This would add another 11% in cancer cost over the same period. Third, higher treatment cost from new medicines and technologies could further increase the total cost.

Figure 1. Percentage increase in per capita cancer health expenditure, real growth, in 2050 vs. 2023



Note: % of total refers to the proportion of total premature mortality for a given cancer that can be prevented by improving survival rates for the same cancer

Source: OECD SPHeP NCDs model, 2024

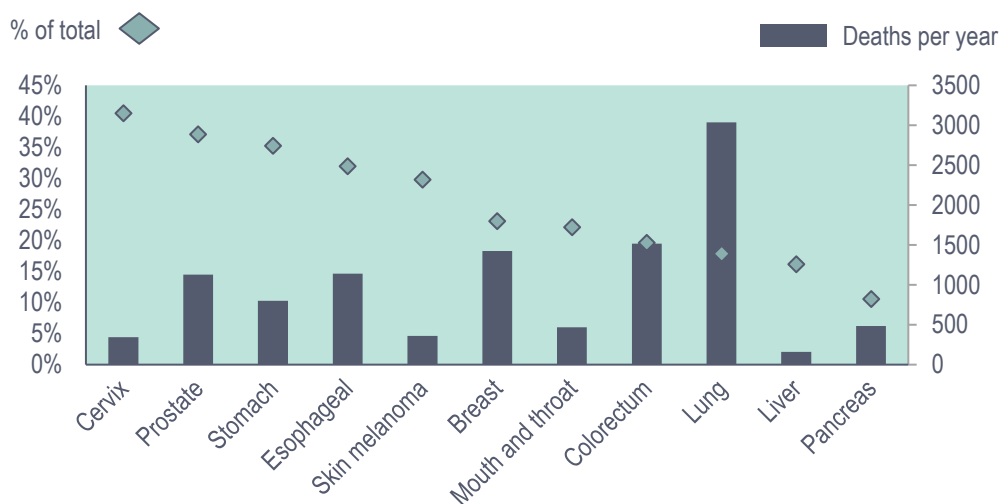
Action on cancer prevention and care is needed to reduce cancer’s health, economic and societal burden

Better cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment would improve the lives of people with cancer

If the United Kingdom were to improve cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment to achieve the best survival rates observed in the OECD and EU, this would...

- prevent **one in five** premature cancer deaths,
- increase the population average life expectancy by **6 months**,
- add the equivalent of **8 000 full-time workers**,
- increase overall health expenditure by **1.3%**.

Figure 2. The impact of improved cancer survival rates on premature mortality, average over 2023-50 in the United Kingdom

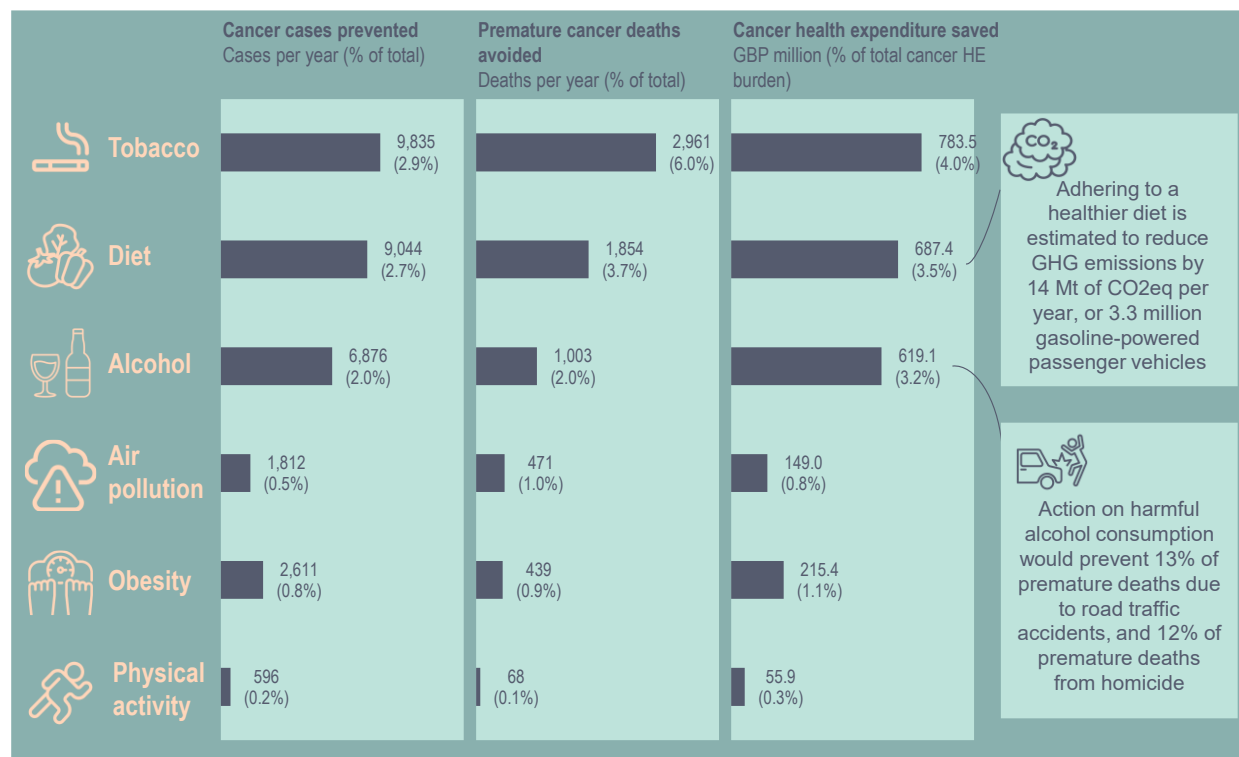


Source: OECD SPHeP NCDs model, 2024.

Action on key cancer risk factors would reap a wide range of benefits

Meeting international policy targets on major cancer risk factors would prevent around **9% of all cancer cases**, avert **14% of premature deaths** due to cancer, and reduce the burden of cancer on **health expenditure by 13%** in the United Kingdom.

Infographic 2. Action on key cancer risk factors would reap a wide range of benefits



HPV vaccination can protect future generations from cervical cancer

Optimal vaccination for human papillomavirus (HPV) in the United Kingdom, in which a high coverage rate provides enough herd immunity to eliminate all infections by the targeted HPV types, could prevent **89% of premature deaths** from cervical cancer, and reduce health expenditure on cancer by **GBP 221 million**.

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