Health disparities: using data and health literacy techniques to reduce inequalities

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We work with partners to plan, recruit, educate and train the health workforce

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Health and digital literacy: national challenge

Patients, carers and members of the public who access, understand, appraise and use health information have better health-related outcomes.

1 in 6

1 in 6 adults struggle with literacy

6 Million

Cannot switch on a digital device without help

Health literacy levels in England

43%

43% adults aged **16-65** cannot understand word-based health information sufficiently well to make health decisions.

61%

Where numbers are added in, **61%** of adults are unable to understand and act on the information.

Health Literacy: local variation

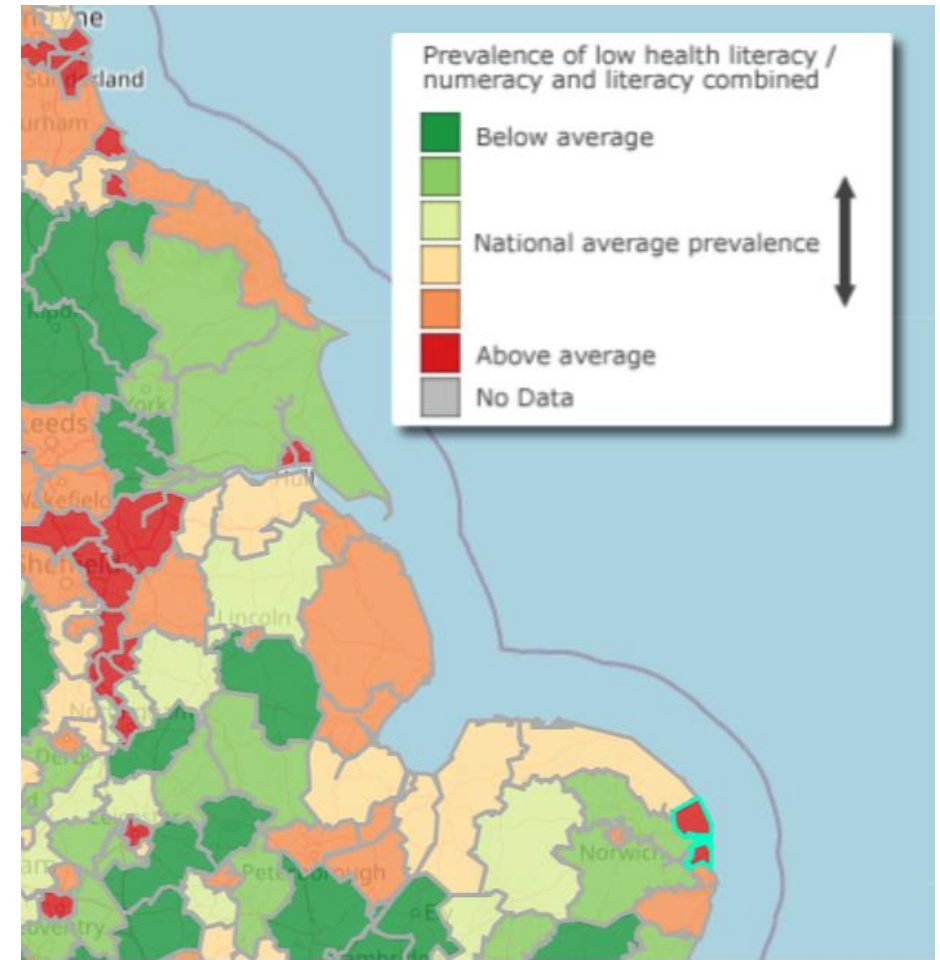Borough-level geodata commissioned by HEE from University of Southampton:

http://healthliteracy.geodata.uk/

Variation (% struggling words and numbers):
Best - South Cambridgeshire: 46.11%
Worst - Newham: 81.75%

Significant issue in rural and coastal areas

Prevalence of low health literacy / numeracy and literacy combined

Below average

National average prevalence

Above average

No Data

Health Literacy: national variation

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- The 20% worst local authorities for health literacy are concentrated in many urban areas of the North and North-West, North-East, West Midlands and certain London Boroughs.

- Health literacy levels are also low in more isolated areas including coastal communities like Torbay and Hastings.

Mapping commissioned by HEE from University of Southampton

20% worst Local Authorities for Health Literacy

Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland

Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley

Birmingham, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell

Hastings

Torbay

Digital Access: Superfast Broadband Coverage

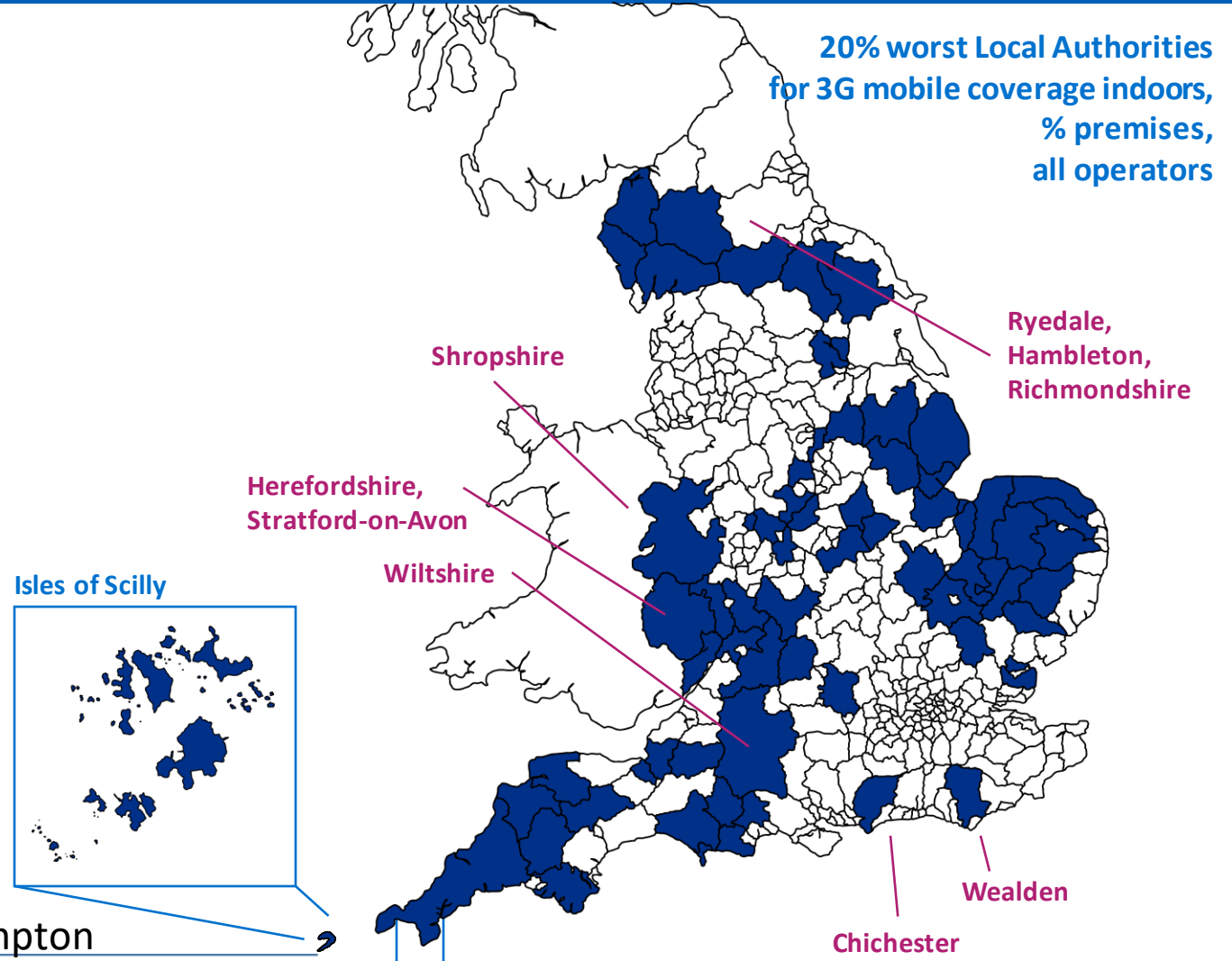20% worst Local Authorities for superfast broadband coverage, % premises

- The 20% worst local authorities for superfast coverage are concentrated in rural locations, although there are some urban outliers such as Manchester and Swindon.

- This can possibly be explained by rural locations having an ageing population with less of an appetite for superfast connectivity, whereas in urban areas the decision to opt for superfast over standard broadband is more a question of affordability.
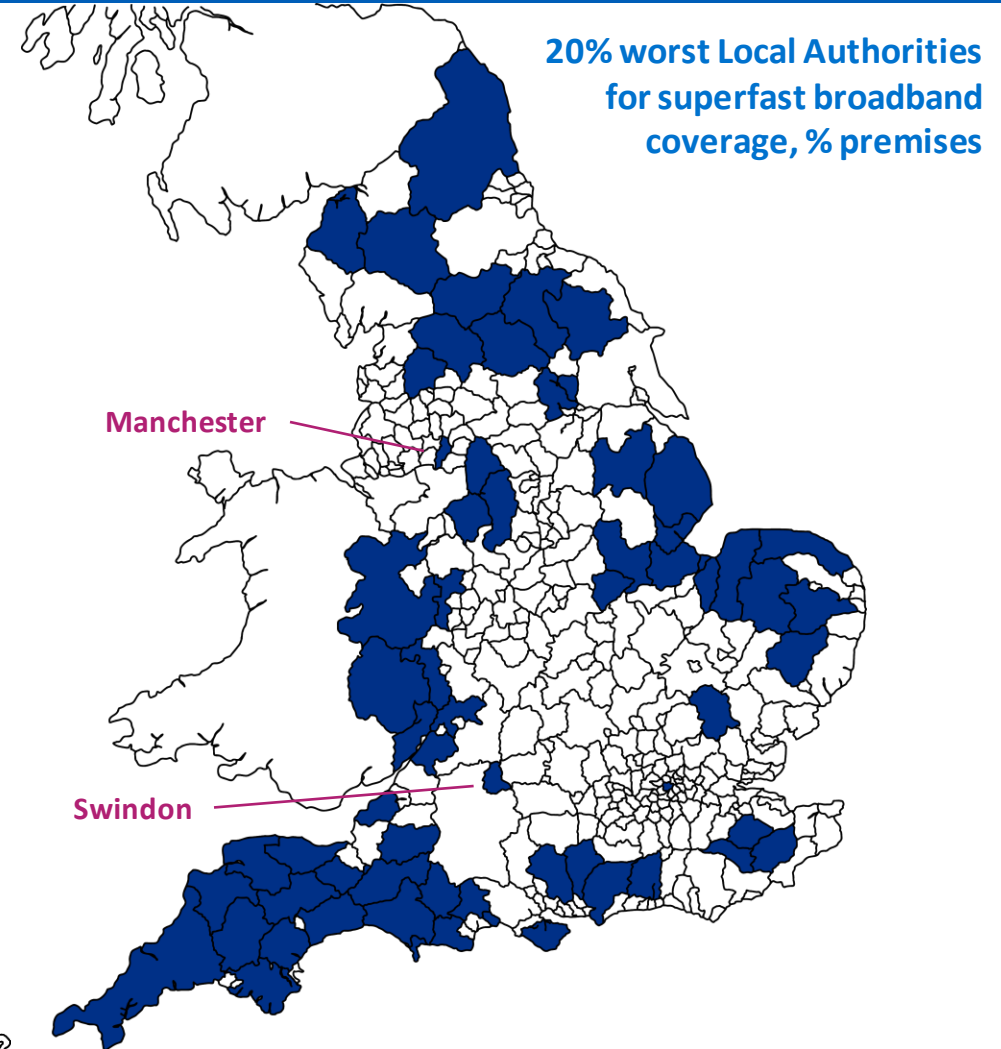
Manchester

Swindon

Mapping commissioned by HEE from University of Southampton

- The 20% worst local authorities for 3G coverage are again in rural locations where distance to cell towers is greatest, such as:

  - Cornwall and parts of Devon
  - Dorset
  - rural North
  - rural Midlands
  - East coast.

- There are pockets of poor access in the rural and coastal south-east.

Mapping commissioned by HEE from University of Southampton

20% worst Local Authorities for 3G mobile coverage indoors, % premises, all operators

Ryedale, Hambleton, Richmondshire

Shropshire

Herefordshire, Stratford-on-Avon

Wiltshire

Isles of Scilly

Wealden

Chichester

Digital Connectivity: download speed

The 20% worst local authorities for download speeds are found in **rural areas** where the problem of 'last-mile' connectivity is most pronounced, such as:

- the South-West peninsula,

- rural Northern England,

- Shropshire and the Welsh Borders,

- many parts of Eastern England,
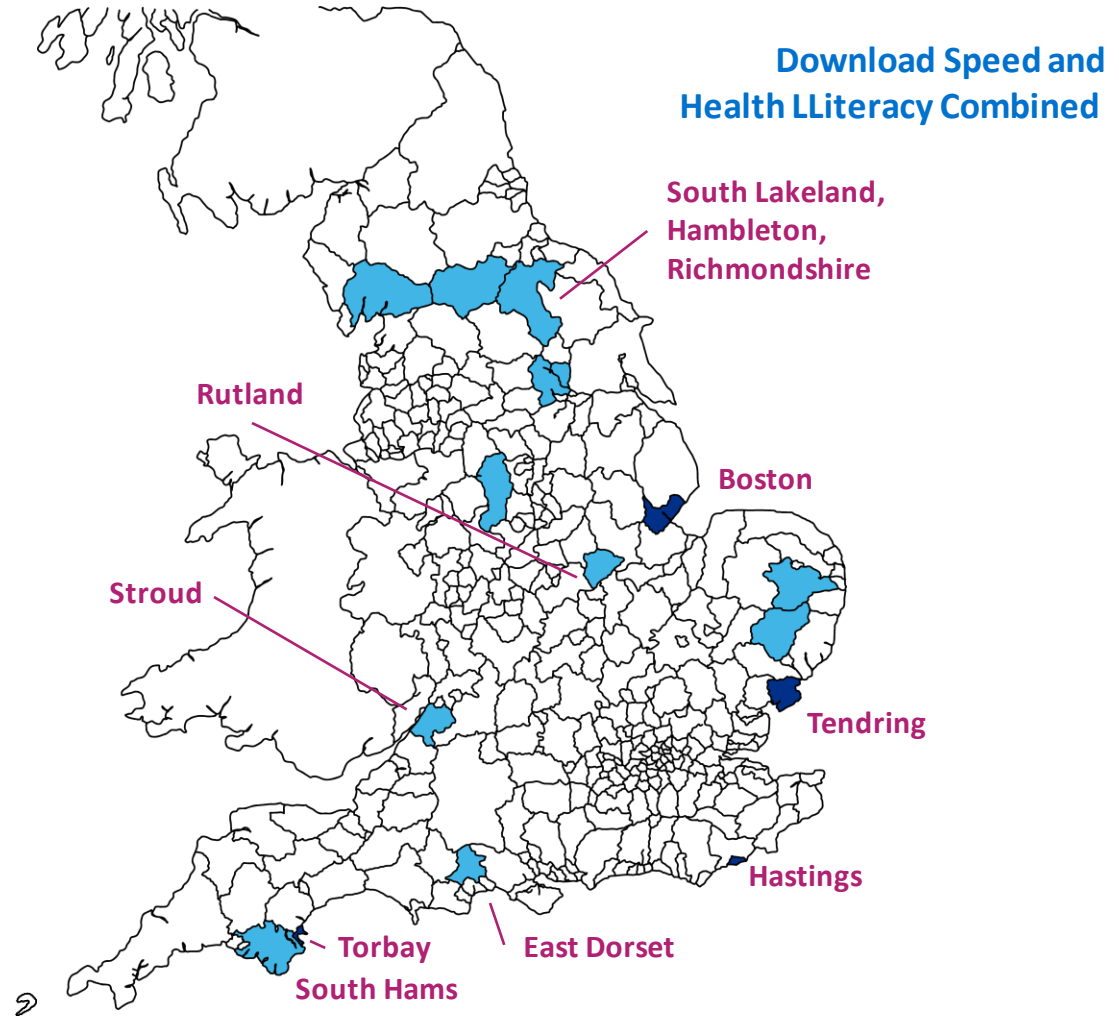
- more rural parts of the South Coast.

Mapping commissioned by HEE from University of Southampton

20% worst
Local Authorities
for download speed

East Lindsey

Shropshire

Chichester,
Arun
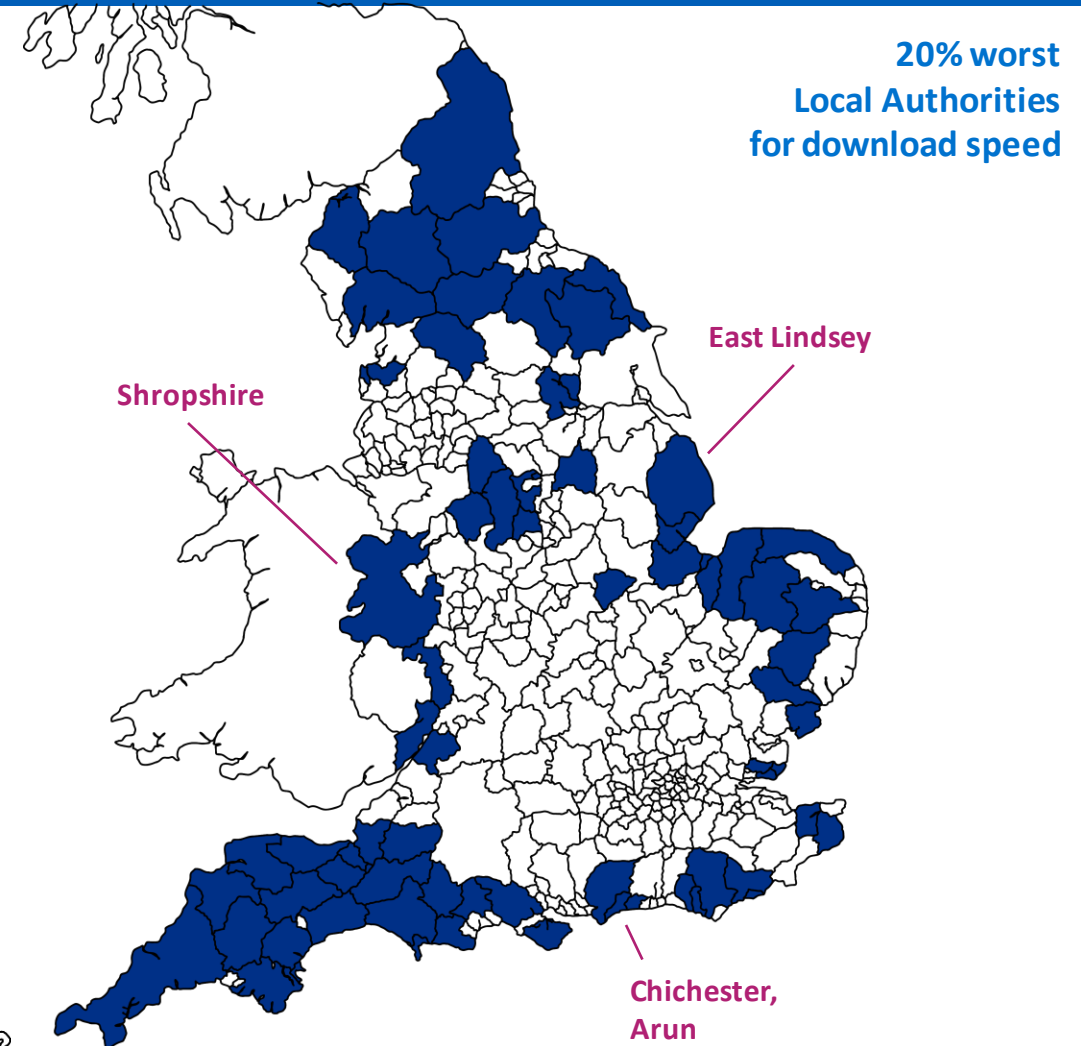
Health Literacy and Digital Connectivity: overlap

- The overlap between the 20% worst local authorities for health literacy and the 20% worst local authorities for digital access show how:

  - Poor digital access can **limit** the benefits of the highest levels of health literacy.

  - Poor digital access can **compound** the impact of the lowest levels of health literacy.

█ Lowest download speed but highest Health Literacy

█ Lowest download speed and lowest Health Literacy

Mapping commissioned by HEE from University of Southampton

Download Speed and Health LLiteracy Combined

South Lakeland, Hambleton, Richmondshire

Rutland

Boston

Stroud

Tendring

Hastings

Torbay
South Hams

East Dorset

Poor Health Literacy Compounded by Poor Digital Access: Local Authorities Tabulated

Broadband Coverage	Broadband Speed	3G Coverage
Manchester **Boston**	Hastings Torbay Tendring **Boston**	Bolsover **Boston**

Local authorities **in red** are disadvantaged on all three dimensions of digital access.

Good Health Literacy Damaged by Poor Digital Access: Local Authorities Tabulated

NHS
Health Education England

Broadband Coverage		Broadband Speed		3G Coverage	
South Norfolk	**Hambleton**	**South Norfolk**		**South Norfolk**	**Hambleton**
Selby	Harrogate	**Selby**		Wiltshire	Cotswold
East Dorset	East	South Lakeland		**Selby**	East Cambridgeshire
South Hams	Hampshire	**East Dorset**		South Lakeland	Isles of Scilly
Stroud	Ribble Valley	**South Hams**		**East Dorset**	Stratford on Avon
Richmondshire	Horsham	Stroud		**South Hams**	Harborough
Tunbridge Wells	**Rutland**	**Richmondshire**		**Richmondshire**	**Rutland**
Mid Suffolk	City Of London	**Mid Suffolk**		Huntingdonshire	West Oxfordshire
Derbyshire	Winchester	Derbyshire Dales		**Mid Suffolk**	South Oxfordshire
Dales	Uttlesford	**Hambleton**		North Kesteven	Uttlesford
Tewkesbury		**Rutland**		Tewkesbury	South
		City of London			Cambridgeshire

Local authorities **in red** are disadvantaged on all three dimensions of digital access.

Addressing the challenge: Four Steps

We work with partners to plan, recruit, educate and train the health workforce.

NHS
Health Education England

Core techniques (in line with NICE shared decision- making guidance):
- Teach Back
- Chunk and Check

Free 35-minute eLearning programme

Action plan to include in CPD file

https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/healthliteracy/

Jointly developed by NHS Education for Scotland and Health Education England

You can make a difference

Teach Back

Routinely offer help

Chunk and Check

You

Simple language

Use pictures

2. Use evidence-based patient information

High-quality patient information should not duplicate what already exists, be developed with user involvement, evidence based and reviewed regularly
https://pifonline.org.uk/resources/publications/good-health-information/

NICE shared decision-making guidance requires evidence-based patient information

Local NHS knowledge and library services can support you to identify, appraise and embed the evidence

NHS library and knowledge services can help you to identify, appraise and embed the evidence.

Partnership working is central to sharing best practice, optimising limited resources and reducing duplication.

Opportunities at ICS/local level to:

➢ Optimise development of health literacy alongside digital skills

➢ Target collaborative activity to best effect

➢ Develop sustainable approaches beyond specific information campaigns

➢ Build local community engagement in health

NHS
Health Education England

Print books and digital resources

- Ageing well
- Recovering from illness
- Men's health
- Women's health and menopause
- LGBTQ + Trans life
- Eating well and moving more
- Pain management

THE **READING** AGENCY

NHS
Health Education England

NHS Knowledge and Library Services

Take control of your health

Your Health Collection

https://library.nhs.uk/yhc/

Can you think of simpler ways of saying these words?
Add your suggestions into chat.

- Modify
- Hypertension
- Positive/negative
- Fever
- Topical

- Change
- High blood pressure
- Good / Bad result
- High temperature
- Applied directly to a part of the body

Data sources

- Health literacy data are from http://healthliteracy.geodata.uk
  The underpinning statistical models use data from the Skills for Life Survey 2011, 2016 population projections and 2011 census data to derive estimates that reflect variations in local demography, educational and social status, deprivation and self-reported English Language proficiency.

- Digital access data were drawn from OFCOM 'Connected Nations' data downloads for 2021, local and unitary authority fixed and mobile coverage and performance variables as named on maps. Connected Nations 2021: data downloads - Ofcom

Contact Us

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NHS knowledge and library services: https://www.hlisd.org/

Including an executive summary or Easy Read version

For further information about Knowledge for Healthcare
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