

# [Lord Alderdice's report on Race, Ethnic Minorities and the Culture of the Liberal Democrats](#)

If we look around us at our fellow Party members, elected representatives and spokespersons, we can see there is a problem: we are not as diverse in our race and ethnic minority profile as the communities we want to represent.

Despite our clear liberal values, rejecting all forms of prejudice and inequality, the Party has failed to engage sufficiently with BAME communities.

**Our commitment to liberal values is not in doubt, but what we're doing isn't working.**

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## [Press release: Local authorities should offer NHS Health Check to all eligible](#)

Speaking at Public Health England 's Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Prevention Conference today (Thursday 8 February 2018), Chief Executive Duncan Selbie has called on local authorities to ensure that all local residents eligible for a free NHS Health Check get an invite – to help tackle the one in four premature deaths in the country caused by CVD.

The NHS Health Check is free for all adults in England aged 40 to 74, who have not yet developed CVD. It's one of the largest health prevention programmes in the world, helping to detect and prevent early signs of cardiovascular diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and dementia.

CVD is a leading cause of disability and death in the UK, affecting around 7 million people and being responsible for 26% of all deaths in England – estimated to cost the NHS around £9 billion a year.

Duncan Selbie, chief executive of Public Health England, said:

Since 2013, over 6.1 million people have taken an NHS Health Check. The programme is a cornerstone in England for the prevention of conditions such as CVD, which causes one in four premature deaths and places a huge strain on individuals, families and our healthcare system. We also know that it is the same risk factors causing many cancers and other preventable illnesses, so this is a hugely important programme.

The NHS Health Check has had much success and has the potential to prevent many thousands of premature deaths and ill health in England, but there is still much to be done. Every local authority in the country is required by law to ensure that all eligible people in their area are offered a check every 5 years. We must work together to increase numbers taking up the offer, in particular targeting our efforts to those at greatest risk.

There is good evidence that the programme is successful in identifying those at high risk of cardiovascular disease, but we also need to follow up with effective care and support for them.

The Conference, with over 500 health professionals expected to attend, including GPs and NHS Health Check providers, will focus on a number of ways that CVD risk can be reduced, including:

- ensuring equity and reducing inequality through CVD prevention programmes
- highlighting the importance of health care professionals in delivering behaviour change messaging for CVD risk reduction
- learning from a range of international CVD prevention projects

PHE has also recently published two documents focusing on CVD prevention:

- [Size of the Prize](#) provides region-specific statistics on the opportunity to prevent many thousands of heart attacks and strokes by improving the follow-up care given to those found to be at risk following an NHS Health Check
- the [stocktake and action plan](#) sets out how to further improve the impact of the programme over the next 5 years

## Background

1. PHE's [CVD Prevention Conference 2018](#) is taking place on 8 February at the Kia Oval, Surrey Cricket Club in London
2. View national [comparison data on NHS Health Check uptake](#)
3. The [Heart Age Test](#) is an innovative online tool to check your risk of having a heart attack or stroke – it tells you your heart age compared to your real age, explains why it's important to know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers and gives advice on how to reduce your heart age. The tool is a collaboration between PHE, NHS Choices, UCL and the British Heart Foundation.

## About Public Health England

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and providing specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE\\_uk](#) and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](http://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland).

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## [News story: UK flu levels remain high according to PHE statistics](#)

*Updated:* Added latest flu data.

### Latest update

Seasonal flu levels remain high but are continuing to stabilise across the UK.

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 8 February 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK and rates across most indicators remain stable. The statistics show over the last week there has been a 17% reduction in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness, a 14% reduction in the flu hospitalisation rate, and a 10% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A(H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 5 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in

over-65s in England, this is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

Richard Pebody, Acting Head of the Respiratory Diseases Department at PHE said:

We are continuing to see flu circulate, with signs that flu activity is stabilising.

Rates of vaccination across all those eligible for the vaccine have increased on last season and we have vaccinated an additional one and a half million people. We are currently seeing a mix of flu types, including the A(H3N2) strain that circulated last winter in the UK and then in Australia and flu B.

It is important to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and to get the vaccine if you are newly eligible, although we are now coming to the end of the vaccine season.

## **Previous updates**

### **Thursday 1 February 2018**

Seasonal flu levels remain high but are stabilising in the last week across the UK.

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 1 February 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, with rates across most indicators remaining stable. The statistics show over the last week there has been a stabilisation in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness, a 7% reduction in the flu hospitalisation rate, and a 26% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A(H3N2), A(H1N1) and Flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 4 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in over-65s in England, although this currently remains lower than the excess mortality observed last season and in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

The 'Catch It, Bin It, Kill It' campaign continues to run across digital, radio and press advertising platforms to inform the public about the steps they can take to protect themselves and reduce spread of the virus by practising good respiratory hand hygiene.

Richard Pebody, Acting Head of the Respiratory Diseases Department at Public Health England said:

We are continuing to see flu circulate, with signs that flu activity is stabilising.

Rates of vaccination across all those eligible for the vaccine have increased on last season and we have vaccinated an additional one and a half million people. We are currently seeing a mix of flu types, including the A(H3N2) strain that circulated last winter in the UK and then in Australia and flu B.

The best form of protection against flu is to get the vaccine if you are eligible and to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene, although we are now coming to the end of the vaccine season.

Whilst this is the most significant flu season since 2010 to 2011 in terms of GP activity, the ICU indicators taken overall suggest that it is less severe at this stage than 2010 to 2011. And in terms of the impact on excess mortality, we have not reached yet the levels seen in 2014 to 2015 and 2016 to 2017.

The flu virus can live for many hours on hard surfaces and therefore practising good hand hygiene can limit the spread of germs and transmission of flu. People are advised to catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue, bin it, and then wash their hands afterwards to kill the germs. Practising good hand hygiene and giving eligible people the flu vaccine is the best defence against the virus.

People suffering with flu-like symptoms should catch coughs or sneezes in tissues and bin them immediately, wash their hands regularly with soap and warm water and frequently clean regularly used surfaces to stop the spread of flu. Avoid having unnecessary contact with other people if you or they have symptoms of flu.

Seasonal flu usually circulates for several weeks each year. The intensity of circulation depends upon the underlying population immunity, the circulating viruses and external factors such as the weather. It is an unpredictable virus and it is not possible to anticipate how flu levels will progress.

Amongst other diseases like norovirus that normally increase during winter, seasonal flu puts extra pressure on the NHS every year.

The latest data is available online. Currently 72.4% of adults over 65, 48.7% of adults with a long-term health condition, 47.1% of pregnant women, 44% of 3-year-olds, 42.6% of 2-year-olds and 63.9% of healthcare workers have received the vaccine.

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# Commissioner Crețu at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Opening Speech by Commissioner **Crețu**, in charge of Regional Policy, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, at the Opening Plenary of the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (7-13 February 2018)

Mister Minister, Madame Executive Director and distinguished delegates,

It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

First of all I would like to congratulate Ms Dato' Maimunah Mohd Sharif on her appointment as the new UN Habitat Executive Director. Mindful of the role of the UN Habitat as the leading agency on urban issues, we wish her all the best and would like to assure her of the full cooperation of the European Union and its Member States in carrying out her duties and the upcoming reform of the organisation.

The adoption of the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III conference in Quito was a crucial step forward in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also a cornerstone for other key agendas of 2015, in particular the Paris Agreement and the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The European Union sees the New Urban Agenda as a collective instrument that will empower both the international community and local governments to turn global urban challenges into great opportunities. As former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon noted, "Our Struggle for Global Sustainability will be won or lost in cities".

The New Urban agenda ambitiously sets the work ahead for thousands of cities on all five continents. The European Union is strongly committed to its implementation, all the more since it reflects well Europe's own vision for sustainable urbanisation. Indeed, we call for an integrated, people-centred and place-based approach that takes into account the diversity of cities and their wider territorial context, while building on urban-rural linkages. The European Union and its Member States can pride themselves on having been instrumental in shaping the New Urban Agenda.

As we have now moved into implementation, the European Union and its Member States intends to continue playing a leading role by taking forward its commitment.

We adopted the Urban Agenda for the European Union which encompasses many similar approaches and fundamental principles to the global New Urban Agenda.

The Urban Agenda for the European Union is based on a partnership approach involving local governments and other stakeholders. It aims at strengthening the urban dimension in European policies. This means involving and mobilising

cities in the design and delivery of these policies.

The European approach seeks to promote a better knowledge base and an effective exchange process, leading to more integrated policy-making, more effective and efficient regulations and needs-oriented funding.

Altogether, this entails a significant change to policy-making, within and for urban areas, based on a renewed commitment to strengthening the capacity of sub-national and local governments in all aspects of governance. I can assure you of our will to support them, in particular regarding revenue generation and access to finance, including data and statistical capacities.

In addition to implementing its Urban Agenda, the European Union and its Member States is also providing substantial external cooperation support to partner countries and cities to take the New Urban Agenda forward. This not only includes the newly launched European External Investment Plan, but also a wide range projects and of initiatives by the EU and its Member States in support of sustainable urbanisation and urban resilience.

Notably, city to city cooperation has proven its worth and value. We will continue to promote this efficient tool. The political ownership of countries and cities in embracing and promoting the New Urban Agenda is key; the European Union and its Member States stands ready to share experiences and provide concrete support.

The European Union and its Member States is also committed to engaging with partners around the globe to promote inclusive and sustainable urban development. Actions should target the specific needs of persons and groups in a marginalised and vulnerable situation, including persons with disabilities, forcibly displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees as well as those living in informal settlements and slums.

The European Union will support partners to improve the delivery of basic services and social support schemes, reinforce capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies, crises and humanitarian disasters to ensure dignity, including equitable access to food security and decent and affordable housing, and to improve the quality of life of fast-growing urban populations. In line with the New Urban Agenda, the European Union and its Member States will promote sustainable spatial planning, equitable management of land and real estate markets, sustainable urban mobility and low-emission infrastructure networks and buildings. It will also support smart, safe and resilient cities that make use of opportunities from digitalisation, innovation and new technologies.

To conclude, I wish to emphasise that the New Urban Agenda is the outcome of our joint efforts to come forward with a truly transformative agenda. It contains all elements needed to go beyond business as usual, and to localise the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this respect, the World Urban Forum represents a great opportunity to reiterate our commitment to making the New Urban Agenda a key implementing tool to reach the targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. Being the first session to focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, we expect the World Urban Forum to concretely contribute to the first report on its implementation.

Together we can turn the global challenges of sustainable urbanisation into global assets for all. The New Urban Agenda is a once-in-a-generation opportunity; let us not miss this historical moment.

Thank you very much.

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## **Annex: 10 new projects under the LIFE funding programme for the Environment and Climate Action**

***LIFE Integrated Projects Environment (3 projects – total budget €62.4 million)***

**FRANCE (FR) (1 project – total budget €34.2 million)**

**Towards a circular economy in the South of France (LIFE-IP SMART WASTE PACA)**

Households in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region of France produce a lot more waste than the national average. Around 400 kg of domestic waste per inhabitant ends up being burned or in landfill. By supporting innovation in waste prevention and management and fostering expertise and skills, this project will lead to around 30 % more organic waste being collected. As well as significantly reducing the amount of landfilled household waste, it will support the development of the circular economy in the region.

[Project summary](#)

**MALTA (MT) (1 project – total budget €17 million)**

**Reducing water demand through sustainable planning (LIFE-IP RBMP-MALTA)**

Water scarcity, low rainfall and high population density are major challenges of sustainably managing Malta’s freshwater resources. This project will optimise the use of precious water and build the capacity of Maltese institutions to implement the country’s river basin management plan. The integrated approach will also involve water audits, investment in water treatment and greater reuse of water. Increasing islanders’ awareness of the need to use water better is expected to lead to a reduction in domestic water use and an increase in available groundwater.

[Project summary](#)



## **SPAIN (ES) (1 project – total budget €11.2 million)**

### **Designing integrated tools for water management (LIFE-IP RBMP-DUERO)**

The Duero/Duoro river basin runs between Spain and Portugal and is a climate change hotspot. As an indicator of future changes across Europe, the river basin can be a test lab for adaptation in the management of water resources. This project will enable better governance of water resources and greater public participation in water management. Other actions will involve the development of natural ways of retaining water and tools to put a value on services provided by watersheds, such as flood prevention. The project will also create synergies between water policy and agricultural and other policies in support of its goal of implementing a river basin management plan.

[Project summary](#)

## ***LIFE Integrated Projects Nature (5 projects – €90.4 million total budget)***

### **DENMARK (DK) (1 project – total budget €17.4 million)**

#### **Making nature management a sound branch of farming (LIFE IP NATUREMAN)**

As a result of intensive farming practices, natural areas in the Danish countryside are small, disconnected and dispersed among cultivated farmland. This project aims to reverse that trend by creating and testing incentives for farmers to manage their land in a more environmentally-friendly way. The goal is to make it financially attractive for farms to graze or harvest biomass from natural areas through the development of high-value specialty products, sold at a premium of at least 25 %. This initiative is also expected to improve the condition of protected fens, springs and grasslands and provide a template for the widespread implementation of a more holistic approach to nature and water management.

[Project summary](#)

### **FRANCE (FR) (1 project – total budget €22.3 million)**

#### **Getting protected marine habitats in good condition (LIFE IP MarHa)**

The waters around mainland France and Corsica are home to a remarkable diversity of marine habitats, from reefs to coastal lagoons. Many of these are included in the French marine Natura 2000 network of protected areas. However, the network is in its early stages and there is significant scope to improve the condition of habitats, for instance by having a better understanding of the impact of human activities. This wide-ranging project will ensure effective and transparent site management that integrates marine users and activities. By 2025, the project will enable the status of all the marine habitats around mainland France and Corsica to be known. This will contribute to the long-term goal of ensuring that all of those habitats are in good condition ('favourable conservation status') by 2040.

[Project summary](#)

## **GREECE (GR) (1 project – total budget €17 million)**

### **Wide-ranging action for nature management (LIFE-IP 4 NATURA)**

There are over 600 protected areas for nature in Greece, yet fewer than 2 % have a management plan. Action plans have been approved for only three of the country's protected species. This wide-ranging project will formulate and implement site management plans and species action plans in four regions. It will also develop innovations such as a comprehensive database of Natura 2000 network sites and a tool to help users visualise ecosystem services. This will improve the capacity of competent authorities to effectively conserve Greek nature. The project will also help mobilise complementary funding to draft a five-year plan of action for the entire network of protected areas in Greece.

[Project summary](#)

## **LITHUANIA (LT) (1 project – total budget €17 million)**

### **Achieving priorities for a positive impact on nature (LIFE-IP PAF-NATURALIT)**

Nature conservation has developed rapidly in Lithuania since EU membership in 2004. However, significant threats to habitats, species and biodiversity remain. Lithuania has drawn up a framework of priority actions that can be integrated into relevant EU funding streams. This project will help implement that framework throughout the country. It will use a common approach to improve the efficiency of management, surveillance and analysis processes and integrate nature conservation into the forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors. The benefits of an ecosystem-based approach to conservation will be shown at selected sites, representing different geographical and natural conditions.

[Project summary](#)

## **SWEDEN (SE) (1 project – total budget €16.7 million)**

### **Model conservation of watercourses and wetlands (GRIP on LIFE IP)**

Sweden's watercourses and wetlands are important for nature and provide a range of ecosystem services, including carbon storage, improved water quality and flood control. To improve the condition of habitats and help those services work to their full potential, this project will foster greater communication and cooperation between different stakeholders. It will also make more coordinated use of available funds. Working on a landscape scale, rather than just focusing on the conservation of individual sites, will ensure that priority actions for nature conservation are carried out effectively. By demonstrating the success of this approach with one type of habitat, the project will serve as a model for the wider implementation of the country's priority actions for nature conservation.

[Project summary](#)

## ***LIFE Integrated Projects Climate Action (2 projects – total budget €29.4***

*million)*

**BELGIUM (1 project – total budget €13.9 million)**

**Renovating for energy efficient living (LIFE IP CA 16 BE-REEL!)**

Belgian homes use 70% more energy than the European average, mainly because much of the housing stock is old. By supporting regional cooperation between Flanders and Wallonia, this project will help to implement renovation and retrofitting policies that vastly improve energy efficiency. Measures will include capacity building and training for administrators and stakeholders, guidelines for the construction sector, innovative techniques and new financial instruments. More than 8 500 homes in Ghent, Antwerp, Mechelen, Mouscron and La Louvière will be fully renovated, giving a practical demonstration of the energy efficiency strategies. This project will put Belgium on the path to renovating its existing housing, mobilising more than €700 million of complementary funding.

[Project summary](#)

**SPAIN (ES) (1 project – total budget €15.6 million)**

**Coherent climate change adaptation in the region of Navarre (LIFE-IP Nadapta-CC)**

Navarre is typical of many regions in Spain, in that it has adopted a climate change adaptation strategy but has not been able to implement that strategy. By breaking down divisions between sectors and involving key stakeholders, this project is an opportunity to overcome barriers to implementation and serve as a model for other regions in a similar position. Actions will include a new task force and indicators for climate monitoring, early warning systems for river floods and emergencies involving wastewater treatment. Other measures include adaptive management of water, forestry, agriculture, health, infrastructure and territorial planning. Mobilising more than €370 million of complementary funding will enable the implementation of Navarre's 2030 climate change adaptation goals.

[Project summary](#)