



Building a healthier future for everyone

Time to act on liver health

BRITISH
LIVER
TRUST

 Liver
Cancer
UK
Part of the
British Liver Trust



Children's Liver
Disease Foundation
fighting childhood
liver disease

Our case for action on liver disease and liver cancer

Liver disease deaths have increased by more than 400% in two generations driven by obesity, alcohol and viral hepatitis – adding to huge avoidable pressures on our NHS and economy.

Over
18,000

people die from
liver disease
and liver cancer
every year



Liver cancer is the fastest rising cause of cancer death in the UK

Premature deaths from liver disease are at their highest level in a generation

For too long, liver disease and liver cancer have been forgotten and omitted from major health policy. Liver conditions disproportionately impact our most vulnerable and deprived communities who continue to face widespread stigma and health inequalities. There are over 200 liver conditions that affect people of all ages and backgrounds.

90%
of liver disease
is preventable

These health inequalities further widen the gap in healthy life expectancy. Liver disease is the second biggest cause of premature death and lost working years of life in England and Wales. The Government must commit to cutting the lives lost to liver disease and liver cancer if it is to halve the gap in healthy life expectancy.

Bolder action on prevention, earlier detection and delivering fair and equal access to person-centred care is mission critical to build an NHS fit for the future.

“There is a massive stigma around hepatitis B. When I was diagnosed, I had to wear a necklace with my blood condition, which made me feel like a leper. This is why it’s important for me to speak about my condition and support others diagnosed with hep B – to make sure they don’t feel alone or stigmatised.”

Claire



Our mission to transform liver health

We are calling on the UK Government and all political parties to help transform how we prevent, detect and treat liver disease and liver cancer.



Prevention

- Bring forward population-wide measures to reshape the unhealthy food and drink environment
- Reduce childhood obesity through improved regulation of products high in fat, salt and sugar
- Deliver a comprehensive alcohol strategy that addresses affordability, promotion and availability



Early detection

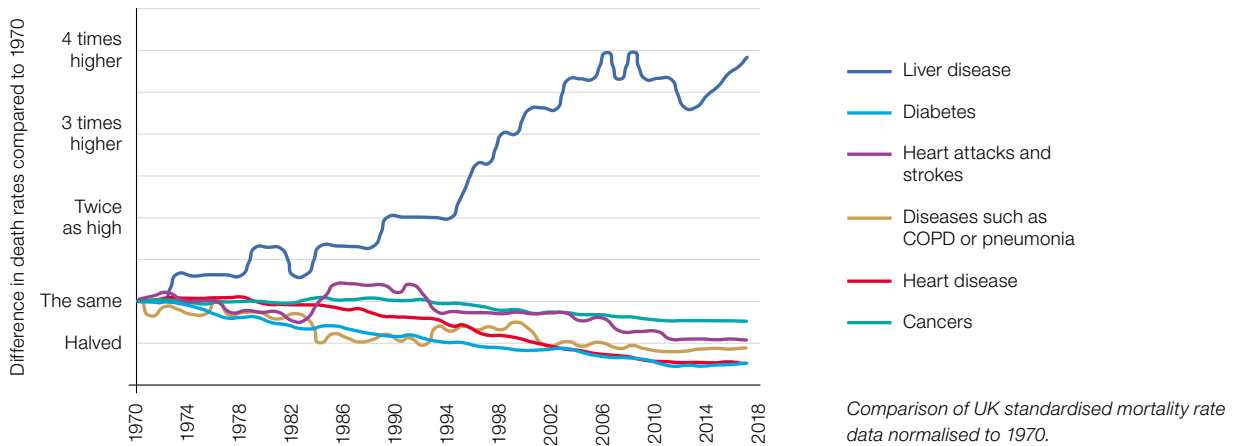
- Commit to expanding rollout of innovative diagnostic technology in primary and community care to boost earlier detection of liver disease and liver cancer
- All Integrated Care Boards to have a full pathway for the early diagnosis of liver disease
- Publish a national cancer strategy with dedicated targets to improve early detection and outcomes for liver cancer and less survivable cancer patients



Tackling inequalities and stigma

- NHSE to deliver a transformative programme for liver services. This should include a comprehensive review of liver services
- Funding for perfusion technology to increase the number of available livers for transplant
- Expand access to weight management services for patients with fatty liver disease

The rise in liver disease death rates compared with other major diseases



Prevention: addressing the social and commercial determinants of health

90% of liver disease is preventable. The rise in hospital admissions and premature deaths is heavily impacted by the unhealthy food and drink environment.

Up to 4 in 10 children with obesity are estimated to have fatty liver disease and the UK has the highest rate of child alcohol misuse worldwide. Alcohol related liver disease deaths have risen by 87% in two decades, driven by the rise in harmful drinking. Alcohol and obesity are estimated to cost the UK economy £27bn and £58bn per annum respectively.

Childhood obesity is on the rise



2 in 5 children with obesity are estimated to have fatty liver disease.

We must address the social and commercial determinants of health, which drive obesity and alcohol misuse in the population and disproportionately impact our most disadvantaged communities.

“Early detection saved my life. If they hadn’t diagnosed me so quickly, I might not be here today. Now I’m active, I love my sports and mostly live a normal life.”

Louis



“My drinking got worse during the pandemic due to work stresses and I didn’t realise the damage it was having on me. One morning I woke up to find my stomach was swollen and this was very frightening. Despite my diagnosis, it took a long time for the doctors to take me seriously.”

Simon



Early detection: Providing equality of access to diagnosis

Patients at risk of liver disease and liver cancer need access to earlier and faster diagnosis through increasing fibrosis assessments in primary care and community settings.

Liver disease is a silent killer that is often asymptomatic. If diagnosed earlier, liver damage can be reversed. Sadly, three quarters of people diagnosed with cirrhosis are currently diagnosed as an emergency in A&E, when it is too late for effective treatment or intervention. Only 3 in 10 cases of liver cancer are diagnosed at an early stage.

Less than 1 in 5 Integrated Care Boards have pathways in place for the early detection of liver disease and only 7 Community Diagnostic Centres currently have liver scanners to detect liver fibrosis or cirrhosis at an early stage. Harnessing innovative diagnostic technology closer to home could transform outcomes and save lives.

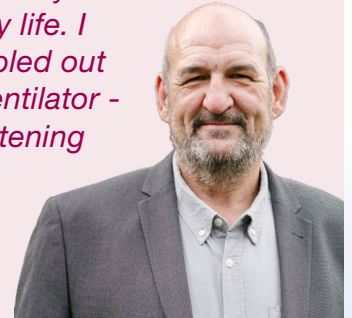
“My liver transplant really affected my time at school. I had a really difficult time being bullied and going to hospital so much made it difficult to study. I plan to become a paediatric nurse to make a difference and help children.”

Charlina



“I didn’t realise the huge harm fizzy drinks were having on my liver until it nearly cost my life. I collapsed at home, bled out and woke up on a ventilator - it was the most frightening experience of my life.”

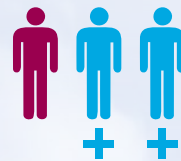
Paul



Tackling health inequalities and stigma

People with liver conditions deserve equal access to person centred care. There are many types of liver disease and many different causes. Yet those most at risk continue to face widespread stigma which can hamper access to earlier detection, treatment and care. Our latest survey results show 1 in 2 patients have experienced stigma from a healthcare professional.

Liver disease mirrors underlying health inequalities with mortality rates four times higher in our most deprived communities compared to our most affluent – where individuals are more likely to develop, be hospitalised by, and die from liver disease.



Stigma stops almost
1 in 3 people from
seeking medical care

29%

One third of all liver disease deaths in England occurred in the North of England, driven by alcohol harm and diets high in fat, salt and sugar. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have similar levels of liver disease mortality and hospitalisation rates.

The cost-of-living crisis has made us a poorer and sicker country. The nation’s declining health is impacting our productivity and adding to huge pressures on our NHS.

Isabella is now thriving after receiving a life-saving transplant. There are over 100 different liver conditions that can affect children.



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The British Liver Trust and Children’s Liver Disease Foundation have merged so that we are better able to offer information and support to everyone affected by any type of liver disease throughout their lives.

The British Liver Trust is a company limited by guarantee. Company registration number: 02227706.
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