

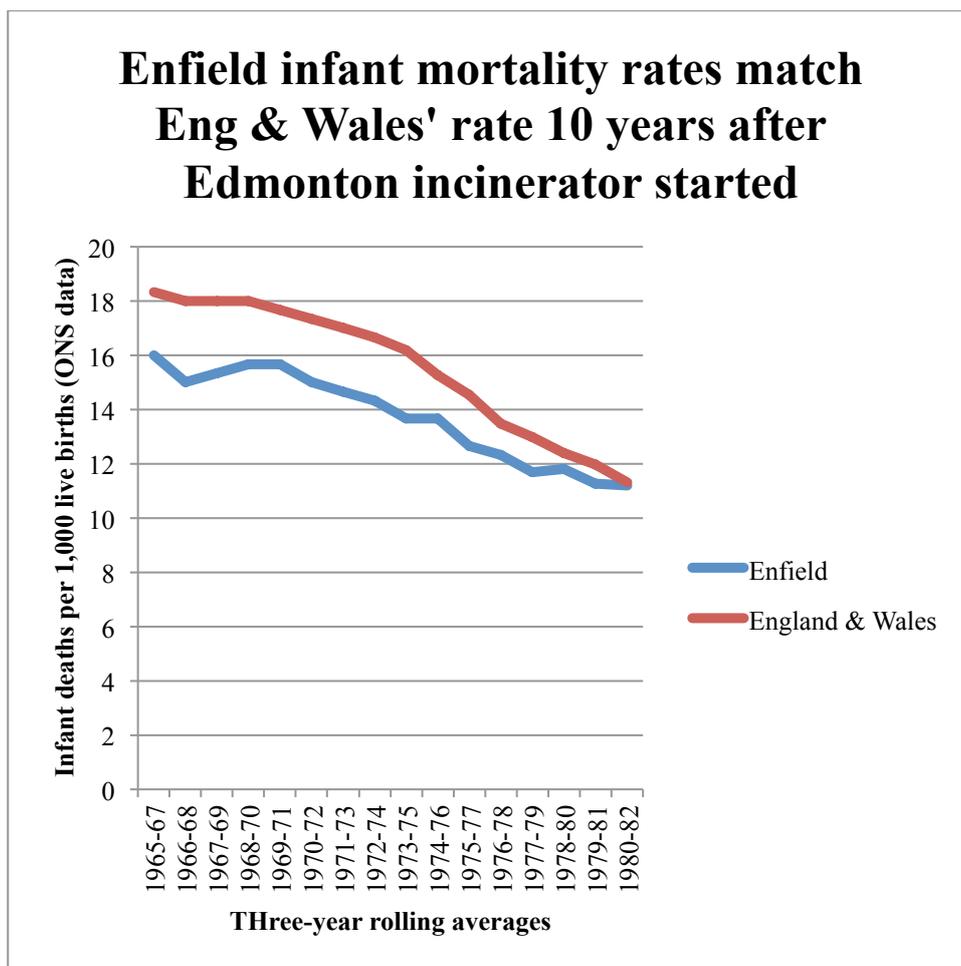
Incinerators and infant mortality rates in Enfield & elsewhere

The Harlescott incinerator will be operational in 2015 and there'll be a presumption that emissions will not harm health. Those with access to data will be unlikely to speak out if death rates rise.

John Woolcock, the Inspector at the 2011 public inquiry into Veolia's appeal, wrote the following on pages 26 & 27 of his decision document in Jan 2012:

“Mr Ryan submitted a number of maps documenting mortality rates upwind and downwind of incinerators, and health statistics for localities near incinerators and power stations. However, no reliable inference can be drawn from this data. A whole host of possible confounding factors exist. These are other causes of the adverse health effect of interest, and they preclude any reasonable conclusions about likely cause and effect in the evidence adduced by Mr Ryan. Chief amongst these is socioeconomic status, for which there is much evidence as to its importance as a predictor of state of health. This is a very complex area which would require detailed epidemiological studies to provide any meaningful analysis of the Office of National Statistics data and other statistics submitted by Mr Ryan.”
(Appeal Decision APP/L3245/A/11/2146219)

Look carefully at what Mr Woolcock wrote about socioeconomic status and then look at how infant death rates changed for the worse after incinerators started. The Edmonton incinerator in North London started in 1971 and seven North London Boroughs were part-owners. SELCHP incinerator (which is currently operated by Veolia) started in 1993 with three South London Boroughs as shareholders.



The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the 1965-2010 infant mortality rates for all London Boroughs following my requests under Freedom of Information Act.

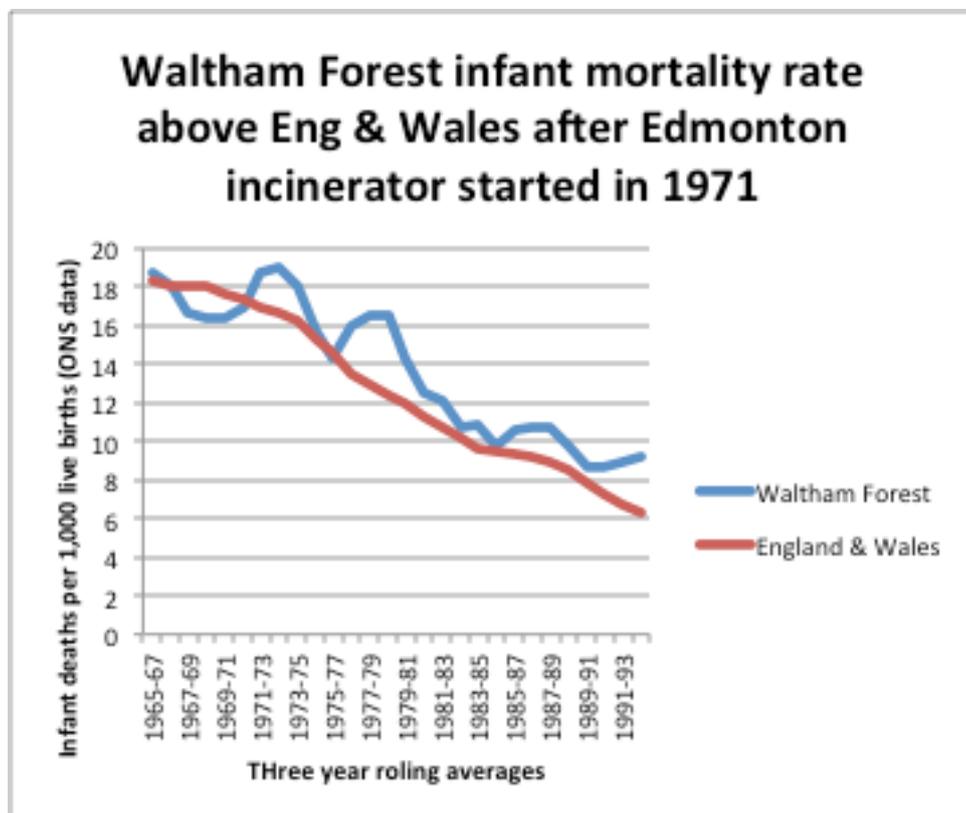
I don't have a colour printer, but the graph pasted above is good enough to show how the average infant mortality rate in England & Wales had matched that in Enfield by 1981; the Enfield rate having been 12.8% lower in 1965-67 (18.3 per 1,000 in Eng & Wales and 16.0 per 1,000 live births in Enfield).

The period shown in the above graph is very significant as it was when there was a rapid fall in infant death rates in Eng & Wales, which cannot be dissociated from the reduced air pollution after the switch to clean North Sea Gas (Tribune article by Mark Metcalf, 27 July 2014):
"At national level in England and Wales, infant mortality rates fell rapidly from the early 1970s and into the 1980s." (Geographical trends in infant mortality: England and Wales, 1970-2006. Health Stat Q. 2008 Winter;(40):18-29.)

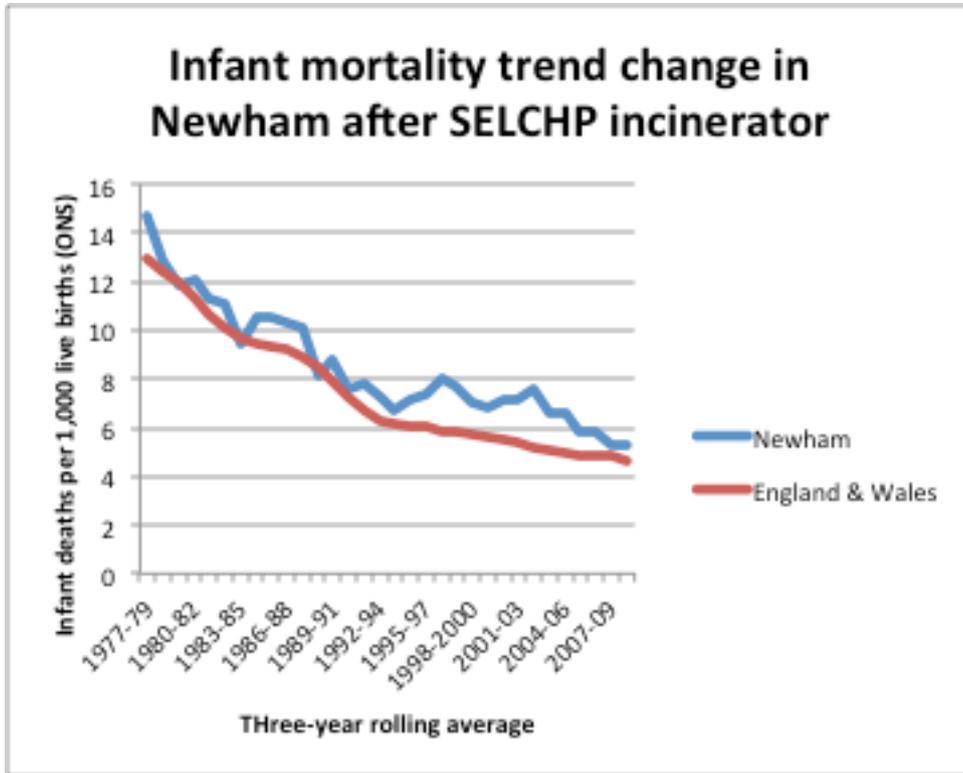
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19093637>

I've also pasted the graph of infant mortality rates in Waltham Forest, which is downwind of the Edmonton incinerator more often than western parts of Enfield Borough where the electoral wards have much lower infant death rates than those close to the incinerator.

The Waltham Forest infant mortality rate for the three years 1968-70 was 16.3 per 1,000 live births, which was 9.4% lower than the Eng & Wales rate of 18.0 per 1,000. For the three years 1972-74, the Waltham Forest rate of 19.0 per 1,000 live births was 13.8% higher than the Eng & Wales rate of 16.7 per 1,000. The 1978-80 rate in Waltham Forest (16.6 per 1,000) was 33.9% higher than the Eng & Wales' rate of 12.4 per 1,000 live births. These data suggest that those who were supposed to be protecting public health have failed in their duty of care. Seven Boroughs in North London had financial interests in the Edmonton incinerator and there was a very clear conflict of interest between protecting the health of citizens and the profits of the incinerator consortium.



When infant mortality data is presented in graphs, it's easy to see the error in the opinion that socio-economic status determines infant mortality rates as no consideration is given to the air pollution levels in areas where rich or poor people live. Kensington & Chelsea, which despite being a very wealthy Borough, had the highest 1965-67 infant mortality rate of all 32 London Boroughs during a time of toxic town gas and also exposure to emissions from power stations including Battersea. Wealth wasn't any guarantee of low infant death rates then and if "being poor" causes high infant death rates, then why did they suddenly rise after incinerators started and why did the rates drop so rapidly after North Sea Gas introduced?



Are our Members of Parliament bothered about incinerators? They should be.

Infant Mortality: Newham

Lyn Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the trends in infant mortality rates in Newham. [137790]

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130118/text/130118w0001.htm>

(Lyn Brown MP: Hansard, 18 January 2013, Column 945W)

Incinerators: Greater London

Lyn Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions he has had on the potential effects on human health in Newham of the operation of the South East London Combined Heat and Power incinerator. [137767]

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130122/text/130122w0001.htm>

(Lyn Brown MP, Hansard, 22 January 2013, Column 142W)

Incinerators: Health Hazards

Mr Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has (a) commissioned and (b) evaluated on any effects on infant mortality and morbidity arising from residence in the vicinity of an incinerator; and if he will make a statement. [61144]
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110622/text/110622w0002.htm#11062262000090>

(Andy Love MP: Hansard, 22 July 2011, Column 325W)