

Statistical bulletin

Quarterly suicide death registrations in England: 2001 to 2020 registrations and Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021 provisional data

Provisional rate and number of suicide deaths registered in England per quarter. Includes 2001 to 2020 registrations and provisional data for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021.

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1 . Main points

- Provisional analysis show there were 10.4 suicide deaths per 100,000 people in each of the first two quarters of 2021, equivalent to 1,274 registered deaths in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) and 1,287 registered deaths in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021.
- The age-standardised suicide rate in Quarter 2 2021 is statistically significantly higher than the rate in Quarter 2 2020 (7.0 deaths per 100,000); the latest Quarter 2 2021 rate has returned to previous levels following disruption to coroner's inquests in Quarter 2 2020 at the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Among males, there were 15.4 suicide deaths per 100,000 in Quarter 1 2021 and 15.5 suicide deaths per 100,000 in Quarter 2 2021; these rates are similar to those seen in Quarters 1 and 2 in years prior to the pandemic.
- The female suicide rates of 5.7 and 5.5 suicide deaths per 100,000 in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2021, respectively, are similar to the rates seen in these quarters pre-coronavirus.

If you are a journalist covering a suicide-related issue, please consider following the [Samaritans' media guidelines on the reporting of suicide](#) because of the potentially damaging consequences of irresponsible reporting. In particular, the guidelines advise on terminology and include links to sources of support for anyone affected by the themes in the article.

If you are struggling to cope, please call Samaritans for free on 116 123 (UK and the Republic of Ireland (ROI)) or contact other sources of support, such as those listed on the [NHS help for suicidal thoughts](#) webpage. Support is available round the clock, every single day of the year, providing a safe place for anyone struggling to cope, whoever they are, however they feel, whatever life has done to them.

2 . Quarterly suicides

Less than one in five of the suicides registered so far in 2021 had a date of death that was also in 2021.

The data reported in this release cannot be used to show the number of suicides with a date of death in 2021. See [deaths from suicide that occurred in England and Wales between April and July 2020](#) for further information on suicide during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Of the 2,561 suicides registered in England between January and June 2021, fewer than one in five had a date of death that was also in 2021 (451 deaths or 17.6%). This is in line with expectation considering the coroner involvement with the investigation of these deaths, and the amount of time it takes to hold an inquest.

All deaths caused by suicide in England are investigated by coroners. Given the length of time it takes to hold an inquest, most deaths are registered around five to six months after they occurred.

Looking at Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2021, 3.2% of the 1,274 suicides registered in this period had a date of death in the same period (41 deaths), with the remaining deaths (96.8%) occurring before 2021. This is in line with the figures seen in previous years.

For Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021, 2.7% of the 1,287 suicides registered in the period occurred in the same period (35 deaths), with the remaining deaths occurring in Quarter 1 2021 (29.1%) or earlier (68.1%).

Table 1: Quarterly registered number and percentage of suicides by date of occurrence, England, provisional 2021 registrations

Quarter of occurrence 2021

		Prior to 2021	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Total registered
Quarter of registration 2021	Q1	1,233 (96.8%)	41 (3.2%)	-	1,274
	Q2	877 (68.1%)	375 (29.1%)	35 (2.7%)	1,287
Occurred	Total	2,110	416	35	

Source: Office for National Statistics - Quarterly suicide death registrations in England

Notes

1. 2021 registration data are provisional.
2. The National Statistics definition of suicide is given in Section 5: Glossary.
3. Figures are for persons aged 10 years and over.
4. Figures for England exclude death of non-residents; geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.

The increase in registered suicides during the second quarter of 2021 reflects the resuming of coroner's inquests

The number and rate of registered deaths from suicide significantly increased in Quarter 2 2021 compared with the same quarter of 2020. This increase reflects the resuming of coroner's inquests, following disruption in Quarter 2 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, as opposed to a genuine increase in suicide. The suicide rate in the Quarter 2 2021 is similar to pre-coronavirus levels.

3 . Death registration delays

Registration delays continue to increase in the Quarters 1 and 2 of 2021 in England

Registration delays refer to the time between the date of death and its eventual registration after inquest. Median registration delays were 177 days in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar), and 189 days in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021. Both delays are higher than those recorded in England for the whole of 2020 (165 days), with the increase likely explained by disruption to inquests caused by the pandemic.

4 . Quarterly suicide data

[Deaths caused by suicide by quarter in England](#)

Dataset | Released 7 September 2021

Provisional rate and number of suicide deaths registered in England per quarter. Includes 2001 to 2020 registrations and provisional data for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021.

5 . Glossary

Suicide

This release is based on the National Statistics' definition of suicide: this includes all deaths from intentional self-harm for persons aged 10 years and over, and deaths where the intent was undetermined for those aged 15 years and over. For further information on the definition used, please see our [Suicides in England and Wales Statistical bulletins](#).

Year of registration

Figures are based on deaths registered in each calendar year, rather than the date on which the death occurs.

Registration delay

The registration delay refers to the time lag between the date of death (that is, when the death occurred) and the date the death was registered. For further information on the impact of registration delays, see Section 7 of the [Suicide rates in the UK Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

Age-standardised mortality rate

Age-standardised mortality rate in this bulletin refers to a weighted average of the age-specific mortality rates per 100,000 people, and is standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. They allow for differences in the age structure of populations and therefore allow valid comparisons to be made between geographic areas, the sexes and over time. For more information see Section 8 of the [Suicide rates in the UK Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

Statistical significance

The term "significant" refers to changes or differences based on unrounded figures. You can [find out more about statistical significance in our methodology](#). Significance has been determined using the 95%, where instances of non-overlapping [confidence intervals](#) between figures indicate the difference is unlikely to have arisen from random fluctuation. For more information see Section 8 of the [Suicide rates in the UK QMI](#).

6 . Measuring the data

Figures are for deaths registered, rather than deaths occurring in each quarter. For deaths caused by suicide, around half of the deaths registered each year will have occurred in the previous year or earlier, due to the length of time it takes to hold a coroner's inquest.

Further information on registration delays and their impact can be found in the [Suicide rates in the UK Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

Quarterly age-standardised rates

Calculation of mortality rates for quarterly deaths requires adjustments to be made to annual population estimates in order to calculate rates that are comparable with annual rates. Further information is detailed in the [accompanying datasets](#).

7 . Strengths and limitations

This release aims to monitor suicide death registrations in England, based on the best available provisional data.

Quarterly data for 2021 are provisional and may be subject to changes once annual death registrations are complete. Data for 2021 will be finalised in the annual [Suicides in the UK](#) release in 2022.

Quarterly age-standardised rates are included to aid interpretation, such as whether changes by quarter in a given registration year are statistically meaningful. This is especially important when interpreting low numbers of deaths, which are prone to random fluctuation and volatility over time.

Our [Suicide rates in the UK Quality and Methodology Information](#) contains further detail on strengths and limitations of suicide registration figures.

8 . Related links

[Suicides in England and Wales: 2020 registrations](#)

Bulletin | Released 7 September 2021

Registered deaths in England and Wales from suicide analysed by sex, age, area of usual residence of the deceased, and suicide method.