

Statistical bulletin

Quarterly suicide death registrations in England: 2001 to 2020 registrations and Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 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 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021.

Contact:
Alison Brookman, Emyr John &
Rabiya Nasir
health.data@ons.gov.uk
+44 1329 890154

Release date:
7 April 2022

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Quarterly suicides](#)
3. [Quarterly suicide data](#)
4. [Glossary](#)
5. [Measuring the data](#)
6. [Strengths and limitations](#)
7. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

- Provisional analysis shows there were 11.0 suicide deaths per 100,000 people in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021 in England, equivalent to 1,377 deaths registered; this rate is similar to rates seen in the fourth quarter of previous years.
- In Quarter 4 2021 death registrations, there were 16.3 suicide deaths per 100,000 males (1,005 deaths registered) and 5.9 suicide deaths per 100,000 females (372 deaths registered); these rates are similar to rates observed in the fourth quarter of previous years.
- In Quarter 4 2021, London had the lowest suicide rate of any region of England (7.3 deaths per 100,000), while the highest rate was in the South West with 14.7 deaths per 100,000.
- In 2021, 5,203 suicides were registered in England equivalent to a provisional rate of 10.5 suicide deaths per 100,000 people; while higher than the rate in 2020 (10.0 deaths per 100,000), the difference was not statistically significant and most likely reflects the resumption of coroner's inquests following the initial COVID-19 lockdown periods in 2020, as opposed to a genuine increase in suicide.

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) or contact other sources of support, such as those listed on the [NHS help for suicidal thoughts](#) webpage. Support is available around the clock, every day of the year, providing a safe place for you, whoever you are and however you are feeling.

2 . Quarterly suicides

Almost half of the suicides registered in 2021 had a date of death that was also in 2021

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

Of the 5,203 suicides registered in England in 2021, 44.4% of these had a date of death that was also in 2021 (2,310 deaths). This is in line with expectation, given 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%).

In Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2021, 3.3% of the 1,265 suicides registered in the period occurred in the same period (42 deaths), with the remaining deaths occurring in Quarter 1 2021 (28.9%), Quarter 2 2021 (32.1%) or earlier (35.7%).

For Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021, 2.7% of the 1,377 suicides registered in the period occurred in the same period (37 deaths), with the remaining deaths occurring in Quarter 1 2021 (15.0%), Quarter 2 2021 (31.4%), Quarter 3 2021 (26.9%) or earlier (24.0%).

Figure 1: Around 3% of suicide deaths that were registered in a quarter occurred in the same quarter in 2021. Quarterly registered number and percentage of suicides by date of occurrence, England, provisional 2021 registrations

		Quarter of occurrence					Total registered
		Prior to 2021	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Quarter of registration	Q1	1,233 (96.8%)	41 (3.2%)	-	-	-	1,274
	Q2	877 (68.1%)	375 (29.1%)	35 (2.7%)	-	-	1,287
	Q3	452 (35.7%)	365 (28.9%)	406 (32.1%)	42 (3.3%)	-	1,265
	Q4	331 (24.0%)	206 (15.0%)	432 (31.4%)	371 (26.9%)	37 (2.7%)	1,377
Occurred		2,893	987	873	413	37	

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 4: 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.

3 . Quarterly suicide data

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

Dataset | Released 7 April 2022

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 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021.

4 . Glossary

Suicide

This release is based on the National Statistics' definition of suicide. This definition includes all deaths from intentional self-harm for persons aged 10 years and over. It also includes 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 occurred.

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 our [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 our [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% confidence interval, 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 our [Suicide rates in the UK QMI](#).

5 . Measuring the data

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

Further information on registration delays and their impact can be found in our [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 to calculate rates that are comparable with annual rates. Further information is detailed in our [accompanying Deaths caused by suicide by quarter in England datasets](#).

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Suicide rates in the UK quality and methodology information](#).

6 . 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 our 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](#) (QMI) contains further detail on the strengths and limitations of suicide registration figures.

7 . 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.