

Statistical bulletin

# Suicides in England and Wales: 2022 registrations

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



Contact:  
Lauren Revie, Emyr John and  
David Mais  
health.data@ons.gov.uk  
+44 1633 456501

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# 1 . Main points

- In 2022, there were 5,642 suicides registered in England and Wales (10.7 deaths per 100,000 people); this is consistent with 2021 (5,583 deaths; 10.7 per 100,000).
- Around three-quarters of suicides registered in 2022 were males (4,179 deaths; 74.1%), equivalent to 16.4 deaths per 100,000.
- The rate for females was 5.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2022, consistent with rates between 2018 and 2021.
- Among females, the age-specific rate was highest in those aged 50 to 54 years (7.8 deaths per 100,000); in 2021 the highest rate was in those aged 45 to 49 (7.7 deaths per 100,000).
- Among males, the age-specific rate was highest in those aged 90 years or over (32.1 deaths per 100,000), followed by those aged 45 to 49 (23.0 deaths per 100,000).
- London had the lowest rate of any region in England (7.0 deaths per 100,000); the highest rate was in the North East (12.8 deaths per 100,000).
- In Wales, there were 12.5 deaths per 100,000 people in 2022, compared with 12.9 deaths per 100,000 people in 2021.

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 web page](#). Support is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, providing a safe place for you, whoever you are and however you are feeling.

For information on the UK government's ambitions and actions towards suicide prevention, see [GOV.UK's Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#).

For 2012 to 2021, revisions have been made to suicide rates because of rebasing of official population estimates (see Section 6: Strengths and limitations). As a result, historical estimates for this year are not directly comparable with previously published figures.

## 2 . Suicides in England and Wales

In 2022, 5,642 suicides were registered in England and Wales, equivalent to an age-standardised mortality rate (ASMR) of 10.7 deaths per 100,000 people. This rate remains the same as 2021 (Figure 1). Suicide rates decreased in 2020 and increased in 2021, likely because of both [decreases in male suicides at the start of the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) and delays in death registrations because of the pandemic.

Males continued to account for three-quarters of suicide deaths registered in 2022 (4,179 male deaths; 1,463 female deaths), a trend seen since the mid-1990s.

In 2022, the suicide rates for males (16.4 deaths per 100,000) and females (5.4 per 100,000) were consistent with rates between 2018 and 2021.

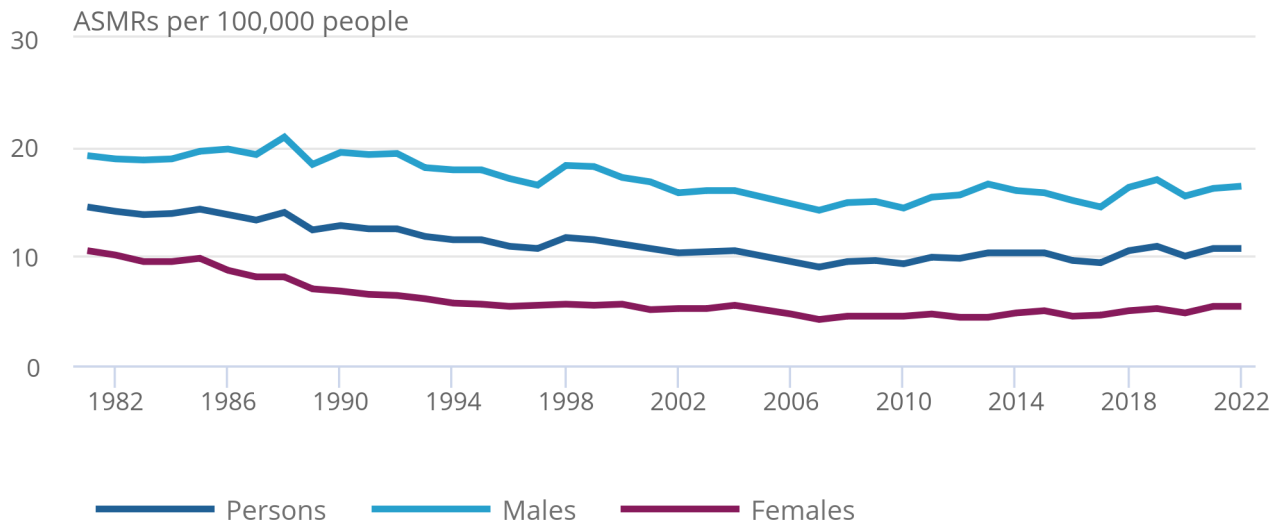
Suicide rates are based on the year of death registration. Because of registration delays, 41% of deaths registered in 2022 had a date of death in the same year, 50% occurred in 2021 and the remaining deaths occurred in 2020 or earlier.

## Figure 1: Suicide rates registered in 2022 remain consistent with 2021, 2019 and 2018

Age-standardised suicide rates by sex, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022

### Figure 1: Suicide rates registered in 2022 remain consistent with 2021, 2019 and 2018

Age-standardised suicide rates by sex, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022



Source: Suicides in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. The National Statistics definition of suicide is given in Section 8: Glossary.
2. Figures are for persons aged 10 years and over.
3. Includes deaths of non-residents.
4. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year. Because of the time taken to complete an inquest, it can take months or even years for a suicide to be registered. More details are available in Section 6: Registration Delays.
5. Rates have been re-calculated from 2012 onwards because of revised ONS population estimates.

## 3 . Suicides by country and region

In 2022, the age-standardised mortality rate in England was 10.5 deaths per 100,000 people (5,284 deaths), similar to the rates in 2021 and 2019 to 2018.

In Wales, there were 12.5 deaths per 100,000 people in 2022 (339 deaths), statistically similar to 2021 (12.9 deaths per 100,000 people). However, the proportion of deaths in Wales that both occurred and were registered in 2022 is lower than expected compared with previous years because of continued increases in registration delays.

Median delay for deaths registered in Wales in 2022 was almost double the delay in 2019. Delays in England also increased in 2022. For further details, see [Section 6: Registration delays](#).

By English region, the North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, and the South West regions had higher rates compared with the overall England and Wales rate. The highest rate was in the North East (12.8 deaths per 100,000 people), although this decreased compared with 2021 (14.2 deaths per 100,000 people). The lowest rate in 2022 was in London (7.0 deaths per 100,000 people), which was statistically lower than any English region (Figure 2).

### Figure 2: The North East had the highest suicide rate registered in 2022, as in previous years

Age-standardised suicide rates for English regions and Wales, deaths registered in 2022

#### Notes:

1. Figures are for persons usually resident in each area, based on postcode boundaries as of August 2023.
2. See Figure 1 for other relevant notes.

## 4 . Suicide patterns by age

In five-year age groups, those aged 50 to 54 years had the highest suicide rate in 2022 (15.2 deaths per 100,000); consistent with 2021 (14.9 deaths per 100,000).

Females aged 50 to 54 years also had the highest rate in 2022 (7.8 per 100,000).

Males aged 90 years or over had the highest rate in 2022 (32.1 per 100,000; 58 deaths). While this is an increase compared with 2021 (17.7 deaths per 100,000; 31 deaths), it is not statistically significant because of wide confidence intervals and low number of deaths. Men aged 45 to 49 years had the second highest rate (23.0 deaths per 100,000).

In 2022, rates among younger people have levelled off, except for females aged 20 to 24 years (Figure 3).

### Figure 3: The highest suicide rates registered in 2022 were seen among persons aged 50 to 54 years

Age-specific suicide rates by five-year age groups, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022

#### Notes:

1. Age-specific suicide rate per 100,000 population.
2. Unreliable rates, with fewer than twenty deaths, are excluded.
3. See Figure 1 for other relevant notes.

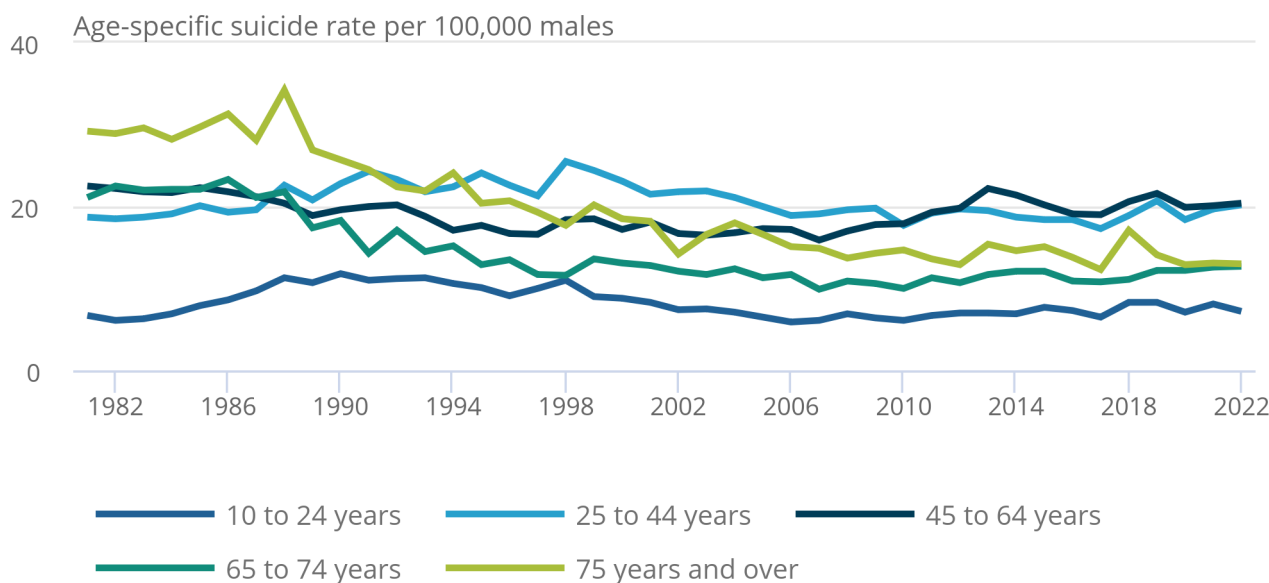
Males aged 10 to 24 years have had the lowest rate of all broad age groups since 1981 (7.2 deaths per 100,000 in 2022), and males aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest rate since 2010 (20.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2022).

**Figure 4: Men aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest rates of suicide for broad age groups since 2010**

Age-specific suicide rates by broad age groups, males, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022

Figure 4: Men aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest rates of suicide for broad age groups since 2010

Age-specific suicide rates by broad age groups, males, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022



Source: Suicides in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Age-specific suicide rate per 100,000 males.
2. See Figure 1 for other relevant notes.

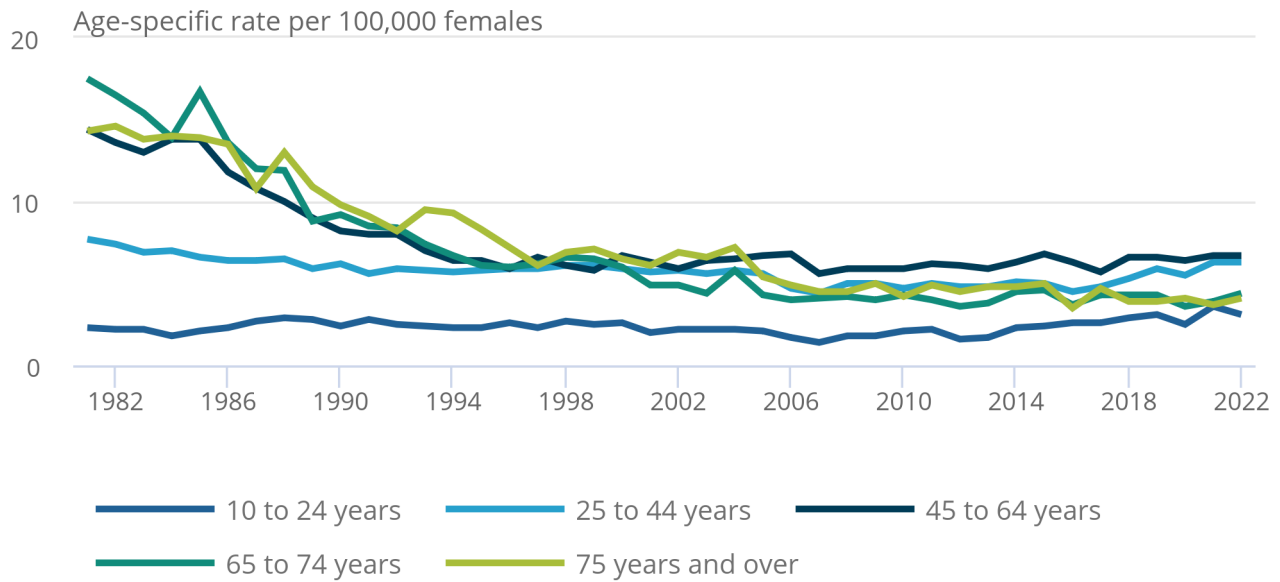
Females aged 10 to 24 years had the lowest rate of all groups (3.1 deaths per 100,000), which decreased compared with 2021 (3.6 deaths per 100,000), although there has been an upward trend in this age group since 2012 (Figure 5). Females aged 45 to 64 years had the highest rate of all groups (6.7 deaths per 100,000 females).

**Figure 5: Suicide rates among females aged over 24 years either increased or remained consistent in 2022**

Age-specific suicide rates by broad age groups, females, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022

**Figure 5: Suicide rates among females aged over 24 years either increased or remained consistent in 2022**

Age-specific suicide rates by broad age groups, females, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2022



Source: Suicides in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Age-specific suicide rate per 100,000 females.
2. See Figure 1 for other relevant notes.



## 5 . Suicide methods

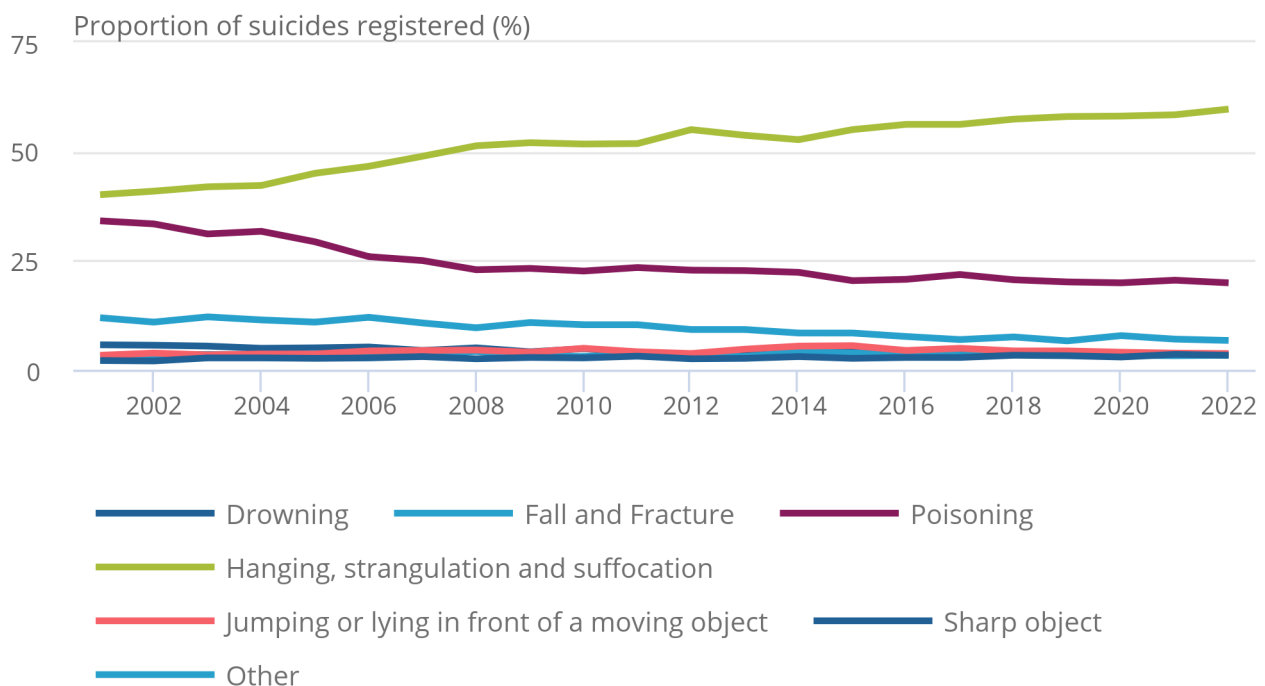
The most common method of suicide in England and Wales continued to be hanging, strangulation and suffocation, which accounted for 59.7% of all suicides in 2022 (3,367 deaths). The second most common method continued to be poisoning (19.9% of all suicides in 2022; 1,123 deaths).

**Figure 6: The proportion of suicides caused by hanging has increased over time**

Proportion of suicides by method, England and Wales, registered between 2001 and 2022

Figure 6: The proportion of suicides caused by hanging has increased over time

Proportion of suicides by method, England and Wales, registered between 2001 and 2022



Source: Suicides in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The "Other" category includes methods of suicide such as firearm, smoke, fire and flames, and unspecified events.
2. For more information regarding definitions, see the "Notes" worksheet in our [Suicides in England and Wales dataset](#).
3. See Figure 1 for other relevant notes.

## 6 . Registration delays

In England and Wales, all deaths by suicide are certified by a coroner and cannot be registered until an inquest is completed. This results in a delay between the date the death occurred and the date of registration.

For suicides, the median registration delay for deaths registered in 2022 in England was 195 days (180 days in 2021) and 309 days for Wales (291 days in 2021). This is the longest delay since 2001 and is likely explained by the continuing disruption to inquests caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

For estimates of suicides prior to inquest in England, see the [Office for Health Improvements and Disparities' Near to real-time suspected suicide surveillance \(nRTSSS\) for England](#).

## 7 . Suicides in England and Wales data

### [Suicides in England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Number of suicides and suicide rates, by sex and age, in England and Wales, registered from 1981 to 2022. Information on conclusion type is provided, along with the proportion of suicides by method and the median registration delay.

### [Suicides in England and Wales by local authority](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Number of suicides, suicide rates and median registration delays, by local authority in England and Wales, registered from 2001 to 2022.

### [Suicide occurrences, England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Number of suicides and suicide rates, by sex and age, for England and Wales occurring from 1981 to 2021.

## 8 . 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 caused by injury or poisoning where the intent was undetermined for those aged 15 years and over. For further information on the definition, see our [Suicide rates in the UK Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#).

### Registration delay

Figures are based on deaths registered in each calendar year, rather than the date on which the death occurs. The difference between these dates is known as the registration delay.

### Age-specific mortality rate

Age-specific mortality rate is the total number of deaths per 100,000 people of an age group, used to allow comparisons between specified age groups.

## Age-standardised mortality rate

Age-standardised mortality rate (ASMR) in this bulletin refers to a weighted average of the age-specific mortality rates per 100,000 people, and standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. Age-standardised mortality rates allow for differences in the age structure of populations and therefore allow valid comparisons to be made between geographic areas, between the sexes, and over time.

## 9 . Measuring the data

Mortality statistics are derived from information provided when deaths are certified and registered. These statistics are compliant with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and are designated as National Statistics.

Further quality and methodology information is available in our [Mortality statistics in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#), our [Suicide rates in the UK QMI](#) and our [User guide to mortality statistics](#).

### Populations

Mortality rates are calculated using the number of deaths and [mid-year population estimates](#). Because of the [rebasement of historical mid-year estimates between 2012 and 2021](#), mortality rates for 2012 to 2021 have been revised for this publication.

### Comparing with other statistics

Scotland and Northern Ireland each produce their own suicide statistics in [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) and the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)](#), respectively, and are comparable with those in this bulletin. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities provide data, via their [Suicide Prevention Profiles](#), on a wide range of indicators related to suicide, including mortality and years of life lost.

Monitoring suicide rates is a requirement under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The statistics in this bulletin will be used to monitor progress towards these goals. UK data on the SDG indicators can be explored on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

### User-requested data

Extracts of suicide data for England and Wales are available to order for a charge (subject to legal frameworks, disclosure control, resources, and agreement of costs). To make an enquiry, please email [health.data@ons.gov.uk](mailto:health.data@ons.gov.uk).

## 10 . Strengths and limitations

### Strengths

Age-standardised rates allow for differences in age structure of populations and therefore allow valid comparisons to be made between the sexes and geographies.

Reliable age-standardised rates can be calculated for groups that have at least 20 deaths. In our [accompanying suicide rate datasets](#), rates have been marked as unreliable where there are fewer than 20 deaths, and are not produced for age groups with fewer than three deaths.

Suicide deaths are compiled using information supplied when a death is registered, which gives complete population coverage. The release uses the National Statistics definition of suicide.

## Limitations

### Registration delays

In England and Wales, when someone dies unexpectedly, a coroner investigates to establish the cause of death; this can take years in some cases. The length of time it takes to hold an inquest creates a delay between the date of death and the registration. For deaths caused by suicide, this means that around half of the deaths registered each year will have occurred in the previous year or earlier.

### Change in the standard of proof used by coroners

In July 2018, [the standard of proof used to determine whether a death was caused by suicide was lowered](#) to the "civil standard"; balance of probabilities. Previously a "criminal standard" was applied; beyond all reasonable doubt.

### Rebasing of official population estimates

For 2012 to 2021, revisions have been made to suicide rates because of [rebasing of official population estimates](#). As a result, historical estimates for this year are not directly comparable with previously published figures.

## 11 . Related links

### [Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2022 registrations](#)

Bulletin | Released 19 December 2023

Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales from 1993 to 2022, by cause of death, sex, age and substances involved in the death.

### [Drug-related deaths and suicide in prison custody in England and Wales: 2008 to 2019](#)

Article | Released 26 January 2023

The risk of suicide and drug-related deaths among prisoners, based on confidential matching of data from HM Prison and Probation Service and Office for National Statistics mortality records.

### [Estimating suicide among higher education students, England and Wales](#)

Article | Released 31 May 2022

An article created using mortality data linked to Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data to estimate suicides among higher education students by sex, age and ethnicity.

### [Official suicide statistics for Scotland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

Official suicide statistics for Scotland, provided by National Records of Scotland (NRS).

### [Official suicide statistics for Northern Ireland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

Official suicide statistics for Northern Ireland, provided by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

## 12 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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