

Statistical bulletin

Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK: registered in 2022

Deaths caused by diseases known to be a direct consequence of alcohol, by age, sex, and region.



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1 . Main points

- In 2022, there were 10,048 deaths (16.6 per 100,000 people) from alcohol-specific causes registered in the UK, the highest number on record.
- The number recorded in 2022 was 4.2% higher than in 2021 (9,641 deaths; 14.9 per 100,000) and 32.8% higher than in 2019 (7,565 deaths; 11.8 per 100,000), the last pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year.
- Between 2012 and 2019, rates of alcohol-specific deaths in the UK had remained stable, with no statistically significant changes in the age-standardised rate.
- Consistent with previous years, the rate of alcohol-specific deaths for males in 2022 remained around double the rate for females (22.3 and 11.1 deaths per 100,000 people, respectively).
- Scotland and Northern Ireland had the highest rates of alcohol-specific deaths in 2022 (22.6 and 19.5 deaths per 100,000 people, respectively).
- Comparing with 2019, there have been statistically significant increases in the alcohol-specific death rate in England, Wales, and Scotland.
- The North East had the highest rate of alcohol-specific deaths of any English region in 2022 (21.8 deaths per 100,000); the East of England had the lowest rate (11.0 deaths per 100,000).

If you are struggling with alcohol, please consider visiting [Get help now](#) on the Alcohol Change UK website or contact other sources of support, such as those listed on the [NHS alcohol support web page](#). Help is available if you are concerned for yourself or on behalf of a family member or friend.

Alcohol-specific deaths only include those health conditions where each death is a direct consequence of alcohol (that is, wholly attributable causes such as alcoholic liver disease). It does not include all deaths that can be attributed to alcohol. See the [Glossary](#) for more information.

2 . Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK data

[Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 22 April 2024)

Annual data on age-standardised and age-specific alcohol-specific death rates in the UK, its constituent countries and regions of England.

[Alcohol-specific deaths in England and Wales by local authority](#)

Dataset | Released 22 April 2024

Annual data on number of deaths, age-standardised death rates and median registration delays for local authorities in England and Wales.

3 . Glossary

Alcohol-specific death

This bulletin uses the National Statistics definition of alcohol-specific deaths; it includes those health conditions where each death is a direct consequence of alcohol misuse (that is, wholly attributable deaths). This is explored in greater detail in [Section 8: Concepts and definitions of our QMI](#).

Figures are based on deaths registered in each calendar year, rather than the date on which the death occurs. On a national level, trends are broadly similar, whether the data are analysed by year of occurrence or year of registration. Registration delays can have greater influence on smaller geographical areas.

Alcohol-attributable death

Alcohol-attributable deaths, also known as alcohol-related deaths, include deaths from any cause that can be attributed to alcohol. This includes alcohol-specific causes (those that can only be caused by alcohol), such as alcoholic liver disease. Also included are those that are made more likely by alcohol, but also occur in people who do not drink, such as heart disease or various types of cancer.

Age-specific mortality rates

Age-specific mortality rates are used to allow comparisons between specified age groups.

Age-standardised mortality rates

Age-standardised mortality rates allow for differences in the age structure of populations, and therefore allow valid comparisons to be made between geographical areas, the sexes, and over time. In this bulletin, age-standardised mortality rates are presented per 100,000 people and standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population.

Statistical significance

The term "significant" refers to statistically significant changes or differences based on unrounded figures. Significance has been determined using the 95% confidence intervals, where instances of non-overlapping confidence intervals between figures indicate the difference is unlikely to have arisen from random fluctuation (or chance).

4 . Measuring the data

Quality and methodology

Statistics on mortality are derived from the information provided when deaths are certified and registered. These statistics are assessed to be fully compliant with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#), and are therefore designated as [Accredited Official Statistics](#). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) holds mortality data for England and Wales. Figures for the UK include data provided by [National Records of Scotland](#) and the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#).

Numerous changes were made to death certification and registration under the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#). We have previously explored the [impact on the quality of death registration data](#) in England and Wales. Further information about the methods and quality of these statistics can be found in our [Mortality statistics in England and Wales QMI](#) and our [User guide to mortality statistics](#).

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK QMI](#) report.

Registration delay

Figures are for deaths registered, rather than deaths occurring in each calendar year.

The amount of time it takes to complete an inquest creates what is known as a "registration delay", which is a lag between the date of death and the date of death registration. For alcohol-specific deaths registered in 2022, the average (median) time between death occurrence and registration was nine days in England and seven days in Wales.

Populations

Mortality rates are calculated using the number of deaths and [mid-year population estimates](#) provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Population Estimates Unit. Population estimates are based on the decennial UK census estimates and use information on births, deaths, and migration to estimate the mid-year population in non-census years.

5 . Strengths and limitations

Strengths

- Consistent methodology across the UK allows for robust and comparable estimates of trends in alcohol mortality to be made.
- The precision of the alcohol-specific definition reduces the uncertainty that arises when estimating the total number of alcohol-attributable deaths.
- Using the alcohol-specific definition, figures can be produced regularly and reliably from routinely collected data.

Limitations

- The alcohol-specific definition underestimates the true extent of alcohol-attributable mortality; for further information, please see [Section 3: Glossary](#).
- The largely chronic nature of the conditions defined as wholly attributable to alcohol mean that there may be a delay between changes in alcohol consumption and behaviour and the resulting change in the number of alcohol-specific deaths.

6 . Related links

[Alcohol-specific deaths, Scotland](#)

Bulletin | Released 29 August 2023

National Records of Scotland (NRS) statistics on the most recent official death registration data available on alcohol-specific mortality across Scotland.

[Alcohol-specific deaths, Northern Ireland](#)

Bulletin | Released 14 February 2024

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) statistics on the most recent official death registration data available on alcohol-specific mortality across Northern Ireland.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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