

Statistical bulletin

Quarterly suicide death registrations in England: 2001 to 2021 registrations and Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2022 provisional data

Provisional rate and number of suicide deaths registered in England per quarter. Includes 2001 to 2021 registrations and provisional data for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2022.

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1 . Main points

- There were 1,376 deaths registered in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2022 in England, equivalent to a provisional rate of 10.9 suicide deaths per 100,000 people; this rate is similar to the rate in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 and to those in Quarter 4 of previous years.
- In 2022, 5,275 suicides were registered in England, equivalent to a provisional rate of 10.6 suicide deaths per 100,000 people; this rate was similar to 2021 but statistically significantly higher than 2020; however, 2020 saw a decrease in suicide rates because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the coroner's inquests, and a decrease in male suicides at the start of the pandemic.
- In the provisional Quarter 4 2022 data, there were 16.8 suicide deaths per 100,000 males (1,036 deaths registered) and 5.3 suicide deaths per 100,000 females (340 deaths registered).
- In Quarter 4 2022, London had the lowest suicide rate of any region of England (7.1 suicide deaths per 100,000), while the highest rate was in the South West (14.0 suicide deaths per 100,000).
- For suicides, the median registration delay increased from 185 days in Quarter 4 2021 to 196 days in Quarter 4 2022.
- As the final part of our analysis looking at suicide occurrences in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, we have also examined suicide occurrences up to 2021, which is included in [Section 3: Deaths from suicide that occurred in England and Wales: 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 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 suicide death registrations in England

4 in 10 suicides registered in 2022 had a date of death that was also in 2022

Of the 5,275 suicides registered in England in 2022, 42.0% of these had a date of death that was also in 2022 (2,213 deaths). This is in line with expectations, given coroner involvement with the investigation of these deaths, and the amount of time it takes to hold an inquest. In Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2022, the median registration delay in England was 196 days.

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 six to seven months after they occurred.

In Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2022, 3.8% of the 1,314 suicides registered had a date of death in the same period (50 deaths). The remaining deaths occurred in 2021 or earlier (96.2%).

In Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022, 2.7% of the 1,201 suicides registered had a date of death in the same period (33 deaths). The remaining deaths occurred in Quarter 1 2022 (24.5%) or earlier (72.8%).

In Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, 2.6% of the 1,384 suicides registered had a date of death in the same period (36 deaths). The remaining deaths occurred in Quarter 1 2022 (34.3%), Quarter 2 2022 (22.0%) or earlier (41.0%).

In Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2022, 2.0% of the 1,376 suicides registered had a date of death in the same period (28 deaths). The remaining deaths registered in Quarter 4 2022 occurred in Quarter 1 2022 (16.1%), Quarter 2 2022 (32.5%), Quarter 3 2022 (23.5%) or earlier (25.9%).

Table 1: Quarterly registered number and percentage of suicides by date of occurrence, England, provisional 2022 registrations

Quarter of occurrence		Prior to 2022	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total registered
Quarter of registration	Q1	1,264 (96.2%)	50 (3.8%)	-	-	-	1,314
	Q2	874 (72.8%)	294 (24.5%)	33 (2.7%)	-	-	1,201
	Q3	568 (41.0%)	475 (34.3%)	305 (22.0%)	36 (2.6%)	-	1,384
	Q4	356 (25.9%)	221 (16.1%)	447 (32.5%)	324 (23.5%)	28 (2.0%)	1,376
Occurred	Total	3,062	1,040	785	360	28	5,275

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

Notes

1. 2022 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 deaths of non-residents; geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.

3 . Deaths from suicide that occurred in England and Wales: 2021

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have previously published articles on [Deaths from suicide that occurred in England and Wales in 2020](#), which are based on date of death occurrence, rather than date of registration. Here, we provide a final update to this analysis for 2021 suicide occurrences.

This section is based on the date the death occurred. Because of late death registration, figures are subject to change and should be interpreted with caution.

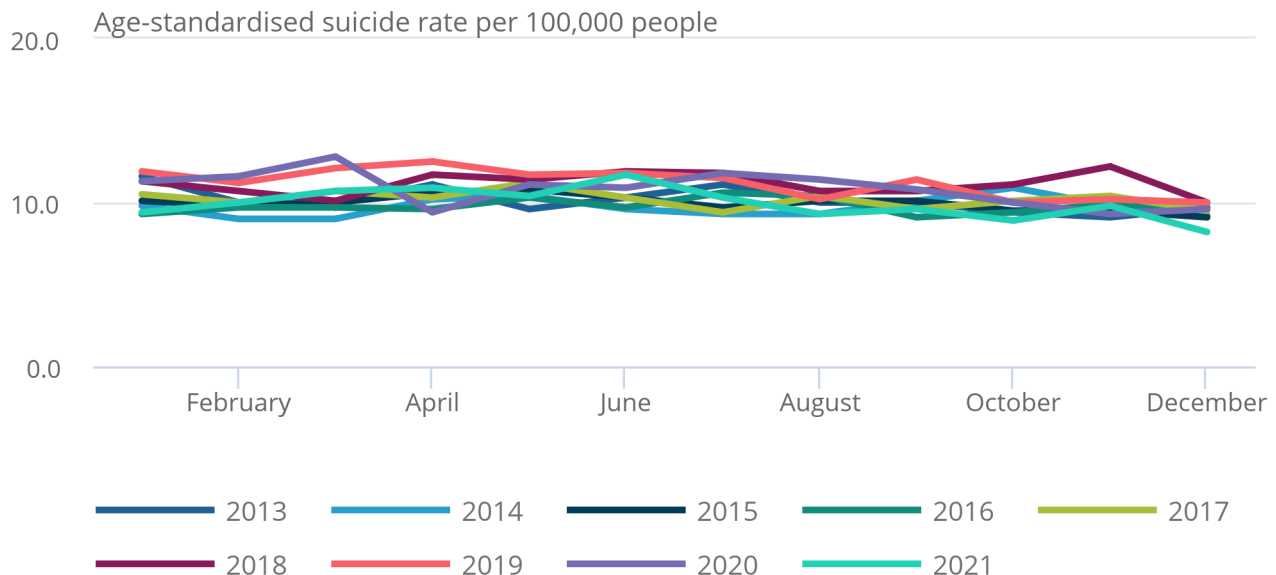
In England and Wales, there were 5,199 suicides with a date of death in 2021, equivalent to a rate of 9.9 deaths per 100,000 people. This was statistically significantly lower than each rate between 2018 and 2020. Rates of suicide occurrences in January and December 2021 were lower than rates in preceding years (2020 to 2017). This coincides with the strictest lockdown periods of 2021 in England and Wales, according to the [Timeline of UK government coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions from the Institute for Government](#).

Figure 1: There is no evidence that the number of suicides has increased since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Age-standardised suicide rates by year and month of occurrence, England and Wales, deaths occurring between 2013 and 2021

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Age-standardised suicide rates by year and month of occurrence, England and Wales, deaths occurring between 2013 and 2021



Source: Quarterly suicide death registrations in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures are for deaths occurring, rather than deaths registered in each calendar year.
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 deaths of non-residents; geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.
5. Age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) per 100,000 population, standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. ASMRs allow comparison between populations which may contain different proportions of people of different ages.

Rates of suicide occurrences for both males and females were lower during the lockdown period in January and omicron period in December in 2021 than in all preceding years (2020 to 2017). Rates for males were also lower than all preceding years between August and October, which coincided with the lifting of lockdown restrictions and the end of the furlough period.

Suicide occurrence rates were the highest in those aged 40 to 49 years throughout 2021, except for age group 50 to 59 years in which rates were highest during March and April, and those aged 30 to 39 years in which rates were highest during July. Ages 10 to 19 years had the lowest rates throughout the year of 2021.

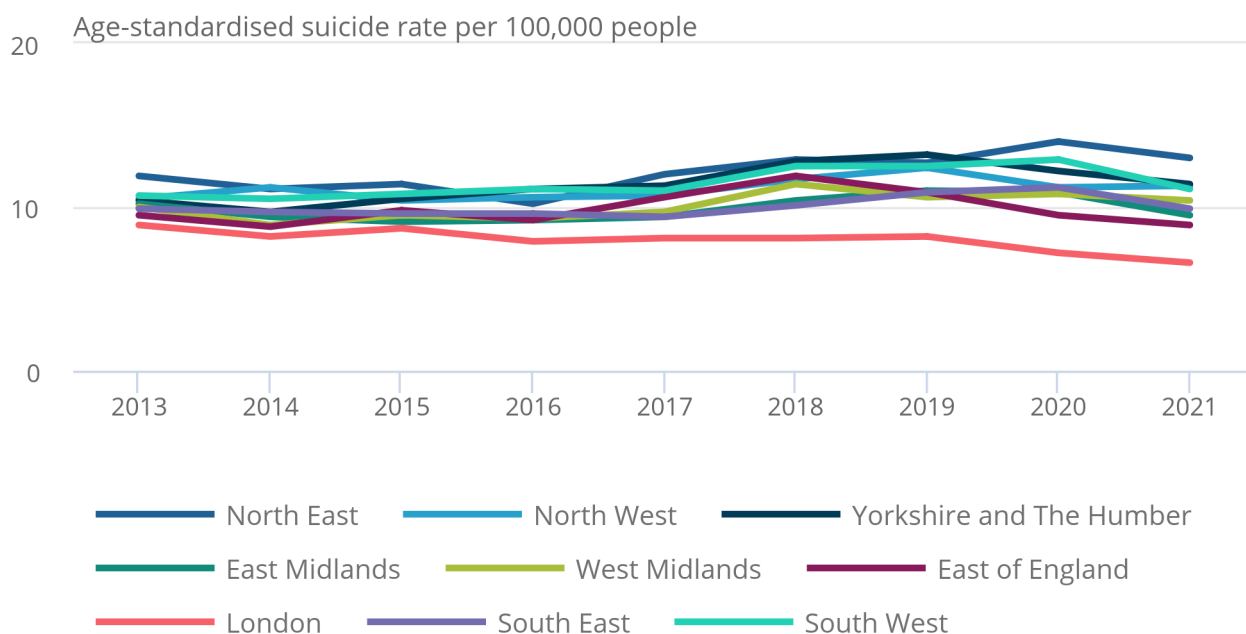
Rates of suicide occurrences in London were the lowest of any English region, while the North East had the highest rates in 2021. While this is consistent with [suicide registration rates in 2021 and previous years](#), the disparity between highest and lowest rate increased in 2021. For further information, see our [accompanying occurrences dataset](#).

Figure 2: Suicide trends differ by region of England

Age-standardised suicide rates by year and region, England, deaths occurring between 2013 and 2021

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

Notes:

1. Figures are for deaths occurring, rather than deaths registered in each calendar year.
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 regions of England exclude deaths of non-residents; geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.
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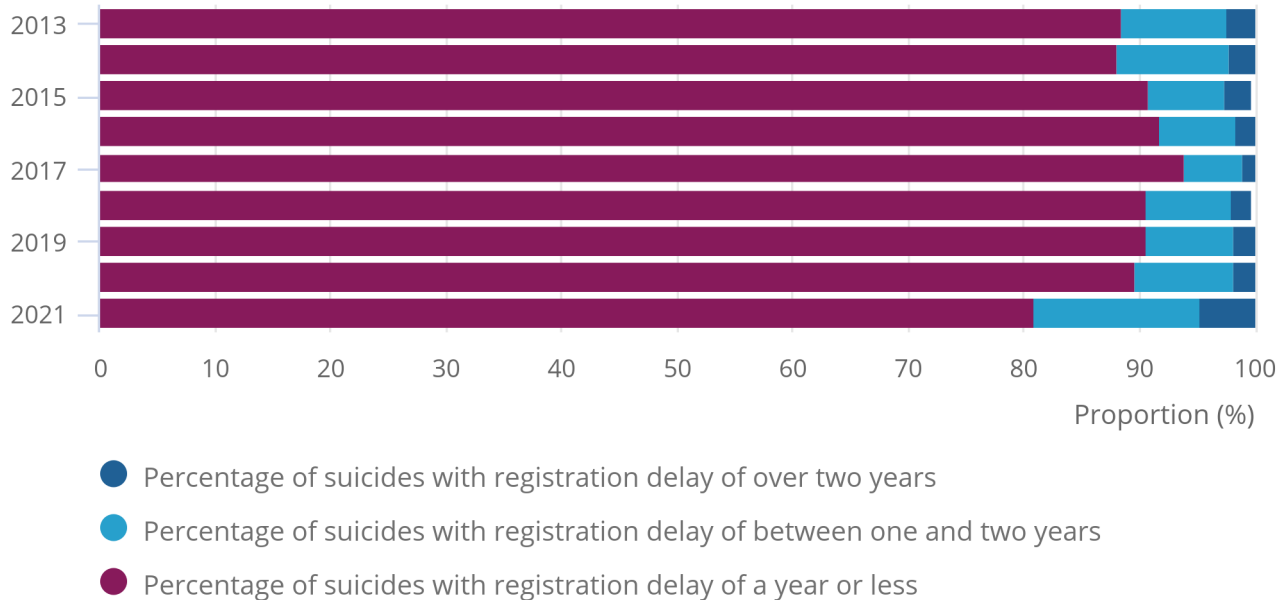
In pre-coronavirus pandemic years, approximately 90.0% of suicides were registered within a year of death. In 2021, this figure decreased to 81.0%.

Figure 3: The proportion of suicides taking over a year to be registered increased in 2021

Proportion of suicides by length of registration delay, England and Wales, deaths registered between 2013 and 2021

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Proportion of suicides by length of registration delay, England and Wales, deaths registered between 2013 and 2021



Source: Quarterly suicide death registrations in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures are based on date of death registration.
2. The National Statistics definition of suicide is given in [Section 5: Glossary](#).
3. Figures are for persons aged 10 years and over.

4 . Quarterly suicide data and suicide occurrence data

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

Dataset | Released 5 April 2023

Provisional rate and number of suicide deaths registered in England per quarter. Includes 2001 to 2021 registrations and provisional data for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2022.

[Deaths from suicide that occurred in England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 5 April 2023

Number of suicides and suicide rates broken down by sex, age, month, and method in England and Wales, that occurred between 2013 and 2021.

5 . 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](#).

Registration delay

In England and Wales, all deaths caused by suicide are certified by a coroner following an inquest and cannot be registered until the inquest is completed. This process can take months, and in some cases, years. 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 \(QMI\) report](#).

Age-specific mortality rate

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 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 QMI report](#).

Statistical significance

The term "significant" refers to changes or differences based on unrounded figures. You can find out more about statistical significance in our [Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys methodology](#). Significance has been determined using a 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 report](#).

6 . Measuring the data

Data source

Statistics on mortality come from the information provided when deaths are certified and registered.

The release uses the National Statistics definition of suicide, which is consistently used by government departments, agencies, and the devolved administrations across the UK.

For deaths caused by suicide, around half of the deaths 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 QMI report](#).

Quarterly 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](#).

Monthly rates

To calculate monthly mortality rates that are comparable with annual rates, adjustments must be made to annual population estimates to account for the time period covered. Find more detail on how this is calculated in [Section 2 of our Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology article](#).

Quality

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our:

- [Mortality statistics in England and Wales QMI report](#)
- [Suicide rates in the UK QMI report](#)
- [User guide to mortality statistics](#)

7 . Strengths and limitations

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

Strengths

- Quarterly and monthly age-standardised mortality rates allow for differences in the age structure of populations and therefore allow valid comparisons to be made over time and between geographic areas and sexes.
- Rates are included to aid interpretation, such as whether changes are statistically meaningful; this is especially important when interpreting low numbers of deaths, which are prone to random fluctuation and volatility over time.
- We only refer to groupings that have at least 20 deaths; for these, reliable age-standardised rates can be calculated, reducing the likelihood of the findings being a result of chance, rates have been marked as unreliable where there are fewer than 20 deaths in our [accompanying datasets](#).
- Suicide deaths are compiled using information supplied when a death is registered, which gives complete population coverage.

Limitations

- Quarterly registrations data for 2022 are provisional and may be subject to changes once annual death registrations are complete; data for 2022 will be finalised in the annual [Suicides in England and Wales bulletin](#) in autumn 2023.
- Provisional death occurrences data are used for 2021 in this article, so they are subject to change; this enables timely analysis to be completed to monitor trends.
- Because of registration delays, death occurrence data are always somewhat incomplete.

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

8 . Related links

[Suicides in England and Wales: 2021 registrations](#)

Bulletin | Released 6 September 2022

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

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 5 April 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Quarterly suicide death registrations in England: 2001 to 2021 registrations and Quarter 1 \(Jan to Mar\) to Quarter 4 \(Oct to Dec\) 2022 provisional data](#)