

Statistical bulletin

# Suicides in England and Wales: 2023 registrations

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

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## Notice

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Following the [Health and Social Care Statistical Outputs consultation](#) commissioned by the [Health and Social Care Statistics Leadership Forum](#), we are improving some of our statistical products, so they are more coherent and efficient. Additionally, we are ensuring that our resources are deployed in producing statistics for maximum possible benefit.

Full details of changes to this product, and our other health and social care products, are available in the [Health and Social Care Statistical Outputs Consultation Response](#). We welcome user feedback on our releases. Please use the contact details on individual publication web pages to share feedback.

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# 1 . Main points

- There were 6,069 suicides registered in England and Wales (11.4 deaths per 100,000 people) in 2023; this is an increase compared with 2022 (10.7 deaths per 100,000, or 5,642 deaths) and the highest rate seen since 1999.
- The suicide rate for males in England and Wales increased to 17.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2023, from 16.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2022; this is the highest rate for males since 1999.
- The suicide rate for females in England and Wales increased to 5.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2023, from 5.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2022; this is the highest rate for females since 1994.
- The age-specific suicide rate was highest for males aged 45 to 49 years (25.5 deaths per 100,000), and for females aged 50 to 54 years (9.2 deaths per 100,000).
- In 2023, suicide rates in Wales (14.0 deaths per 100,000) were higher than in England (11.2 deaths per 100,000), although rates increased from 2022 in both England (10.5 deaths per 100,000) and Wales (12.5 deaths per 100,000).
- London had the lowest rate of any region in England (7.3 deaths per 100,000); the highest rate was in the North West (14.7 deaths per 100,000).

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 bulletin.

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](#).

Suicide rates are based on the year of death registration. Because of registration delays, 39% of deaths registered in 2023 had a date of death in the same year, 51% occurred in 2022 and the remaining deaths occurred in 2021 or earlier.

## 2 . Suicides in England and Wales

In 2023, 6,069 suicides were registered in England and Wales, equivalent to an age-standardised mortality rate (ASMR) of 11.4 deaths per 100,000 people. This was an increase of 7.6% in the number of suicides since 2022 (427 deaths).

Males continued to account for around three-quarters of suicide deaths registered in 2023 (4,506 male deaths; 1,563 female deaths), a trend seen since the mid-1990s.

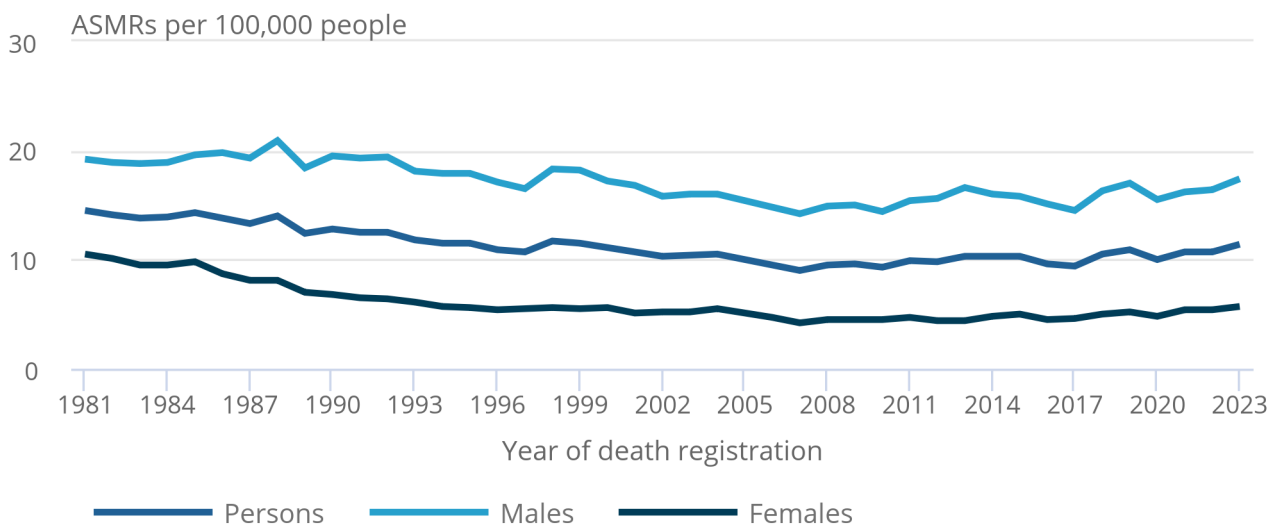
In 2023, suicide rates for males (17.4 deaths per 100,000) and females (5.7 per 100,000) increased to their highest levels since 1999 and 1994, respectively.

### Figure 1: Suicide rates registered in 2023 increased

Age-standardised suicide rates by sex, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2023

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Age-standardised suicide rates by sex, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2023



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

#### Notes:

1. The accredited official statistics definition of suicide is available 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 years for a suicide to be registered. More details are available in [Section 6: Registration delays](#).

### 3 . Suicides by country and region

In 2023, the age-standardised mortality rate in England was 11.2 deaths per 100,000 people (5,656 deaths), an increase compared with 2022, where the rate was 10.5 deaths per 100,000 people (5,284 deaths). In Wales, there were 14.0 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023 (386 deaths), an increase compared with 2022, where the rate was 12.5 deaths per 100,000 people (339 deaths).

In England, the highest rate was in the North West (14.7 deaths per 100,000 people). The lowest rate in 2023 was in London (7.3 deaths per 100,000 people), visibly lower than any other English region (Figure 2).

When comparing 2022 and 2023 registrations, the number of suicides increased 17.9% in the North West, 15.1% in the North East and 14.9% in the East of England. Rates increased or remained the same in each of the nine English regions. The biggest increase was in the North West (12.5 deaths per 100,000 in 2022 to 14.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2023).

#### **Figure 2: The North West had the highest suicide rate registered in 2023**

**Age-standardised suicide rates for English regions and Wales, deaths registered in 2023**

#### **Notes:**

1. Figures are for persons usually resident in each area, based on postcode boundaries as of May 2024.
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 again in 2023, at 16.3 deaths per 100,000 (Figure 3). In 2023, males aged 45 to 49 years had the highest rate (25.5 per 100,000) and females aged 50 to 54 years had the highest rate (9.2 per 100,000).

#### **Figure 3: The highest suicide rates registered in 2023 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 2023**

#### **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.

Rates increased across all broad age groups between 2022 and 2023. The largest increase was in those aged 45 to 64 years (from 13.4 to 14.8 deaths per 100,000 people).

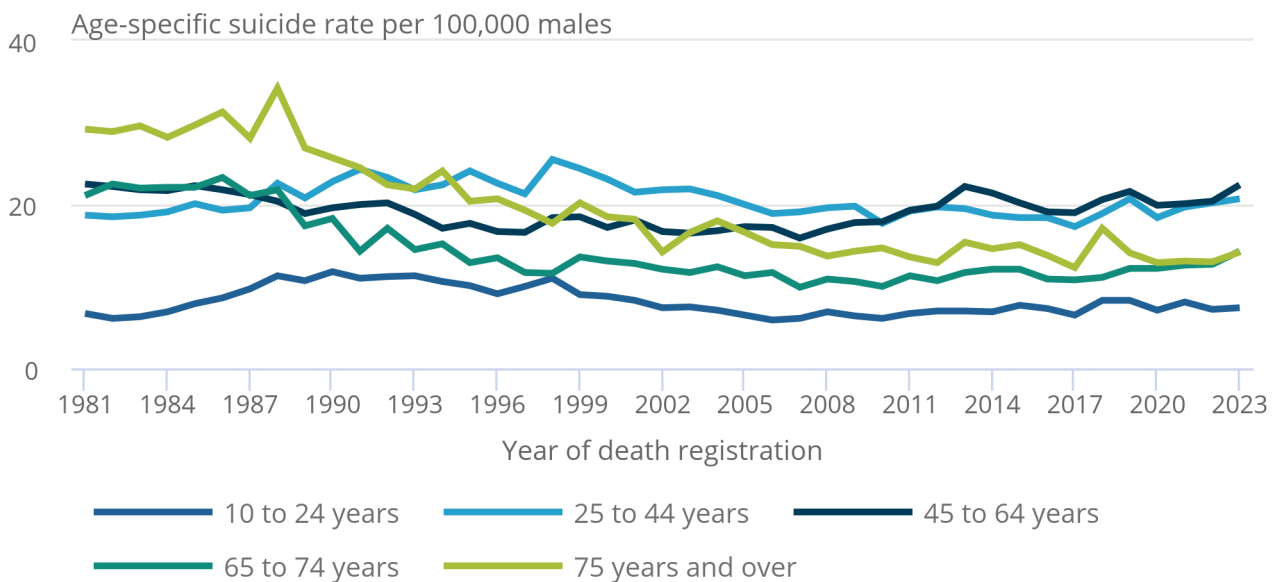
For males, those aged 10 to 24 years have had the lowest rate of all broad age groups since 1981 (7.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2023). Males aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest rate since 2010, with the rate at 22.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2023 (Figure 4).

**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 2023

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 2023



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.

For females, those aged 10 to 24 years also had the lowest rate of all groups at 3.1 deaths per 100,000 in 2023, which decreased compared with 2021 (3.6 deaths per 100,000), although there has been an upward trend in this age group since 2012. Females aged 45 to 64 years had the highest rate of all groups in 2023, at 7.5 deaths per 100,000 females (Figure 5).

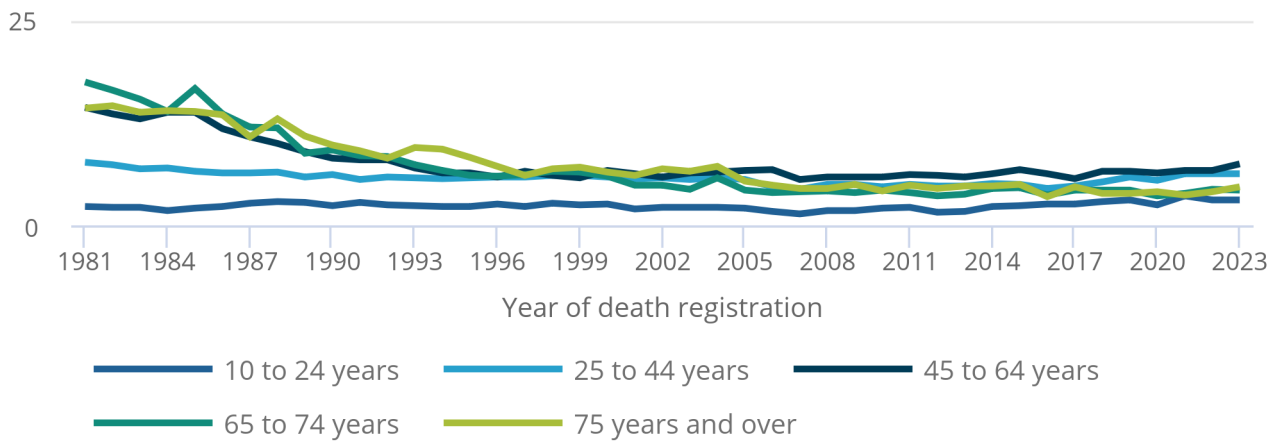
**Figure 5: Women aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest rates of suicide for broad age groups since 2005**

Age-specific suicide rates by broad age groups, females, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2023

**Figure 5: Women aged 45 to 64 years have had the highest rates of suicide for broad age groups since 2005**

Age-specific suicide rates by broad age groups, females, England and Wales, registered between 1981 and 2023

Age-specific rate per 100,000 females



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 58.8% of all suicides in 2023 (3,569 deaths). The second most common method continued to be poisoning (19.8% of all suicides in 2023; 1,203 deaths).

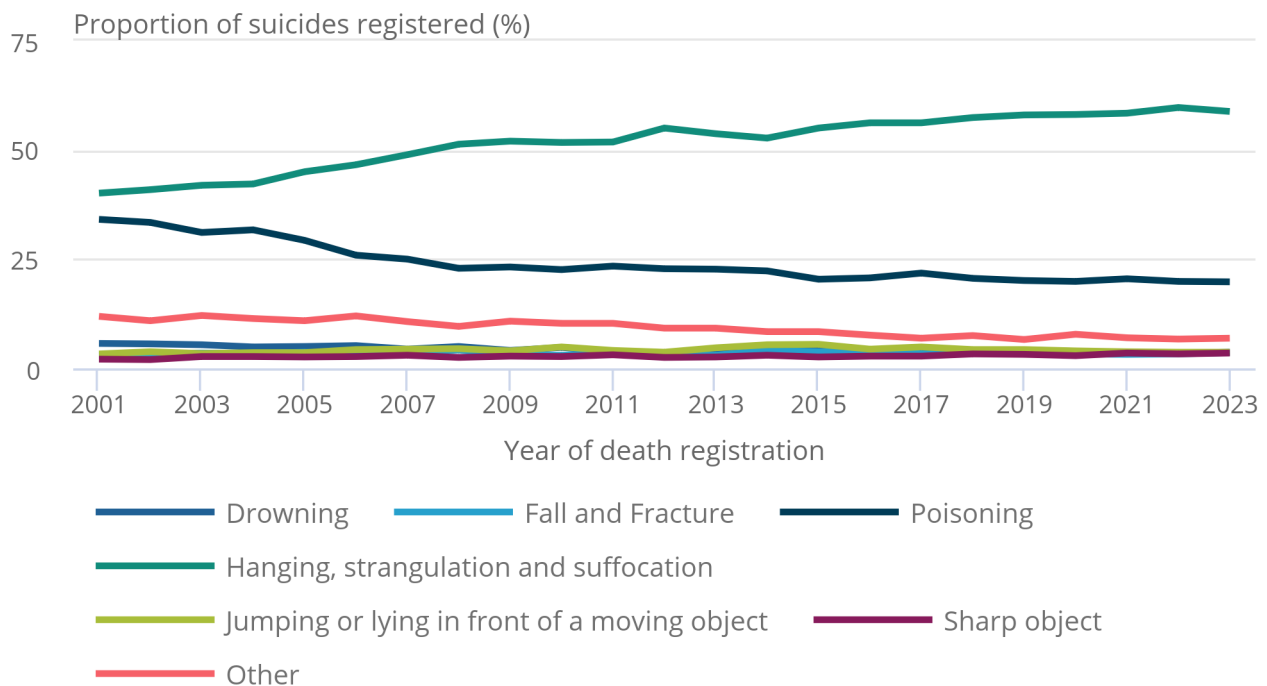
Our [Suicides in England and Wales: 2019 registrations bulletin](#) describes male and female trends in suicide methods over time. Our [Suicides in England and Wales: 2020 registrations bulletin](#) describes how suicide method varies by age group.

**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 2023

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 2023



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. As suicides are more likely to require coroners' inquests, timeliness decreases greatly when compared with other causes. More information about this is available in our [Impact of registration delays on mortality statistics in England and Wales: 2022 article](#).

For suicides, the median registration delay for deaths registered in 2023 was 199 days in England (compared with 195 days in 2022), and 293 days in Wales (compared with 309 days in 2022). Delays in Wales have decreased for the first time since 2016, though remain much higher than England, and almost double the median in 2019.

Registration delays in England and Wales have yet to return to pre coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels and remain at historically high levels.

For estimates of suicides prior to inquest, see the [Near to real-time suspected suicide surveillance \(nRTSSS\) for England report](#) published by the Office for Health Improvements and Disparities and the [Deaths by suspected suicide 2022 to 2023 report](#) published by Public Health Wales.

## 7 . Data on suicides in England and Wales

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

Dataset | Released 29 August 2024

Number of suicides and suicide rates, by sex and age, in England and Wales, registered from 1981 to 2023. Provides information on conclusion type, proportion of suicides by method, and median registration delay.

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

Dataset | Released 29 August 2024

Number of suicides, suicide rates and median registration delays, by local authority in England and Wales, registered from 2001 to 2023.

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

Dataset | Released 29 August 2024

Number of suicides and suicide rates, by sex and age, for England and Wales.

## 8 . Glossary

### Suicide

This release is based on the accredited official 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 . Data sources and quality

Mortality statistics are derived from information provided when deaths are certified and registered.

### Accredited official statistics

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in February 2013. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

### Populations

Mortality rates are calculated using the number of deaths and [mid-year population estimates](#). Population estimates were revised in our [Suicides in England and Wales: 2022 registrations bulletin](#), following the [rebasement of official population estimates between 2012 and 2021](#). As a result, suicide rates may not be comparable with figures published before the 2022 registrations bulletin.

### Comparing with other statistics

Scotland and Northern Ireland each produce their own suicide statistics through the [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, using 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 the [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).

### 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-standardised rates based on fewer than 10 deaths, and age-specific rates based on fewer than 3 deaths.

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

### 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.

## Quality and methodology information

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Mortality statistics in England and Wales QMI](#), our [Suicide rates in the UK QMI](#) and our [User guide to mortality statistics](#).

## 10 . 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 between the academic year ending 2017 and the academic year ending 2020.

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

Web page | Updated annually

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).

## 11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 29 August 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Suicides in England and Wales: 2023 registrations](#)