

Monthly Mortality Analysis, Scotland

October 2023

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This statistical report includes provisional statistics on deaths occurring up to 31 October 2023.

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1. Main Points

- Taking into account the size and age structure of the population, the rate of mortality was 1,085 per 100,000 population in October 2023. This is 5% lower than the October average rate.
- There were 5,164 deaths in October 2023. This is similar to the October five-year average number of deaths.
- The leading cause of death was Ischaemic heart disease, which accounted for 11% of all deaths in October.
- For females, the leading cause of death was Dementias and Alzheimer's disease (13% of all female deaths in October). For males, the leading cause was Ischaemic heart disease (13% of all male deaths in October).

2. Introduction

This publication focusses on mortality in Scotland, with breakdowns by council area, health board, age, sex, cause of death, location of death and deprivation quintile.

The data in this publication for 2023 onwards is still provisional and subject to change. Finalised data for the 2023 calendar year will be confirmed in summer 2024.

How can these statistics be used?

- To look at emerging and seasonal trends in mortality in Scotland.
- To understand excess deaths
- To investigate how causes of death, and rates of mortality vary across Scotland.

This short report only gives a look at some of the headline figures every month, with much more information available in our downloadable datasets. These datasets all have interactive charts built in, to aid users in exploring the latest trends.

The data in this report is based on the date a death occurred, other analysis can be based on the date a death was registered.

What are you looking for?

Data from this report

Weekly deaths data

Where is it?

[Monthly mortality tables](#)

[Weekly deaths registered](#)

3. Differences between this data and other NRS mortality data

There are differences in the way we present deaths data in our various statistical releases. Users should consider the following factors when comparing figures from different publications.

Date of occurrence and date of registration

The data in this report focusses on deaths by date of occurrence. Other NRS datasets focus on deaths by date of registration. Deaths by date of occurrence are generally a more accurate measure as they are not affected by public holidays and other factors which may delay registration. Deaths by date of registration are more timely and can be produced more quickly, which is why we use this measure for our weekly data.

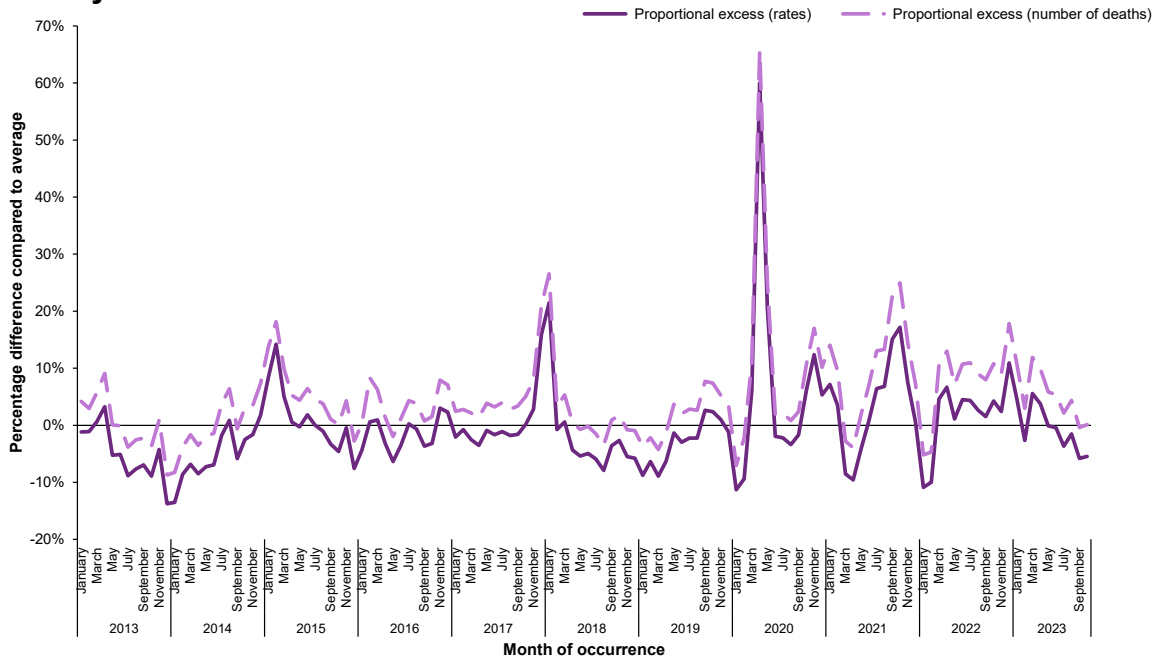
Weekly data and monthly data

The data in this report looks at monthly death data. Other NRS datasets look at weekly data. Weekly data does not fit neatly into calendar months or years, e.g. weeks 1-4 of a year are not the same thing as data for the calendar month of January.

4. Mortality rates in October 2023 were lower than average

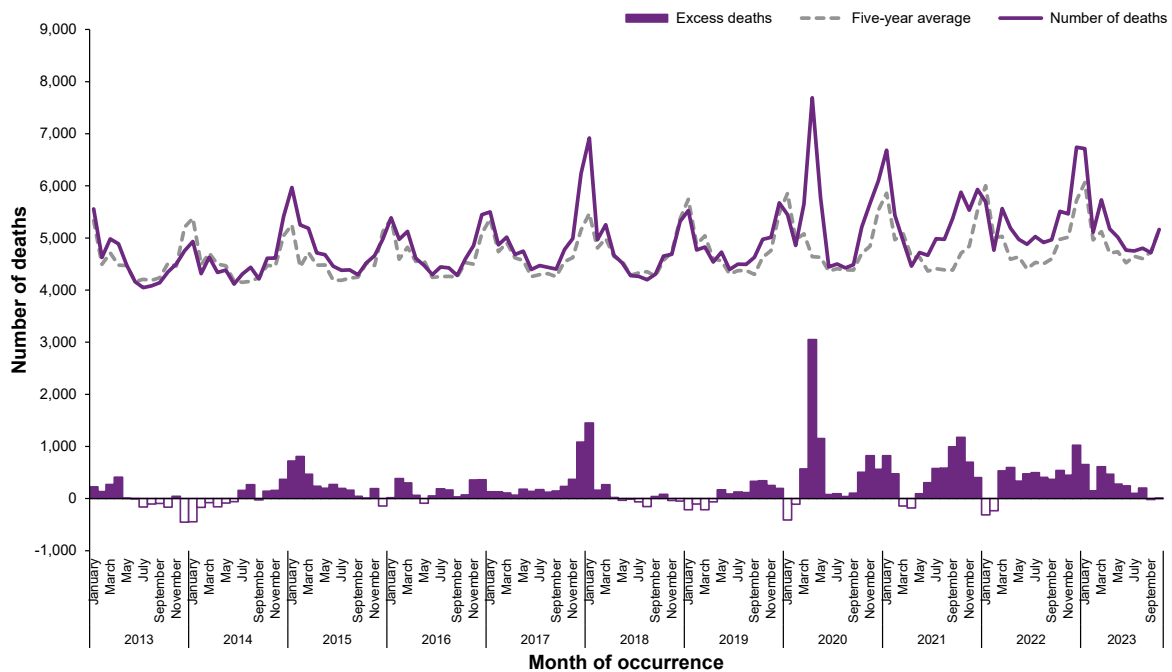
Taking into account the size and age structure of the population, the mortality rate in October was 5% lower than the five-year average rate (Figure 1). In October 2023 there were 5,164 deaths which was similar to the October five-year average (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Proportional excess mortality, based on age-standardised rate of mortality and number of deaths



Source: [Table M1 – Monthly Mortality Analysis](#)

Figure 2: Number of deaths in Scotland by month, with five-year average



Source: [Table M1 – Monthly Mortality Analysis](#)

The number of deaths was similar to the five year average in October 2023. The age-standardised rate of mortality, which takes into account the size and age structure of the population, was 1,085 per 100,000 population in October 2023. This is 5% lower than the October average rate, and a statistically significant difference from the average.

The year 2020 has been excluded from five-year averages for the purpose of calculating excess deaths. Find out more about this [here](#).

Figure 1 shows how the excess based on age-standardised mortality rates is generally lower than the excess based on number of deaths. This happens because the rate takes into account the age-structure and size of the population. The population has increased and become older over time (people are living longer, and there are fewer children than in previous generations). With a larger and older population, we might expect the number of deaths to be higher than it was in previous years.

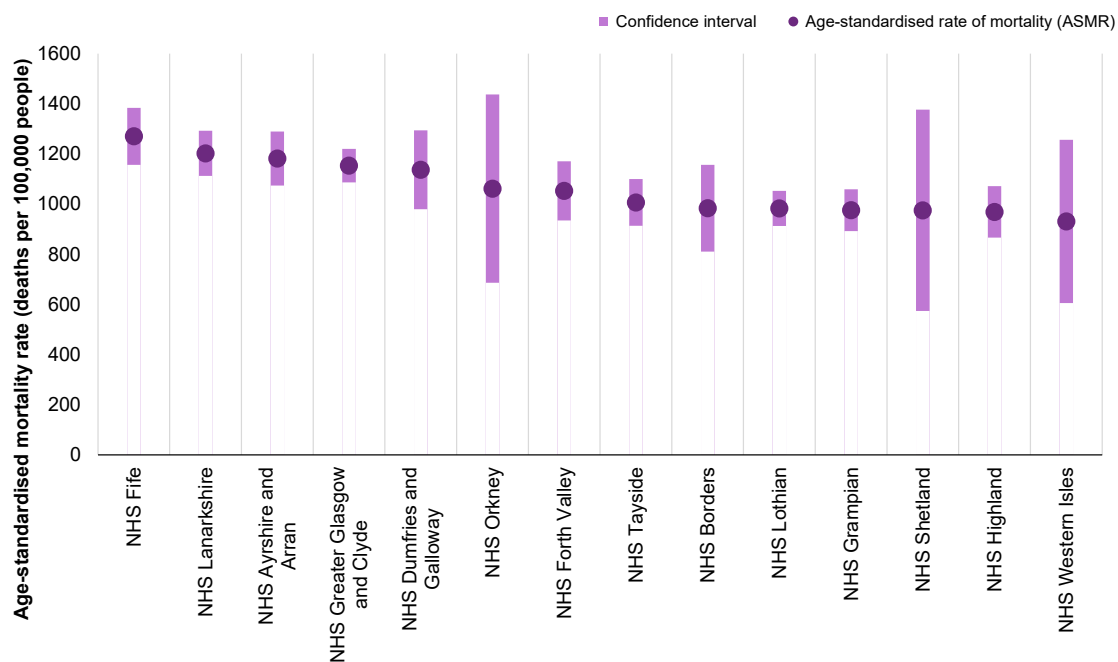
The calculation of excess based on age-standardised rates takes into account the changing population structure, so it gives a more accurate picture of excess deaths by removing the impact of the growing and ageing population.

5. Variation in mortality rates across Scotland

Fife and Lanarkshire had higher mortality rates than the average for Scotland in October 2023, shown in [Figure 3](#). These were statistically significant differences.

In contrast, Highland, Grampian and Lothian all had lower rates than from the average for Scotland in October 2023. These were also statistically significant differences.

Figure 3: Age-standardised mortality rates, health board, October 2023

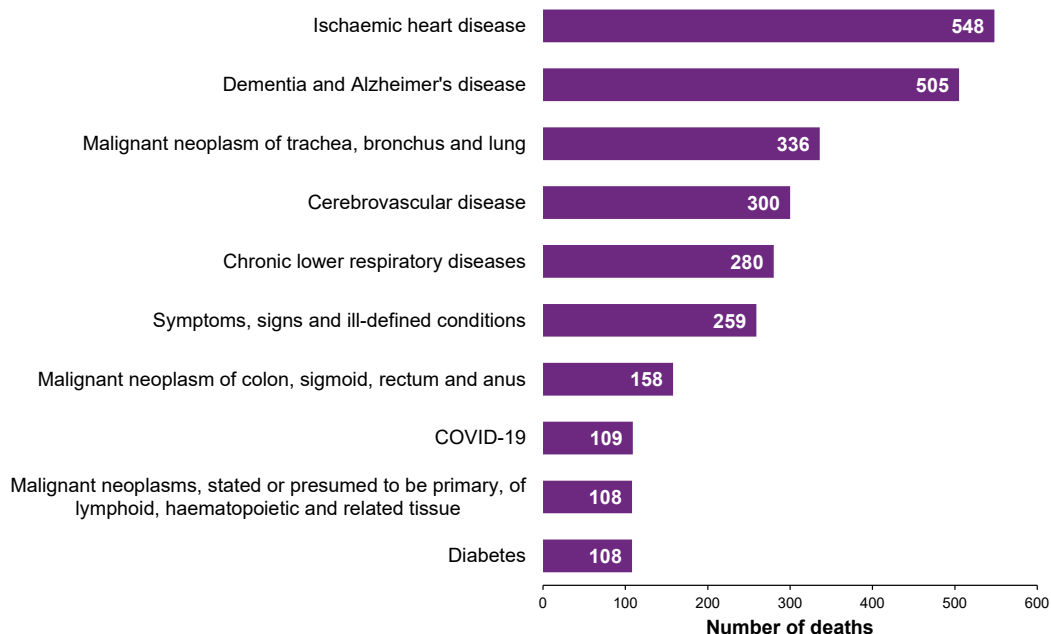


Source: [Table M3 – Monthly Mortality Analysis](#)

6. Ischaemic heart disease was the leading cause of death in October 2023

In October 2023 there were 548 deaths from Ischaemic heart disease, which was the leading cause of death, shown in [Figure 4](#). Ischaemic heart disease accounted for 11% of all deaths that occurred in October 2023.

Figure 4: Leading causes of death in October 2023

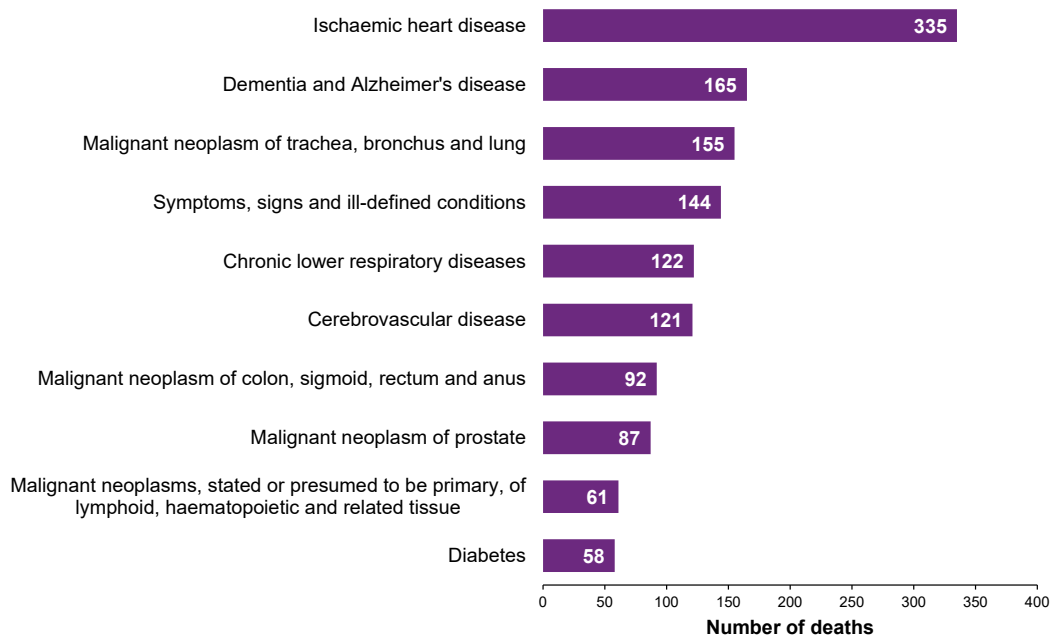


Source: [Table M4 – Monthly Mortality Analysis](#)

Ischaemic heart disease was also the top cause of death for males (13% of all male deaths in October), but dementia and Alzheimer's disease was the top cause of death for females (13% of all female deaths last month).

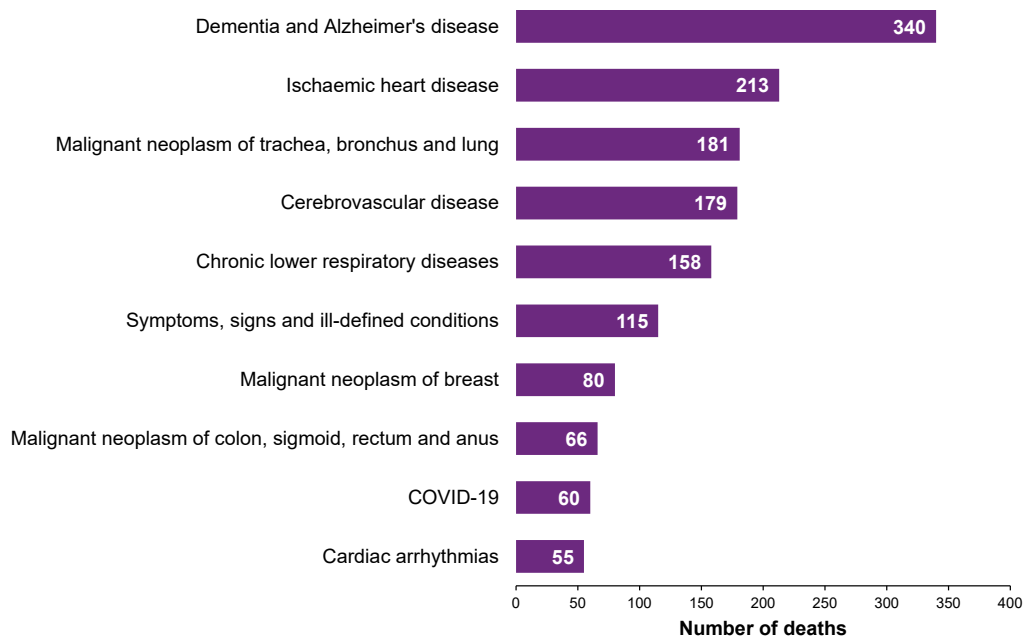
The top ten leading causes of death can change each month, particularly when broken down by sex, shown in [Figures 5](#) and [6](#). This can be the result of small changes in less common causes of death. For example, diabetes was one of the leading causes of death for males in October 2023 after not being in the leading causes since January 2023. Similarly, COVID-19 was one of the leading causes of death for females after not being a leading cause since April of this year.

Figure 5: Leading causes of death in Males, October 2023



Source: [Table M4 – Monthly Mortality Analysis](#)

Figure 6: Leading causes of death in Females, October 2023



Source: [Table M4 – Monthly Mortality Analysis](#)

7. Background Notes

Methodology

A full methodology document is available on the NRS website.

The data in this report comes from death registrations, where causes of death are certified by a doctor. Figures represent deaths occurring in Scotland, deaths of people whose usual residence is outside Scotland are included in these figures. Some data is provisional and is subject to change. This is because the cause of death (and other registered details) can be changed after a death has been registered.

Where can I find data?

The data used in this report can be found on the [NRS website](#). There are six tables available to download.

- [Table M1 – Deaths in Scotland by month of occurrence, sex and cause](#)
- [Table M2 – Deaths in Scotland by month of occurrence, sex, cause and age](#)
- [Table M3 – Deaths in Scottish areas by month of occurrence and sex](#)
- [Table M4 – Leading causes of death in Scotland by month of occurrence and sex](#)
- [Table M5 – Deaths in Scotland by location of death](#)
- [Table M6 – Deaths in Scotland by deprivation quintile \(SIMD\), month of occurrence and sex](#)

8. Links to related statistics

Other NRS mortality statistics:

- [Weekly deaths registered in Scotland](#)
- [Births, deaths and other vital events - Quarterly](#)

Statistics from other organisations:

- [ONS Monthly Mortality Analysis \(England and Wales\)](#)
- [NISRA Monthly Deaths \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

9. Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UKSA](#) website).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is National Records of Scotland's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Information on background and source data

Further details on data source(s), timeframe of data and timeliness, continuity of data, accuracy, etc. can be found in the metadata that is published alongside this publication on the NRS website.

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Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the [Statistics](#) section of our website. Scottish Census statistics are available on the [Scotland's Census](#) website.

We also provide information about [future publications](#) on our website. If you would like us to tell you about future statistical publications, you can register your interest on the Scottish Government [ScotStat website](#).

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Enquiries and suggestions

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