

About this publication	Description
Publication title	Winter Mortality in Scotland (Note: some of the previous editions were called 'Increased Winter Mortality ...' or 'Excess Winter Deaths ...')
Description	<p>Numbers of 'additional' deaths in the four 'winter' months (December to March: deaths then compared with the average number of deaths for the preceding and subsequent four-month periods), broken down by age-group, sex and the underlying cause of the death for Scotland as a whole, and by age-group for each Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile, NHS Board and Local Authority area.</p> <p>The Additional Analyses and the accompanying "data" workbook provides further information about (e.g.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any relationship with overall mean winter temperature; • any relationship with the level of influenza activity; • what the seasonal increase in winter 2019/20 might have been, had there been no coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; and • how the daily number of deaths varies over periods of 12 months.
Theme	Population and Migration
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Format	Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) document. The Additional Analyses and Methodological Annexes are provided in separate PDF documents. The numbers used to produce the Figures in the publication, the detailed Tables and some more charts are provided as Excel workbooks and Comma Separated Value (CSV) files.
Data source(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical certificate of the cause of death • Other information provided to the Registrar when a death is registered • Any additional information provided by, for example, the Procurators Fiscal
Date that data is acquired	Throughout the calendar year, and in the first eight months or so of the following calendar year.
Publication Release date	October
Frequency	Annual
Timeframe of data and timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death registration records - received throughout the year, usually a day or so after registration • Any additional information - may be received several months after the death was registered
Continuity of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no breaks in the series for the total number of 'additional' deaths for winter 1951/52 onwards • However, because records of individual deaths are only available from the Vital Events statistical database for 1974 onwards, more detailed analyses are possible only for winter 1974/75 onwards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figures for administrative areas are affected by changes to the boundaries of those areas. Therefore, Tables 3 and 5 of the 'winter 2013/14' edition provided revised figures for NHS Board areas for 2012/13 and earlier winters, based on the boundaries which applied with effect from 1 April 2014, and this has continued in subsequent editions. NB: with effect from the 'winter 2020/21' edition, Tables HB1 and HB2 are the relevant tables. The continuity of the figures for some of the underlying causes of death has been affected by changes in the software that is used for coding the causes of death. More information about this appears in Annex B, in paragraphs B4 and B5.
Revisions statement	<p>National Records of Scotland (NRS) produces the figures for the latest winter (for example December 2009 to March 2010) in October, which is several months before it 'freezes' its statistical data for the latest calendar year (for example the data for 2010 were frozen in mid-2011). Therefore, the figures could be revised due to late returns or corrections, but such changes tend to be very slight.</p> <p>Any revisions due to changes in the way in which the information was processed will be mentioned in the publication and (unless their effects are small) the accompanying news release.</p> <p>Revisions and corrections to previously published statistics are dealt with in accordance with the Scottish Government Statistician Group corporate policy statement on revisions and corrections - a copy of which is available on the Scottish Government website.</p>
Concepts and definitions	The publication includes the definitions of the seasonal increase in mortality in the winter (the number of 'additional' deaths) and the Increased Winter Mortality Index.
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	The statistics are of interest to those concerned with issues such as 'fuel poverty' and the health of the elderly, and policies on matters such as winter fuel payments and seasonal flu vaccination.
Accuracy	There is very little error in the overall total, as few if any deaths are not registered.
Completeness:	The published statistics cover Scotland as a whole, and also provide some figures for each NHS Board and Local Authority area.
Comparability	<p>The figures are produced using a method which is recommended by the World Health Organisation, so are comparable with those published for England & Wales and various other countries.</p> <p>Some information about how Scotland's figures compare with those of other countries is given in Section 8 of the publication and in the Background Note which is available on the NRS website. In the publication, Figure 10 shows the</p>

	Increased / Excess Winter Mortality Index for Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland for winter 1991/92 onwards; in the “Tables …” workbook, Table 6 gives the Index values.
Accessibility	It is the policy of the National Records of Scotland to make its website and products accessible according to published guidelines. More information is available in the Accessibility section of the NRS website.
Coherence and clarity	The statistics are provided in Excel, CSV and PDF format. They are designed to be consistent, and incorporate historical data where appropriate. Coherence: the statistics in different tables have been on the same standard basis for a number of years. Clarity: they are accompanied by impartial commentary and background information about their basis.
Value type and unit of measure	Most of the statistics are simply the numbers of ‘additional’ deaths broken down in various ways (for example, by age). Some other types of figure are provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Increased Winter Mortality Index, to facilitate comparisons between areas with markedly different populations; • the total numbers of deaths registered; and • some 5-year moving averages.
Official Statistics designation	National Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Assessed by UK Statistics Authority, report can be found within the UK Statistics Authority - Assessments section on the National Records of Scotland website
Help email	statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk
Date this form was published	12 October 2021