

# **Births, Deaths and Other Vital Events – Third Quarter 2011**

## **Background**

This is a quarterly publication. The National Records of Scotland (NRS) collects the underlying data on a daily basis, as and when each event is registered. The statistics for the latest quarter are all new; some of the figures for earlier quarters may have been revised slightly.

These figures are directly comparable with those for other parts of the United Kingdom: there are no significant differences across the UK in how Vital Events data are collected and processed.

The figures given here are provisional because there may be some slight revisions to the overall totals when the final statistics for the calendar year as a whole are published in the following summer. At that stage, the numbers of deaths for a few causes will change significantly, because NRS will by then have received information that will enable a more precise classification of some of the deaths which are currently counted under (e.g.) 'events of undetermined intent' or 'ill-defined or unknown causes of mortality'.

Statistics of deaths (for the calendar year as a whole) are used in some Scottish Government targets, such as reductions in the numbers of suicides and in the age-standardised death rates, of people under 75, from ischaemic (coronary) heart disease, cerebrovascular disease (stroke) and cancer: Scottish Government reports on progress towards these targets. The numbers of births and deaths are used to update estimates of life expectancy and the size of the population, for which there are also government targets. More generally, Vital Events statistical data are used for research into, and to develop and monitor policies on, a wide range of topics, including: fertility; stillbirths and infant deaths; alcohol- and drug- related deaths; suicides; deaths from healthcare associated infections; the effectiveness of cancer screening programmes; cancer survival rates; hospital standardised mortality rates; and the arrangements for certifying deaths.