

1 October 2021

Statistical news release

Alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland increase

This is a corrected version of the news release issued on [17 August 2021](#)

The number of alcohol-specific deaths has increased by 17% to 1,190 in 2020, up from 1,020 in 2019, according to statistics on deaths by various causes published today by National Records of Scotland.

These figures show a return to the recent upward trend in the number of alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland following a decline in the previous year. This is the largest number of deaths due to alcohol recorded since 2008.

Other key findings show that in 2020:

- Probable suicide deaths decreased by 3% to 805 deaths, from 833 in 2019. There was a downward trend in probable suicide deaths in Scotland from the early 2000s until 2017, followed by increases in 2018 and 2019.
- There was a 1.1% decrease, to 6,352, in deaths where Alzheimer's and other dementias were the underlying cause.
- There were 2,759 accidental deaths in Scotland, a 1.2% increase compared with 2019. The majority of accidental deaths were the result of accidental poisonings or falls.
- The death rate from all causes for people in the most deprived areas is 1.9 times that of those in the least deprived. Death rates for drug-related (18.4 times as large) alcohol-specific deaths (4.3 times as large), and suicides (3.0 times as large) were notably higher in the most deprived areas.

Pete Whitehouse, Director of Statistical Services said:

“NRS figures released today show a marked increase in the number of deaths due to alcohol, reversing the fall seen in 2019.

“Monthly analysis shows that alcohol-specific deaths were higher than average in 9 months of 2020. From August to December deaths were similar to or substantially higher than the highest numbers seen during these months over the last five years.

“Suicide deaths decreased slightly on the 2019 level. Monthly figures show that suicide deaths between September and November of 2020 were consistently above the highest numbers seen in these months over the last 5 years.

“These statistics provide important analysis of deaths related to alcohol, from suicide and from other causes during the first 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The publications [Probable suicides 2020](#), [Alcohol-specific deaths 2020](#) and [Deaths from specific causes 2020](#) are available on the NRS website.

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