

Annual births, deaths, marriages and other vital events

Vital Events Reference Tables 2022

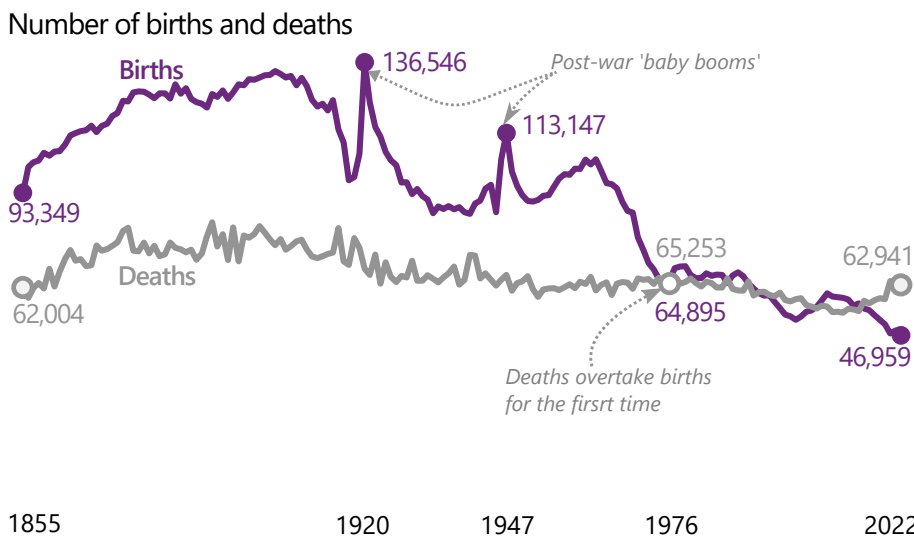
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This release presents final figures for vital events which were registered in Scotland in the period from 1 January to 31 December 2022, inclusive. The tables provide statistics of births, adoptions, stillbirths, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths.

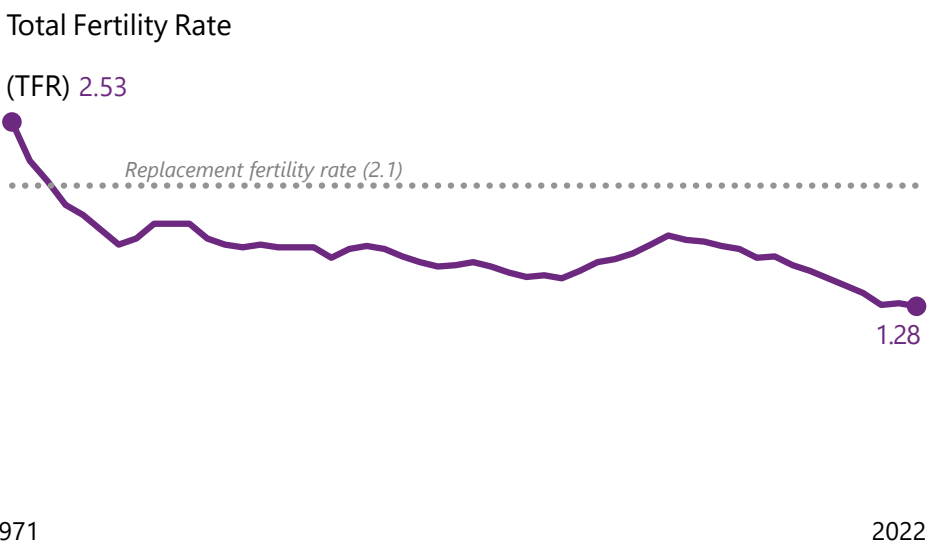
There were 62,941 deaths and 46,959 births in 2022

In 2022 there were 15,982 more deaths than births. This measure is sometimes called "natural change". The last time Scotland had more births than deaths was in 2014.



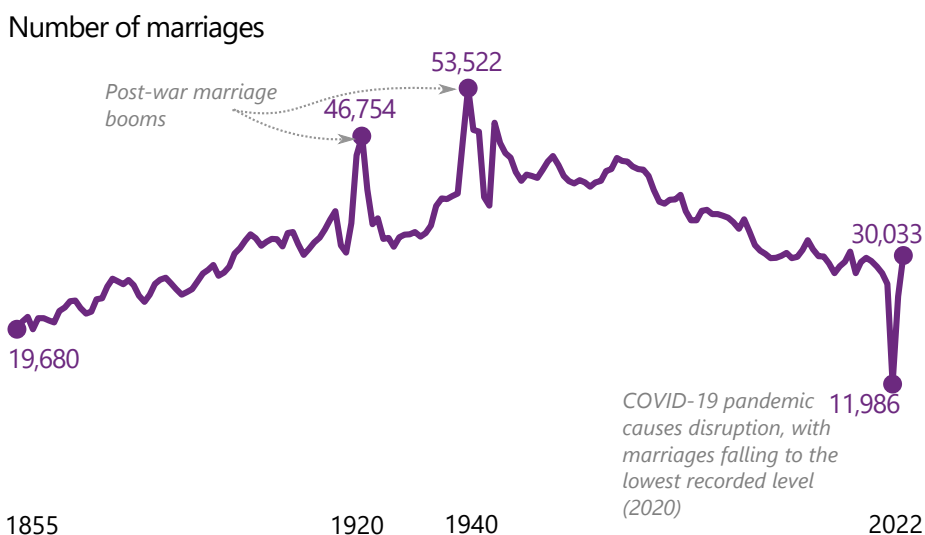
Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell to its lowest ever level

TFR is the number of children born to a female over their lifetime if they were to experience the current rates of fertility through their life. This needs to be 2.1 for a population to replace itself.



The number of marriages continued its post pandemic rise

The rise in the number of marriages in the past two years is comparable to the post-war marriage booms of the '20s and '40s. In 2020, opportunities to have ceremonies were restricted.



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1. Main points

- Scotland's total fertility rate has fallen to its lowest ever level at 1.28, down from 1.30 last year. For a population to replace itself this rate needs to be around 2.1.
- There were 46,959 births in Scotland in 2022 which is 2% lower than in 2021 but slightly higher than the lowest number ever recorded (46,809 in 2020).
- There were 62,941 deaths in 2022, down by 1% on 2021. This was 3,979 (7%) higher than the five-year average.
- In 2022 there were 15,982 more deaths than births. This measure is sometimes called "natural change". The last time Scotland had more births than deaths was in 2014.
- The age-standardised mortality rate was 1,171 per 100,000 people in 2022, a decrease of 1 per cent on 2021. This was 3% higher than the five-year average rate.
- There were 30,033 marriages in Scotland in 2022, 24% more than in 2021. The number of marriages in Scotland continued to rise after the COVID-19 pandemic restricted opportunities to have ceremonies. Aside from the 103% rise in 2021 the only comparable year on year rises in the number of marriages were in the post-war years (28% in 1919 and 31% in 1945).
- There were 176 stillbirths in 2022, a rate of 3.7 for every thousand live and still births. The lowest ever still birth rate (3.5) was recorded in 2019.
- There were 165 infant deaths, a rate of 3.5 for every thousand live births in 2022. This was a decrease on last year's rate of 3.9 but higher than rates seen in the previous six years
- There were 370 adoptions registered in 2022, 110 fewer than in 2021. It is worth noting that figures for 2021 contain some adoptions that occurred in the final months of 2020, but registration of adoptions stopped in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There were 630 civil partnerships registered in 2022, the highest number since 2007. The majority of civil partnerships in Scotland are now mixed sex (84% in 2022), following a legislation change in 2021 which allowed this.

2. Introduction

Provisional figures have been released throughout the last year on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. This release replaces these and provides the final figures for vital events which were registered in Scotland from 1 January to 31 December 2022.

When this report was published no population estimates were available for 2022, so 2021 population estimates will be used in their place. Rates (which use population as a denominator) will be updated in the future when 2022 population estimates are available.

3. Adoptions

There were 370 adoptions registered in 2022, 110 fewer than in 2021. During March 2020 registration of adoptions stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of adoptions has fallen over the long term. The pre-pandemic level was around half the number in the mid-1980s and less than a quarter of the number of the late 1960s.(Table 2.01)

4. Births

There were 46,959 live births registered in 2022, a slight decrease of 2 per cent on the year before and the second lowest annual total since records began in 1855 (the lowest being in 2020).

Births have been falling over the long term and fell to their lowest point in 2002 before increasing to reach a recent high point of 60,041 in 2008, generally decreasing since then.

In 2022 there were 24,259 baby boys and 22,700 girls. [The most common names were Noah and Olivia](#) respectively.

Just over half of all live births (55%) were to unmarried parents. Multiple births accounted for 1.4% of all maternities with 622 maternities involving twins and 9 involving triplets or more. (Table 1.01b)

The age of mothers has changed over time. In the 1960s, mothers in their twenties were the most common age-groups. From the mid-1970s onwards births to mothers in their thirties began to increase and the 30-34 age-group is now the most common. The birth rate among mothers under 20 has fallen over time and is now the age group with the lowest birth rate, but rose a little in the latest year. (Figures 1 and 2)

Figure 1 – Live Births per 1,000 women, by age of mother, 1951 - 2022

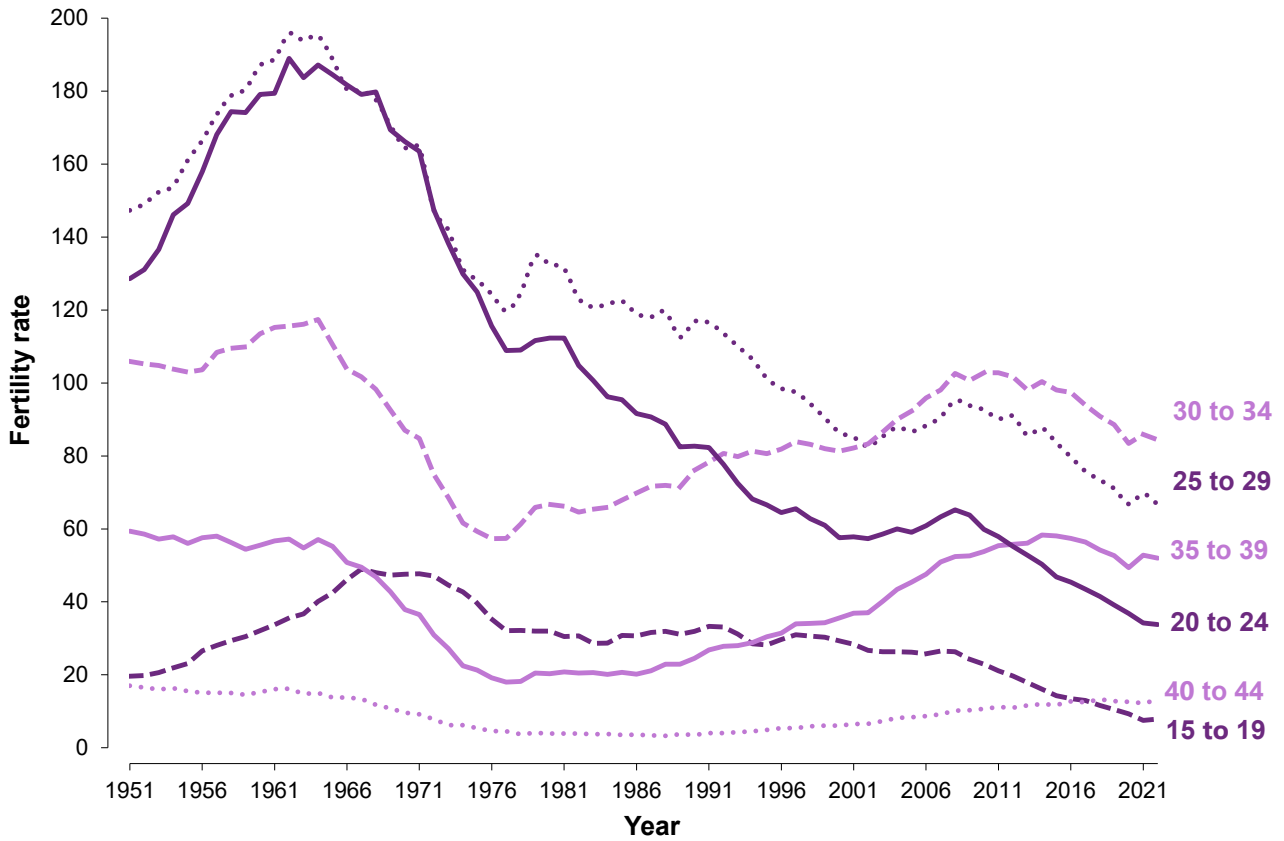
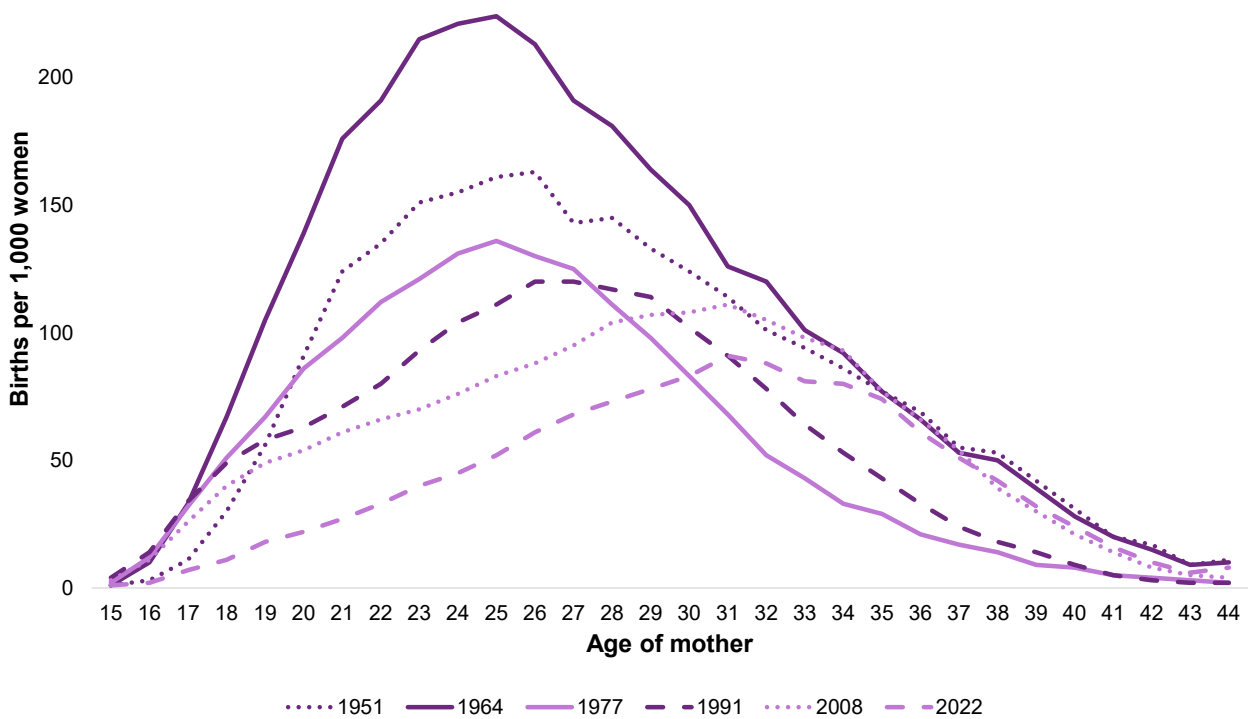


Figure 2 – Live Births per 1,000 women, by age of mother, selected years



The total fertility rate (TFR) fell to the lowest ever recorded level in 2022 at 1.28. For a population to replace itself this figure needs to be around 2.1. In Scotland, the total fertility rate is lowest in the cities. The lowest is the City of Edinburgh, with a TFR of 0.93 children, followed by Aberdeen City at 1.04.

The **total fertility rate** is the average number of children that a group of women would expect to have if they experienced the observed age specific fertility rates in each of their childbearing years.

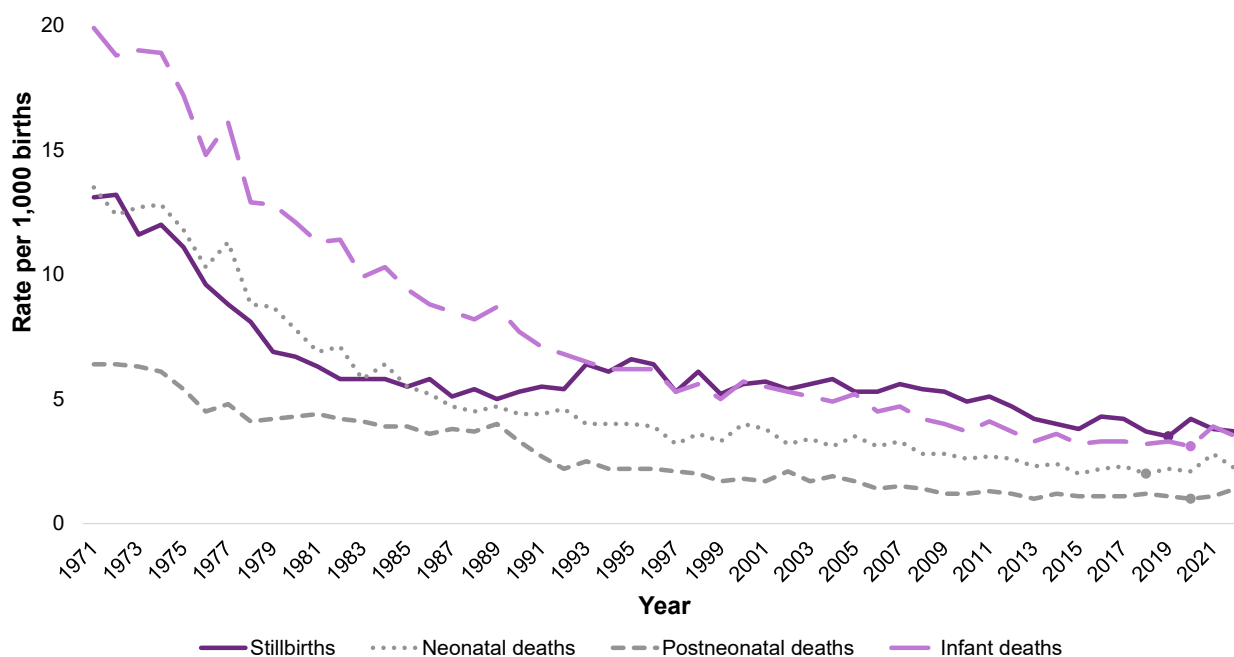
Fertility rates were highest in the most deprived areas (1.46) and lowest in the least deprived areas (1.15). (Table 3.17)

Almost half of all births in 2022 (45%) were to mothers who had no previous live births. 35% were to mothers with 1 previous live birth and only two per cent were to mothers who had 4 or more previous live births. The number of previous live births differed according to the age of the mother, with younger mothers being more likely to have had no previous live births than older mothers, with the exception of the oldest mothers. Mothers aged 45 and over were more likely than mothers aged 30-44 to have had no previous live births. (Table 3.18)

5. Stillbirths and Infant Deaths

There were 176 stillbirths in 2022, a rate of 3.7 for every thousand live and still births. The lowest ever still birth rate (3.5) was recorded in 2019.

Figure 3 – Stillbirth and Infant Death Rates¹, 1971 - 2022



¹ Stillbirth rates are calculated per 1,000 live and still births. Infant deaths, neonatal and post-neonatal death rates are calculated per 1,000 live births.

There were 165 infant deaths, a rate of 3.5 for every thousand live births in 2022. This was a decrease on last year's rate of 3.9 but higher than rates seen in the previous six years (Table 1.01b, Figure 2).

Infant deaths can be split into neonatal deaths (deaths in the first 4 weeks) and post-neonatal deaths (deaths from 4 weeks to 1 year). There were 101 neonatal deaths and 64 post-neonatal deaths registered in 2022 (Table 4.01). The rate of postneonatal deaths rose to the highest level since 2008 at 1.4 per 1,000, while the rate of neonatal deaths fell in the latest year, returning to its previous level after an increase in 2021.

6. Deaths

The number of deaths registered in 2022 was 62,941. This was one per cent lower than the number in 2021. There were 3,979 (7%) excess deaths in 2022. This was fewer than in 2020 (6,333) and in 2021 (5,827) but was higher than in previous years. The highest number of excess deaths in the decade before the pandemic was in 2015 when there were 3,278 excess deaths (figure 4)

Measuring excess based on numbers doesn't take into account the growing and ageing population. Excess deaths based on age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) provide a more accurate measure as they take account of the changing population structure over time. The age-standardised mortality rate was 1,171 per 100,000 people in 2022, a decrease of 1 per cent on 2021 but 3% higher than the five-year average rate. Figure 5 compares excess deaths based on numbers and rates and shows that the excess based on number of deaths is consistently higher than the excess based on rates. Excess mortality based on rates has been negative for most of the last two decades, with only 2015, 2020, 2021 and 2022 showing an excess once population structure is taken into account.

Excess deaths for 2022 would generally be calculated against the average for 2017-2021. Due to the unusually high number of deaths in 2020 due to the pandemic, the 2017-2021 five-year average would not provide a true reflection of excess deaths in 2021. Excess deaths for 2022 have therefore been compared against the average of 2016-2019 and 2021.

Figure 4 – Deaths and excess deaths 2000-2022

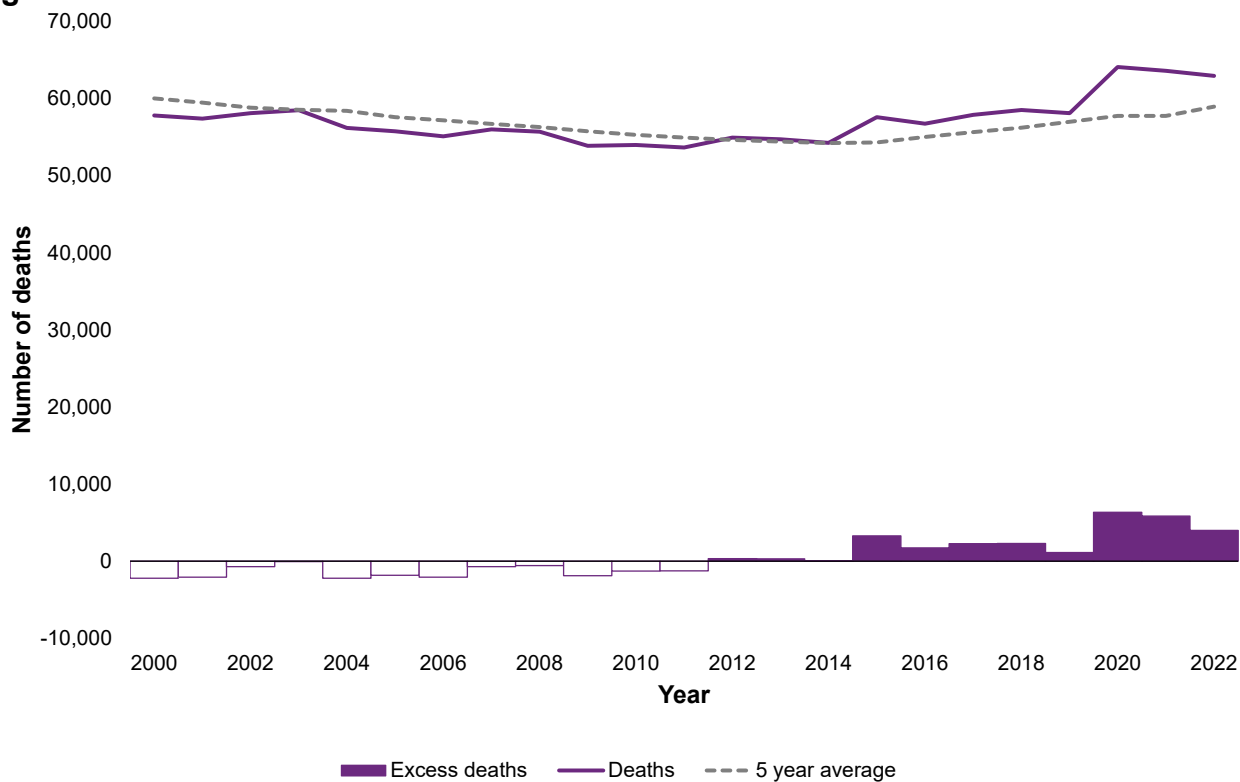
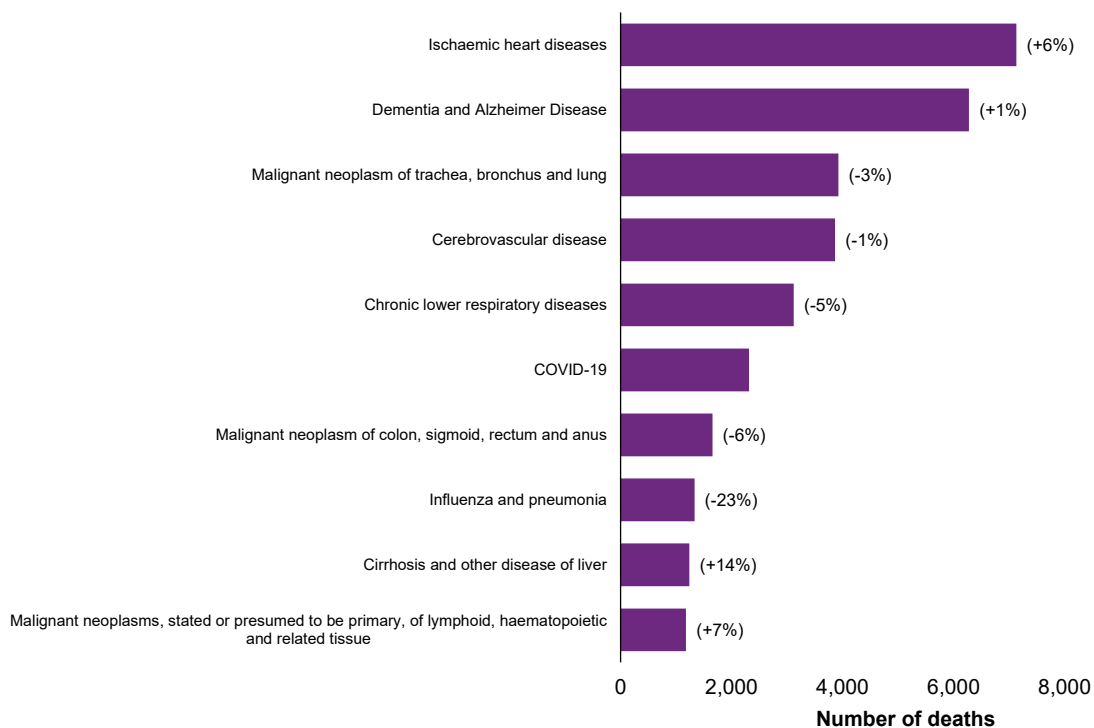


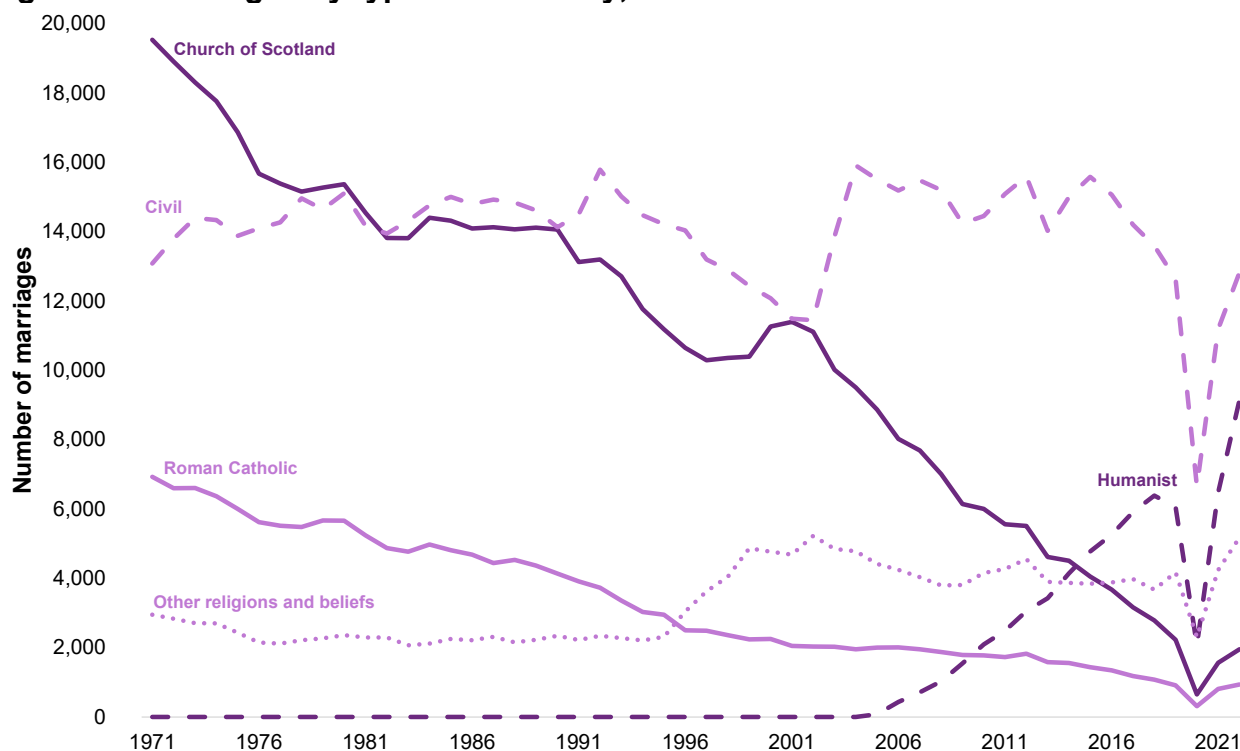
Figure 5 – Leading causes of death, 2022

Figures in brackets are a comparison to the five-year average



7. Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Figure 6 – Marriages by type of ceremony, 1971 - 2021



There were 30,033 marriages in Scotland in 2022, 24% higher than in 2021. The number of marriages in Scotland continued to rise after the COVID-19 pandemic restricted opportunities to have ceremonies. Aside from the 103% rise in 2021 the only comparable year on year rises in the number of marriages were in the post-war years (28% in 1919 and 31% in 1945). There were 1,112 same-sex marriages in 2022. (Table 1.01b)

Over two fifths of marriages were civil ceremonies (12,821, 43%). 17,212 ceremonies were carried out by religious and other belief bodies. The most common types of ceremonies after civil ceremonies were Humanist ceremonies (9,140), Church of Scotland (1,954) and Roman Catholic (940) (Table 7.07 and Figure 6).

There were 630 civil partnerships registered in 2022, the highest number since 2007. The majority of civil partnerships in Scotland are mixed sex (84% in 2022), following a legislation change in 2021 which allowed this, and the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2014.

8. Background to these statistics

This is an annual publication. NRS collects the underlying data on a daily basis, as and when each event is registered. Provisional data are published on a quarterly basis around 10 weeks after the end of the quarter. These annual figures represent the final figures for the calendar year and supersede the provisional weekly, monthly and quarterly figures already published.

Information about (for example) the sources, methods, definitions and reliability of these statistics is available from the following NRS web site pages:

[general background information on Vital Events statistics](#) and

[background information on points which are specific to statistics about deaths.](#)

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

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

More detailed commentary on the final Vital Events statistics for calendar years as a whole can be found in the relevant chapters of [Scotland's Population - the Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends](#).

Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The UK Statistics Authority 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 UK Statistics Authority 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 can be found in the 'About this Publication' document that is published alongside this publication on the NRS website.

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- Preserving the past – We look after Scotland's national archives so that they are available for current and future generations, and we make available important information for family history.
- 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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Revisions and Corrections

We, the National Records of Scotland, label any revisions and corrections that we have applied to any of our statistics. These revisions and corrections are clearly marked on the webpage of the publication as well on our [revisions and corrections](#) page available on the NRS website.

Where applicable, revisions will also be carried out in accordance with the [revisions policy for population, migration and life events](#) statistics available on the ONS website.

Enquiries and suggestions

Please get in touch if you need any further information, or have any suggestions for improvement.

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