

Vital Events – General – Background Information

Date Of Registration Is Basis Of Vital Event Statistics

All the Vital Events statistics of births, stillbirths, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths are based on the date of registration of the event and not on the date on which the event occurred. For example, a birth on 31 December 2005 which was registered on 5 January 2006 would be included in the 2006 figures (because the statistics are the numbers of events registered in the specified period).

Vital events are required by law to be registered within a given number of days. Births and stillbirths should be registered within the statutory period of 21 days; marriages and civil partnerships should be registered within 3 days; and deaths should be registered within 8 days.

In the Vital Events statistics, year means calendar year unless otherwise stated.

Quarters refer to the quarters of the calendar year - so, for example, 'Q1' refers to the period from January to March. When a range of years (for example, 1951-55) is referred to in a time-series table, the figure given will be an average for the period concerned unless something different is specified.

However, some of the numbers of births and deaths that appear in other parts of the National Records of Scotland (NRS) web site are on a different basis. For example, the components of population change (in the Population estimates) give the numbers of births and deaths which occurred between the middle of one year and the middle of the next year: in that case, data for (say) '2007-2008' relate to the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, and a birth which occurred on 29 June 2008 would be included in the '2007-2008' total, and in the estimate of the population 'as at 30 June 2008', even if it was not registered until (say) 8 July 2008.

Registrations by week

For the purposes of the Vital Events statistics, each week starts on a Monday and weeks are numbered using the ISO-8601 standard. This was implemented in 2016 when the Vital Events computer system was upgraded. Weekly statistics prior to 2016 are based on weeks starting on a Sunday. For the purpose of these pre 2016 statistics, 'week 1' of a calendar year often consists of the last few days of the previous calendar year plus the first few days of the new year. (In theory, 'week 1' might not start until a few days into the new year - but that is seldom the case.) Similarly, what is counted, for the purpose of the statistics, as the last week of the calendar year often finishes a few days before the actual end of the calendar year. (In theory, the last week could include the first few days of the next calendar year - but that is seldom the case.) For example, for the purposes of the Vital Events statistics:

- the last week of 2007 started on Sunday 23 December 2007 and finished on Saturday 29 December 2007;
- the first week of 2008 started on Sunday 30 December 2007 and finished on Saturday 5 January 2008.

From 2016 onwards, week 1 begins in the first week of the new year and does not contain any days from the previous year. Week 52 (or 53 if there is one) may contain a few days at the beginning of the next year.

As a result, the period covered by weeks 1 to 52 (or, occasionally, weeks 1 to 53) of a given year will differ slightly from that calendar year - so it is very unlikely that any totals

of the figures for the weeks of a given year will agree exactly with what is published elsewhere as the figure for the year as a whole.