Suicide Statistics for Scotland
Update of trends to 2017
A National Statistics publication for Scotland
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About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) is the annual update of suicide statistics on the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) website. It is based on information on deaths from suicide registered in Scotland in 2017. The publication is released on the same day as National Records of Scotland publish their 2017 suicide statistics.

Main Points
- There were 680 probable suicides registered in Scotland in 2017, down from 728 in 2016. The number of males who died by suicide was 522 and the number of females was 158, the lowest it has been since 1982.
- In 2017, the probable suicide rate for males was more than three times that for females.

*see background section for more information on 'new coding rules'
Between 2013 and 2017, the probable suicide rate was more than two and a half times higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas.

While probable suicide rates are strongly related to deprivation level, this difference or inequality has decreased between 2003-07 and 2013-17.

Although Scotland appears to have had a higher suicide rate than the UK overall since the early 1990s, this comparison is influenced by differences in data recording practices between countries.

The suicide rate in Scotland is similar to the rate in other European countries.

**Background**

‘Probable suicides’ refers to deaths from intentional self-harm and events of undetermined intent. The latter category includes cases where it is not clear whether the death is a suicide; however it is understood that the majority of deaths of this type are actually suicides, so they are included here. In 2011, National Records of Scotland changed their coding rules for certain causes of death. Some deaths previously coded under ‘mental and behavioural disorders’ are now classed as ‘self-poisoning of undetermined intent’ and consequently are classified as suicides. Comparing the suicide numbers for Scotland using the old coding rules, there were 697 in 2016 and 664 in 2017. The Scottish Government's suicide prevention strategy 2013-2016 sets out key areas of work to reduce the number of suicides in Scotland. A refreshed suicide prevention strategy will be released later this year.

**Contact**

**Suzanne Hill**  
Principal Information Analyst  
0131 314 1530  
suzannehill@nhs.net

**Ciara Gribben**  
Senior Information Analyst  
0131 275 7769  
ciaragribben@nhs.net

Email: nss.isdmentalhealth@nhs.net

**Further Information**

The publication and supporting information can be found on the Scottish Public Health Observatory website. A technical paper describing the data and methodology used in this release is also available.

An in-depth investigation into the demographics and prior healthcare contacts of people who died by suicide in Scotland is available in the report A profile of deaths by suicide in Scotland 2009-2015.

The next release of this publication will be in summer 2019.

**ISD and Official Statistics**

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.