

Alcohol-specific deaths

2021

Published on 2 August 2022

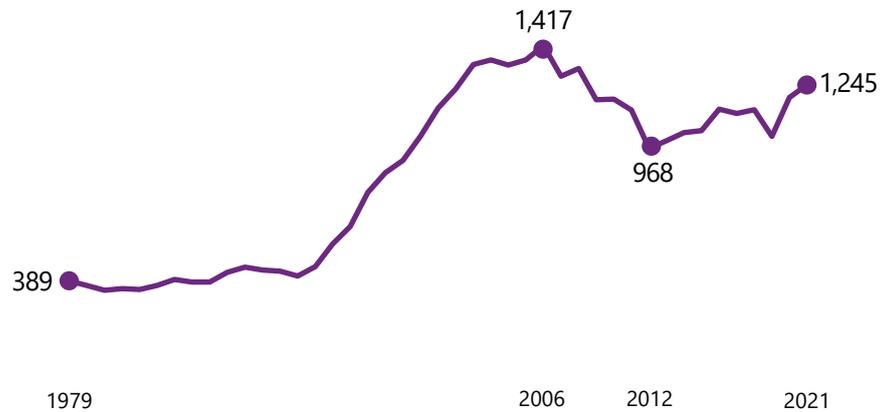


This statistical report details information on the number of deaths that were registered in Scotland in 2021 which are classified as alcohol-specific. It also includes breakdowns by sex, age, cause of death and deprivation.

Number of alcohol-specific deaths up 5% to 1,245 in 2021

Alcohol-specific deaths have generally risen since 2012. Before this point, deaths fell sharply from the peak of 1,417 in 2006 to 968 in 2012. Last year, deaths rose by 5% or 55 deaths to 1,245.

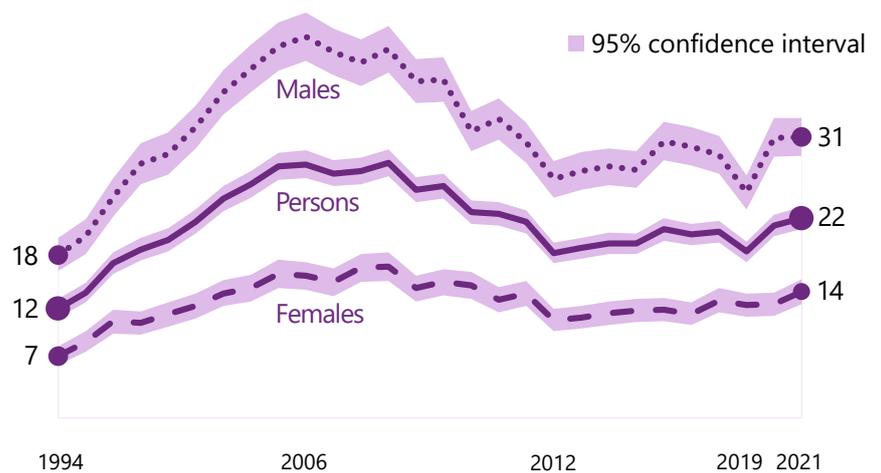
Number of deaths



Alcohol-specific mortality rate rises slowly since 2012

The rate of alcohol-specific mortality fell between 2006 and 2012. Since then it has generally risen, but did fall in 2019. Most of the increase since 2019 has come from male deaths.

Age-standardised rate of mortality (deaths per 100,000 people)



Rates are 5.6 times as high in most deprived areas compared to least deprived

Alcohol-specific mortality has increased in Scotland's most deprived areas in the last two years. This has increased the disparity between the most and least deprived areas, in terms of alcohol mortality.

Age-standardised rate of mortality (deaths per 100,000 people)

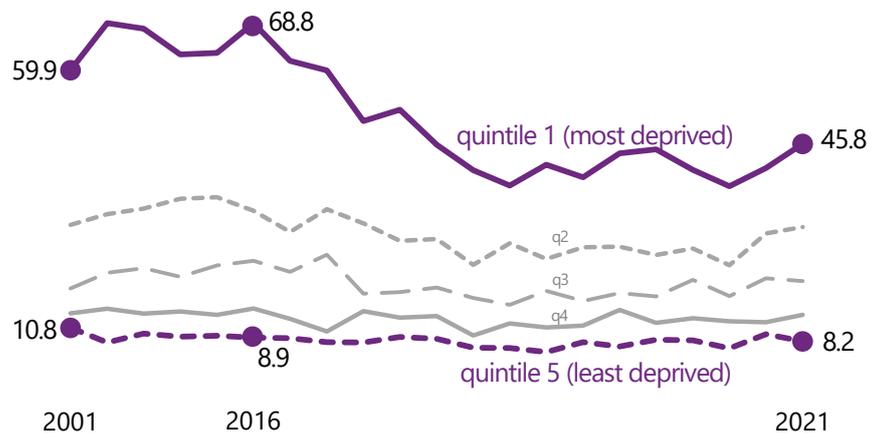


Table of Contents

1. Key Findings	4
2. Alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland	5
3. Alcohol-specific deaths in Scottish areas.....	7
4. Multiple deprivation and urban rural.....	9
5. Related Statistics	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. Notes on statistical publications.....	10

1. Key Findings

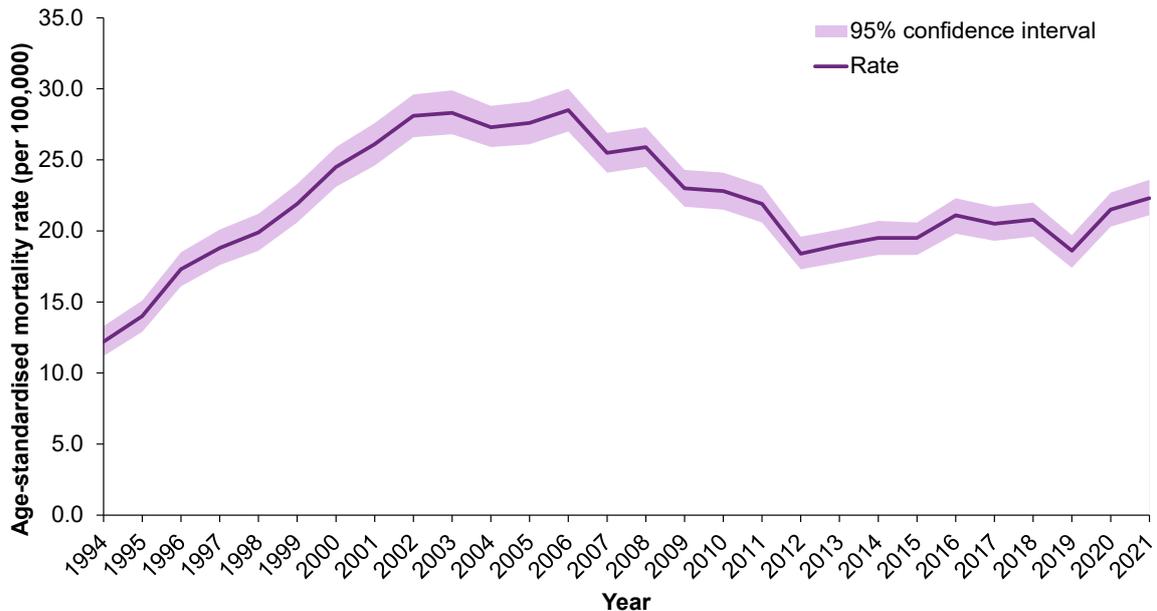
- There were 1,245 alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland in 2021, an increase of 5% (55 deaths) on 2020. The rate of mortality for alcohol-specific deaths fell between 2006 and 2012, from 28.5 to 18.4 deaths per 100,000 people. Since then it has generally risen, but did fall in 2019.
- The rate of mortality from alcohol-specific causes was 22.3 deaths per 100,000 people in 2021. This is not a statistically significant increase on 21.5 deaths per 100,000 in 2020.
- Two thirds of alcohol-specific deaths were males - there were 836 (67%) male deaths and 409 (33%) female deaths. Males have generally tended to make up around two thirds of alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland.
- Alcohol-specific deaths in females tend to be at slightly younger ages than for males. In 2021, the average age of death for females was 58.7 years and for males it was 59.7 years.
- After adjusting for age, the alcohol-specific mortality rate was higher than the Scottish average in Greater Glasgow and Clyde and in Lanarkshire (at health board level).
- Alcohol-specific deaths were 5.6 times as likely in the most deprived areas of Scotland compared to the least deprived areas. This compares to a ratio of 1.9 times for all causes of death. Over time, this ratio has generally decreased (from a high 8.9 in 2002 to a low of 4.3 in 2020).

2. Alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland

There were 1,245 alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland in 2021, an increase of 5% (55 deaths) on 2020. This is the highest number of alcohol-specific deaths registered in a year since 2008.

The rate of mortality from alcohol-specific causes was 22.3 deaths per 100,000 people in 2021 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Age standardised mortality rate for alcohol-specific deaths, 1994-2021



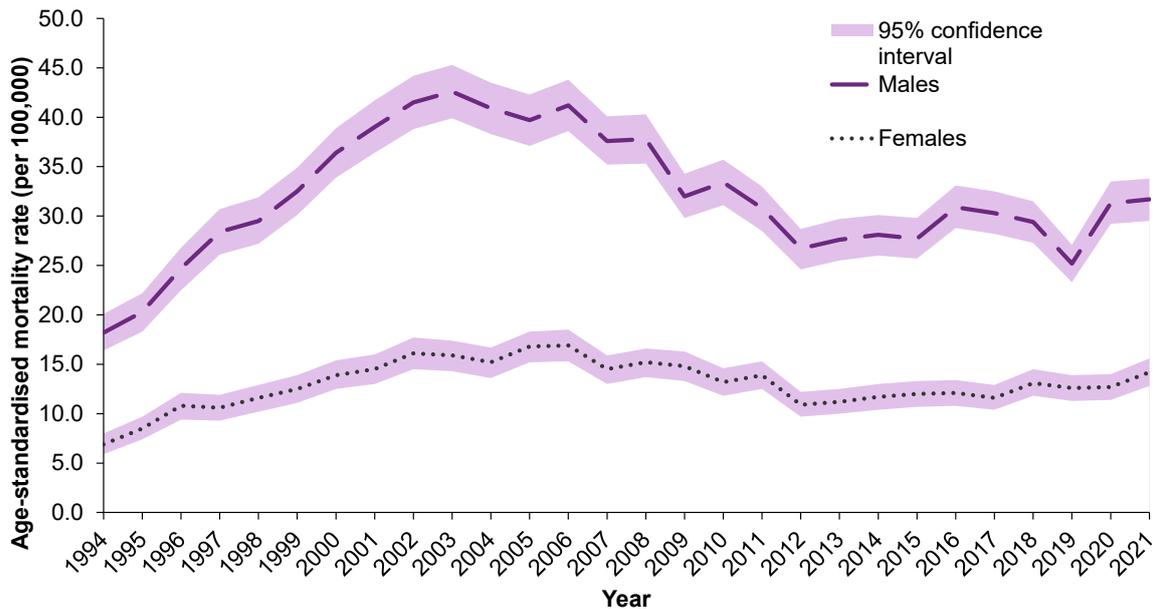
The rate of mortality for alcohol-specific deaths fell between 2006 and 2012, from 28.5 to 18.4 deaths per 100,000 people. Since then it has generally risen, but did fall in 2019. The current rate of mortality is now at a similar level to the 2010 rate.

What are age-standardised rates?

Age-standardised mortality rates are a better measure of mortality than numbers of deaths, as they account for the population size and age structure and provide more reliable comparisons between groups or over time.

More information on the calculation of age-standardised mortality rates is available on our website.

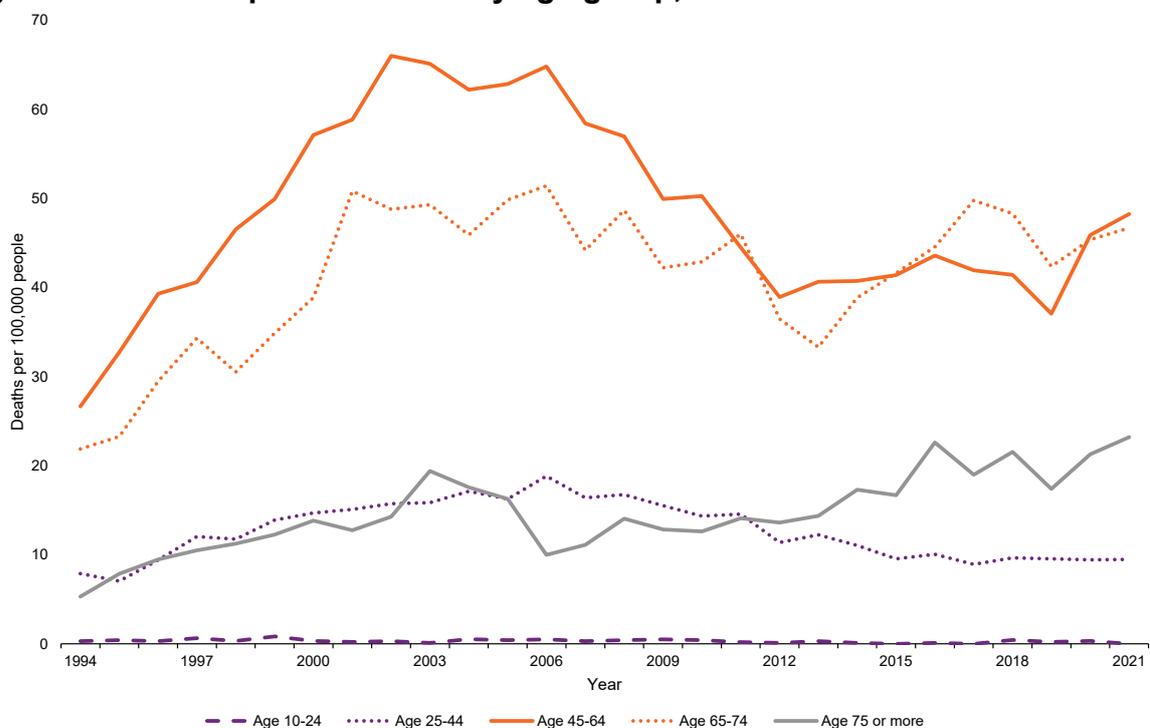
Figure 2: Age-standardised mortality rate for alcohol-specific deaths, by sex, 1994-2021



In 2021 there were 836 (67%) male deaths and 409 (33%) female deaths from alcohol-specific causes. Males have generally tended to make up around two thirds of alcohol specific deaths in Scotland in recent years.

The rates for males and females have not changed significantly in the past year. It is notable that the drop in 2019 occurred only in males, with females staying at a fairly stable level over recent years (Figure 2).

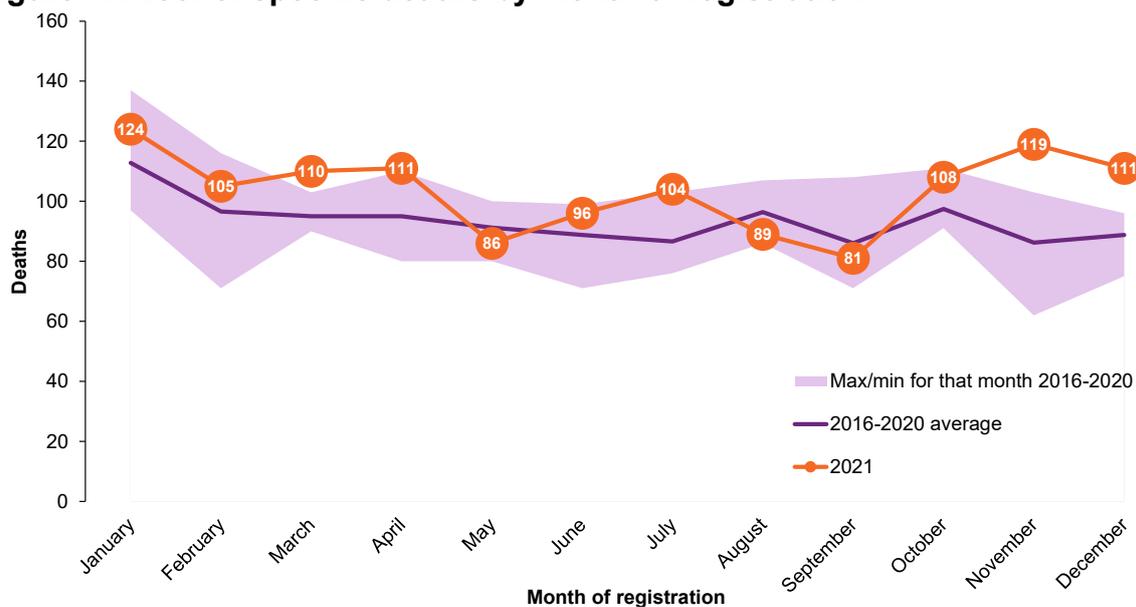
Figure 3: Alcohol-specific deaths by age group, 1979-2021



Alcohol-specific deaths in females tend to be at slightly younger ages than for males. In 2021, the average age of death for females was 58.7 years and for males it was 59.7 years.

The mortality rates for the age 45-64 and age 65-74 age groups are the highest, and have been the highest since the data was first available. For the oldest age group (age 75+) the rate of alcohol-specific mortality has generally increased since 2006, but is still at about half the level of the two highest age groups. For age 25-44, the rate of mortality has generally fallen since 2006.

Figure 4: Alcohol-specific deaths by month of registration

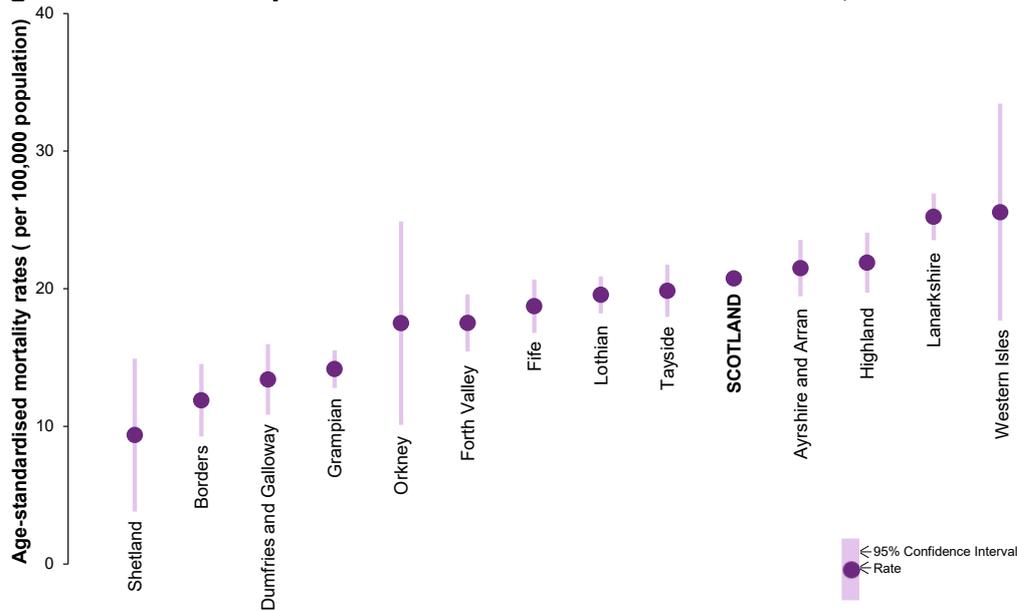


In 2021, alcohol-specific deaths were higher than the five year average for that month in nine out of twelve months (Figure 4). On average, January has had the highest amount of alcohol-specific deaths and this was the case again in 2021 (124 deaths).

3. Alcohol-specific deaths in Scottish areas

In the past five years, after adjusting for age, the rate of mortality from alcohol-specific deaths was higher than the Scottish average in Greater Glasgow and Clyde and in Lanarkshire.

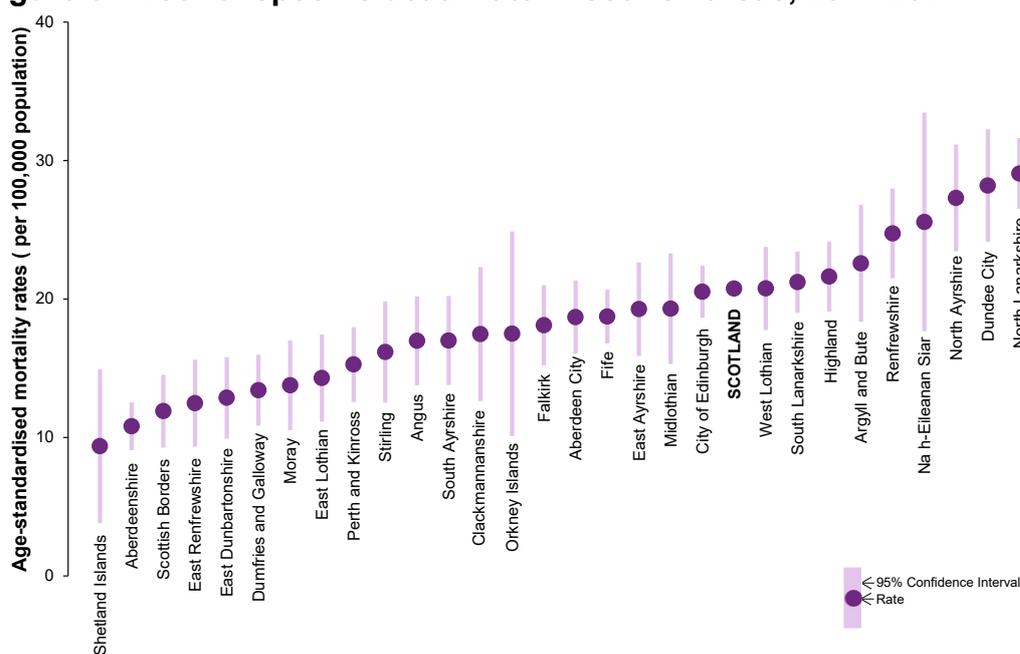
Figure 5: Alcohol-specific death rate in NHS board areas, 2017-2021



While the rate for Western Isles is higher than the Scottish average, the confidence interval is so large that it is hard to tell if it is truly higher. This is due to the fact that Western Isles has a small population (Figure 5). In the 2014 to 2018 estimates, Western Isles had a rate that was higher than Scotland by a statistically significant amount.

At council area in the last five years, Inverclyde, Glasgow City, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Dundee City, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire all had alcohol-specific death rates higher than the Scottish average. Some other areas also had rates higher than the Scottish average, but had large confidence intervals which make it hard to tell whether there was a true difference. (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Alcohol-specific death rate in council areas, 2017-2021



4. Multiple deprivation and urban rural

Alcohol-specific deaths were 5.6 times as frequent in the most deprived areas of Scotland compared to the least deprived areas. This compares to a ratio of 1.9 times for all causes of death.

This disparity in rates of alcohol-specific death has generally fallen over time, but has risen again in the past few years (Figure 7). There has been a clear and consistent trend over time showing alcohol-specific deaths are more common in more deprived areas.

In urban and rural areas, the pattern has been less clear over time and there doesn't appear to be as strong a relationship between changing levels of rurality and the rate of alcohol-specific deaths (Figure 8).

In 2021, alcohol-specific deaths were 1.7 times as likely to be in large urban areas compared to remote rural areas. The lowest rate was seen in accessible rural areas (13.6 per 100,000 people) but the difference between the bottom three categories was not statistically significant

Figure 7: Alcohol-specific death rate in SIMD quintiles

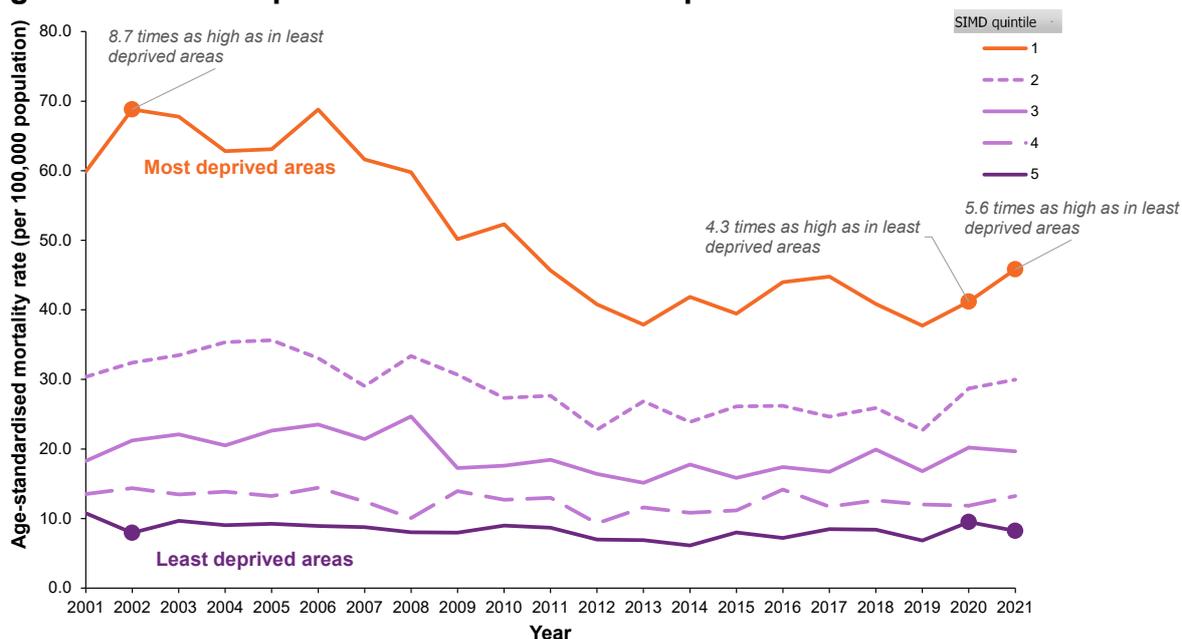
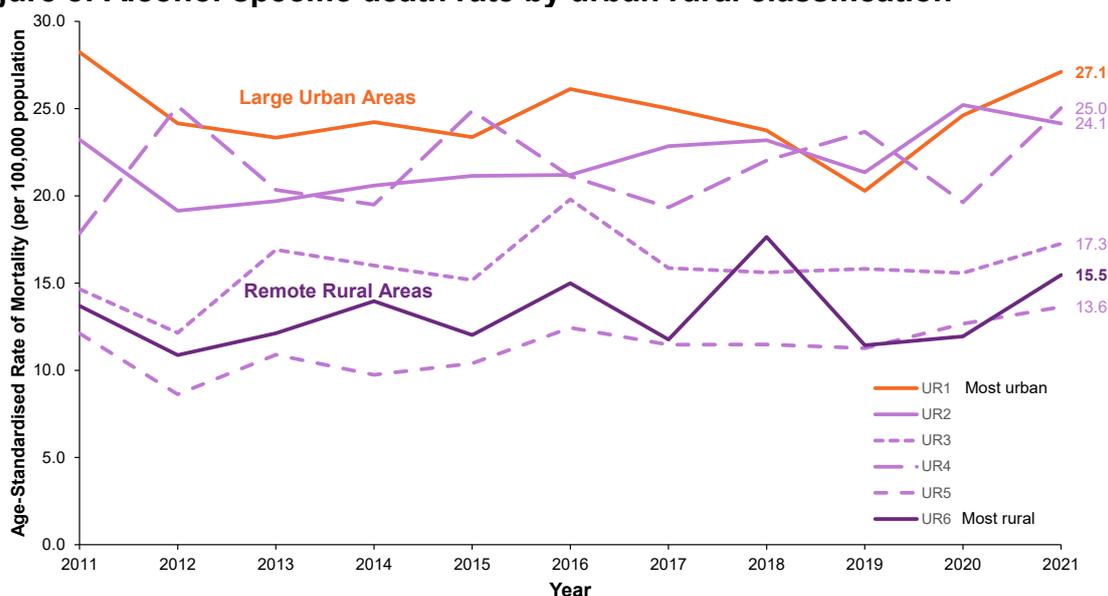


Figure 8: Alcohol-specific death rate by urban rural classification



5. Comparisons with the rest of the UK

Scotland and Northern Ireland have had the highest alcohol-specific death rates in both of the last two years for which comparable data exists (2019 and 2020). Data for the rest of the UK is yet to be released for 2021. Before this, the rate in Scotland was the highest in its own right. The difference between Scotland and the other UK countries has generally narrowed over the last twenty years. Taking England as an example, in 2001 Scotland was 2.9 times as high and in 2020 it was 1.7 times as high.

More information and analysis on trends across the UK is available in the ONS publication of [Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK](#).

6. Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) 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 [UKSA](#) 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, etc. can be found in the metadata that is published alongside this publication on the NRS website.

National Records of Scotland

We, the National Records of Scotland, are a non-ministerial department of the devolved Scottish Administration. Our aim is to provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland. We do this as follows:

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](#).

You can also follow us on twitter [@NatRecordsScot](#)

Enquiries and suggestions

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

E-mail: statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

Lead Statistician: Julie Ramsay