

Alcohol-specific deaths

2022

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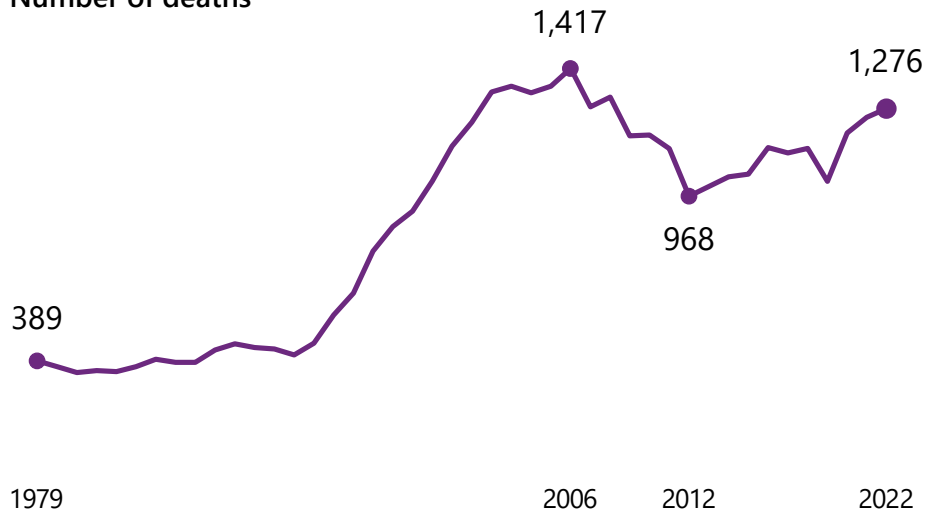
This statistical report details information on the number of deaths that were registered in Scotland in 2022 which are classified as alcohol-specific. It also includes breakdowns by sex, age, cause of death and deprivation.

Small increase in alcohol-specific deaths in 2022

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, there were 31 more deaths than in 2021.

Number of deaths

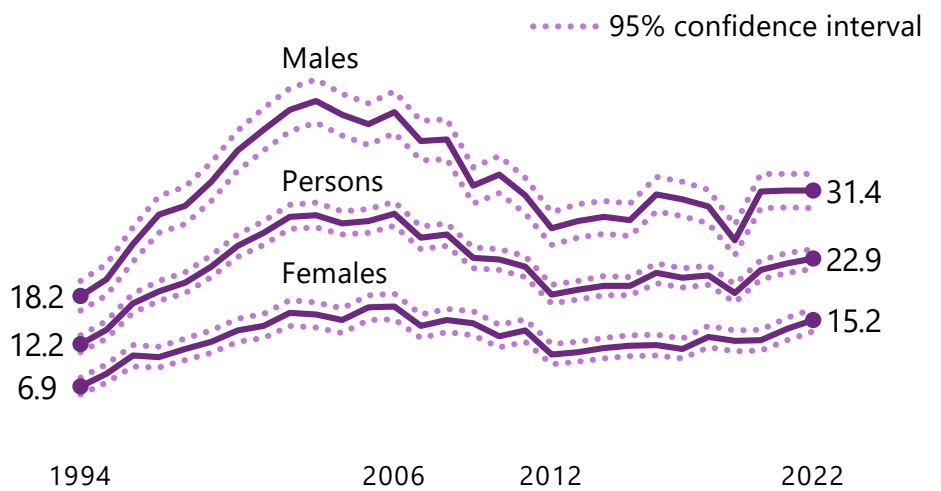


Alcohol-specific mortality rate rises slowly since 2012

The rate of alcohol-specific mortality fell between 2006 and 2012. Since then it has generally risen.

Males deaths continue to account for around two thirds of all alcohol-specific deaths.

Age standardised mortality rate (per 100,000 population)



Rates are 4.3 times as high in most deprived areas compared to least deprived

The gap between alcohol-specific mortality rates in the most and least deprived areas has narrowed over time. However, alcohol-specific deaths continue to be more common in more deprived areas.

Age standardised mortality rate (per 100,000 population)

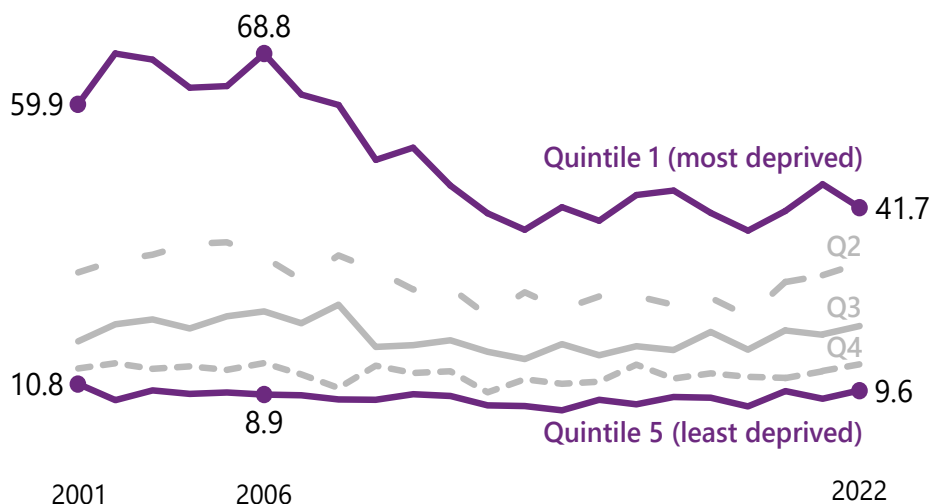


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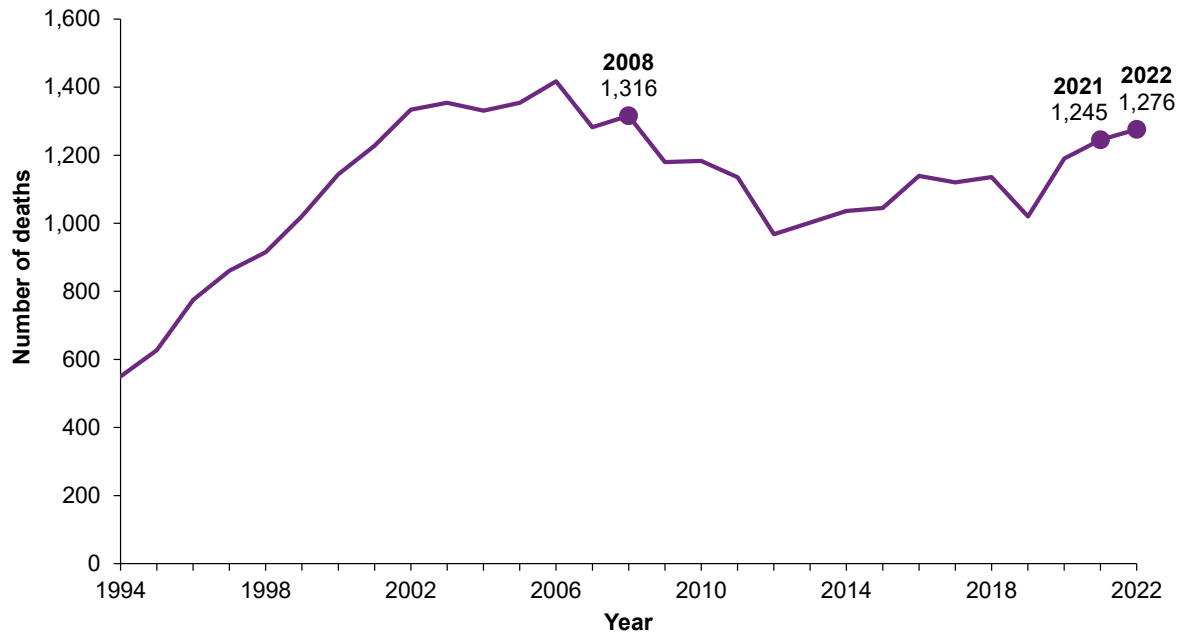
1. Main Findings

- There were 1,276 alcohol-specific deaths registered in Scotland in 2022, an increase of 2% (31 deaths) on 2021.
- Female deaths increased by 31 to 440 deaths in 2022, with the number of alcohol-specific male deaths unchanged from 2021. Male deaths continue to account for around two thirds of alcohol-specific deaths.
- The rate of mortality for alcohol-specific deaths was 22.9 deaths per 100,000 people in 2022, similar to the rate of 22.3 per 100,000 people in 2021 (the increase is not statistically significant). This measure takes into account the size and age-structure of the population.
- After adjusting for age, the alcohol-specific mortality rate was higher than the Scottish average in the health board areas of Western Isles, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and Lanarkshire.
- Alcohol-specific deaths were 4.3 times as high in the most deprived areas of Scotland compared to the least deprived areas in 2022. This compares to a ratio of 1.8 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 2022).

2. Alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland

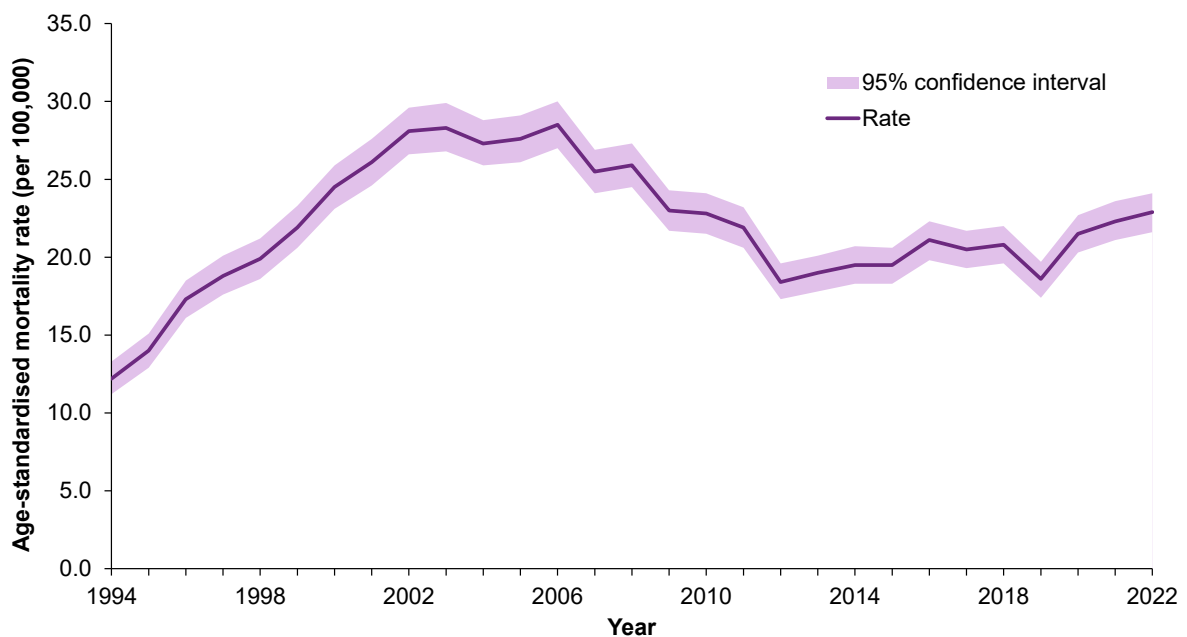
There were 1,276 alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland in 2021, an increase of 2% (31 deaths) on 2020. This is the highest number of alcohol-specific deaths registered in a year since 2008 (Figure 1a).

Figure 1a: Number of alcohol-specific deaths, 1994-2022



The rate of mortality from alcohol-specific causes was 22.9 deaths per 100,000 people in 2022 (Figure 1b).

Figure 1b: Age-standardised mortality rate for alcohol-specific deaths, 1994-2022



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.

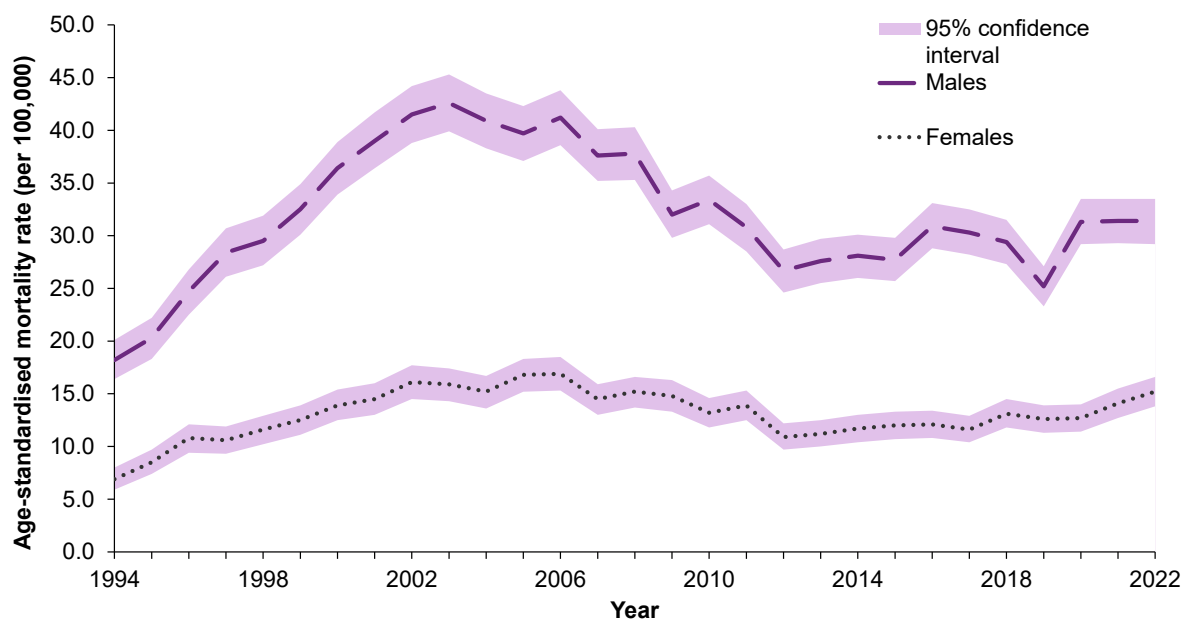
3. Alcohol-specific deaths by age and sex

In 2022 there were 836 (66%) male deaths and 440 (34%) 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 increase in deaths in 2022 was driven by an increase of 31 female deaths. The number of male deaths is unchanged from 2021.

The rates for males and females have not changed significantly in the past year. It is notable that the drop in rate in 2019 occurred only in males, with the rates for females showing a slow but gradual increase over the last decade (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Age-standardised mortality rate for alcohol-specific deaths, by sex, 1994-2022

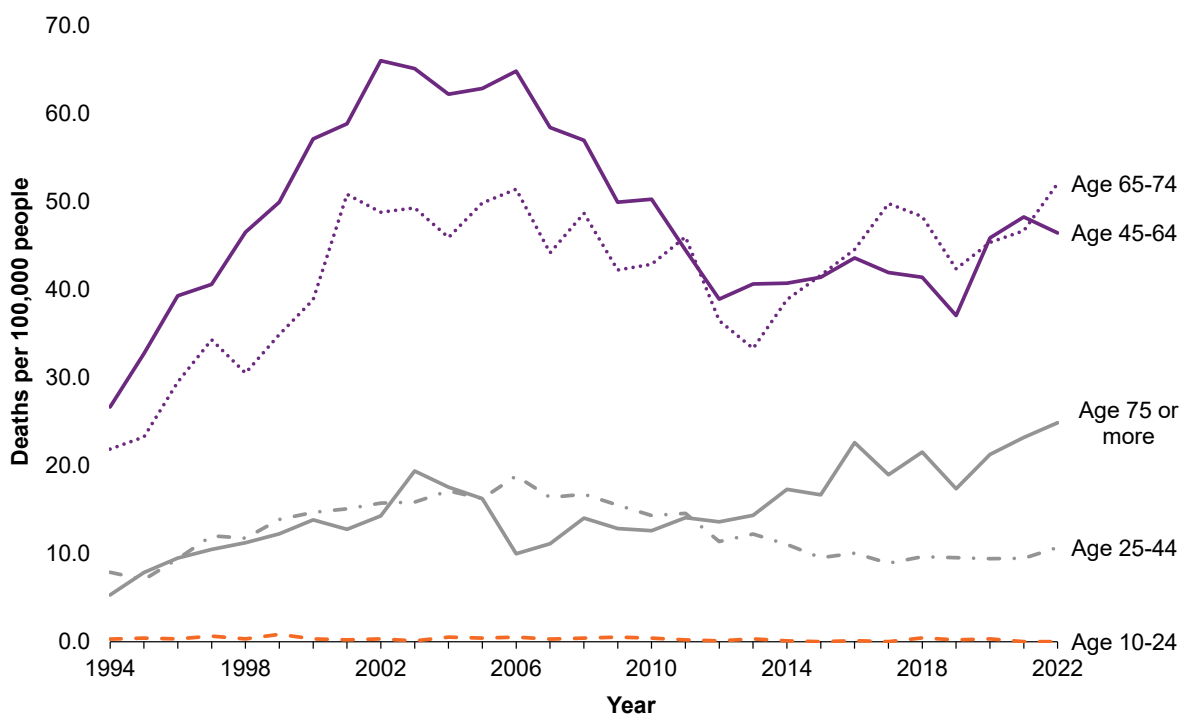


Alcohol-specific deaths in females tend to be at slightly younger ages than for males. In 2022, the average age of death for females was 58.7 years and for males it was 60.0 years.

Mortality rates for the age groups 45-64 and 65-74 are the highest and have been the highest since the data was first available (Figure 3). For the oldest age group (age 75+) the rate of alcohol-specific mortality has generally increased since 2006, but it the rate is still about half of both of the two highest age groups. For age 25-44, the rate of mortality has generally fallen since 2006.

In 2022, the rates for the two oldest age groups (age 65-74 and age 75+) were the highest rates in their respective age groups since the data was first available.

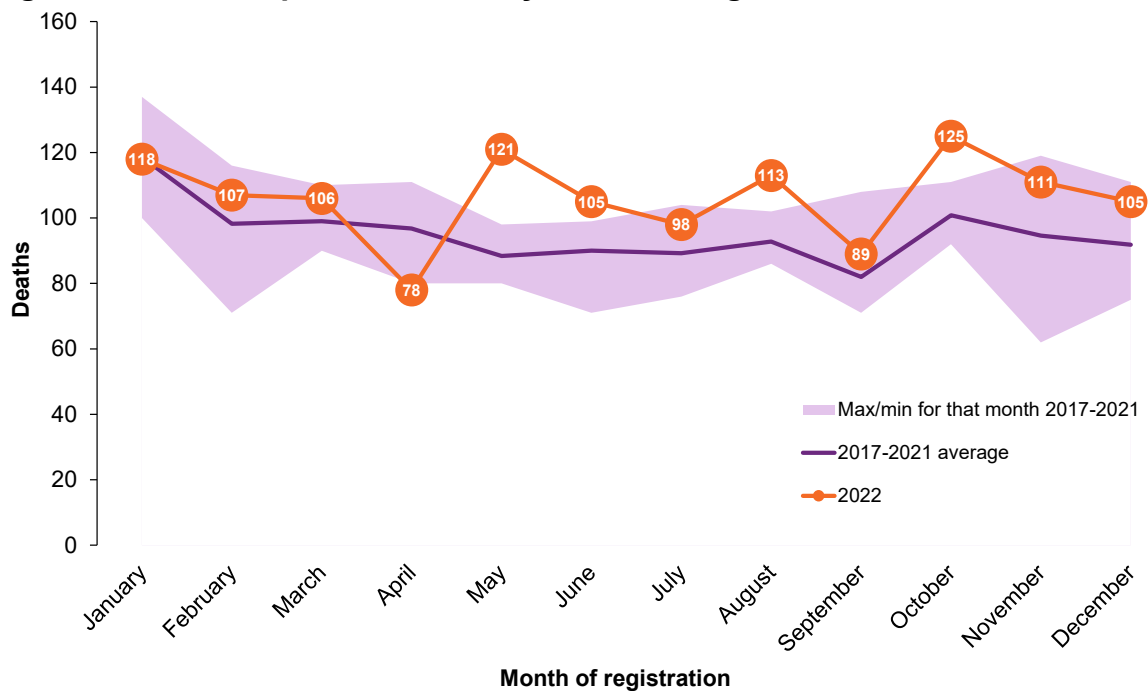
Figure 3: Age-specific mortality rate for alcohol-specific deaths by age group, 1994-2022



4. Alcohol-specific deaths by month of registration

In 2022, alcohol-specific deaths were higher than the five-year average for that month in 10 out of 12 months (Figure 4). On average, January has had the highest number of alcohol-specific deaths in the last five years, however there were more deaths in both October (125 deaths) and May (121 deaths) than January in 2022.

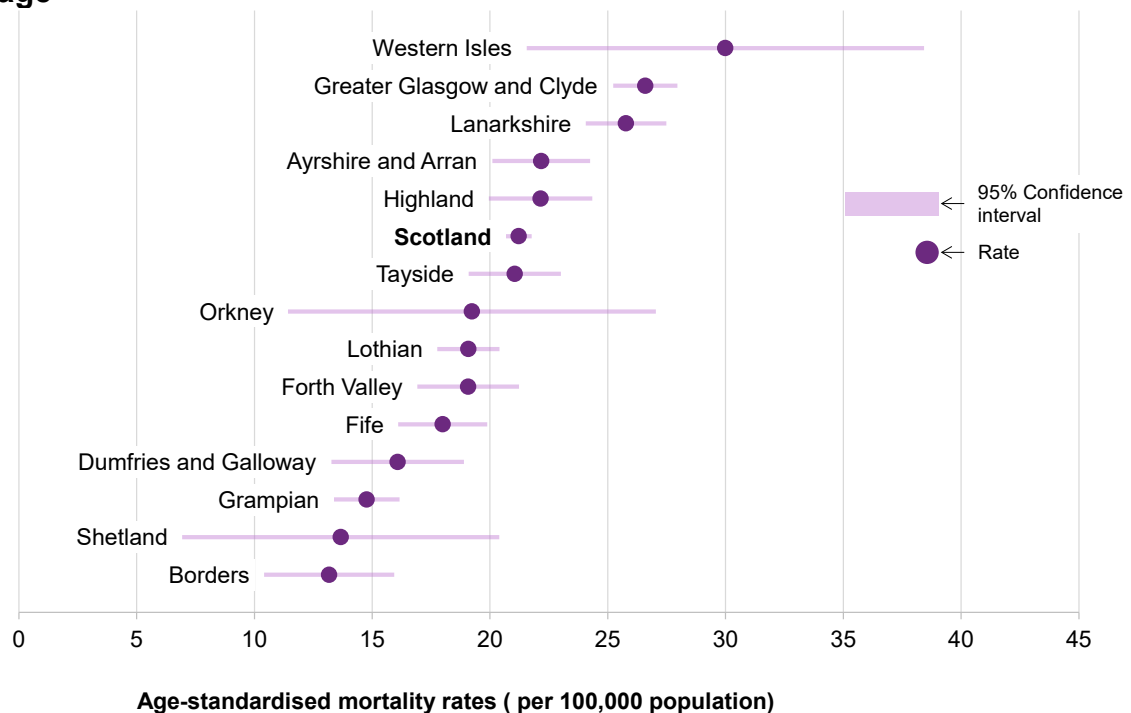
Figure 4: Alcohol-specific deaths by month of registration



5. 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 the NHS Board areas Western Isles, Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Lanarkshire (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Age-standardised mortality rates in NHS board areas, 2018-2022 average



At council area in the last five years, Inverclyde, Glasgow City, Na h-Eileanan Siar, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Dundee City and North Ayrshire 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: Age-standardised mortality rates in council areas, 2018-2022 average

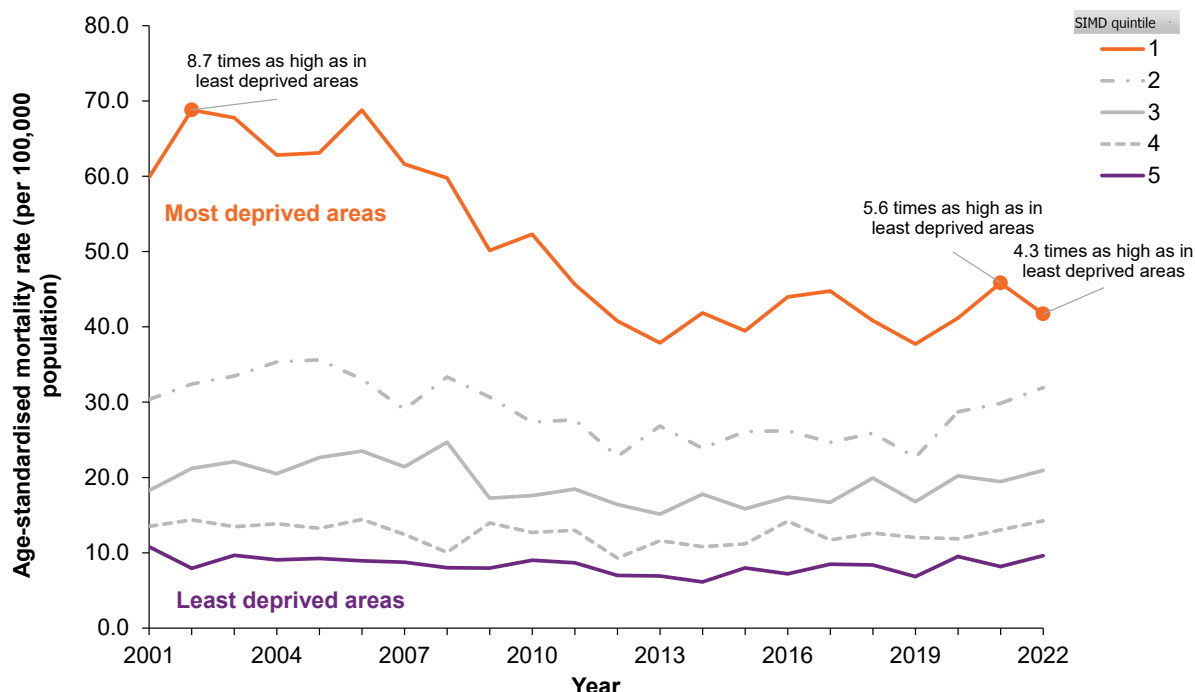


6. Multiple deprivation and urban rural

Alcohol-specific deaths were 4.3 times as frequent in the most deprived areas of Scotland compared to the least deprived areas. This compares to a ratio of 1.8 times for all causes of death.

This disparity in rates of alcohol-specific death has generally fallen over time but has fluctuated more 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.

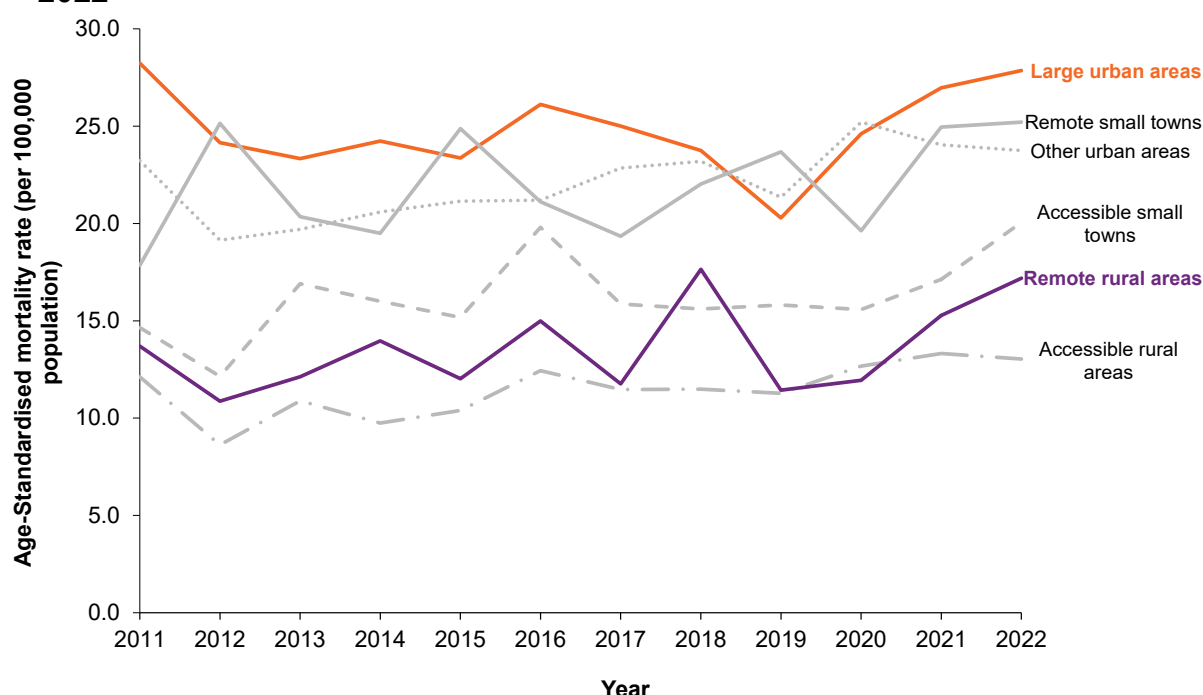
Figure 7: Age-standardised mortality rates in SIMD quintiles, 2001-2022



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). Generally, the rates in large urban areas, other urban areas and remote small towns are higher than other groupings.

In 2022, alcohol-specific deaths were 1.6 times as likely to be in large urban areas compared to remote rural areas. The lowest mortality rate was seen in accessible rural areas (13.0 per 100,000 people) but the difference between accessible and remote rural areas was not statistically significant.

Figure 8: Age-standardised mortality rates by urban-rural classification, 2011-2022



7. Comparisons with the rest of the UK

Scotland continued to have the highest alcohol-specific death rate of the UK constituent countries in 2021 (the latest year for which comparable data exists). Data for the rest of the UK is yet to be released for 2022.

The difference between Scotland and the other UK countries has generally narrowed over the last twenty years. Taking England as an example, in 2001 the rate for Scotland was 2.9 times as high and in 2021 it was 1.6 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](#).

8. 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.

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Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

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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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Enquiries and suggestions

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