Alcohol-related Deaths in the UK, 2010

Coverage: UK  
Date: 26 January 2012  
Geographical Area: Region  
Theme: Health and Social Care  
Theme: Population

Alcohol-related deaths in the United Kingdom, 2010

- In 2010 there were 8,790 alcohol-related deaths in the UK, 126 more than in 2009 (8,664).

- There are more alcohol-related deaths in males than in females, with 67 per cent of all alcohol-related deaths in the UK in 2010 being male.

- Alcohol-related death rates were highest for those aged 55-74 and lowest for those aged under 35 over the last ten years.

- UK males aged 55-74 years showed a sharp and statistically significant increase in alcohol-related death rate from 41.8 per 100,000 in 2009 to 45.2 per 100,000 in 2010.

- Alcohol-related death rates varied between the regions of England and tended to be highest in the North and lowest in the East of England over the last ten years.

- Within England and Wales, alcohol-related death rates are higher in Wales. In 2010 this difference was statistically significant.

Summary

This annual bulletin presents alcohol-related death figures and age-standardised rates for the UK, England, Wales, and regions of England for 2010. This updates the previous release 'Alcohol-related deaths in the United Kingdom, 2000-2009' which includes more detailed commentary on trends in alcohol-related deaths over a ten-year period. Data for Scotland and Northern Ireland are published separately; see the 'Context' section for details.

There were 8,790 alcohol-related deaths in the UK in 2010, an increase of 126 on the number recorded in 2009 (8,664). This increase has been limited to males with the number of deaths
increasing from 5,690 deaths (17.4 per 100,000 population) in 2009 to 5,865 (17.8 per 100,000) in 2010. The number of female deaths fell between 2009 and 2010 from 2,974 (8.4 per 100,000) in 2009 to 2,925 (8.3 per 100,000) in 2010 (See figure 1).

Alcohol-related death rates in the UK were highest among men and women aged 55–74 years. In 2010, age-standardised rates for these groups were 45.2 and 19.9 per 100,000, respectively.

There were fewest alcohol-related deaths among people aged under 35 years. Rates could not be calculated for the under 15s due to small numbers, however in 2010 rates for males and females aged 15-34 were 2.7 and 1.5 per 100,000, respectively.

Males aged 55-74 years showed a sharp and statistically significant increase in the alcohol-related death rate from 41.8 per 100,000 in 2009 to 45.2 per 100,000 in 2010. This rise indicates a return to the long-term trend of increasing death rate for this age-group but there is no clear reason for this. No statistically significant change in rate was observed for males or females in any other age-group.

Across the regions of England there was significant geographical variation in alcohol-related death rates. In 2010, rates for males were highest in the North East (22.6 per 100,000) and lowest in the East of England (11.7 per 100,000). For females, rates were highest in the North West (11.7 per 100,000) and lowest in the East of England (5.5 per 100,000).

Alcohol-related death figures for the UK, England, Wales and the regions of England for 2000 to 2010 are presented below in Tables 1 and 2 for males and Tables 3 and 4 for females.

**Figure 1. Alcohol-related death rates, 2000-2010**

United Kingdom
Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Notes:
1. A common definition of alcohol-related death is used across the United Kingdom; see the 'Definition' section for further information
2. Rates per 100,000 population, standardised to the European Standard Population
3. Deaths of non-residents are included in figures for the UK
4. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year

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Context

Excessive consumption of alcohol is a major preventable cause of premature mortality with alcohol-related deaths accounting for almost 1.5 per cent of all deaths in England and Wales in 2010. In 2008, the Department of Health published a report titled ‘The cost of alcohol harm to the NHS in England’ (Department of Health, 2008) which estimated that the cost of alcohol harm to the National Health Service (NHS) in England is £2.7 billion each year (2006/07 prices).

There is widespread policy, professional and public interest in the prevalence of alcohol-related deaths in the UK. The main users of these statistics include the Department of Health and other devolved health administrations, public health observatories and local government. The figures on alcohol-related deaths are used to monitor and develop policies to protect the health of the public. In November 2010, the government published a White Paper titled ‘Healthy lives, healthy people: our strategy for public health in England’ (Department of Health, 2010) which outlines the government’s commitment to protecting the population from serious health threats and helping people to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives. Among other lifestyle and behavioural factors, the paper highlights the harmful effects of alcohol abuse and the associated cost to the NHS.

Non-government users include charitable organisations such as Drinkaware, Alcohol in Moderation and Addaction. These organisations use the statistics to educate people about the risks associated with alcohol consumption, to target support services to vulnerable group and to inform public opinion and policy. Many of these organisations have also signed up as partners to the government’s Public Health Responsibility Deal (Department of Health, 2011) in which public, private and voluntary organisations sign-up and work collaboratively to address key public health issues, including alcohol abuse. Academics and researchers use the statistics to investigate the causes and the impact of alcohol-related deaths.

The statistics are used by local and national media to report on geographical and temporal trends in alcohol-related deaths and to comment on the effectiveness or potential effectiveness of government policies and are of great interest to the general public.
This statistical bulletin presents figures for the UK, England and Wales and regions of England. Statistics for Scotland, published by National Records of Scotland and statistics for Northern Ireland, published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are available at the links below.

Scotland - GRO Scotland: Alcohol-related deaths

Northern Ireland - NISRA: Alcohol-related deaths

The World Health Organization has developed the WHO Global Information System on Alcohol and Health (available at the link below) which contains over 200 indicators to allow alcohol consumption and the effects of consumption, including mortality, to be compared on an international basis across continents. Both ONS and the WHO publish age-standardised mortality rates which allow meaningful comparisons between geographical areas by accounting for differences in the age structure of their populations. However, since the WHO publishes its statistics using a standard designed for populations with a much younger age profile, the data held on the WHO system is not comparable to the statistics presented in this bulletin.

World Health Organisation: Global Health Atlas

United Kingdom

The number of alcohol-related deaths in the UK increased slightly between 2009 and 2010, rising from 8,664 (12.8 per 100,000) to 8,790 (12.9 per 100,000) and following a fall in deaths in the year before. The number of alcohol-related deaths grew steadily between 2000 and 2006, increasing from 6,884 (11.2 per 100,000) in 2000 to 8,758 (13.4 per 100,000) in 2006. Between 2006 and 2010, the trend has been more variable, showing a decrease in the number of deaths in 2007 and 2009 but increases in 2008 and 2010.

This increase in the number of alcohol-related deaths in 2010 was driven by an increase in the number of deaths in men, which increased from 5,690 (17.4 per 100,000) in 2009 to 5,865 (17.8 per 100,000) in 2010. The number of deaths for females fell between 2009 and 2010 from 2,974 (8.4 per 100,000) in 2009 to 2,925 (8.3 per 100,000) in 2010.

There are more alcohol-related deaths in males than in females, with 67 per cent of all alcohol-related deaths in the UK in 2010 being male. The number of alcohol-related deaths in males increased over the 2000-06 period but has been more volatile over the last five years with rates ranging from 17.4 per 100,000 in 2009 to 18.7 per 100,000 in 2008. For females, the number of deaths also increased between 2000 and 2006 but has decreased steadily between 2006 and 2010, falling from 8.8 per 100,000 in 2006 to 8.3 per 100,000 in 2010.

The causes of death defined as alcohol-related in this bulletin (see the ‘Definition’ section for details) are those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption. Data on alcohol consumption in Great Britain, collected as part of the General Lifestyle Survey (GLF) and presented in the Smoking and drinking among adults, 2009 Report (ONS, 2011a), showed that alcohol consumption between 1992 and 2009 was higher in males than in females. This difference
in consumption is likely to be the main factor responsible for the higher number of alcohol-related deaths that are observed in males than in females.

GLF data also show that alcohol consumption for both males and females tended to increase until 2000–02 and declined thereafter (data available to 2009, 2010 data on alcohol consumption will be available in March 2011 in the GLF (ONS, 2011b)). However, despite an apparent decrease in alcohol consumption, it is likely that it will take a number of years for any resulting reduction in alcohol-related deaths to become apparent as diseases associated with excessive alcohol consumption are often slow to develop. For example, Alcoholic Liver Disease, the most prevalent of all alcohol-related causes of death included in this bulletin, responsible for approximately 64 per cent of all alcohol-related deaths in 2010, takes approximately ten years to develop.

Trends in the number of alcohol-related deaths differ according to age. In 2010, and the previous decade, the highest alcohol-related death rate occurred in males aged 55–74. In 2010 the rate for this group was 45.2 per 100,000, a sharp and statistically significant increase from a rate of 41.8 per 100,000 in 2009. The lowest male rate was in those aged 15–34; the rate for this group in 2010 was 2.7 per 100,000, a slight rise from a rate of 2.6 per 100,000 in 2009. The alcohol-related death rates in 2010 for males aged 35–54 and those aged 75 years and over were 28.6 and 22.8 per 100,000, respectively, a fall on the rates observed in 2009. Death rates were not calculated for persons aged under 15 years of age due to the small number of deaths.

Similarly for females, the alcohol-related death rate between 2000 and 2010 was highest in females aged 55–75. The rate for this group was 19.9 per 100,000 in 2010, a decrease on the previous year. Rates were lowest in women aged 15–34. The rate for this age group in 2010 was 1.5 per 100,000. In 2010 the rates for women aged 35–54 and 75 and over were 13.6 and 11.5 per 100,000, respectively. For all age groups, the rate in 2010 was lower or the same as the rate in 2009.
Figure 2. Alcohol-related death rates by age group, males, 2000-2010

United Kingdom

Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Notes:
1. A common definition of alcohol-related death is used across the United Kingdom; see the 'Definition' section for further information
2. Rates per 100,000 population, standardised to the European Standard Population
3. Rates not calculated for persons aged under 15 due to small numbers
4. Deaths of non-residents are included in figures for the UK
5. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year

Download chart

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**Figure 3. Alcohol-related death rates by age group, females, 2000-2010**

United Kingdom

![Graph showing alcohol-related death rates by age group, females, 2000-2010.](image)

Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

**Notes:**
1. A common definition of alcohol-related death is used across the United Kingdom; see the 'Definition' section for further information
2. Rates per 100,000 population, standardised to the European Standard Population
3. Rates not calculated for persons aged under 15 due to small numbers
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5. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year

**Download chart**

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**England**

Figures for alcohol-related deaths in England show a similar pattern to figures for the UK. The number of male deaths increased between 2009 and 2010 from 4,315 (15.8 per 100,000) in 2009 to 4,439 (16.1 per 100,000) where the number of female deaths fell from 2,267 (7.7 per 100,000) in 2009 to 2,230 (7.5 per 100,000) in 2010.

Between 2000 and 2006, the number of alcohol-related deaths has generally increased for both sexes. Since 2006, the trend in the number of male deaths has been more variable with rates ranging from 15.8 per 100,000 (4,315 deaths) in 2009 to at 16.7 per 100,000 (4,476 deaths) in 2008.
For females, the number of deaths continued to increase until 2007 but then began to decrease falling from 8.0 per 100,000 (2,310 deaths) in 2007 to 7.5 per 100,000 (2,230 deaths) in 2010.

Males and females aged 55–74 had the highest alcohol-related death rates in 2010 and over the previous decade. Rates in 2010 were 40.3 per 100,000 for men and 18.2 per 100,000 for women. The lowest rates were in those aged 15–34. In 2010 the rates for this age group were 2.5 per 100,000 for males and 1.3 per 100,000 for females.

Regions of England

There is variation in alcohol-related death rates between the regions of England. Over the last ten years, rates for both males and females tended to be highest in the North West and lowest in the East of England. However in 2010, an increase in the rate for males in the North East, from 20.6 per 100,000 in 2009 to 22.6 per 100,000, meant the North East region had the highest rate for males. For females, rates were highest in the North West in 2010 at 11.7 per 100,000. In the East of England, the region with the lowest rate for both sexes in 2010, the male rate was 11.7 per 100,000 and the female rate was 5.5 per 100,000.

Figure 4. Alcohol-related death rates, with 95 per cent confidence intervals, by region, 2010

England

Notes:
1. A common definition of alcohol-related death is used across the United Kingdom; see the 'Definition' section for further information
2. Rates per 100,000 population, standardised to the European Standard Population
3. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year
Alcohol-related deaths have tended to increase for all regions since 2000. For males, death rates in all regions increased between 2000 and 2010 with the exception of London where rates decreased during the period. For females, the trends were more variable between regions. Death rates increased in the North, the Midlands and in Yorkshire and the Humber, but decreased in London and showed little change in the South and East of England.

The only region where a decrease in rates was observed in males between 2009 and 2010 was the North West although this decrease was not statistically significant. For females, the changes between 2009 and 2010 were more variable.

A study conducted by Breakwell et al. in 2007, which examined geographical variation in the number of alcohol-related deaths between 1991 and 2004, found a strong association between death rates and deprivation in England and Wales, with death rates being higher in the most deprived areas. A study by Siegler et al. (2011), demonstrated that alcohol-related deaths also varied by socio-economic class with higher death rates in those in the most disadvantaged classes. The study also showed that socio-economic inequalities varied geographically.

Wales

The alcohol-related death rate was higher in Wales than in England. In 2010, rates for males and females in Wales were 18.9 and 10.2 per 100,000, significantly higher than the rates in England (16.1 and 7.5 per 100,000 respectively). Between 2000 and 2006 the difference between the rate in Wales and England remained approximately constant for both males and females. However, since 2006, the gap has increased, particularly for males where there has been a statistically significant difference since 2007.

Results from the General Lifestyles Survey show that, in 2009, average consumption of alcohol was higher in Wales than in England. The survey showed that in Wales, the average weekly consumption was 12.4 units of alcohol compared to 11.9 units consumed by persons in England.

Overall, the number of alcohol-related deaths in all persons in Wales increased between 2000 and 2006 from 340 deaths in 2000 to 430 deaths in 2006. For males, the number of deaths increased from 271 (17.2 per 100,000) in 2006 to a peak of 344 (21.4 per 100,000) in 2008 before decreasing to 309 (18.9 per 100,000) in 2010. For females, movements between subsequent years since 2006 were more variable ranging from 151 deaths (8.6 per 100,000) in 2007 to 197 (11.0 per 100,000) in 2008.
As for the United Kingdom and England, death rate differed by age-group. The highest number of alcohol-related deaths occurred in those aged 55–74 years for both sexes. In 2010, the rates for men and women in this age group were 48.7 and 24.2 per 100,000, respectively, a sharp but not statistically significant increase on the rates observed in 2009, particularly for women.
### Data Tables - Males

#### Table 1. Male alcohol-related death rates: by country and region of England, 2006-2010

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**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. A common definition of alcohol-related death is used across the United Kingdom; see the 'Definition' section for further information
2. Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population
3. Deaths of non-residents are included in figures for the UK, but excluded in figures for England, Wales and regions
4. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year

**Download table**

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### Table 2. Number of male alcohol-related deaths: by country and region of England, 2006-2010

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**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

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**Download table**

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# Data Tables - Females

## Table 3. Female alcohol-related death rates: by country and region of England, 2006-2010

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**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**
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### Table 4. Number of female alcohol-related deaths: by country and region of England, 2006-2010

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<td>222</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>215</td>
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<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>337</td>
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<td>308</td>
<td>327</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
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<td>209</td>
<td>222</td>
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<td>Wales</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**
1. A common definition of alcohol-related death is used across the United Kingdom; see the 'Definition' section for further information.
2. Deaths of non-residents are included in figures for the UK, but excluded in figures for England, Wales and regions.
3. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year.

**Download table**

[XLS](20.5 Kb)

**Results**

Alcohol-related death figures for the UK, England, Wales and regions of England can be found in Microsoft Excel workbooks on the [Office for National Statistics website](https://www.ons.gov.uk).
The two workbooks contain:

- Results for the UK – age-standardised rates per 100,000 (with 95 per cent confidence intervals) and numbers of alcohol-related deaths for the period 1991-2010. Data are available split by sex and broad age groups (All ages, 1-14, 15-34, 35-54, 55-74 and 75 and over)
- Results for England and Wales – age-standardised rates per 100,000 (with 95 per cent confidence intervals) and numbers of alcohol-related deaths for England and Wales, England, Wales and regions of England for the period 1991-2010. Data are available split by sex and broad age groups (All ages, 1-14, 15-34, 35-54, 55-74 and 75 and over) (sex only for regions of England)

Statistics for Scotland, published by National Records of Scotland and statistics for Northern Ireland, published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are available at the links below.

Scotland - [GRO Scotland: Alcohol-related deaths](#)
Northern Ireland - [NISRA: Alcohol-related deaths](#)

**References**

- [Department of Health (2010) Healthy lives, healthy people: our strategy for public health in England](#)
- [Department of Health (2011) Public Health Responsibility Deal](#)
- [ONS (2011a) Smoking and drinking among adults, 2009 Report (794.6 Kb Pdf)](#)
- [ONS (2011b) General Lifestyle Survey](#)
- [ONS (2011c) Alcohol-related deaths in the United Kingdom, 2000-2009 (208.3 Kb Pdf)](#)

**Definition**

The National Statistics definition of alcohol-related deaths only includes those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption, as shown in Box 1 below. It does not include other diseases where alcohol has been shown to have some causal relationship, such as cancers of the mouth, oesophagus and liver. The definition includes all deaths from chronic liver disease and
cirrhosis (excluding biliary cirrhosis), even when alcohol is not specifically mentioned on the death certificate. Apart from deaths due to poisoning with alcohol (accidental, intentional or undetermined), this definition excludes any other external causes of death, such as road traffic and other accidents. The definition allows for consistent comparisons over time for those deaths most clearly associated with alcohol consumption.

**Box 1. National Statistics definition of alcohol-related deaths**

International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICD-10 code</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F10</td>
<td>Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G31.2</td>
<td>Degeneration of nervous system due to alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G62.1</td>
<td>Alcoholic polyneuropathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I42.6</td>
<td>Alcoholic cardiomyopathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K29.2</td>
<td>Alcoholic gastritis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K70</td>
<td>Alcoholic liver disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K73</td>
<td>Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K74</td>
<td>Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Excluding K74.3-K74.5 - Billiary cirrhosis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K86.0</td>
<td>Alcohol induced chronic pancreatitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X45</td>
<td>Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X65</td>
<td>Intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y15</td>
<td>Poisoning by and exposure to alcohol, undetermined intent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Download table

[XLS](XLS format)

(28 Kb)

**Background notes**

1. Statistics on mortality are derived from the information provided when deaths are certified and registered. Further information about the methods and quality of these statistics can be found in the Quality and Methodology Report (211.4 Kb Pdf).

2. Information about the underlying mortality data, including details on how the data are collected and coded, is available in the mortality metadata (2.46 Mb Pdf).
3. ONS holds mortality data for England and Wales. Figures for the UK include data kindly provided by National Records of Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.


5. The introduction of ICD-10 in England and Wales in 2001 had a significant effect on mortality rates for some diseases, causing a discontinuity in mortality trends for these causes of death. However, the change resulted in a difference of less than 1 per cent in the number of deaths from alcohol-related causes.

6. This bulletin presents age-standardised (also known as ‘directly-standardised’) rates, standardised to the European Standard Population. These make allowances for differences in the age structure of the population, over time and between sexes. The age-standardised rate for a particular cause of death is that which would have occurred if the observed age-specific rates for that cause had applied in the given standard population.

7. Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year.

8. Within this bulletin, a difference which is described as ‘statistically significant’ has been assessed using 95 per cent confidence intervals. If a difference is said to be statistically significant, it is unlikely that it could have occurred by chance alone.

9. Confidence intervals give a measure of the statistical precision of an estimate and show the range of uncertainty around the estimated figure. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one figure overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two figures. Alcohol-related death rates included in this bulletin are presented with 95 per cent confidence intervals are available in the reference tables accompanying this release.

10. Special extracts and tabulations of alcohol-related death (and other causes of mortality) data for England and Wales are available to order for a charge (subject to legal frameworks, disclosure control, resources and agreement of costs, where appropriate). Such requests or enquiries should be made to:

Mortality Analysis Team, Health and Life Events Division
Office for National Statistics
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport NP10 8XG
Tel: +44 (0)1633 456736
Email: mortality@ons.gsi.gov.uk

11. As a valued user of our statistics, we would welcome feedback on this release. In particular, the content, format and structure. This is in line with the Health and Life Events user engagement strategy. Please send feedback to the postal or e-mail address above.

12. Media contact:
   Tel    Media Relations Office 0845 6041858
   Emergency on-call    07867 906553
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   Statistical contact:
   Tel    Claudia Wells +44(0)1633 455867
   E-mail claudia.wells@ons.gov.uk, mortality@ons.gov.uk

   Website: www.ons.gov.uk

13. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.

Statistical contacts

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<th>Email</th>
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<td>Health and Life Events division</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mortality@ons.gsi.gov.uk">mortality@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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