

# Births, deaths and other vital events

## First quarter 2019

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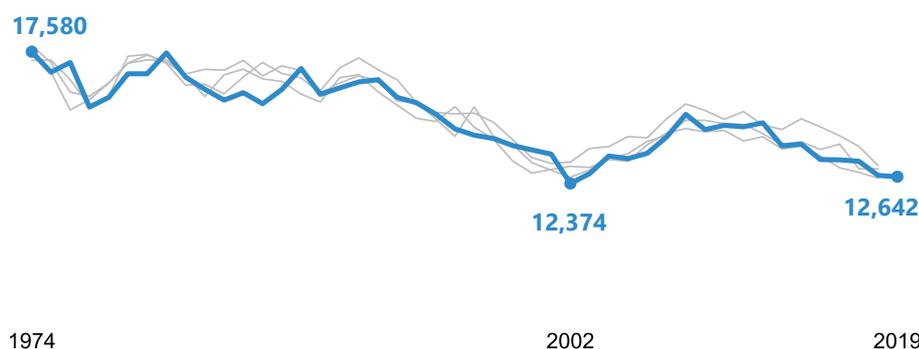


This release presents provisional figures for vital events which were registered in Scotland in the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019, inclusive. The tables provide statistics of births, stillbirths, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths.

**Quarter 1 births at lowest level since 2002**

There were 12,642 births in 2019 quarter 1, the lowest quarter 1 total since 2002 when there were 12,374 births and 4.9% lower than the average of the previous 5 years.

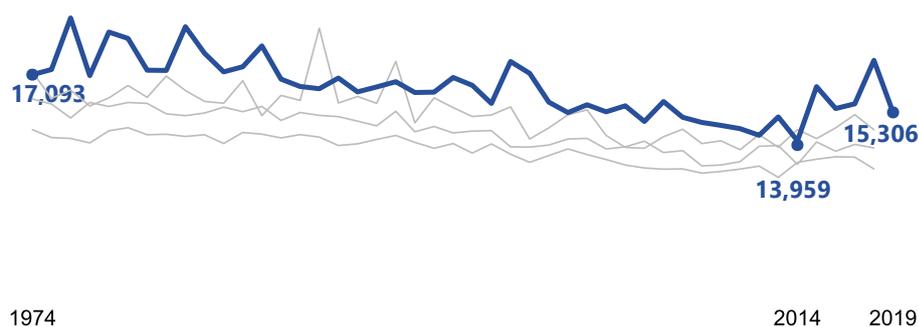
Number of births by quarter (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)



**Quarter 1 deaths fall but are 9.6% higher than in 2014**

There were 15,306 deaths in 2019 quarter 1, a 13.9% decrease following the spike in 2018 quarter 1, but an increase of 9.6% compared with 2014 quarter 1, which was the lowest quarter 1 total recorded.

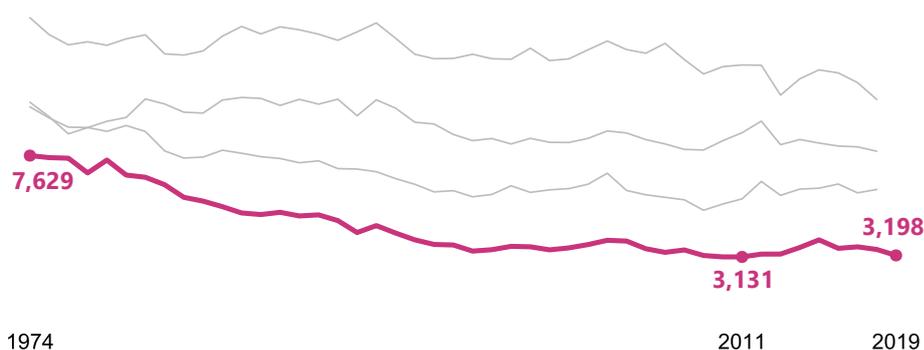
Number of deaths by quarter (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)



**Quarter 1 marriages fall**

There were 3,198 marriages in 2019 quarter 1, 7.6% lower than the same quarter last year but 2.1% higher than the quarter 1 low point in 2011.

Number of marriages by quarter (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)



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The tables and charts above have been made available as [Excel spreadsheets](#) and can also be viewed in [Comma Separated Value \(CSV\)](#) format.

## 1. Main points

- There were 12,642 births, 15,306 deaths and 3,198 marriages registered between January and March 2019.
- At 12,642, the number of births registered in the first quarter was 0.4% lower than in the same period of 2018. This is the lowest quarter one total since 2002 when the number of births registered was 12,374. Compared to the quarter one average for the previous 5 years (2014-2018), births are 4.9% lower.
- Expressed as a rate, there were 9.4 births per 1,000 population.
- At 15,306, the number of deaths registered was 2,465 (13.9%) lower than in the same period last year but 2018 quarter 1 had a very high number of deaths so this decrease was expected. The 2019 quarter 1 deaths figure is 9.6% higher than the 2014 quarter 1 figure, which was the lowest quarter 1 deaths figure recorded.
- Expressed as a rate, there were 11.4 deaths per 1,000 population.
- Compared with the first quarter of 2018:
  - The number of cancer deaths fell by 5.2% to 3,996;
  - The number of deaths from coronary heart disease fell by 10.5% to 1,740;
  - The number of deaths from dementia and Alzheimer's disease fell by 24.2% to 1,678;
  - Deaths from respiratory diseases fell by 30.8% to 1,985;
  - There were 962 deaths from cerebrovascular disease (a decrease of 21.1%).
- The provisional figures also show there were 3,198 marriages in total, 264 less than during the first quarter of 2018 (a fall of 7.6%). There were 130 same-sex marriages, the same number as in 2018 quarter one. Of the same sex marriages registered in the first quarter, 11 (8.5%) were changes from civil partnerships.
- There were 14 civil partnerships (9 male and 5 female), the same number as in the first quarter of 2018).

## 2. Introduction

This release presents provisional figures for vital events which were registered in Scotland in the period from 1 January to 31 March 2019, inclusive. The tables and chart provide statistics of births, stillbirths, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths, including:

- quarterly figures for Scotland for each of the past ten years;
- the totals for each Local council and NHS Board area for the latest quarter; and
- more detailed analyses of the numbers of deaths (for example cross-classified by sex, cause and NHS Board area) for the latest quarter.

## 3. Commentary

The number of births in the first quarter of 2019 (12,642) is the lowest quarter one total since 2002.

The total number of quarter one births fell to a previous low of 12,374 in 2002. It then rose to 15,106 in 2008 before falling in more recent years. There is no single reason for the fall in the number of births, but possible causes may include the postponement of childbearing until older ages, often meaning that women will have fewer children; and economic uncertainty influencing decisions around childbearing, particularly given that the beginning of the recent fall coincided with the financial crash a decade ago.

The number of deaths registered in the first quarter of 2019 (15,306) fell by 13.9% compared to the same quarter last year, but quarter one of 2018 had a very high number of deaths so this decrease was expected. The 2019 quarter one figure was 9.6% higher than 2014 quarter one, the lowest quarter one total recorded.

Compared with the first quarter of 2018 there were falls in the numbers of deaths from many of the most common causes of death. The number of deaths from cancer, coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, respiratory disease, dementia and Alzheimer's disease all fell. Given the particularly high number of deaths in 2018 quarter one, these falls are unsurprising.

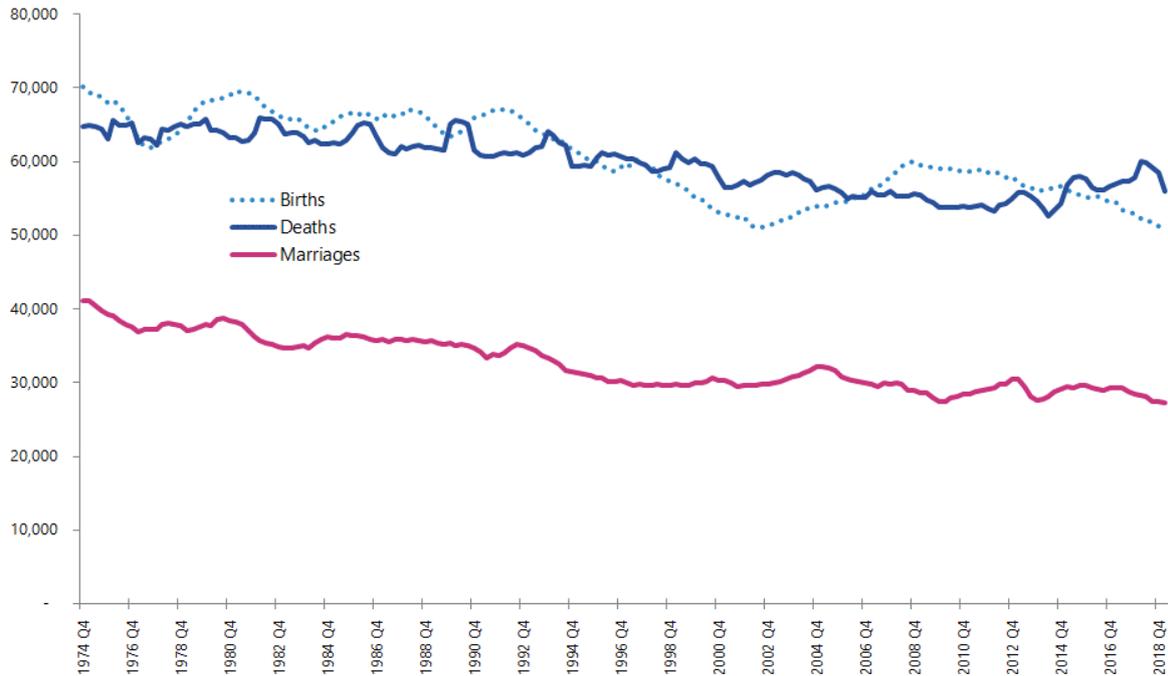
Over the longer term, deaths from coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease have decreased considerably whilst the number of deaths from cancer and respiratory disease has risen slightly. There has been a relatively large increase in the number of deaths from dementia and Alzheimer's disease with such deaths now accounting for more than 10% of all deaths compared to 5% a decade ago.

The quarterly tables, which can be downloaded from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\) website](#), contain further detailed statistics on births, deaths and other vital events, including figures for NHS Boards and Local council areas.

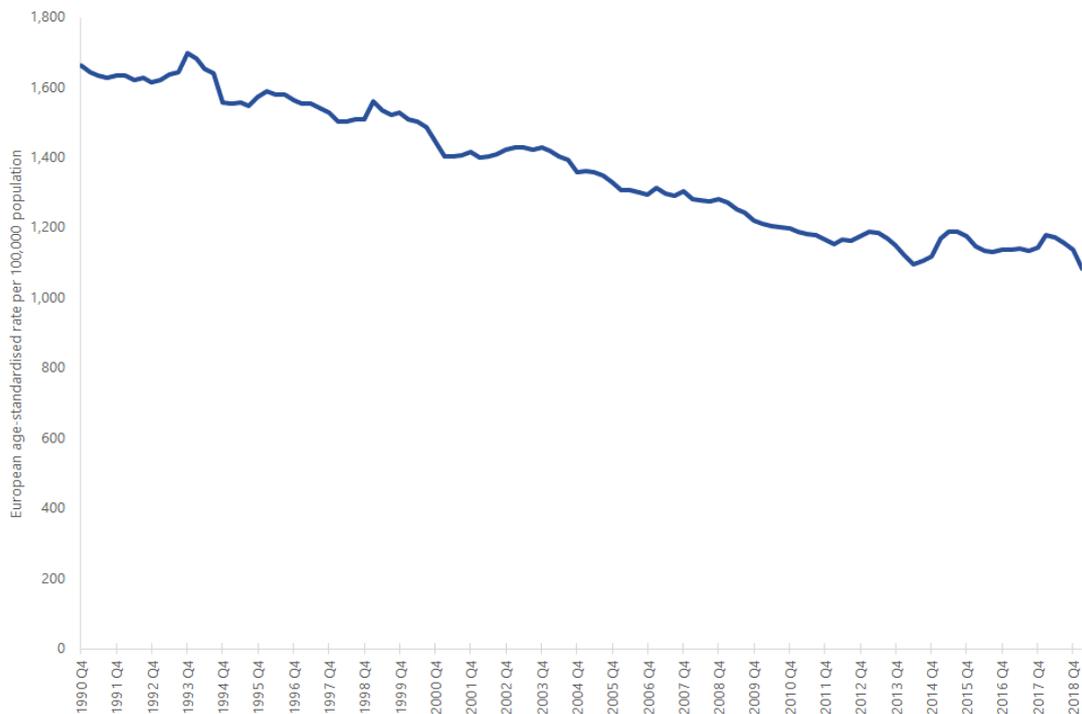
For the four most recent quarters there were 51,259 births and 56,038 deaths, a shortfall of 4,779 births compared to deaths. Having less births than deaths in a population is referred to as 'negative natural change', meaning that without external factors (such as migration) the population will fall. Scotland has been in a position of negative natural change since the period ending 2015 Q1. Prior to this, there was a sustained period of positive natural change (for instance more births than deaths) going back to 2006. As can be seen from figure 1, the gap between births and deaths has fluctuated over time and

there have been several periods of both positive and natural change over the last 40 years.

**Figure 1: Births, deaths and marriages registered in rolling periods of four quarters**



**Figure 2: Age-standardised death rates for rolling periods of four quarters**



Given the increasing interest in the changing direction of the mortality trend, we are now publishing age-standardised mortality rates on a quarterly basis rather than an annual update. Figure 2 illustrates the age-standardised mortality rates for each four-quarter period from the period ending 1990 Q4 to that ending 2019 Q1. These figures are based on rolling periods of four quarters to reduce fluctuations and reduce seasonal variation. There is a large degree of seasonality in mortality, with higher number of deaths occurring in winter than in summer, so it does not make sense to compare a quarter 2 figure with a quarter 1 figure, for example.

Despite the attempts to reduce fluctuations, it is clear that there are still considerable fluctuations in the time series. Particularly of note in the most recent period are the increases in early 2015 and 2018 due to high winter mortality in quarter one of these years. As these rates are based on rolling four quarter periods, the impact of the high quarter one is also seen in the figures for the following three quarters before dropping out when the next year's quarter one figure is picked up.

The rate for the period ending 2019 Q1 was 4.8% lower than that for the period ending 2018 Q4. This is largely due to the high mortality rate in 2018 quarter one dropping out of the latest four quarter period.

The longer term trend shows a clear decrease over time, although there have been fluctuations along the way. Until now, the period ending 2014 Q2 represented the lowest point in the trend with 1,096.8 deaths per 100,000 population. Since then there has been little change (with the two notable fluctuations previously discussed in 2015 and 2018). The 2019 Q1 rate of 1,084.3 per 100,000 population represents a slight decrease on this level, although it should be noted that this is based on 2018 population projections and may be revised once population estimates for 2019 have been published.

#### **4. Background to these statistics**

This is a quarterly publication. NRS collects the underlying data on a daily basis, as and when each event is registered. The statistics for 2018 and 2019 are all provisional.

Information about (for example) the sources, methods, definitions and reliability of these statistics is available from the following NRS web site pages [general background information on Vital Events statistics](#) and [background information on points which are specific to statistics about deaths](#). These figures are directly comparable with those for other parts of the UK, there are no significant differences across the UK in how Vital Events data are collected and processed.

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

More detailed commentary on the final Vital Events statistics for calendar years as a whole (including some comparisons of the figures for different years, for parts of Scotland and for some other countries) can be found in the relevant chapters of [Scotland's Population - the Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends](#).

## Notes on statistical publications

### National Statistics

The UK Statistics Authority 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 UK Statistics Authority 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 can be found in the 'About this Publication' document 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 purpose is to collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland's people and history and make it available to inform current and future generations. 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](#)

### **Revisions and Corrections**

We, the National Records of Scotland, label any revisions and corrections that we have applied to any of our statistics. These revisions and corrections are clearly marked on the webpage of the publication as well on our [revisions and corrections](#) page available on the NRS website.

Where applicable, revisions will also be carried out in accordance with the [revisions policy for population, migration and life events](#) statistics available on the ONS website.

### **Enquiries and suggestions**

Please contact our Statistics Customer Services if you need any further information.

Email: [statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk](mailto:statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk)

If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our standards of service, please contact:

Alan Ferrier  
Senior Statistician  
National Records of Scotland  
Room 1/2/12  
Ladywell House  
Ladywell Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7TF

Phone: 0131 314 4530

Email: [alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk](mailto:alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk)

## Related organisations

Organisation	Contact
<p>The Scottish Government (SG) forms the bulk of the devolved Scottish Administration. The aim of the statistical service in the SG is to provide relevant and reliable statistical information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland.</p>	<p>Office of the Chief Statistician and Strategic Analysis            Scottish Government            2W, St Andrews House            Edinburgh            EH1 3DG</p> <p>Phone: 0131 244 0442</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot">statistics.enquiries@gov.scot</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics">http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics</a></p>
<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing a wide range of economic and social statistics. It also carries out the Census of Population for England and Wales</p>	<p>Customer Contact Centre            Office for National Statistics            Room 1.101            Government Buildings            Cardiff Road            Newport            NP10 8XG</p> <p>Phone: 0845 601 3034            Minicom: 01633 815044</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk">info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/">www.ons.gov.uk/</a></p>
<p>The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is Northern Ireland's official statistics organisation. The agency is also responsible for registering births, marriages, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland, and the Census of Population.</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency            Colby House            Stranmillis Court            Belfast            BT9 5RR</p> <p>Phone: 0300 200 7836</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk">info.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.nisra.gov.uk">www.nisra.gov.uk</a></p>

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