

Births, deaths and other vital events

Second quarter 2024

Published on 17 September 2024

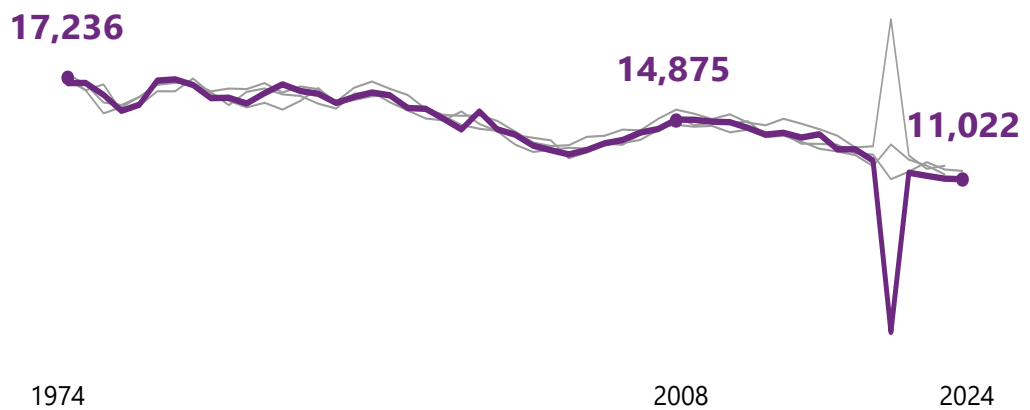


This release presents provisional figures for vital events which were registered in Scotland in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2024, inclusive. The tables provide statistics of births, stillbirths, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths.

The number of births was 6.5% lower than average

11,022 births were registered in 2024 quarter 2. This figure is 6.5 per cent lower than the quarter 2 average.

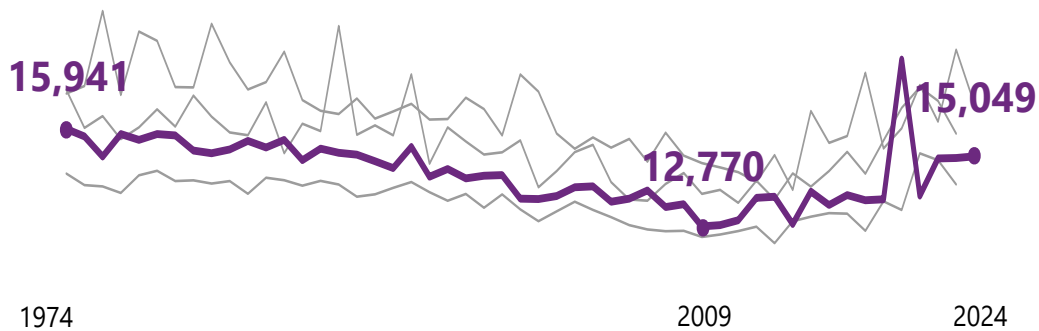
Number of births by quarter (Q1, **Q2**, Q3, Q4)



The number of deaths was 6% lower than expected

15,049 deaths were registered in April - June 2024. That's 6.2% lower than the expected number of deaths, which was 16,040.

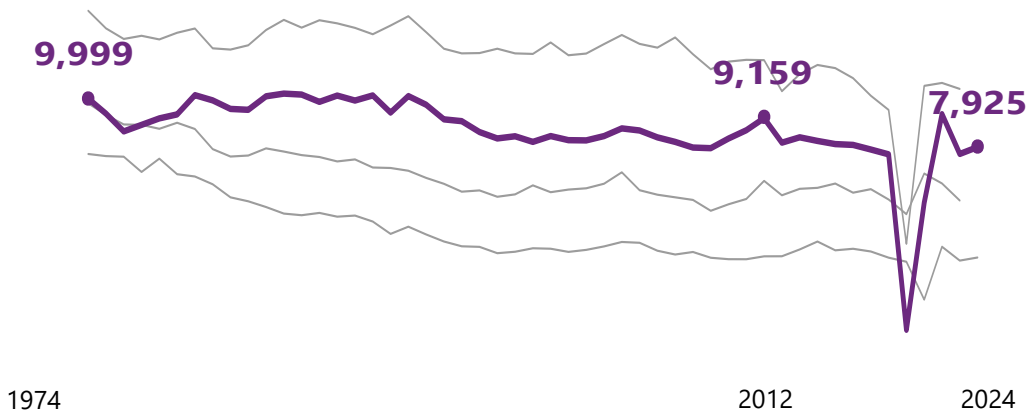
Number of deaths by quarter (Q1, **Q2**, Q3, Q4)



Marriages were 4% above average

There were 7,925 marriages in 2024 quarter 2. This was 4.4% higher than average for the second quarter of the year.

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



Contents

1.	Main points	5
2.	Introduction.....	6
3.	Births	6
4.	Deaths.....	6
5.	Marriages and civil partnerships.....	8
6.	Natural change (births minus deaths).....	9
7.	Background to these statistics.....	9
8.	Notes on statistical publications	10

List of tables

- Table Q1 Births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships, numbers and rates, Scotland, quarterly, 2013 to 2024
- Table Q2a Estimated population, births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships, numbers and rates, by Council area, Scotland, second quarter, 2024
- Table Q2b Estimated population, births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships, numbers and rates, by NHS Board area, Scotland, second quarter, 2024
- Table Q3a Deaths, by sex, age and Council area, Scotland, second quarter, 2024
- Table Q3b Deaths, by sex, age and NHS Board area, Scotland, second quarter, 2024
- Table Q4 Deaths, by cause, Scotland, second quarter 2018-2024
- Table Q5 Deaths by sex, age and cause, Scotland, second quarter, 2024
- Table Q6 Deaths by sex, cause and NHS Board area, Scotland, second quarter, 2024
- Table Q7 Deaths, expected and excess deaths by age and sex, Scotland quarter, 2011-2024

List of Figures

- Figure 1 Deaths, expected deaths and excess deaths in Scotland, by quarter, 2011-2024
- Figure 2 Excess deaths by age group and by quarter, 2013-2024
- Figure 3 Births, deaths and marriages registered in rolling periods of four quarters, 1974-2024

The tables and charts above have been made available as Excel spreadsheets.

1. Main points

- There were 11,022 births registered in Scotland between 1 April and 30 June 2024. This is 6.5 per cent lower than the quarter two average of 11,785.
- There were 15,049 deaths in 2024 quarter two. This is 6.2 per cent lower than the expected number of deaths, which was 16,040.
- For all age groups, the number of deaths was lower than the expected number for quarter two of 2024. Female deaths were 643 (8%) lower than the expected number and male deaths were 348 (4%) lower than expected in the latest quarter.
- There were 42 stillbirths (3.8 per 1,000 live and still births) in quarter two of 2024. This is close to the quarter two average of 43.
- There were 35 infant deaths, a rate of 3.2 per 1,000 live births, in the second quarter of 2024. This is lower than the quarter two average of 42.
- There were 7,925 marriages in quarter two of 2024. This was 4.4% higher than the recent average. Of these, 316 were same-sex marriages, compared with a five-year average of 251.
- Since June 2021 mixed-sex couples have been able to form a civil partnership. Of the 188 civil partnerships registered in the second quarter of 2024, 159 involved mixed-sex couples. There were 29 same-sex civil partnerships, compared with an average of 25.

Comparing against the expected number of deaths

Excess deaths is the difference between the observed number of deaths in a particular period and the number of deaths that would have been expected in that period, based on historical data. The expected number of deaths is estimated from age-specific mortality rates rather than death counts, so trends in population size and age structure are taken into account. This new method for calculating excess deaths has been adopted by statistical agencies across the UK. More information about this can be found in the methodology paper on the [ONS website](#).

Comparing against the five year average

Comparisons for statistics other than deaths are usually made by comparing the current year to the average for the previous five years. For 2024, standard practice would be to compare against the 2019-2023 average.

As the 2020 figures were severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – marriages were much lower than usual and registration of births was delayed – comparing the 2024 figures to an average including 2020 would not give a true reflection of how the latest quarter's figures compare to the average.

2024 comparisons have therefore been made against the 5 years 2018-2019 plus 2021-2023.

2. Introduction

This release presents provisional figures for vital events which were registered in Scotland in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2024, inclusive. The tables and charts provide statistics on births, stillbirths, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths, including:

- quarterly figures for Scotland back to 2014;
- the totals for each Local Authority 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.

The quarterly tables can be downloaded from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\) website](#).

3. Births

There were 11,022 live birth registrations in 2024 quarter two. This total is 6.5% lower than the average for quarter two. We would usually use quarter two of the preceding five years as a comparison (2019-2023), but the registration of births was affected in 2020 by the closure of registration offices, due to COVID-19. Comparisons for 2024 have therefore been made against the 5 years 2018-2019 plus 2021-2023.

Expressed as a rate there were 8.1 live births per 1,000 population.

There were 42 stillbirths (3.8 per 1,000 live and still births) in the second quarter of 2024. This is close to the quarter two average of 43.

4. Deaths

In the second quarter of 2024 there were 15,049 deaths. This 6.2 per cent lower than the expected number of deaths which was 16,040.

Expressed as a rate, there were 11.1 deaths per 1,000 population.

Figure 1 illustrates the number of deaths registered each quarter since 2011, and shows the trend in expected deaths and excess deaths. For much of the last four years we have had excess deaths, with the highest quarterly excess deaths seen in 2020 quarter two.

However, in the four most recent quarters the number of deaths registered has been lower than the expected number of deaths.

A new method for calculating excess deaths has been adopted by statistical agencies across the UK. The new method of calculating expected and excess deaths takes into account trends in population size and age structure. More information about this can be found in the methodology paper on the [ONS website](#).

Figure 1: Deaths, expected deaths and excess deaths in Scotland, by quarter

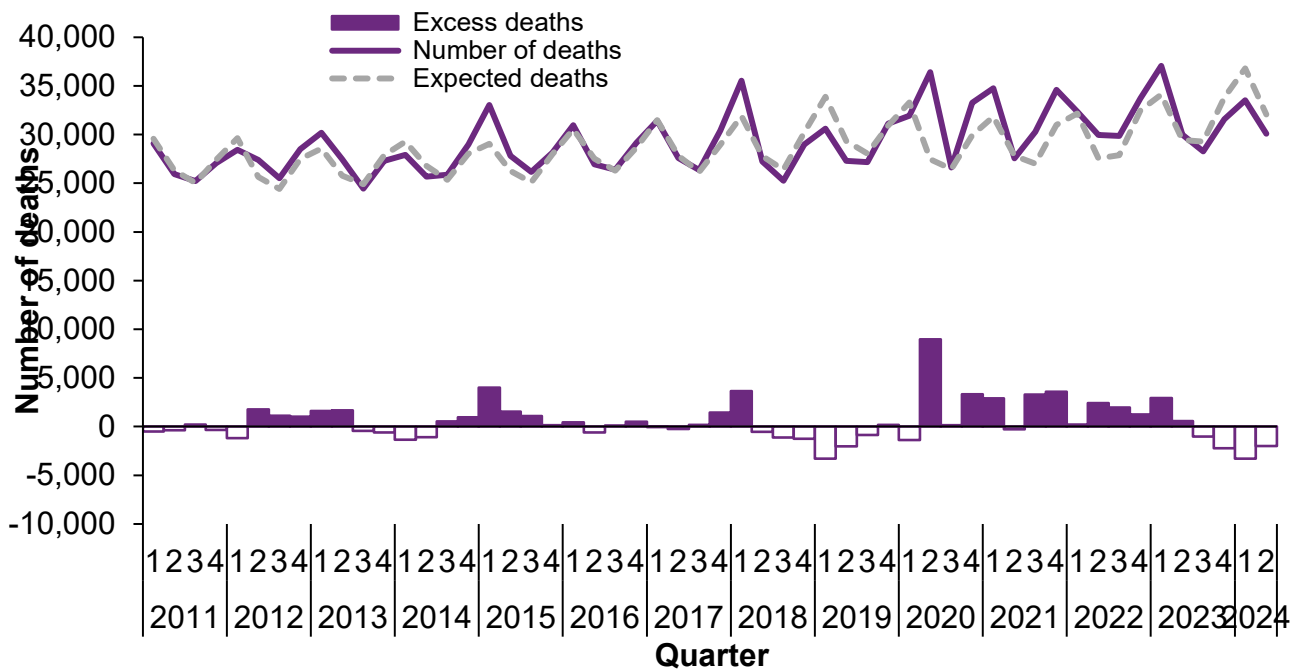
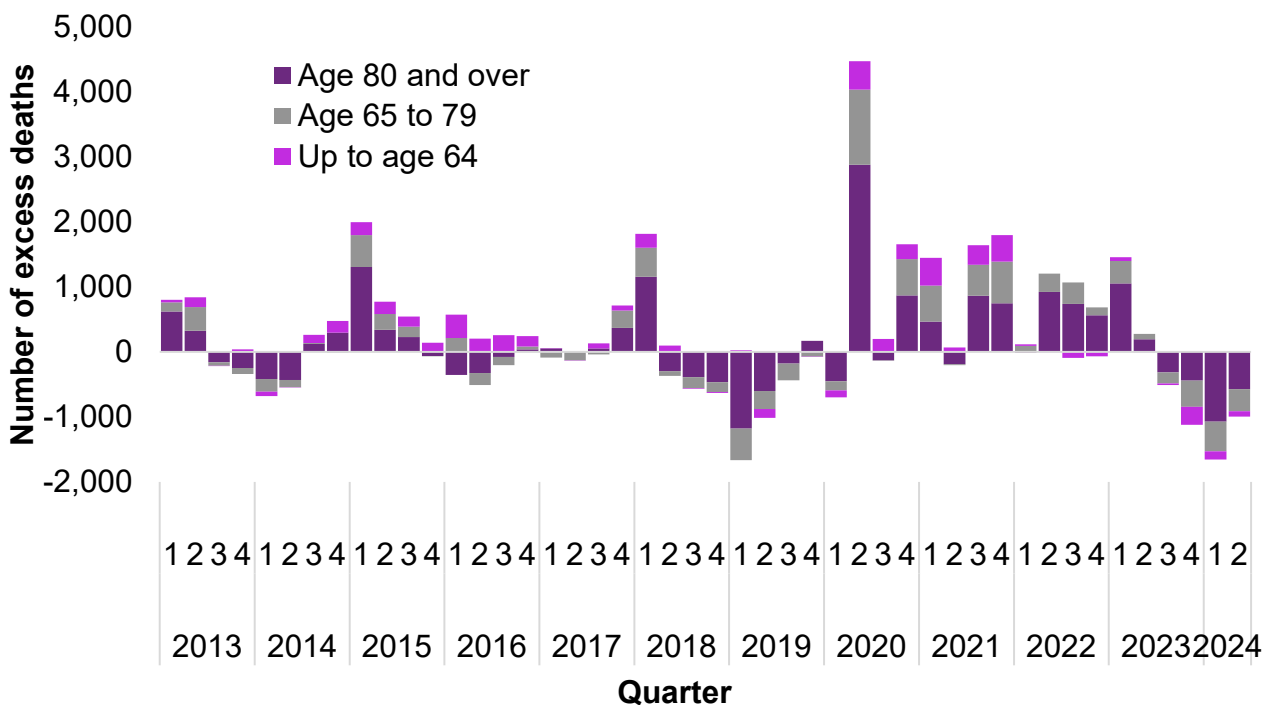


Figure 2 illustrates the number of excess deaths by age group in each quarter since 2013.

In all age groups, deaths have been below expected levels for the last four quarters. In quarter 2 of 2024 deaths among under 65s were 79 (3%) lower than expected, deaths in the 65-79 age group were 340 (7%) below expected and deaths for people aged 80 and over were 573 (7%) lower than expected levels. Female deaths were 643 (8%) below expected and male deaths were 348 (4%) lower than expected in the latest quarter.

Figure 2: Excess deaths in Scotland by age group, by quarter



In quarter two of 2024 there were:

- 4,049 deaths from cancer;
- 1,702 deaths from coronary heart disease;
- 1,592 deaths from respiratory diseases;
- 1,498 deaths from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias;
- 878 deaths from cerebrovascular disease.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) was the underlying cause of 115 deaths during quarter two and there were no deaths where the underlying cause was adverse effects of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The infant death rate (deaths within the first year of life) was 3.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in the second quarter of 2024.

5. Marriages and civil partnerships

There were 7,925 marriages in quarter two of 2024. This was 4.4% higher than than the recent average. The number of marriages began to increase after the COVID-19 restrictions (which were first put in place in quarter 2 of 2020) were eased. Quarter three of 2021 was the first to return to pre-pandemic levels.

There were 316 same-sex marriages, compared with a five-year average of 251 for quarter two.

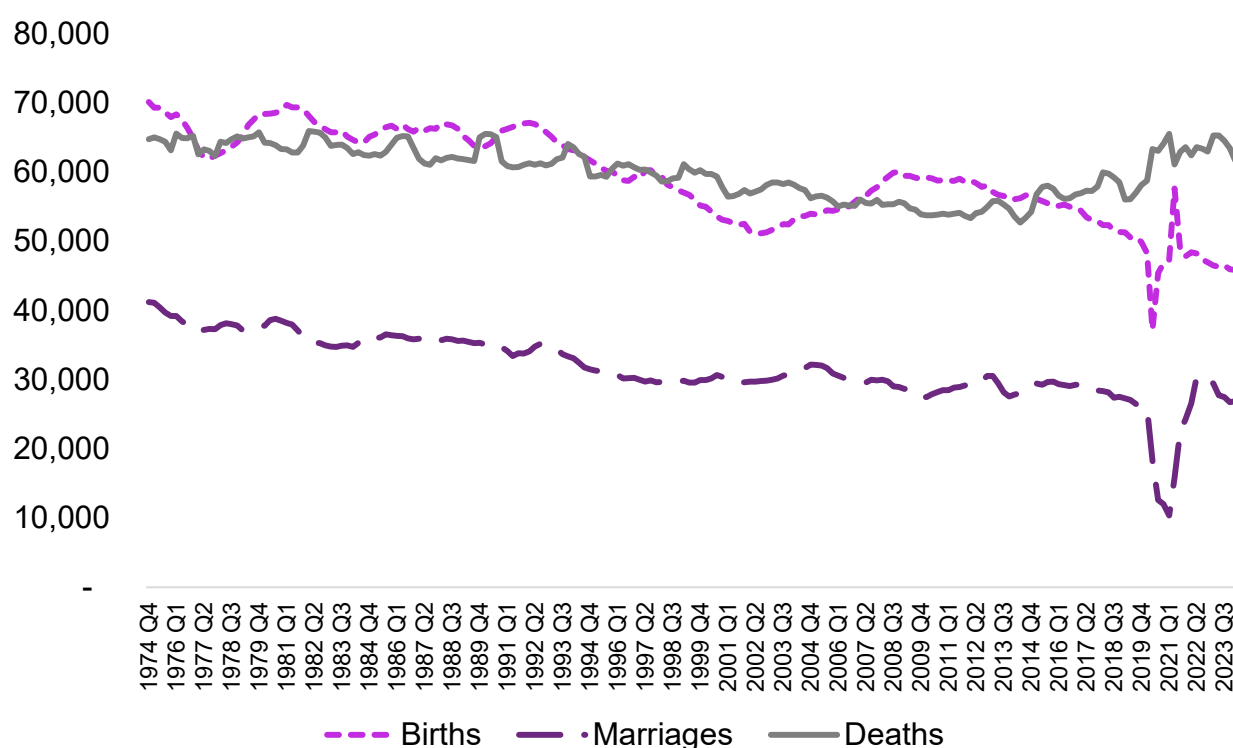
Since June 2021 mixed-sex couples have been able to form a civil partnership. Of the 188 civil partnerships registered in the second quarter of 2024, 159 involved mixed-sex couples. There were 29 same-sex civil partnerships.

6. Natural change (births minus deaths)

For the latest four quarter period (2023 Q3 to 2024 Q2) there were 45,805 births and 61,730 deaths, a shortfall of 15,925 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 (i.e. more births than deaths) going back to 2006. As can be seen from Figure 2, the gap between births and deaths has fluctuated over time and there have been several periods of both positive and negative natural change over the last 50 years.

Figure 3: Births, deaths and marriages registered in rolling periods of four quarters



Note: The number of birth registrations in the quarters of 2020 do not reflect the number of births which occurred.

7. 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 2024 are provisional and likely to be finalised in summer 2025.

Information about 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](#)
- [background information on points which are specific to statistics about deaths.](#)

Finalised Vital Events statistics for calendar years as a whole can be found in the [Vital Events Reference Tables](#).

8. Notes on statistical publications

Accredited Official Statistics

These official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

In June 2024 The Office for Statistics Regulation introduced the new accredited official statistics badge, to denote official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and judged to meet the standards in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). The new badge replaces the current National Statistics badge, though the meaning is the same. Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

The method used to calculate excess deaths was introduced in February 2024 and has been adopted by statistical agencies across the UK. More information about this can be found in the methodology paper on the [ONS website](#). We will regularly review estimates produced by the new excess deaths methodology, with further refinements to the approach being undertaken if necessary. As such, estimates of excess deaths produced by the new methodology will be labelled as Official Statistics in Development while further review, testing and development work is undertaken.

It is National Records of Scotland's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of accredited official statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Office for Statistics Regulation promptly. Accredited official 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](#)

Enquiries and suggestions

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

Email: statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

Lead Statistician: Phillipa Haxton