

# Deaths due to alcohol remain high in Scotland

**National Records of Scotland report that the number of alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland is the highest in 16 years.**

The number of deaths in 2023 as a result of alcohol rose from the previous year to 1,277. Deaths in this category are 4.5 times higher in the most deprived areas of the country. The areas where the alcohol-specific rate is higher than the Scottish average included Inverclyde, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire and Dundee City.

The figures are set out [in a report published today](#).

Phillipa Haxton, Head of Vital Events Statistics, said: “The rate of alcohol-specific deaths peaked in 2006 and then fell until 2012. Since then it has generally risen.

“Those aged 45-64 and 65-74 continue to have the highest mortality rates. If we look at the average age at death, that has risen over time. The mortality rates for those aged 65 to 74, and 75 and over, were at their highest since we began recording these figures in 1994. As the same time for age 25-44 the mortality rate has been fairly stable over the last decade.”

Scotland continued to have the highest alcohol-specific death rate of the UK constituent countries in 2022 (the latest year for which comparable data exists). Data for the rest of the UK is yet to be released for 2023.

The difference between Scotland and the other UK countries has narrowed over the last two decades. In 2001, the alcohol-specific mortality rate for Scotland was between 2.1 and 2.9 times as high as other UK countries. The rate for Scotland was between 1.2 and 1.6 times as high in 2022.

Scottish Labour Public Health spokesperson, Carol Mochan, said: "Every single one of these deaths is a travesty and the scale of this crisis is a national scandal.

"All alcohol and drug deaths are preventable and the number of lives being cut tragically short shames this SNP government.

"The number of deaths being directly caused by alcohol is just one part of the damage alcohol does in Scotland, with many more lives being ruined.

"This tragedy is a damning indictment of the SNP's record of failure in government and a reflection of its past cuts to drug and alcohol services.

"There is no excuse for inaction when lives are on the line – the SNP government must set out a comprehensive plan to tackle the root causes of this public health emergency and ensure drug and alcohol services can offer people the lifesaving support they need."

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader and health spokesperson, Alex Cole-Hamilton, MSP, said: "It is devastating that more than 20 people a week die due to alcohol misuse in Scotland. This will be a hard day for all those who have lost a loved one.

"We were the first party to call for the minimum unit price to be updated so that public health isn't undermined by inflation – a move that will happen at the end of this month. But on the flipside the Scottish Government decided to hand down a real-terms cut to drug and alcohol services in this year's budget.

"We need joined up thinking from the Scottish Government to

stop alcohol wrecking lives and communities.”