



## Suicide rates

# Male suicide rate hits two-decade high in England and Wales

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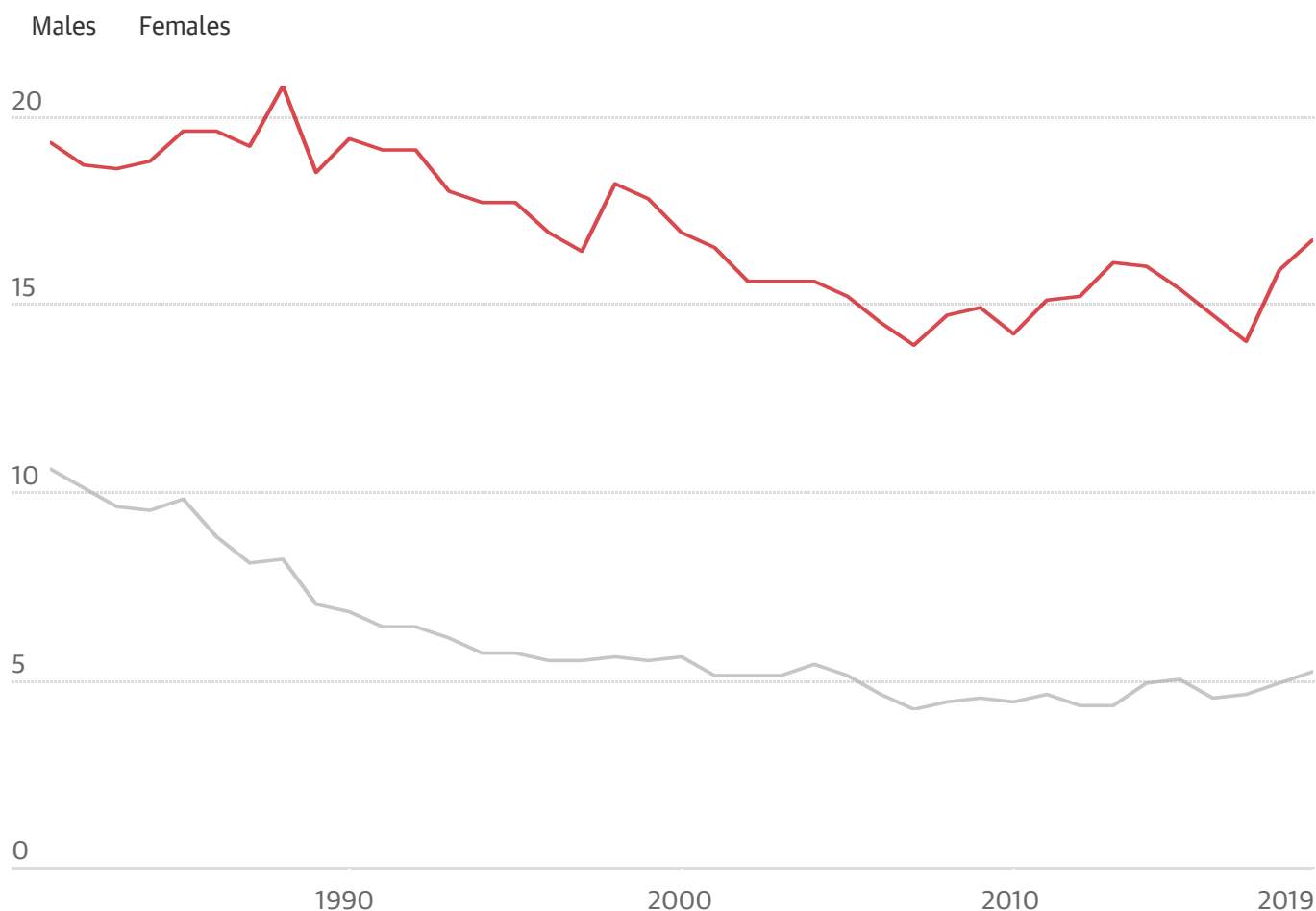
The suicide rate for men in England and [Wales](#) in 2019 was the highest for two decades, official figures show.

Data from the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS), published on Tuesday, found there were 5,691 suicides registered, with an age-standardised rate of 11 deaths per 100,000 population.

The ONS said men accounted for about three-quarters of suicide deaths registered in 2019, 4,303 compared with 1,388 women.

## The male suicide rate of 16.9 deaths per 100,000 in England and Wales was the highest since 2000

Age-standardised suicide rates per 100,000 people



The England and Wales male suicide rate of 16.9 deaths per 100,000 was the highest since 2000 but remained in the line with the 2018 rate. The rate for women was 5.3 deaths per 100,000, the highest since 2004.

Samaritans pointed to “worrying trends”, including men aged 45-49 remaining at the highest risk of suicide, and an increase in suicide rates among young people, especially women under 25. An increase in suicide rates among people aged 25 to 44 in recent years continued in 2019.

“With the impact of the pandemic this year taking a huge toll on people’s mental wellbeing, we should be even more concerned,” said the charity’s chief executive, Ruth Sutherland.

Although there was no guarantee the impact of Covid-19 would lead to higher suicide rates, Samaritans said its research, based on calls to its helpline, found the pandemic had exacerbated known risk factors for people already vulnerable.

“Volunteers are telling us that many callers have been worried about losing their job and/or business and their finances, with common themes around not being able to

pay rent/mortgage, inability to support the family, and fear of homelessness.”

Vicki Nash, the head of policy and campaigns at the charity Mind, said: “Not all suicides are mental health-related but many are, and we know that a significant proportion of people who take their own lives have asked for support for their mental health within the last 12 months, which means that services are failing people when they need help the most.

“With more and more people seeking support for their mental health, it is absolutely crucial that services are equipped to meet the demand. No one in touch with services, asking for help, should reach the point of taking their own life.”

Among men, the area with the highest rate was Yorkshire and the Humber at 20.6 per 100,000, followed by the south-west at 19.4. London recorded the lowest rate with 11.8.

The area with the highest female suicide rate was also Yorkshire and the Humber at 7.3 per 100,000, while the north-east had the lowest rate among women at 4.1.

The male suicide rate in the south-east increased from 13.5 per 100,000 (526 deaths) in 2018 to 16.8 per 100,000 (657 deaths) in 2019.

The ONS said: “Higher rates of suicide among middle-aged men in recent years might be because this group is more likely to be affected by economic adversity, alcoholism and isolation. It could also be that this group is less inclined to seek help.”

Provisional data, also published by the ONS, showed there were 6.9 suicide deaths per 100,000 people in England between April and June, during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic. This was the equivalent of 845 registered deaths, the lowest of any quarter since 2001, the ONS added.

But the ONS said the low number of suicide deaths registered during this period was probably because inquests were delayed because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

“The lower number of deaths registered caused by suicide in quarter two of 2020 should be interpreted with caution; this likely reflects delays to inquests because of the impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on the coroner’s service. All deaths caused by suicide in England are investigated by coroners,” it said.

“Given the length of time it takes to hold an inquest (around five months), we do not currently know the total number of suicides that occurred during the coronavirus pandemic.”

Sutherland added: “Undoubtedly, the pandemic has affected everyone in society, but Samaritans is particularly worried about three groups: people with pre-existing mental health conditions, young people who self-harm, and less well-off middle-aged men.

“It is essential that these groups are given the support they need before people reach crisis point. Suicide prevention must be a priority right now, so we can save lives.”

*In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie). In the US, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. In Australia, the crisis support service Lifeline is 13 11 14. Other international helplines can be found at [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org).*

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