



My Ref: FOI 6316
Enquiries to: Information Requests
E-Mail: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

Dear Requester,

Re: Request for Information – Freedom of Information Act 2000

I wish to confirm that the council has completed its search for the information which you requested.

The information requested and our findings are as follows: -

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information:

- **Recent suicide rates for Penistone West and Penistone East wards**
- **Trends over a 5-10 year period**
- **Data breakdowns by particular relevant characteristics**
- **How local patterns compare with Barnsley, the rest of South Yorkshire and national averages**
- **References/links to any existing reports, needs assessments or suicide prevention analyses that include Penistone**

Data Request - Suicide Rates and Trends for Barnsley

In relation to the recent data request, I have pulled together the relevant published data that is available to us. Currently smaller geographical level published data is unavailable, so we have provided the below data at a Barnsley level. We do have access to ward level data through our South Yorkshire Suspected Suicide Surveillance System in partnership with South Yorkshire Police which informs our local practice, suicide prevention plans etc as well as feeding into the National [Near to real-time suspected suicide surveillance \(notes\) for England](#), however this isn't publicly available and subject to strict data sharing agreements due to the sensitive nature. Disclosure of Individual cases can be more easily identifiable, particularly within local communities, which raises significant risks to confidentiality and privacy. To mitigate this, we apply statistical disclosure control principles, including number suppression, to ensure that individuals cannot be identified either directly or through inference when data are combined with other local knowledge.

This approach is consistent with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and established statistical disclosure control standards, which require organisations to minimise the risk that individuals can be identified from published data. This ensures that sensitive information is handled responsibly and safeguards the privacy and dignity of individuals and their families.

Recent suicide rates for Barnsley

- Barnsley's Suicide Rate (All Persons) 2022-2024 Directly standardised rate per 100,000 is 13.1 with the England average being 10.8. This equates to 87 deaths over the 3 year period.

- Barnsley's Suicide Rate (Males) 2022-2024 Directly standardised rate per 100,000 is 20.9 with the England average being 16.8. This equates to 68 deaths over the 3 year period.
- Barnsley's Suicide Rate (Females) 2022-2024 Directly standardised rate per 100,000 is 5.9 with the England average being 5.5. This equates to 19 deaths over the 3 year period.

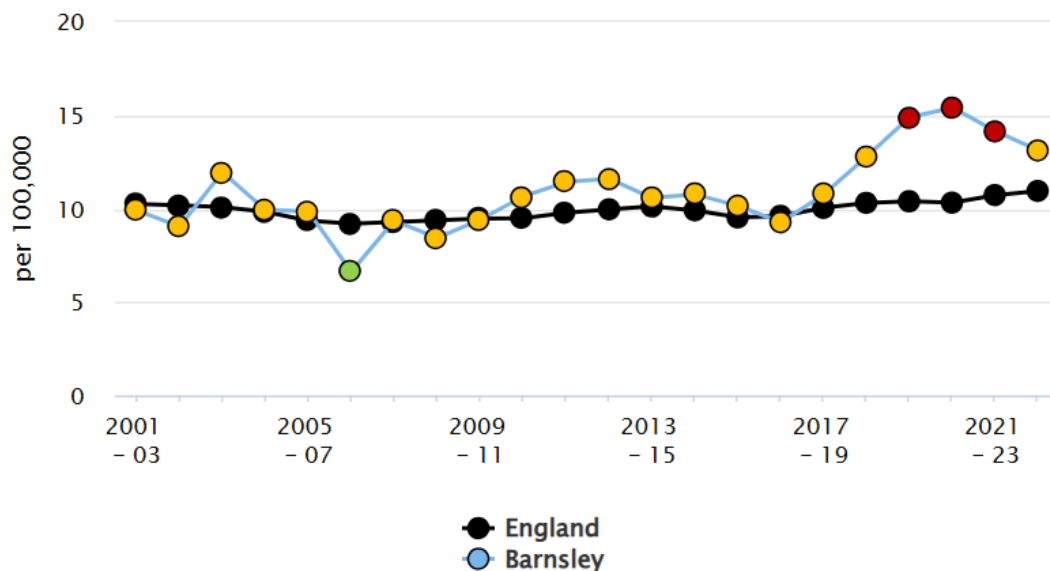
Trends over time, ideally 5-10 years

The below graphs shows suicide rates from 2001-2024 for Barnsley compared with the England average. This is the latest published data due to there being backlogs in coroner's inquests. It's not uncommon for inquests to conclude 12-18 months after death and can be even longer for particularly complex cases.

Suicide rate (Persons)

[Show confidence intervals](#)

[Show 99.8% CI values](#)



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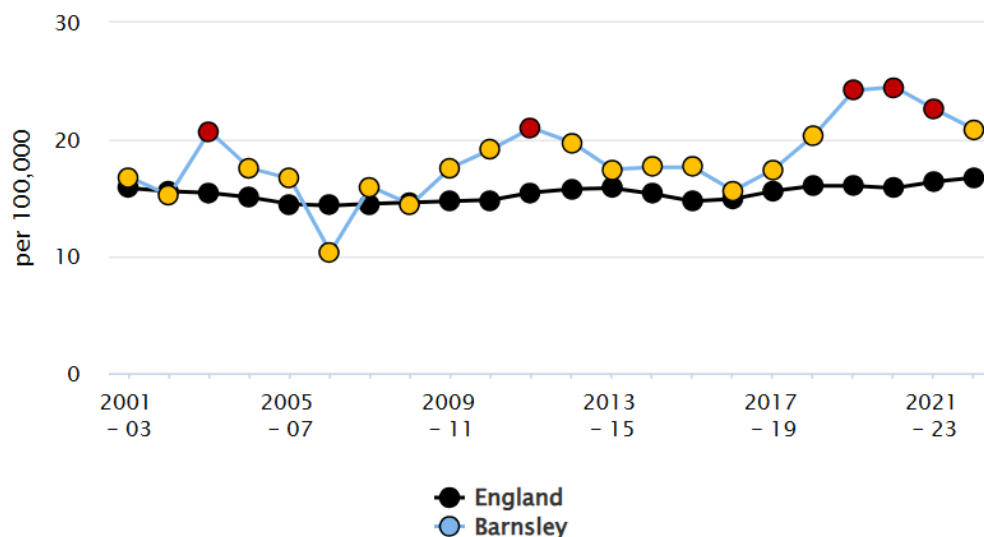
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Suicide rate (Male)

[Show confidence intervals](#)

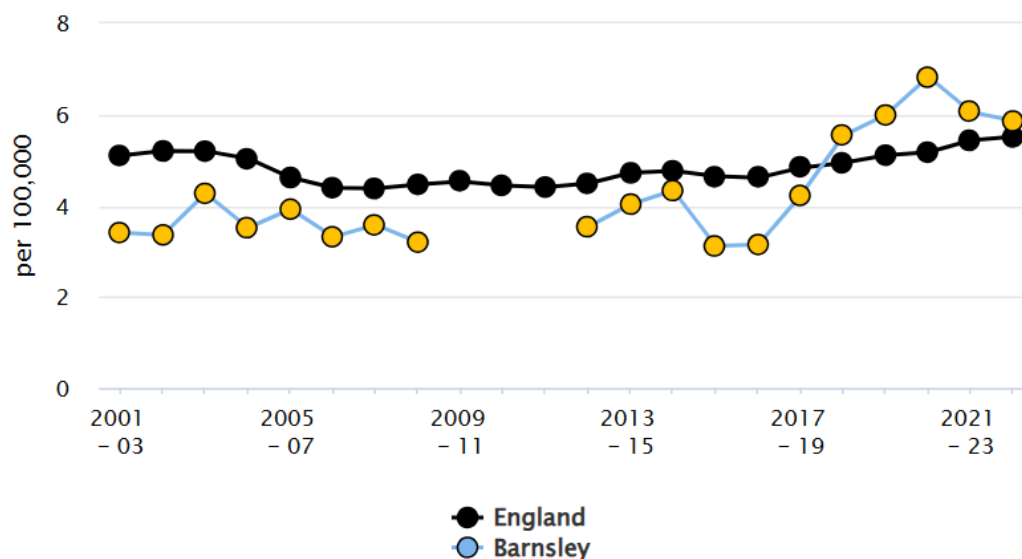
[Show 99.8% CI values](#)



Suicide rate (Female)

[Show confidence intervals](#)

[Show 99.8% CI values](#)



**Please note the gaps in reporting from 2010-2012 are due to small numbers, therefore were statistically insignificant and are protected for disclosure control.*

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Changes to the Burden of Proof

It's worth noting that the burden of proof for suicide was changed from the criminal standard of "beyond all reasonable doubt" to the civil standard of "on the balance of probabilities" on 26 July 2018. This change was made by the Supreme Court in the aim to reduce stigma and provide a more accurate reflection of the true scale of suicide cases. There is an argument that increased rates are attributable to this change as opposed general increases however this is difficult to determine and evidence and research is limited.

Any available breakdowns by particular relevant characteristics

The only published data based on characteristics at a Barnsley level is basic demographics such as age and gender. However as set out in the national strategy the following groups for consideration for tailored or targeted action are:

- Children and young people
- Middle-aged men
- People who have self-harmed
- People in contact with mental health services
- People in contact with the justice system
- Autistic people
- Pregnant women and new mothers

Addressing risk factors linked to suicide is a central part of effective suicide prevention. This provides an opportunity for effective early intervention, as well as providing appropriate, tailored support for those experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings. Many risk factors are common across different individuals, groups and communities. Therefore, actions to address these risk factors are likely to prevent suicides at a population level with potential benefits for some groups. Links have been evidenced between suicide and wider determinants of health such as housing, poverty, employment and education.

While there is ongoing work locally and across government to address these factors, there are some specific factors (many of which are linked to these wider determinants) that have been identified as priority areas to address within the national suicide prevention strategy and [Barnsley's Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy](#). These other factors are set out below.

- Physical illness
- Financial difficulty and economic adversity
- Harmful gambling
- Substance misuse
- Domestic abuse
- Social isolation and loneliness

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How local patterns compare with Barnsley, the rest of South Yorkshire and national averages.

Comparison with South Yorkshire

Area	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
Sheffield	139	9.0	7.5	10.6
Rotherham	95	13.3	10.7	16.2
Barnsley	87	13.1	10.5	16.2
Doncaster	116	14.1	11.5	16.7

Comparison with Yorkshire & Humber

Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	—	16,657	10.9	10.8	11.1
Yorkshire and the Humber region (statistical)	—	1,869	12.7	12.2	13.3
North East Lincolnshire	—	73	18.3	14.3	23.1
Calderdale	—	89	16.3	13.1	20.1
Wakefield	—	148	15.7	13.1	18.2
Kingston upon Hull	—	106	14.7	11.9	17.6
Doncaster	—	116	14.1	11.5	16.7
North Yorkshire UA	—	239	14.1	12.2	15.9
East Riding of Yorkshire	—	130	13.5	11.1	15.9
Rotherham	—	95	13.3	10.7	16.2
Barnsley	—	87	13.1	10.5	16.2
North Lincolnshire	—	56	13.1	9.8	17.0
Leeds	—	250	11.7	10.3	13.2
Kirklees	—	134	11.6	9.7	13.6
Bradford	—	161	11.4	9.6	13.1
Sheffield	—	139	9.0	7.5	10.6
York	—	46	8.7	6.3	11.7

Source: Office for National Statistics

References/links to any existing reports, needs assessments for suicide prevention

- **National Suicide Prevention Strategy**
[Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#)
- **Barnsley Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 (Currently being updated)**
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/22000/barnsley-mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2022-26.pdf>
- **Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council: Developing an attempted suicide follow-up service**
<https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/barnsley-metropolitan-borough-council-developing-attempted-suicide-follow-service>
- **Evaluation of a System for Real-Time Surveillance of Suicide in England**

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<https://pure.hud.ac.uk/en/publications/evaluation-of-a-system-for-real-time-surveillance-of-suicide-in-e/>

- **AMPARO – South Yorkshires bereavement support service for anyone bereaved or affected by suicide.**

<https://amparo.org.uk/our-locations/south-yorkshire/>

- **Barnsley Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) Peer Support Group**

<https://uksobs.com/>

- **Barnsley Suicide Prevention Training Programme**

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/training-and-resources/funded-courses>

- **Zero Suicide Alliance Training**

<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact Information Requests Via email.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way the Directorate has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review. Please clearly mark your correspondence 'Complaint' and address it to:

Barnsley MBC
Information Requests Team
PO Box 634
Barnsley
S70 9GG
email: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: -

Customer Services Team
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Email: <http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Kind regards,

Information Requests Team, Barnsley MBC

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