

WAID UK 2023 Summary for the NWSF

This report details the 2023 release of water-related fatality data.

Overall water-related fatalities

In 2023, there were 659 water-related fatalities in the United Kingdom from all recorded causes. There was an increase in fatalities compared to previous years.

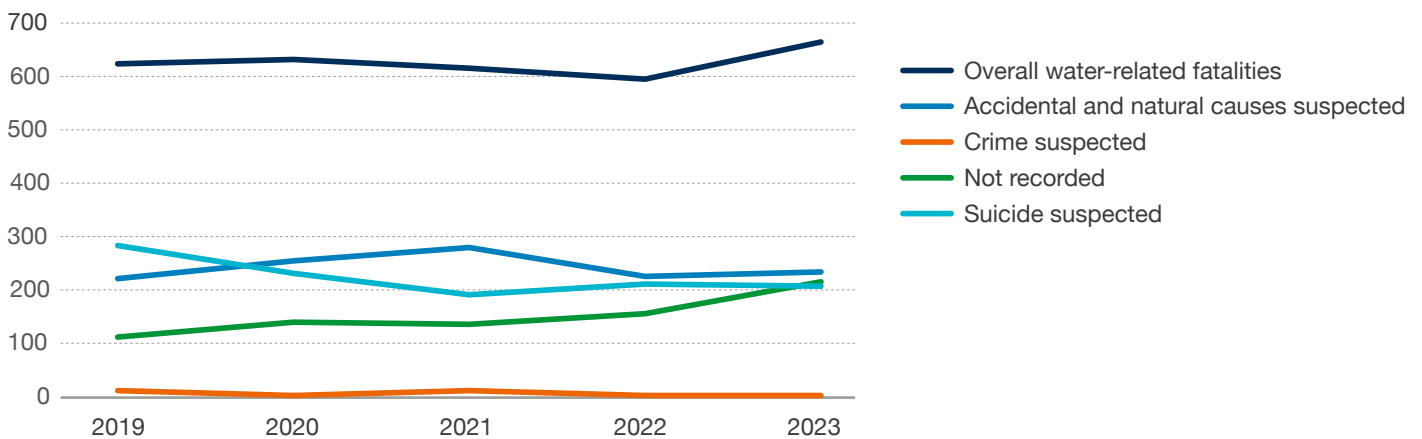


Figure 1: Overall fatalities by year, 2019-2023

The 2023 figures show that overall water-related fatalities have increased. The 2023 figures are above the three-year average (see Figure 2).

Year	Overall water-related fatalities
Three-year average (2013-2015)	650
2019	623
2020	631
2021	616
2022	597
2023	659

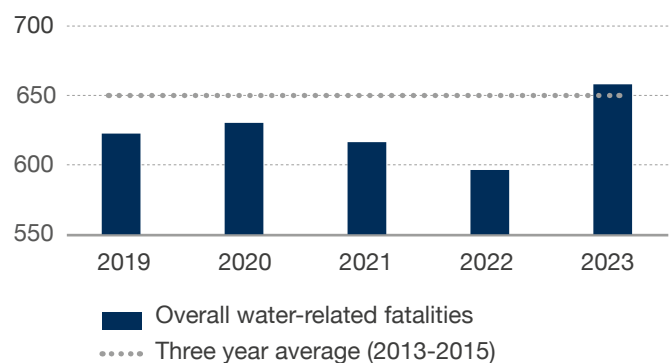


Figure 2: Overall water-related fatalities by year 2019-2023 vs Three-year average baseline, UK

Accidental fatalities

In 2023, there were 236 accidental fatalities¹ in the UK. This is a 31 per cent decrease in comparison to the three-year average (see Figure 3). However, caution should be taken in the interpretation of this trend due to the high number of not recorded/inconclusives within the data set.

Year	Accidental fatalities
Three-year average (2013-2015)	344
2019	223
2020	254
2021	277
2022	226
2023	236

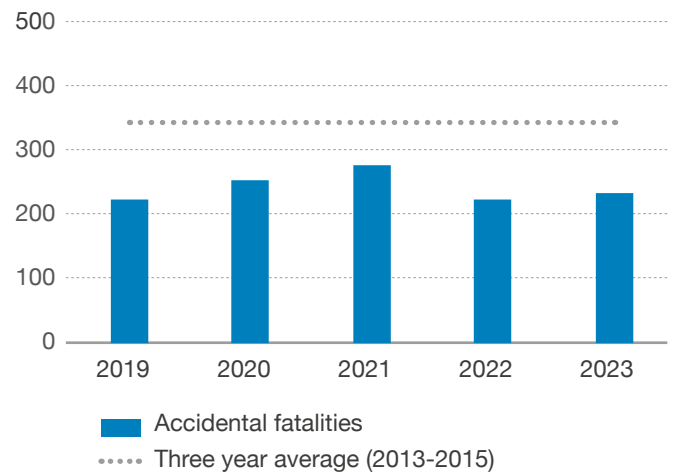


Figure 3: Accidental fatalities by year 2019-2023 vs Three-year average baseline, UK

¹ Accidental fatality refers to accidental and natural causes suspected.

Key points

In 2023:

- There were 236 accidental fatalities
- 83% of accidental fatalities were male
- Males aged 60-69 were the highest group for accidental fatalities (see Figure 4)
- 63% of accidental fatalities happened at inland waters (see Figure 5)
- Recreational activities accounted for 44% of accidental fatalities (see Figure 6)
- 32 accidental fatality reports noted the presence of alcohol
- The rate of accidental water-related fatalities has increased slightly since 2018 (0.40 per 100,000) to 0.35 in 2023 (see Figure 7)

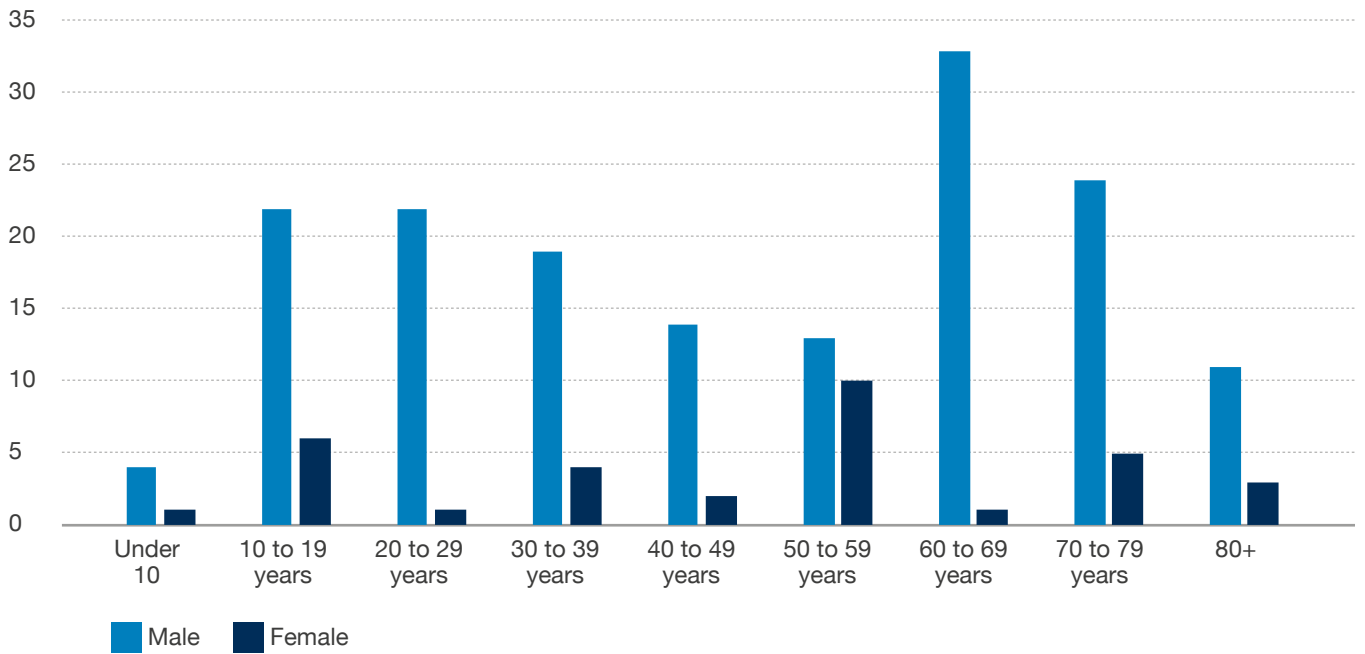


Figure 4: Accidental fatalities by age, N=195, 41 Not Recorded

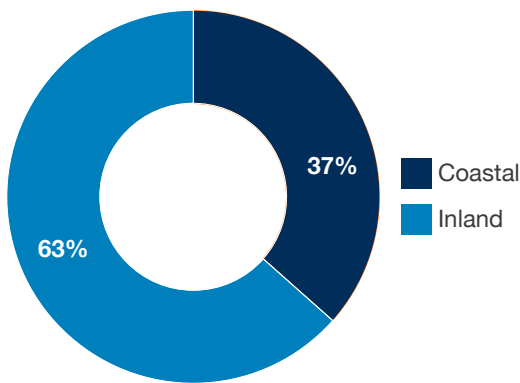


Figure 5: Accidental fatalities by location, N=221, 15 excluded

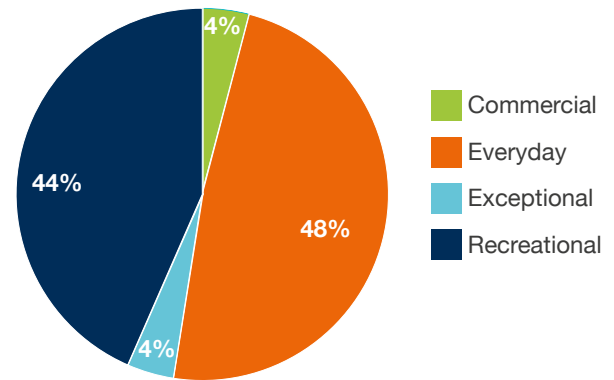


Figure 6: Accidental fatalities by activity, N= 221, 15 excluded

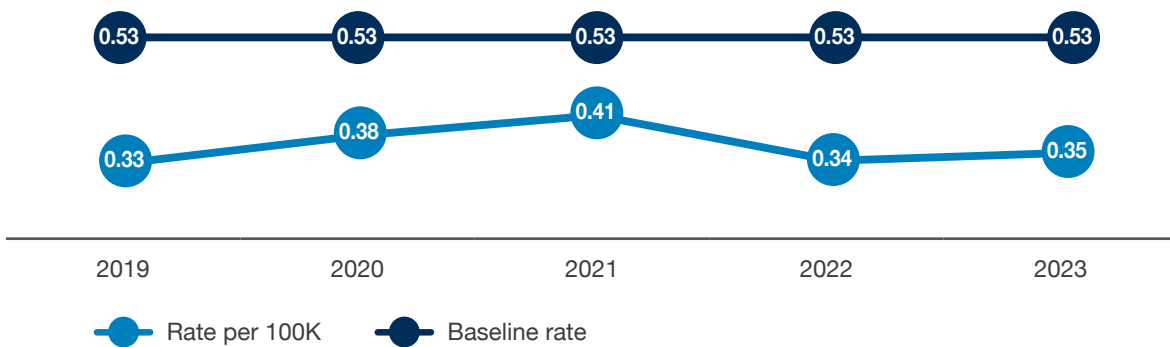


Figure 7: Accidental fatality rates by year and baselines per 100,000 (Population Source: ONS)

Suicide suspected fatalities

In 2023, there were 208 suicide suspected fatalities at or near water in the UK. This is similar to last year and above the three-year average baseline. Again, caution should be taken in interpretation due to the high number of not recorded/inconclusives within the data set.

Year	Suicide suspected fatalities
Three-year average (2013 – 2015)	200
2019	279
2020	232
2021	195
2022	212
2023	208

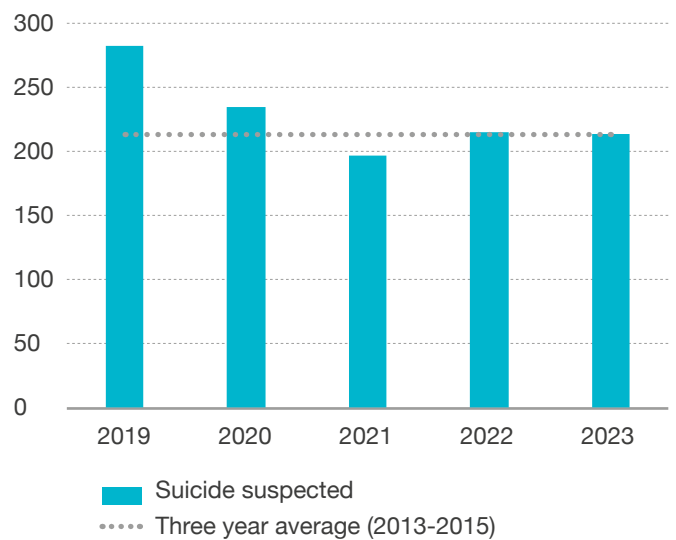


Figure 8: Suicide suspected fatalities by year 2019-2023 vs Three-year average baseline, UK

Notes

“Accidental fatalities” refers to accidental causes and natural water related causes.

This data analysis is based on the official releases of WAID data as found online nationalwatersafety.org.uk/waid/annual-reports-and-data. It should be noted that the core data providers continue to improve verification and completeness of records starting in 2012 which results in an improved record set.

All rates for population figures are based on ONS figures for the previous mid-year, published online: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland. Baseline rates are based on mid-year 2015 data.

The number of ‘Not Recorded’ or inconclusives is high due to various issues: including inquest dates, coroners not responding, limited stakeholder information and lack of media information.

Baseline performance metrics

The three-year average baseline focuses on years 2013-2015. This does not include ‘Not Recorded’ outcomes except in figure 2 which covers overall water-related fatality. This helps to enable clearer comparison with home nation strategies.

Figures 5 and 6 exclude domestic fatalities.