



---

## Deaths during or following police contact:

Statistics for England and Wales  
2016/17

## Acknowledgements

Kerry Grace led the production and analysis of this report, with support from Melanie O'Connor in the IPCC research team. Our thanks go to colleagues from the policy and engagement, investigations and communications teams, all of whom helped to gather and check the information in this report or to support its release. We would also like to thank officers and staff at police forces across England and Wales who provided information and responded to our enquiries.

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics are designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice continues to be followed.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or comments about this report, please contact Kerry Grace at [research@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk)

## National statistics

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. This shows compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation means that the statistics:

# Contents

---

<b>01</b>	Introduction	1
<b>02</b>	Overall findings	3
<b>03</b>	Road traffic fatalities	7
<b>04</b>	Fatal shootings	10
<b>05</b>	Deaths in or following police custody	11
<b>06</b>	Apparent suicides following police custody	15
<b>07</b>	Other deaths following police contact: IPCC independent investigations only	17
<b>08</b>	Background note	24
<b>09</b>	Appendix A: Additional tables	30

# List of tables and figures

---

<b>Table 2.1</b> Incidents by type of death and investigation type, 2016/17	4
<b>Table 2.2</b> Fatalities by type of death and financial year, 2006/07 to 2016/17	4
<b>Figure 2.1</b> Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2006/07 to 2016/17	5
<b>Table 3.1</b> Type of road traffic fatality, 2006/07 to 2016/17	9
<b>Table 3.2</b> Type of road traffic incident, 2006/07 to 2016/17	9
<b>Table 5.1</b> Deaths in or following police custody: reason for detention, 2016/17	11
<b>Table 6.1</b> Apparent suicides following police custody: reason for detention, 2016/17	16
<b>Table 7.1</b> Other deaths following police contact: reason for contact, 2016/17	18
<b>Table A1</b> Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2006/07 to 2016/17	28
<b>Table A2</b> Type of death by gender, 2016/17	28
<b>Table A3</b> Type of death by age group, 2016/17	29
<b>Table A4</b> Type of death by ethnicity, 2016/17	29
<b>Table A5</b> Type of death by appropriate authority, 2016/17	30

# 1. Introduction

---

This report presents figures on deaths during or following police contact that happened between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. It provides a definitive set of figures for England and Wales, and an overview of the nature and circumstances in which these deaths occurred.

This publication is the thirteenth in a series of statistical reports on this subject, published annually by the IPCC. To produce these statistics, the circumstances of all deaths referred to the IPCC are examined. We decide whether they meet the criteria for inclusion in the report under one of the following categories:

- road traffic fatalities
- fatal shootings
- deaths in or following police custody
- apparent suicides following police custody
- other deaths following police contact that were subject to an IPCC independent investigation

[Box A](#) on page 2 provides a definition for each of these categories. For more detailed definitions please see the [guidance document](#) on the IPCC website. Further supporting information about the report can be found in the background note.

## Box A Definitions of deaths during or following police contact categories

For more detailed definitions and for information about how the death cases are categorised and recorded please see the guidance document on the [IPCC website](#).

In this report the term 'police' includes police civilians, police officers and staff from the other organisations under IPCC jurisdiction<sup>1</sup>. Deaths of police personnel or incidents that involve off-duty police personnel are not included in the report.

**Road traffic fatalities** includes deaths of motorists, cyclists or pedestrians arising from police pursuits, police vehicles responding to emergency calls and other police traffic-related activity.

*This does not include:*

- deaths following a road traffic incident (RTI) where the police have attended immediately after the event as an emergency service

**Fatal shootings** include fatalities where police officers fired the fatal shot using a conventional firearm.

**Deaths in or following police custody** includes deaths that happen while a person is being arrested or taken into detention. It includes deaths of people who have been arrested or have been detained by police under the Mental Health Act 1983. The death may have taken place on police, private or medical premises, in a public place or in a police or other vehicle.

*This includes deaths that happen:*

- during or following police custody where injuries that contributed to the death happened during the period of detention
- in or on the way to hospital (or other medical premises) following or during transfer from scene of arrest or police custody
- as a result of injuries or other medical problems that are identified or that develop while a person is in custody
- while a person is in police custody having been detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 or other related legislation

*This does not include:*

- suicides that occur after a person has been released from police custody

- deaths that happen where the police are called to help medical staff to restrain individuals who are not under arrest

### **Apparent suicides following police custody**

includes apparent suicides that happen within two days of release from police custody. This category also includes apparent suicides that occur beyond two days of release from custody where the time spent in custody may be relevant to the death.

**Other deaths following police contact** include deaths that follow contact with the police, either directly or indirectly, that did not involve arrest or detention under the Mental Health Act 1983 and were subject to an IPCC independent investigation. An independent investigation is determined by the IPCC for the most serious incidents that cause the greatest level of public concern, have the greatest potential to impact on communities, or that have serious implications for the reputation of the police service. Since 2010/11, this category has included only deaths that have been subject to an IPCC independent investigation. This is to improve consistency in the reporting of these deaths.

*This may include deaths that happen:*

- after the police are called to attend a domestic incident that results in a fatality
- while a person is actively attempting to avoid arrest; this includes instances where the death is self-inflicted
- when the police attend a siege situation, including where a person kills themselves or someone else
- after the police have been contacted following concerns about a person's welfare and there is concern about the nature of the police response
- where the police are called to help medical staff to restrain individuals who are not under arrest

<sup>1</sup> See background note 2.

## 2. Overall findings

---

In 2016/17, the following number of fatalities occurred in each category:

- 32 road traffic fatalities
- six fatal police shootings
- 14 deaths in or following police custody
- 55 apparent suicides following police custody
- 124 other deaths following police contact that were independently investigated by the IPCC

Demographic information about those who died is presented in the following chapters, along with details about the circumstances of the deaths and a summary of trend data. The appendix contains additional information such as their age, gender, ethnicity, and the associated police force or appropriate authority. Some of the investigations into the deaths recorded in this report are ongoing. Details about the nature and circumstances of these cases are therefore based on information available at the point of analysis.

### Investigations

When the IPCC is told of a fatality, it considers the circumstances of the case and decides whether to investigate independently, or to manage or supervise a police investigation. In some circumstances, it is decided that the police force's professional standards department (PSD) or other equivalent department is best placed to investigate a case locally. [Box B](#) on page six provides a description of each type of investigation. Table 2.1 shows the type of investigation at the time of analysis for all incidents involving

a fatality recorded in 2016/17. The figures show the number of incidents; an incident leading to a single investigation can involve more than one death and so the totals for some categories may be lower than the total fatalities presented above. In total, 169 incidents were independently investigated. This is higher than previous years owing to the increase in the IPCC's resources and capacity to investigate independently<sup>2</sup>, where it is appropriate to do so, more 'other deaths following police contact'. Across all death categories, and as in recent years, no incidents were subject to a managed or supervised investigation.

---

<sup>2</sup> See the [IPCC's Corporate Plan 2015-18](#) for more information about expansion.

**Table 2.1** Incidents by type of death and investigation type, 2016/17

Type of investigation	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Independent	24	6	13	5	121
Managed	0	0	0	0	0
Supervised	0	0	0	0	0
Local	4	0	1	32	0
Back to force	0	0	0	18	0
<b>Total incidents</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>121</b>

Note: investigation type as recorded on the IPCC case system at the time of analysis.

\*This category includes only cases subject to an IPCC independent investigation.

## Trends

The figures presented in Table 2.2 show the number of fatalities across the different categories since 2006/07<sup>3</sup>. It would not be meaningful to produce trend analysis across

all five categories. This is due to the wide variation in the circumstances and the change in definition in the category of ‘other deaths following police contact’.

**Table 2.2** Fatalities by type of death and financial year, 2006/07 to 2016/17

Category	Fatalities										
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16**	16/17
Road traffic fatalities	36	24	40	29	26	19	31	12	14	21	32
Fatal shootings	1	5	3	2	2	2	0	0	1	3	6
Deaths in or following police custody	27	22	15	17	21	15	15	11	18~	14	14
Apparent suicides following custody	47	45^	56	54	46	39	65	70	71~	60	55
Other deaths following police contact*	22	31	35	39	57*	47	22	44	43	104~	124

^ Operational advice note issued in 2007 on the referral of these deaths.

\* Change in definition of other deaths following contact in 2010/11 to include only cases subject to an independent investigation.

\*\* Expansion of IPCC investigative resource and capacity to conduct more independent investigations into serious and sensitive matters – this has a direct impact on the number of other contact deaths that are reported.

~ This table presents the most up-to-date set of figures for these categories; any changes to previously published data are indicated.

<sup>3</sup> Information on fatalities from 2004/05 is available on the [IPCC website](#).

Figure 2.1 Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2006/07 to 2016/17

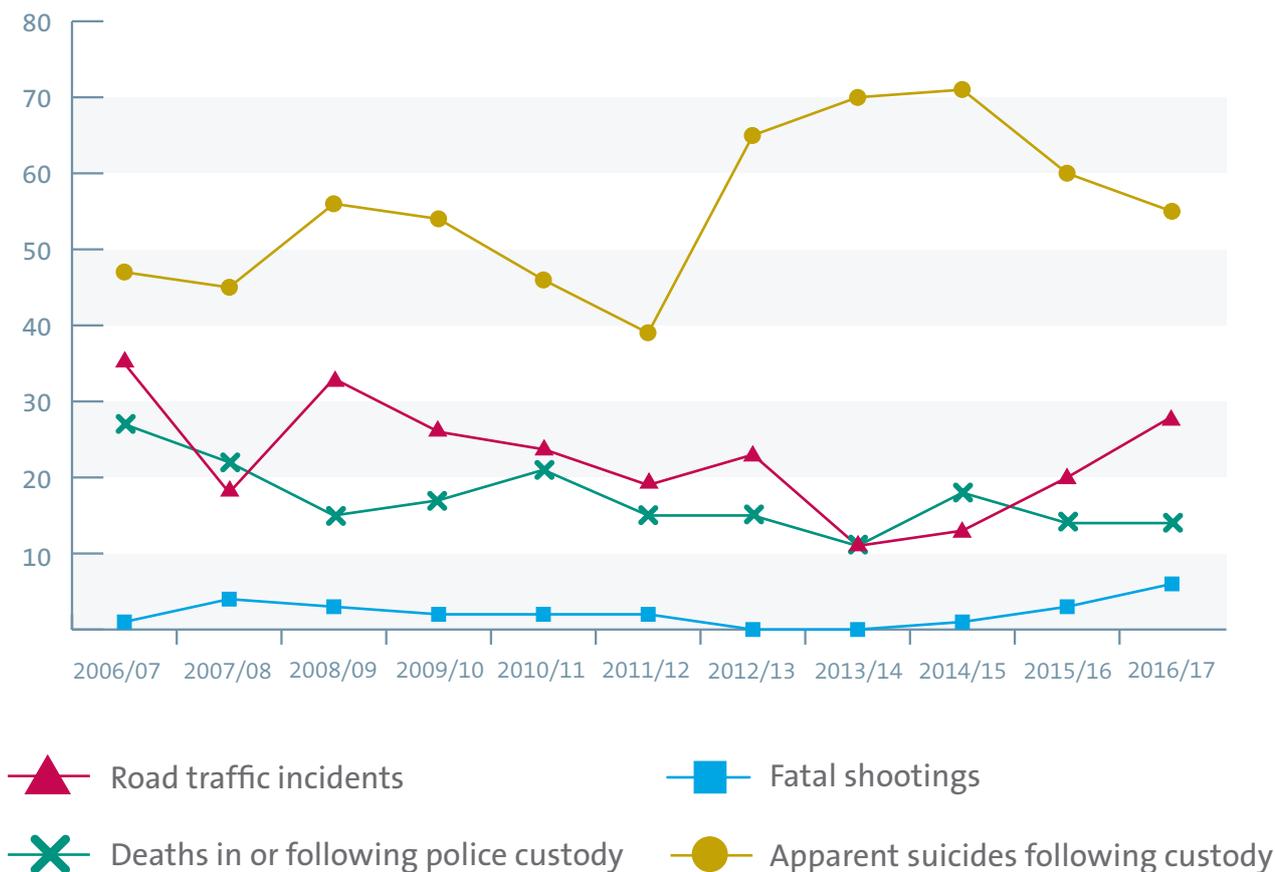


Figure 2.1 shows the number of separate incidents that resulted in fatalities. There are fewer incidents than fatalities. This is because a single incident – for example, a road traffic collision – can result in multiple fatalities.

The number of fatal road traffic incidents (RTIs) has increased this year from 20 to 28. While this figure has fluctuated over the past 11 years, this year's figure represents the third highest number of RTIs recorded since 2006/07.

This year there were six fatal police shootings, compared to three recorded last year. This is the highest figure recorded since 2004/05. The number of deaths in or following police custody has remained stable at 14, the second lowest figure recorded over the past 11 years. Since 2006/07, the number of

deaths in or following custody has almost halved.

The number of recorded apparent suicides following custody has decreased to 55, compared to 60 recorded in the previous year. This is the second consecutive decrease in this category and is the lowest figure recorded since 2012/13 when there was a notable increase in this category. However, it still remains higher than the average before 2012/13. Reporting of these deaths relies on police forces making the link between someone's apparent suicide and them having experienced a recent period in custody. The overall increase in these deaths over the 11-year period may therefore be influenced by improved identification and referral of such cases.

The category of ‘other deaths following police contact’ is not included in Figure 2.1. Including a death in this category is dependent on the IPCC deciding to investigate a death independently. The criteria for making this decision may vary over time – for example, in response to current public and community concerns. In addition, over the past year, the IPCC has increased its capacity to conduct independent investigations this has had a direct impact

on the number of deaths reported on in this category. Therefore, trend analysis of deaths recorded in this category would not be meaningful.

Figures on all fatal incidents (as distinct from fatalities) are provided in Table A1 in the [appendix](#). Trend data on ethnicity, age, gender, police force, and category of death since 2004/05 is on the [IPCC website](#).

### Box B Type of investigation

**Independent investigations** are carried out by the IPCC’s own investigators. In an independent investigation, IPCC investigators have all the powers of the police.

**Managed investigations** are carried out by police, usually by professional standards departments (PSDs), under the direction and control of the IPCC.

**Supervised investigations** are carried out by police PSDs, under their own direction and control. The IPCC will set the terms of

reference for a supervised investigation and receive the investigation report when it is complete.

**Local investigations** are conducted by police officers when the IPCC decides that the force has the necessary resources and experience to carry out an investigation.

**Referred back to force** are cases where the IPCC has reviewed the circumstances and returned the matter back to the police force to be dealt with as it considers appropriate.

# 3. Road traffic fatalities

---

## Demographics

In 2016/17, there were 28 fatal police-related road traffic incidents (RTIs), resulting in 32 fatalities. Of these, 24 people were male and eight female. Twelve people who died were aged between 21 and 30. The eldest was 78. The average age was 31. This average decreases to 24 if the deceased was the driver or passenger in the pursued or fleeing car. It increases to 48 if the deceased was a pedestrian, cyclist or in an unrelated vehicle. Twenty-one people were reported to be White and four were from an Other ethnic background. Three people were Asian, two were Black, and two people were from a Mixed ethnic group.

## Circumstances of death

Incidents are classified as 'pursuit-related' if they involved a pursuit, or if they involved the police driving in the same direction as a suspect vehicle. Not all of these incidents will have entered an official pursuit phase as defined in the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on police pursuits<sup>4</sup>. Incidents where there was a collision involving a vehicle that had recently been pursued by the police, and the police had lost sight of the vehicle, are included. Incidents where the police are driving in the direction of a vehicle before obtaining permission to pursue are also included as pursuit-related.

## Pursuit-related

There were 24 police pursuit-related incidents, in which 28 people died. Of these:

- Ten people were the driver of a vehicle being pursued by the police when it crashed. Of these, one person was riding a motorbike. In another incident, the person was riding a quad bike.
- Twelve people were passengers in the car being pursued by the police.
- Five people were pedestrians, and one was a cyclist, who were hit by the pursued or suspect vehicle.

Three pursuit-related incidents resulted in multiple fatalities. In one incident, there were three fatalities. In another, there were two. In both of these cases, the people who died were the passengers in the pursued vehicle. In the third incident, two pedestrians died after the pursued vehicle collided with them.

Twenty-two of the pursuit-related incidents were investigated independently by the IPCC. The remaining two were dealt with locally by the relevant police force.

## Emergency response-related

This category includes all incidents that involve a police vehicle responding to a request for emergency assistance. There were no emergency response-related incidents recorded this year.

---

<sup>4</sup> See College of Policing (2015) [Authorised Professional Practice on police pursuit](#). The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issued guidance in 2011 as a statutory code of practice for police pursuits. ACPO was replaced by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in April 2015. The [College of Policing](#) now owns [Authorised Professional Practice](#).

## Other police traffic activity

This category includes RTIs that did not happen during pursuit-related activity, or an emergency response. There were four such incidents resulting in four fatalities. Two people were pedestrians, one was a cyclist and one person was in an unrelated vehicle. Two incidents are being investigated independently. The remaining two are being dealt with locally by the police force.

- A police car was on patrol when it struck a pedestrian near a crossing. Paramedics were called, but the man died at the scene. The incident is being independently investigated.
- Officers on patrol saw a suspicious car that then collided with another car. The police indicated to the driver to stop but they drove off at speed. The police stayed with the people in the car that had been hit. Minutes later, a pedestrian was apparently struck by the fleeing vehicle. The pedestrian was air lifted to hospital where she later died. The incident is being investigated independently.
- In a similar incident, police received reports of dangerous driving by an uninsured driver. An officer saw the car and activated his emergency equipment to indicate to the driver to stop. The vehicle failed to stop and drove away at speed. The officer lost sight of the car. Later, the fleeing vehicle collided with a cyclist who died at the scene.
- Officers saw a car travelling towards them at speed. The driver was suspected of drink driving. Officers turned on their emergency lights and indicated to the vehicle to stop, but it continued at speed. The police turned their car around. Soon after, they came across an overturned car that had been hit by the suspect vehicle. The driver of the overturned vehicle died at the scene.

## Trends

This year there were 32 deaths from 28 separate incidents. This is the highest figure recorded in the past eight years and is the fifth highest figure recorded over the 13-year period since 2004/05. These figures are subject to fluctuation and, therefore, we should be cautious when making year-on-year comparisons.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 provide details of the type of road traffic fatalities and incidents over the past 11 years<sup>5</sup>. The tables show the incidents in the three categories previously described: pursuit-related, emergency response-related, and other police traffic activity.

This year there has been an increase in the proportion of pursuit-related incidents. The number of incidents is double the figure for last year. It is the highest proportion of road traffic incidents recorded since 2004/05, when the IPCC first published these statistics. This year, of the 24 pursuit-related incidents, three resulted in seven fatalities. The number of fatalities is more than double the figure for last year, and the highest over the 11-year period.

The number of incidents resulting from other police traffic activity has reduced since last year. It is similar to the average recorded in the previous five years. This year, there were no emergency response-related incidents. This is the third time since 2006/07 that there have been no fatalities of this kind.

---

<sup>5</sup> Information on fatalities and incidents from 2004/05 is available on the [IPCC website](#).

### 3. Road traffic fatalities

**Table 3.1** Type of road traffic fatality, 2006/07 to 2016/17

Fatalities											
RTI type	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Pursuit-related	19	17	22	19	13	12	27	10	7	13	28
Emergency response-related	3	2	6	3	4	2	2	0	0	2	0
Other	14	5	12	7	9	5	2	2	7	6	4
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>

**Table 3.2** Type of road traffic incident, 2006/07 to 2016/17

Incidents											
RTI type	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Pursuit-related	19	11	16	17	13	12	19	9	6	12	24
Emergency response-related	3	2	6	3	3	2	2	0	0	2	0
Other	13	5	11	6	8	5	2	2	7	6	4
<b>Total incidents</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>

# 4. Fatal shootings

---

This year there were six fatal police shootings. One of these was terrorism-related. This figure is the highest recorded since 2004/05. The circumstances of the six fatal police shootings are described below. Three incidents are subject to ongoing independent investigations, and three are complete.

Armed officers from Northumbria Police responded to reports of a White man, aged 24, in the street who appeared to have a handgun. They challenged the man and shouted for the gun to be put down. An officer fired an Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP)<sup>6</sup> round that hit the man, but did not incapacitate him. The police then fired a single shot from a conventional firearm, hitting the man in the chest. He received immediate medical attention and was taken to hospital where he died three days later. A break barrel air pistol, resembling a genuine firearm, was recovered from the scene.

Armed officers from Kent Police went to a remote area as part of a planned police operation. A White man, aged 36, was shot and wounded by police during the operation. Two officers each fired their weapons twice during the incident. The man received medical attention, but died at the scene. Two non-police issue firearms were recovered from the scene.

Bedfordshire armed police went to a block of flats following reports that a woman had been attacked. Officers arrived at the scene where

a White man, aged 24, had run into a flat and armed himself with two large knives. Officers forced entry. The man reportedly made threats to use the knives on himself and on an officer. The police fired a single shot, hitting the man in the chest. He was treated at the scene by officers and paramedics before being taken to hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

Armed officers from Humberside Police responded to a report of a White man, aged 31, carrying an axe in a city centre. The officers used Tasers<sup>7</sup> on the man four times, but they were ineffective. An officer fired two shots, both of which hit the man. He was taken to hospital where he died later that evening.

An Asian man, aged 28, was shot three times by armed West Yorkshire Police officers during a planned police operation. They had information that there might be a firearm in the car the man was travelling in. The man was a passenger in the front seat of the vehicle when he was shot. He received medical attention, but died at the scene. A non-police firearm was recovered from the vehicle.

Armed officers from the Metropolitan Police Service were on duty at the Palace of Westminster when they saw officers fleeing from a man of Mixed ethnicity, aged 48, armed with two knives. The man then stabbed an unarmed officer. The armed officers challenged the man and fired three shots hitting him in the chest. He was taken to hospital by ambulance where he later died.

---

<sup>6</sup> Attenuating Energy Projectiles (AEP) are soft-nosed projectiles intended to soothe impact, but deliver a high amount of energy over an extended period, while reducing the potential for life-threatening injury.

<sup>7</sup> The technical name for a Taser is a Conducted Energy Device (CED). It is a tool that uses electric shocks to stun and immobilise. These devices release short bursts of 1,500 volts in either drive stun (manual use) or through two spiked barbs.

# 5. Deaths in or following police custody

## Demographics

Fourteen people died in or following police custody. Twelve were men and two were women. Their ages ranged from 18 to 56. Eleven people were reported to be White. Two were Black and one was of Mixed ethnicity.

Eight people were identified as having mental health concerns. The types of mental health concerns identified included: schizophrenia, depression and self-harm or suicidal tendencies.

Eleven people were known to have a link to alcohol and/or drugs. This meant that at the time of their arrest they had recently consumed, were intoxicated by, in possession of, or had known issues with alcohol and/or drugs. Where cause of death was known, a pathologist said that alcohol or drug toxicity, or long-term abuse, was likely to be a contributing factor in their deaths for two people.

## Circumstances of detention

Table 5.1 shows the reasons why people were arrested or detained by the police. Three people were arrested for an offence relating to alcohol or drugs. A further three people were detained for an alleged assault. Two people were arrested for a suspected robbery. Two were wanted on a warrant as they failed to appear in court or they were

being recalled to prison. Other reasons for detention included: an alleged sexual offence, a breach of the peace or anti-social behaviour, possession of a weapon and driving under the influence of drugs.

**Table 5.1** Deaths in or following police custody: reason for detention, 2016/17

Reason for detention	Number of fatalities
Drug / alcohol-related (excl. drink driving)	3
Violence-related (non-sexual or murder)	3
Robbery	2
Failure to appear in court / recall to prison	2
Sexual offences (not child related)	1
Breach of the peace / anti-social behaviour	1
Possession of a weapon	1
Driving offences, including drink driving	1
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>14</b>

It is known that five of the 14 people had some force used against them by officers or by members of the public before their deaths. It is important to note, that the use of restraint<sup>8</sup>, or other types of force, did not necessarily contribute to the deaths. There were no uses of incapacitant spray, Taser, or a police dog in any of the incidents.

<sup>8</sup> The term restraint refers to a range of actions including physical holds and pressure compliance. It does not include the routine use of handcuffs, unless another use of restraint was also used.

## 5. Deaths in or following police custody

- Four men were being physically restrained by non-police, such as security staff or members of the public, when the police arrived at the scene. There was no police involvement in restraining the people involved in these incidents but they did apply handcuffs when they arrived.
- One man was physically restrained by the police, and also had leg restraints<sup>9</sup> used on them and a contamination hood<sup>10</sup>.

### Circumstances of death

In the circumstances of the deaths described, cause of death according to the pathologist's report following a post-mortem<sup>11</sup> is reported for seven of the 14 people who died. At the time of reporting, the cause of death was pending for seven people. Inquests have not been held in any of the cases. At an inquest, the cause of death is determined formally and may change from the cause of death listed in a pathologist's report. All but one of the 14 deaths are being independently investigated by the IPCC.

Eight people were taken ill, or were identified as being unwell in a **police cell**. Three of these people died in a police cell. Five were taken to hospital where they died on arrival, or sometime later. Of these eight:

- One man, arrested for drug-related offences, was believed to have swallowed a drug package while trying to avoid arrest. In custody, he denied taking or swallowing any substances. While waiting in a holding cell with officers to be booked into custody, he became unwell and was taken to hospital by ambulance. A drug package was found lodged in his throat. His condition deteriorated and he later died. His cause of death is awaited.
- On arrival at custody, a man said that he previously had deep vein thrombosis. He was assessed by a healthcare practitioner in custody who raised concerns about his health. An ambulance took him to hospital where he was placed in an induced coma and later died. His cause of death was reported as *idiopathic multiple pulmonary embolism*.
- A man was taken to hospital because he was unresponsive due to intoxication. While there, he was arrested for assaulting a member of staff. The hospital staff said he was fit to be released and he was taken into custody. When in custody, he was assessed by a healthcare practitioner when he apparently became agitated. He was physically restrained and leg-straps, handcuffs and a contamination hood were also used. An ambulance was called as he was deemed unfit to be detained at a police station. He died shortly after arriving back at hospital. His cause of death was reported as *ischaemic heart disease with codeine and paracetamol (co-codamol) toxicity and amitriptyline ingestion with periods of agitation and subsequent restraint*.
- On arrival in custody, a man disclosed that he was under the influence of alcohol, a drug user and had other medical conditions. During detention, he was examined by healthcare practitioners who noted signs of withdrawing from alcohol and drugs. After approximately 15 hours, he was found unwell in his cell.

---

9 This device is used to restrict the movements of limbs. Its application should prevent a person from kicking and punching, and allow for safe transportation of the person.

10 A hood designed to cover the whole of the face made of a thin, light fabric designed to allow the person to breathe easily while others are protected from their spitting or biting.

11 In a minority of cases, a post-mortem may not be conducted. In these instances the cause of death will be taken from the records of the certifying doctor. If the cause of death is formally disputed at the time of analysis, the cause of death will be recorded as 'awaited'.

## 5. Deaths in or following police custody

Medical assistance was provided and he was taken to hospital by ambulance where he died shortly after arrival. His cause of death was reported as *cardiac arrhythmia during alcohol withdrawal in a man with a diagnosis of long QT syndrome*.

- One man was assessed as being heavily intoxicated and admitted he was under the influence of controlled drugs. He was assessed as needing half-hourly welfare checks and placed in a cell with CCTV. Between welfare checks, custody staff saw on the CCTV that he had collapsed. Medical assistance was given and an ambulance called. He died in his cell, soon after the arrival of the ambulance. His cause of death is awaited.
- On arrival to the custody suite, during the risk assessment, one man disclosed that he suffered from a number of medical conditions. He received regular observations during his detention. After approximately 18 hours, following a regular cell check, he was found to be unwell. In the cell, his condition deteriorated while waiting for assistance from the London Ambulance Service. Medical assistance by paramedics was unsuccessful and the man was pronounced dead in his cell. His cause of death is awaited.
- One man arriving in custody disclosed that he had a heart condition. He appeared to be alcohol dependent. He was assessed by a healthcare professional and observed during his detention. After approximately 12 hours, during one check, he was found unwell. Medical assistance was provided. Paramedics attended, but the man was pronounced dead in his cell. His cause of death was recorded as *coronary artery atheroma and left ventricular hypertrophy*.
- One woman was found unresponsive in her cell with a ligature round her neck. This was made from the pyjama bottoms she had been wearing. Medical treatment

was provided. She was taken to hospital by ambulance where she died two days later. Her cause of death was recorded as *1a) hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy and 1b) pressure to the neck*.

Three people were taken ill at the **scene of arrest**. One died at the scene and two people died later after they had been taken to hospital:

- One man was being restrained by two members of the public when the police arrived at the scene. The police arrested and handcuffed the man. He soon became unwell and medical attention was provided. An ambulance was called and the paramedics continued to provide medical care, but the man died at the scene. His cause of death is awaited.
- The police were called to a violent street robbery. On arrival, the suspect was being restrained on the floor by two members of the public. The police handcuffed the man to the rear and left him face down on the floor. Additional officers, arriving at the scene, were concerned for the man's welfare and started first aid. An ambulance took the man to hospital where he later died. His cause of death is awaited.
- Police were called to a shopping centre after a man was detained by security staff. The police handcuffed the man and called for an ambulance. He was taken by ambulance to hospital where he died shortly after arrival. His cause of death is awaited.

One man was taken ill in a **police vehicle** while being taken from the scene of arrest to the police station. Officers became concerned for his wellbeing. They stopped the van and called for an ambulance. The man received medical aid at the scene before being taken to hospital by ambulance where he later died. His cause of death is awaited.

## 5. Deaths in or following police custody

Two people died following their **release from police custody**:

- While in custody, a man disclosed that he had an abscess in his groin. He had been ill for the previous few weeks. He complained of being in pain from the abscess and was seen by medical staff. He was not taken to a hospital and deemed fit to be detained. He was transferred to a prison, where he died six days later from complications relating to the abscess *1a. Septic and lung abscesses with broncho pneumonia 1b. Femoral mycotic aneurysm*. This was locally investigated by the police force.
- A woman was arrested on suspicion of driving while under the influence of drugs. In custody, blood samples were taken to determine what drugs were in her system. She did disclose some drug use. After 12 hours in custody she was deemed fit for release, but the results of the tests were not known. The police drove her to her car so she could drive home. Soon after, the woman was seen driving erratically and crashed. She died at the scene from the *multiple injuries* received. The post-mortem found that there were drugs in her system that were likely to have impaired her driving. It is unclear if the drugs were taken after release, or were in her system when she was in custody.

remained stable at 14 fatalities, the second lowest recorded number over the past 13 years.

This year, one person died after taking her own life while in police custody. The last incident of this kind was in 2014/15. Before that it was in 2008/09. Since 2004/05, seven people are known to have died as a result of a self-inflicted act while in a police cell.

## Trends

Between 2004/05 and 2008/09, there was a year-on-year reduction in the number of deaths in or following police custody. They reduced from 36 deaths in 2004/05 to 15 deaths in 2008/09. Over the next two years, the number of deaths in custody increased to 21 in 2010/11, before falling back to 15 in 2011/12 and 2012/13. There was a further reduction, to 11, in 2013/14. In 2014/15, the number rose again to 18 and then declined to 14 in 2015/16. This year the figures have

# 6. Apparent suicides following police custody

Apparent suicides following police custody are reported if they occur within two days of someone's release from custody. They are also reported if experiences in custody may have been relevant to the death, and the death has been referred to the IPCC. The police may not always be told about an apparent suicide that happens after detention in custody, as the association may not be clear. Therefore, there may be more deaths in these circumstances than are reported here.

The term 'suicide' does not necessarily relate to a coroner's verdict because, in most cases, verdicts are still pending. In these instances, the case is only included if, after considering the nature of death, the circumstances suggest that death was an intentional, self-inflicted act – for example, a hanging, or where there was some evidence of 'suicidal ideation', such as a suicide note.

## Demographics

There were 55 apparent suicides following police custody. Of these, 53 were men and two were women. The average age of those who died was 43. The most common age was between 41 and 50 (16 people), followed by 31 to 40 (13 people). The youngest person was 17 years old. Forty-five people were reported to be White. Four people were Asian, three were Black, two were of Other ethnicity, and one person was from a Mixed ethnic group.

Almost three-quarters of the people (40) had known mental health concerns. Of these, two had been detained under Section 136 of the

Mental Health Act 1983. Other mental health concerns included: depression, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, previous thoughts or incidents of suicide attempts, and self-harm.

Almost half of the people (26) were reported to be intoxicated with drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the arrest, or this featured heavily in their lifestyle. Fifteen of these related to alcohol and 15 to drugs.

## Circumstances of death

Seven apparent suicides happened on the day of release from police custody. Thirty-five were one day after release, and 12 happened two days after release.

There was one case where the apparent suicide took place three days after release from police custody. This is being independently investigated. The risk assessment conducted in custody and the information recorded is being examined. The person had attempted suicide the day before their arrest. This investigation is ongoing.

Table 6.1 shows why these people had been detained. Twenty-nine of those who died had been arrested for a sexual offence. Of these, 26 were in connection with sexual offences or indecent images involving children. Other common reasons for detention, included: violence-related offences (10), possession of a weapon (four), and driving offences (three). Criminal damage was an additional arrest reason for four people.

**Table 6.1** Apparent suicides following police custody: reason for detention, 2016/17

Reason for detention	Number of fatalities
Sexual offences	29*
Violence-related (non-sexual or murder)	9**
Possession of a weapon	4^
Driving offences, including drink driving	3~
Theft / shoplifting	2
Detained under the Mental Health Act	2
Harassment / threatening behaviour	1
Arson	1
Murder / manslaughter	1
Fraud	1
Other	2
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>55</b>

\*One man was also arrested for drug offences.

\*\*Three men were also arrested for criminal damage.

^One man was also arrested for criminal damage and breach of bail conditions.

~One man was also arrested for violence-related offences.

The majority of recorded apparent suicides following custody were dealt with locally by the police force (32). Five are being investigated independently. In addition to the one case on page 15, the other four independent investigations were concerned with the quality of risk assessments, information recording, and appropriate safeguarding measures during the person’s detention. All four independent investigations are ongoing:

- During his detention, a man apparently told a healthcare professional that he was suicidal. This information was not recorded on the risk assessment or custody record, or passed to the custody sergeant. When released, the man died by suicide.
- During one man’s contact with police, he told them that he would self-harm or hurt someone. He went on to carry out an assault and was arrested for this offence.

The investigation is reviewing the actions and decision-making of the police during their contact with the man. He died as a result of an apparent suicide the day he was sent to prison.

- One man arrested for child sexual offences died by apparent suicide using a firearm that he owned. There was concern that he was able to continue to access the firearm, given his offence.
- One man had previously attempted suicide while on bail for alleged offences. This information was known by the force carrying out the investigation. The man answered bail on three occasions to his local force, which was not the one investigating. On the third occasion, he was charged for the offences. On the same day, he died by apparent suicide. The investigation is reviewing what information was shared between the two forces.

## Trends

The number of apparent suicides following custody is lower than the 60 recorded last year. While the reported figure this year is lower than the past few years, it is the fifth highest recorded over the 13-year period since 2004/05. It is in-line with the average figure, since the release of the operational advice note in 2007/08. Reporting of these deaths relies on police forces making the link between an apparent suicide and a recent period of custody. Increases in these deaths may therefore be influenced by improved identification and referral of such cases.

This year, for 53% (29) of fatalities the reason for detention related to alleged sexual offences. The proportion of sexual offences or indecent images involving children was 47% (26). These are the highest proportions recorded since 2004/05. The average proportions for these alleged offences over the 13-year period are 32% and 26% respectively.

# 7. Other deaths following police contact: IPCC independent investigations only

---

In 2010/11, a change was made to the definition of this category. It now includes only those deaths following police contact that were investigated independently by the IPCC.

During 2014/15, the IPCC started a significant period of change and expansion. This was in response to the Home Secretary's announcement that there should be more independent investigations into serious and sensitive matters<sup>12</sup>. This has a direct impact on the number of deaths recorded as 'other deaths following police contact', as inclusion of these types of case into this annual report is based on there being an independent investigation.

The increase in this category does not, therefore, indicate an increase in the number of people who have died following some form of contact with the police. It is worth noting that over the past few years, before 2015/16, on average, the IPCC has received about 430 referrals each year where someone had died following police contact. In 2013/14 and 2014/15, the IPCC investigated independently approximately one in ten (10%) of these referrals. In 2015/16, in line with the increase in IPCC resources, one in four (25%) referrals were investigated independently. There was a similar picture in 2016/17.

## Overall demographics

The IPCC independently investigated the deaths of 124 people who died during or following other contact with the police during 2016/17. Of these:

- Eighty-seven people were men (70%) and 37 were women (30%).
- One hundred and seven people were White. Nine were Black, six were Asian, one was of Mixed heritage and one was of Other ethnicity. In total, 17 people (14%) were from a BME group.
- Five people were aged under 18. Ten people were young adults aged between 18 and 24. The average age was 43.

Over half the people who died (74) were reported to be intoxicated by drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the incident, or drugs and/or alcohol featured heavily in their lifestyle. Almost two-thirds of the people who died (77) were reported to have mental health concerns.

---

<sup>12</sup> See the IPCC's [Corporate Plan 2015-18](#) for more information.

Table 7.1 Other deaths following police contact: reason for contact, 2016/17

Reason for contact		Number of fatalities
Concern for welfare	Health / injuries / intoxication / general	26
	Self-harm / suicide risk / mental health	23
	Missing person	21
	Domestic related	21
	Threatening behaviour / harassment	6
	Other	4
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>101</i>
Other contact	Execute search / arrest warrant / investigation enquiries	9
	Assist medical staff	2
	Siege	1
	Attending a disturbance	4
	Other	7
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>23</i>
<b>Total fatalities</b>		<b>124</b>

## Circumstances of death

This category includes deaths in a range of circumstances. The police contact may not have been with the deceased directly, but with a third party, as illustrated by some of the case examples. Where stated, the cause of death is taken from the pathologist's report following a post-mortem<sup>13</sup>.

As shown in Table 7.1, the most common reason for contact with the police related to a concern for welfare. That is, 101 people died after concerns were raised with the police, either directly or indirectly, about the safety or well-being of the deceased before their death. There were a further 23 fatalities recorded as relating to other types of contact with the police.

A total of ten people who died following police contact had force used against them. This does not necessarily mean that the use of force contributed to the death. Seven people were White and three were Black. Eight people who died were known to have been restrained by police officers. One further person had been restrained by members of the public. One man had Taser used on him and no other force or restraint. In the eight incidents where police officers used physical restraint, five also included these other methods of force:

- Taser
- Taser and a baton
- Taser and incapacitant spray
- Taser, a baton and incapacitant spray
- Taser, a baton, incapacitant spray and a stun grenade<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In a minority of cases, a post-mortem may not be done. In these instances, the cause of death will be taken from the records of the certifying doctor. If the cause of death is formally disputed at the time of analysis, the cause of death will be recorded as 'awaited'.

<sup>14</sup> Also known as a flash grenade. It is a less-lethal explosive device used to temporarily disorientate a person's senses.

## Concern for welfare

Of the 101 fatalities that followed contact with the police about a concern for welfare, 26 incidents related to the person's **health, possible injuries, intoxication, or general well-being**. In most incidents, a third party raised the concern. The police generally did not have direct contact with the deceased in these circumstances, although they did in some cases. In this category:

- Twenty-one people were men and five were women. The proportion of men was higher in this concern for welfare contact type than in all other deaths following police contact that were investigated independently.
- The majority of people were aged over 41, with 11 people aged over 61. The average age was 53, older than for the other contact types.
- Three-quarters (20 people) of those who died were reported to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the incident, or these featured heavily in their lifestyle. This is a higher proportion in this category of contact than in all the other following contact deaths.
- The most common form of death classification was natural causes (13 people), followed by self-inflicted (five people).
- In this 'concern for welfare' type, three men were physically restrained by the police, including two who also had Taser used on them. One man also had incapacitant spray used on them. Another man had just Taser used on him. All four men were White. Three were in their early 40s and one was aged 39.

Twenty-three fatalities related to concern about a person's risk of **self-harm, risk of suicide, or mental health**. In these instances, the concern is most often raised with the police by a third party, about a person

with known mental health concerns. The people may, for example, fail to attend an appointment or welfare check, or show signs of being at risk of self-harm or suicide. The person is not reported or considered missing. Of these:

- Seventeen people were men and six were women.
- Seventeen people who died were White, two were Black, and two were Asian. One person was of Mixed ethnicity and one was of Other ethnicity. The proportion of BME people in this category (35%) is higher than in all the other groups of deaths in or following police contact.
- The ages of the people ranged from 17 to 70. The most common age group was 31 to 40 (seven people). The average age was 42.
- Death by self-inflicted means was the most common classification for death (21 people). Remaining fatalities were from natural causes and the death classification of one person is awaited.
- For 17 people, alcohol and/or drugs featured heavily in their lifestyle. This is a higher proportion than in the other types of deaths following police contact investigated independently.

Twenty-one people died following a report of a **missing person**. Fifteen people were also identified as at risk of **self-harm or suicide**. Of these 15:

- Eight people who died were men and seven were women. All were White. Women accounted for a higher proportion in this category of type of contact than in all other deaths in or following police contact that were investigated independently.
- The ages of people in this category ranged from 18 to 66. The most common age group was 21 to 30 (four people). The average age was 36. This is lower than the

overall average age for all other deaths following police contact.

- For 12 people, alcohol and/or drugs featured heavily in their lifestyle, representing a higher proportion than in all the other groups of deaths following police contact.
- In all incidents, the person's death was from an apparent self-inflicted act.

For the remaining six people **reported missing** to the police, there were no specific risks of self-harm or suicide. In these cases:

- Five people were men and one was a woman. All people were White and aged between 31 and 50.
- Four people were known to have mental health concerns and alcohol and/or drugs featured in their lifestyle.
- Three people died from an apparent accidental overdose, and a further two were self-inflicted. The classification of death for one person is awaited.

Twenty-one fatalities were **domestic-related**. This means that the police were responding to a domestic incident, or the circumstances of the contact involved a history of domestic violence or threats made against the deceased and/or family members. In this category:

- Thirteen people who died were women and eight were men. Women accounted for a higher proportion of this category than they did in the other deaths in or following police contact that were investigated independently.
- Eighteen people were White and three were Black.
- The most common age groups were 21 to 30, 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 – each age group had six people. Eighteen people were aged between 21 and 50. The average age was 34, the lowest across all the other deaths in or following police contact.

- In 13 instances, the classification of death was an alleged murder – 11 of these were women. Six were apparently self-inflicted. One was from natural causes and one is not currently known.
- There were three incidents that each resulted in two fatalities. In all these cases, a person was apparently murdered and the suspected perpetrator then died by a self-inflicted act.

Six people died following concern about **threatening behaviour**. These incidents involve threatening behaviour or harassment among people in non-domestic situations, such as between neighbours or strangers. In this category:

- Three people were men and three were women. All those who died were White. The average age was 41, and ranged from 16 to 67.
- Two classifications of death were an alleged murder. One death was self-inflicted. Two classifications of death are awaited pending further investigation.
- One classification of death was from natural causes. In this incident, the deceased reported to the police that her neighbour was shouting verbal abuse and making threats to kill. The neighbour also called the police two days later with concern for her wellbeing. When the police attended, the woman who reported the threats was found dead from pneumonia.

Four people died following **other types of concern for welfare** that are not covered by the above categories. The circumstances in this category vary:

- In one incident, a suspected assault and kidnap of an Asian man was reported to the police. He was later found deceased in a car park, having allegedly been murdered.
- In a similar incident, a Black man contacted the police stating he had been

kidnapped and was being held against his will. The police made enquiries to locate the man. He was later found dead in a car park, having allegedly been murdered.

- A young man, aged 16, was reported to the police to be in difficulty while swimming in a river and could not be found. His body was recovered from the water two days later.
- During an anti-social driving operation, a member of the public reported to the police a concern about the driving of a 93-year-old man. As part of the programme, police should assess the report and take action as they see necessary. No assessment was done in this instance. Some months later, the man lost control while driving and crashed his car. He later died in hospital.

## Other contact

The 23 deaths recorded as relating to **other types of contact** occurred in the following circumstances.

There were nine deaths after or during contact with the police who were **executing a search, an arrest warrant, or conducting investigation enquiries**. All of the deceased were White. Eight were men and one was a woman. All but one, who was 30, were aged over 43 years. In eight incidents, the death was self-inflicted. Of these eight deaths, in five cases the police were making investigation enquiries following allegations of sexual-related offences. One related to corruption and another related to an allegation of assault. In the other self-inflicted death, police went to a property to execute a warrant under Section 135 of the Mental Health Act 1983. The man had a history of mental ill-health and there was concerns about his recent behaviour. He stabbed himself when the police were at the property. He was taken to hospital, but died

shortly after arrival from the stab wound.

In the other incident the police were deployed to carry out a planned stop of a man. The police found the man in the street. Two officers struggled with the man and he was taken to the ground and restrained. The man had been seen to put something in his mouth and the police shouted for him to spit it out. Almost immediately, the man became unwell. He received medical assistance and was taken to hospital by ambulance where he died shortly after arrival. His cause of death is awaited.

Two men, both White, died after police were **called to assist medical staff**:

- In one incident, the ambulance service was called to help a man at his home address. The ambulance service called the police to assist because a second man at the same address was aggressive and hostile to them over the phone. The police agreed they would assist. The ambulance service called the police a number of times to tell them about the threat of weapons at the property and ask for their estimated time of arrival. Approximately one hour later, before police arrived, there was a fire at the property. This resulted in the death of a third man, aged 48.
- In the other incident, police were asked to force entry to a property because a man, aged 61, was badly injured and could not get to the door. The police arrived half an hour later and almost immediately forced entry. The man was taken to hospital, but died shortly after arrival.

One man died during a **siege** situation with the police:

- Armed officers were called to an address after reports of a White man, aged 35, outside with a gun. The police negotiated with the man for several hours before

he shot himself. Paramedics, who were standing by, administered advanced life support, but the man was pronounced dead at the scene.

forced entry approximately ten hours later where she was found dead. Her cause of death was reported as *ischaemic heart disease and cardiomegaly*.

Four people died after police officers attended a **report of a disturbance**:

- In one incident, the police were in contact with a Black man, aged 48, outside the address where a disturbance was reported. During this contact, the police discharged a Taser and physically restrained the man. He became unwell and an ambulance was called. The man was treated at the scene and taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead. His cause of death is awaited.
- When police arrived in response to a reported fight, security staff had restrained two men on the floor. The police attended to one of the men, White, aged 54, and noticed that he was unresponsive. They provided medical aid and he was taken to hospital. He died later from *the effects of a combination of left ventricular hypertrophy, coronary artery atheroma, cocaine, MDMA, alcohol and stress occurring during restraint*.
- In one incident, the police became aware of an unconscious man and were told by a witness that he had been assaulted. The man, White, aged 21, regained consciousness, but was assaulted again later the same night. The police attended again and provided medical assistance. An ambulance took the man to hospital where he died shortly after arrival from a *severe bleed on the brain*.
- One woman, White, aged 69, called the police to report that people were in her garden in the early hours of the morning. The police arrested one of the alleged offenders and took him away. The police went back to the property, but there was no answer from the occupant. The police

Seven deaths occurred following **other contact** with the police:

- A police officer stopped a man known to them in the street. During conversation, the man swallowed what was believed to be a drugs package. Soon after, he showed signs of airway obstruction. He received medical assistance, but died at the scene. His cause of death was reported as *1a. Cardiac arrest b. Airway obstruction caused by wraps. 2. Heroin and benzodiazepine use suppressing airway reflexes*.
- Police responded to a single vehicle road traffic collision where the driver was seen abandoning their car and jumping over a barrier into an area of marshland. This environment, and the darkness, made it difficult for police to search for him. A dog unit was sent for, but was later cancelled. Approximately two weeks later, a man was reported missing. He was believed to be the driver of the abandoned car. The police returned to search the area of the collision and found the man dead in the marshland.
- A police officer started directing traffic following the breakdown of a car. Soon after, there was a collision between two motorcyclists as they hit two cars manoeuvring around the broken down car. One of the motorcyclists was airlifted to hospital where he died shortly after. The ongoing investigation is exploring the traffic management and safety measures taken by the police before the collision.
- The police were contacted about a potentially dangerous dog. Despite having some pit-bull characteristics, the dog was thought by the police not to meet the threshold of a 'dangerous dog'. It was

returned to the owner who was ordered by the local council to keep the dog under control. A few days later, the dog attacked a neighbour who died of the wounds he received.

- One man, who was a passing motorist, contacted the police to report a car had crashed into the central reservation. A police van passed the scene of the crash, but did not stop. The man got out of his car to assist. While on the phone to the police, he was hit by a passing car. He died at the scene.
- A man was rescued by the fire service after he was stuck in his car in a flooded section of a road. He reported the flooded road to the police. Another man was later reported missing. This man had been swept away in his vehicle in the same place. The ongoing investigation is examining the response taken by the police to facilitate the closure of the road.
- A man told police that he had been threatened with murder and been assaulted by another man. The suspect was arrested by the police and later released. The complainant was not happy with the decision to release the man and suggested to the police that he would take matters into his own hands. He later murdered the person who he said had threatened him.

## Trends

In 2010/11, a change was made to the definition of this category. It now includes only those deaths following other police contact that were investigated independently by the IPCC. It would therefore not be meaningful to provide any trend analysis for this category. The deaths included in this category happen in a range of circumstances, which makes it difficult to identify one specific set of events to account for changes in the number of fatalities.

The number of cases that fall into this category has increased because we are carrying out more independent investigations into these matters. The overall proportion of cases relating to a concern for welfare made up 80% of the deaths following police contact that were independently investigated – last year, the proportion was 90%. This year, a fifth of investigations into deaths following police contact related to incidents of concern for someone's health, injury, intoxication, or general well-being.

# 8. Background note

---

1. Under the Police Reform Act 2002, forces in England and Wales have a statutory duty to refer to the IPCC a death during or following police contact where there is an allegation or indication that police contact, directly or indirectly, contributed to the death<sup>15</sup>. We consider the circumstances of all referrals and decide whether to investigate the death.
2. Since April 2006, the IPCC has also received fatal cases, mandatorily referred from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)<sup>16</sup>, and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), and since October 2013, SOCA's replacement, the National Crime Agency (NCA). Up until March 2013, it also received cases from the UK Border Agency (UKBA)<sup>17</sup>, when UKBA's executive agency status was ended and its functions were brought back into the Home Office as UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI); UK Immigration Enforcement (UKIE); and UK Border Force (UKBF). The IPCC has continued to have jurisdiction over those officials and contractors. Deaths during or following contact with these organisations or individuals, therefore, are also presented in this report.
3. The IPCC has been going through a significant period of change and expansion, which will see them carry out significantly more independent investigations into serious and sensitive

cases. This has had an impact on the number of deaths recorded in the category of 'other deaths following police contact that were subject to an independent investigation'. As a result, we have changed the approach to how this category is presented in this report.

## Changes and revisions

4. In 2010/11, a change was made to the definition of the 'other deaths following police contact' category. It now includes only those deaths following police contact that were investigated independently by the IPCC. Further information about this category can be found in the [guidance document](#). No other changes have been made to the definitions of the death categories.
5. In 2007, the IPCC issued an operational advice note to forces to address inconsistencies in the referral of 'apparent suicides following release from police custody'. Forces were asked to refer to the IPCC any suicides that happened within two days of release from police custody, or apparent suicides that happened more than two days after release, but where there was a possible link between the time the person spent in custody and their death.

---

<sup>15</sup> Paragraph 4(1)(a), 13(1)(a), 14c(1). Schedule 3, Part 1, Police Reform Act 2002 as amended by the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, Schedule 12.

<sup>16</sup> Regulation 34 of the Revenue and Customs (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Regulation 25 of the UK Border Agency (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2010.

6. This report presents the most up-to-date set of figures for each death category. In this release, four fatalities have been added to previous years' figures. Within the category 'other deaths following other police contact', two fatalities have been added for the year 2015/16. One 'death in or following police custody' and one 'apparent suicide following police custody' have been added to the 2014/15 figures. These deaths were either not subject to an IPCC investigation or they had not been referred to us at the time the previous report was released.

## Methods and definitions

7. For more detailed definitions and for information about how the death cases are categorised and recorded, see the [guidance document](#). This document also provides suggestions for further reading on associated themes.

## Policies and statements

8. A number of [policies and statements](#) are produced in relation to this report. These are available on the IPCC website. They include information about:
- confidentiality and security of data
  - statement of administrative sources
  - revisions policies
  - announcing changes to methods
  - quality assurance
  - pre-release access
  - user engagement strategy
  - pricing policy

## Users, uses and engagement

9. Information about key users of the data contained in this report and how it has been used can be found in the [user engagement feedback](#) document. This also summarises feedback received on the annual deaths report, the IPCC's response, and any impact this may have on the information contained in the report or on the data collection process.
10. This report provides data and information about a highly sensitive topic area. It is used to promote and inform debate and discussion among police forces and other stakeholders and interested parties. It provides users with an opportunity to learn from the cases that appear in the report and identify, take action, and/or review policy to help prevent such deaths from happening again where possible.
11. Additional [in-depth](#) studies and [learning bulletins](#) have been conducted and produced to further aid learning.
12. Users of the statistics should be aware that care needs to be taken when looking at the time series of the data. There may be discontinuities due to changes in category definition and the varied nature of the circumstances of the cases. The small numbers involved also means it is not possible to analyse trends, as variances can be large.
13. We make every effort to make sure that all relevant deaths are included in this report through an extensive validation exercise with internal colleagues and police forces. However, at times, a case may come to light after the report has been published. Read our [revision policies](#) for information about how we manage routine amendments and errors to published data.

While comparisons to other countries and jurisdictions can be made, care needs to be taken as the data is unlikely to be directly comparable. This is due to differences in death classifications or how other details have been collated.

14. The user engagement strategy is found in section eight of the [policies and statements](#) document.

## Further information

15. On 23 July 2015 the then Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon Theresa May MP announced a major review into deaths and serious incidents in police custody. Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC was appointed to lead the review and examine 'the procedures and processes surrounding deaths and serious incidents in police custody, including the lead up to such incidents, the immediate aftermath, and through to the conclusion of official investigations.

We have contributed to the review by providing ongoing input on specialist matters and through the development of two focus groups that were held with Dame Elish Angiolini.

In May 2016, we responded to a public consultation on the review, and in June 2016 we provided the review team with an update on the progress we had made against the action points from the review of the IPCC's work in investigating deaths.

16. The IPCC's [draft guidance](#) on achieving best evidence in death or serious injury investigations was submitted to the Home Secretary for consideration in December 2015.

In February 2017, we published the draft guidance, to ensure that debate about this important issue was fully informed. There

is no obligation at this stage for police forces to have regard to the guidance. If approved, it will be published on a statutory footing.

17. In March 2017, we held a family listening day. Working with the charity INQUEST, which provides support to families who have been bereaved following contact with the police, the event gave families the opportunity to feed back on their experiences of the IPCC investigation process.

The feedback we heard during the event gave us an insight into what we are doing well and what needs to be improved. It allowed us to develop an understanding of these families' experiences and their general impression of our investigation process.

INQUEST is working on a report to capture all the main issues and recommendations arising from the event. This will be published on our website in due course.

18. The review of the IPCC's work in investigating deaths reinforced the principle that engaging with communities and the wider public during an investigation has important implications for confidence, both in our investigations and in the police complaints system as a whole. In response to this, we developed and agreed an interim approach to community and stakeholder engagement during critical investigations.

In 2016/17, we provided engagement support to 12 investigations. The purpose of this work was to:

- increase community and stakeholder confidence in the organisation's work
- improve public and stakeholder understanding of the IPCC's role and remit

- contribute to managing local community tensions, or concerns where they related to incidents that required independent investigation, or to the wider police complaints system

**19.**The IPCC has a formal agreement, known as a [concordat](#), with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the College of Policing. This sets out how these organisations intend to work together to promote best practice. Examples of where the IPCC is working with HMIC and the College of Policing to raise standards are:

- Sharing information with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) to support HMIP/HMIC joint inspections of custody facilities. These inspections consider the progress the force has made in implementing IPCC recommendations relevant to police custody.
- Working with the College of Policing on its revision of Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on mental health. The revised guidance was published in August 2016.

**20.**In March of this year, the IPCC published their 29th edition of the [Learning the Lessons bulletin](#), which contains specific learning relevant to the issues of custody and detention. It also covers areas relevant to mental health and personal safety.

**21.**Significant changes are due to be made to the police complaints and disciplinary systems. These will impact on the work of the IPCC and the organisation itself. These changes were given effect by the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

**22.**All previous annual deaths in or following police contact reports can be found on our website.

**23.**Electronic versions of the tables presented in the report are available on our website.

In addition, [time series tables](#) are available. These look at ethnicity, age, and gender of the deceased, and police force area by death category, from 2004/05 up to the current reporting year.

**24.**In addition to the annual reports on deaths, the IPCC also periodically produces research studies that examine in more detail some of the issues associated with these cases. To read these related studies please visit the [research and information](#) pages on our website.

**25.**Following a recommendation by the [National Statistician](#) in 2012, this annual report was assessed by the UK Statistics Authority and granted National Statistics designation.

**26.**If you have any questions or comments about the annual death reports, please email the IPCC research team at [research@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk).

**27.**Estimated publication date for 2017/18 report: July 2018.

# Appendix A: Additional tables

**Table A1** Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2006/07<sup>18</sup> to 2016/17

Category	Incidents										
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Road traffic incidents	35	18	33	26	24	19	23	11	13	20	28
Fatal shootings	1	4	3	2	2	2	0	0	1	3	6
Deaths in or following police custody	27	22	15	17	21	15	15	11	18~	14	14
Apparent suicides following custody	47	45^	56	54	46	39	65	70	71~	60	55
Other deaths following police contact*	21	30	33	37	49	37	20	41	43	101~**	121

^ Operational advice note issued in 2007 on the referral of these deaths.

\* Change in definition of 'other deaths following contact' in 2010/11 to include only cases subject to an independent investigation.

\*\* Expansion of IPCC investigative resource and capacity to conduct more independent investigations into serious and sensitive matters – this has a direct impact on the number of other contact deaths that are reported.

~ This table presents the most up-to-date set of figures for these categories; any additions to previously published data are indicated.

**Table A2** Type of death by gender, 2016/17

Gender	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Male	24	6	12	53	87
Female	8	0	2	2	37
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>124</b>

\*This category includes only cases subject to an independent investigation.

18 Information on fatalities from 2004/05 is available on the IPCC website.

**Table A3** Type of death by age group, 2016/17

Age group (years)	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Under 18	6	0	0	1	5
18 - 20	3	0	1	1	3
21 - 30	12	3	3	7	19
31 - 40	3	2	3	13	27
41 - 50	3	0	4	16	34
51 - 60	1	1	3	12	16
61 and over	4	0	0	5	20
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>124</b>

\*This category includes only cases subject to an independent investigation.

**Table A4** Type of death by ethnicity, 2016/17

Ethnicity group	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
White	21	4	11	45	107
Asian^	3	1	0	4	6
Black	2	0	2	3	9
Mixed	2	1	1	1	1
Other	4	0	0	2	1
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>124</b>

\* This category includes only cases subject to an independent investigation.

^ Following changes to ethnicity classification by the Office for National Statistics, since 2015/16 the Asian ethnic group now includes Chinese.

Table A5 Type of death by appropriate authority, 2016/17

Appropriate authority	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Avon and Somerset	0	0	0	0	1
Bedfordshire	1	1	0	0	1
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	0	2
Cheshire	0	0	0	0	4
City of London	0	0	0	0	1^
Cleveland	1	0	0	2	0
Cumbria	0	0	0	0	1
Derbyshire	0	0	1	1	0
Devon and Cornwall	0	0	1	2	2
Dorset	0	0	0	0	1
Durham	0	0	0	1	3
Dyfed Powys	0	0	0	0	1
Essex	2	0	0	3	1
Gloucestershire	3	0	1	2	1
Greater Manchester	4	0	0	1	9
Gwent	0	0	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	0	0	3	2
Hertfordshire	0	0	0	2"	5
Humberside	0	1	0	0	1
Kent	0	1	0	0	3
Lancashire	1	0	1	3	2
Leicestershire	0	0	0	1	3
Lincolnshire	0	0	0	3	2
Merseyside	1	0	1	1	4
Metropolitan	5	1	3	4	9
Norfolk	1	0	0	0	1
North Wales	0	0	0	1	4
North Yorkshire	2^^	0	0	0	2
Northamptonshire	0	0	0	2	1
Northumbria	0	1	2	0	9
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	0	3
South Wales	0	0	0	0	7
South Yorkshire	2	0	0	1	2
Staffordshire	0	0	0	2	6
Suffolk	0	0	1	2	0
Surrey	0	0	0	1	2
Sussex	1	0	0	2	4
Thames Valley	1	0	0	3	6
Warwickshire	1	0	0	0	0
West Mercia	2	0	1	3	2
West Midlands	2	0	1	4	9
West Yorkshire	2	1	1	3	5
Wiltshire	0	0	0	0	2
British Transport	0	0	0	0	0
HMRC	0	0	0	1	0
Ministry of Defence	0	0	0	0	0
NCA	0	0	0	1	0
Home Office~	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>124</b>

## Appendix A: Additional tables

\*This category includes only cases subject to an IPCC independent investigation.

^The Metropolitan Police are also under investigation for this fatality.

“For one of these fatalities, the NCA are also under investigation.

^^For one of these fatalities, Durham Police are also under investigation.

~This includes UKBF, UKIE and UKV.

**Independent Police Complaints  
Commission (IPCC)**  
90 High Holborn  
London  
WC1V 6BH

**Tel:** 0300 020 0096

**Email:** [enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.ipcc.gov.uk](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk)

July 2017

Copyright IPCC © 2017  
ISBN:978-0-9573365-7-5