

Annual deaths during or following police contact: Statistics for England and Wales 202/26

Report summary

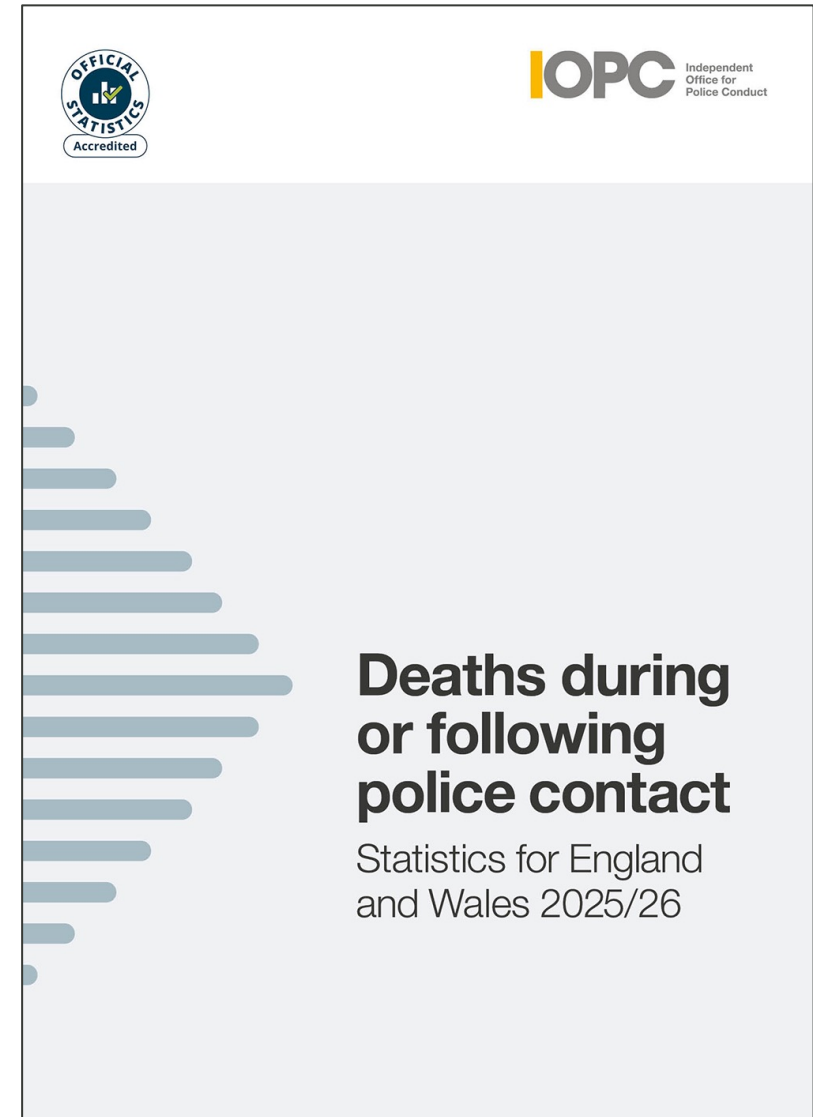
30 July 2026

About this report

This report sets out the figures on the number of deaths during or following police contact between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.

It covers the figures for England and Wales, and gives an overview of the nature and circumstances in which these deaths occurred.

It is the twenty-second annual report on deaths during or following police contact published by the IOPC, formerly the Independent Police Complaints Commission.



Introduction

To produce these statistics, we examine the circumstances of all deaths that are referred to us. We decide whether the deaths meet the criteria for inclusion in this 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 independent investigation

National statistics

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics.

This designation means that the statistics:

- 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

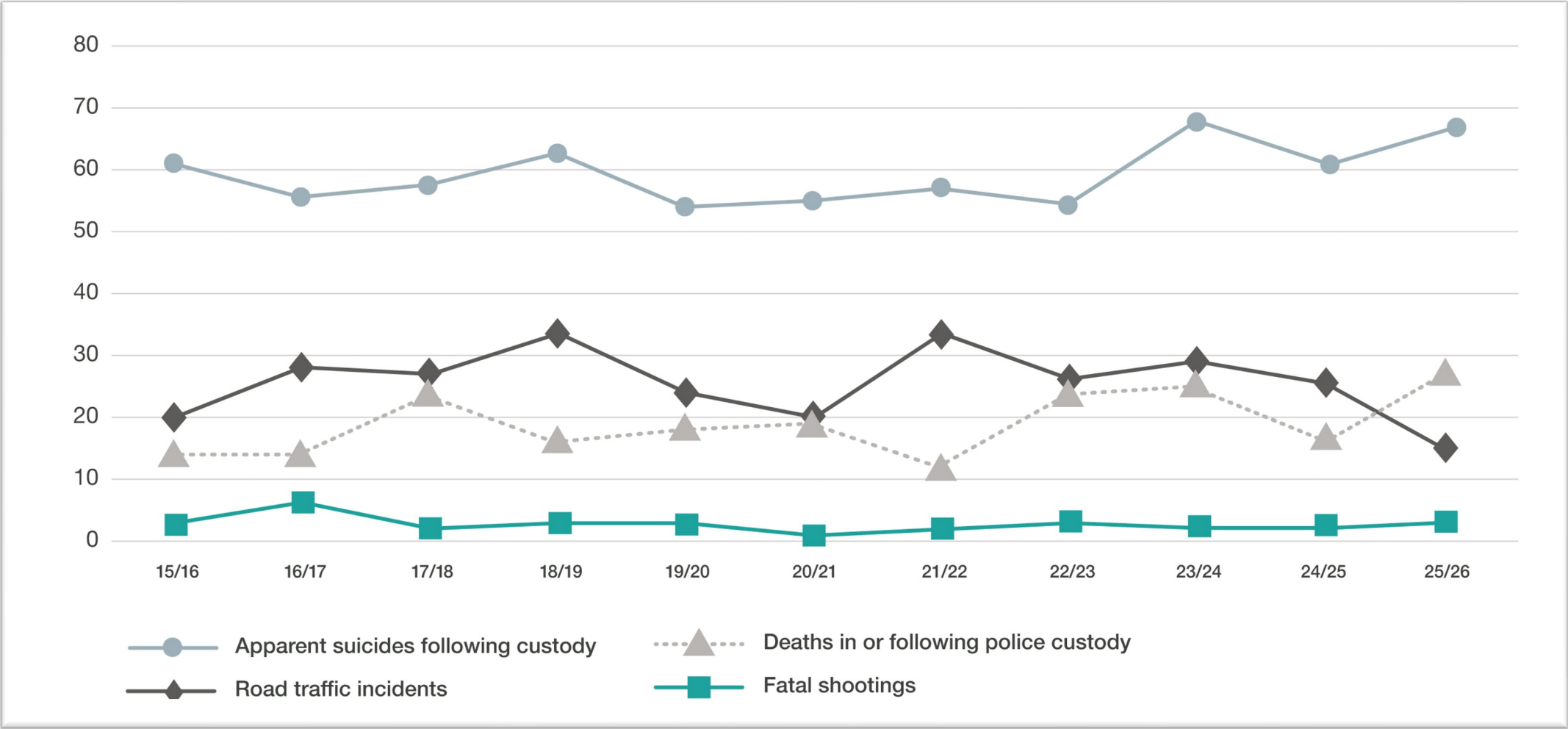


Overall findings

During 2025/26 there were:

- 15 road traffic fatalities
- 4 fatal police shootings
- 27 deaths in or following police custody
- 67 apparent suicides following police custody
- 63 other deaths following police contact that were independently investigated by the IOPC

Fig 2.1: Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2015/16 to 2025/26



Key findings

Deaths in or following police custody

The number of deaths in or following police custody has increased to 27, the joint-third highest recorded since 2004/05. The average number of deaths in or following police custody recorded since figures began in 2004/05 is 20.

- 12 people had some force used against them by officers or members of the public before their deaths, although the use of force did not necessarily contribute to their deaths.
- Of the 27 deaths in or following police custody, 23 people were White, 3 people were Asian and 1 person was of a mixed ethnicity.
- 6 people were pronounced dead in a police cell, 3 more than in 2024/25.

Key findings

Road traffic incidents

There were 15 fatal police-related road traffic incidents, resulting in 15 fatalities. Last year, there were 25 incidents. This is below the average of 29 road traffic incident fatalities recorded over the 11-year period since 2015/16.

- Of the 15 fatalities, 11 resulted from pursuit-related activity.
- Pursuit-related fatalities decreased this year and is below the average of 19 deaths over the 11-year period since 2015/16.
- Of the 15 fatalities:
 - 8 people were the driver or passenger in the pursued vehicle
 - 1 person was a rider of an unrelated moped, which was hit by the pursued car
 - 2 people were pedestrians hit by the car being pursued by the police

Key findings

Road traffic incidents (continued)

- There were 2 emergency response-related incidents resulting in 2 fatalities. This is a notable decrease from 5 fatalities last year and below the average of 3 recorded since 2015/16.
- A decrease from other police traffic activity to 2 incidents from 3 the previous year, and number of fatalities also decreasing to 2 from 3.
- The average age of the people who died was 41.
- The average age decreases to 36 if the deceased was the driver or passenger in the pursued or fleeing vehicle. It increases to 54 if they were a pedestrian, cyclist, driver or passenger in a vehicle hit by either police, or pursued or fleeing vehicle.
- No-one was under 18, compared to four people in 2024/25.

Key findings

Shootings

- There were 4 fatal police shootings which occurred in 3 separate incidents.
- This is an increase from 2 fatal police shootings and 2 incidents recorded in 2024/25.
- 3 people were White and 1 person was Asian.

Key findings

Apparent suicides following police custody

There were 67 apparent suicides following custody, which is higher than the 61 recorded in 2024/25. It is higher than the average of 59 recorded over the 11-year period from 2015/16.

- For 60% of fatalities, the reason for custody was for alleged sexual offences.
- The proportion of deaths which involved sexual offences or indecent images of children was 43%. These proportions are in line with the figures recorded last year (62% and 44% respectively), but higher than average figures.
- The average proportions for these alleged offences since 2004/05 are 38% and 30% respectively.

Key findings

Other deaths following police contact – independent investigations only

The IOPC independently investigated the deaths of 63 people who died during or following other contact with the police, an increase from 53 in 2024/25.

- The number of deaths recorded in this category is directly impacted by the number of independent investigations we conduct. This report category only includes deaths that we independently investigated.
- Any change in this category does not necessarily indicate an increase or decrease in the number of people who died following contact with the police.

Key findings

Other deaths following police contact – independent investigations only (cont.)

There were 51 fatalities following contact with the police, either directly or indirectly, after welfare concerns were raised.

- 16 deaths linked to domestic incidents/concerns, 15 were women and 1 was a man.
- 13 deaths related to the person's health, possible injuries, intoxication, or well-being.
- 12 deaths related to incidents where there was concern about the person's risk of self-harm, risk of suicide, or mental health.
- 6 deaths related to a report of a missing person.
- 2 deaths followed concern about threatening behaviour in non-domestic situations, such as between neighbours or strangers

Key findings

Other deaths following police contact – independent investigations only (cont.)

We conducted 12 (19%) investigations into deaths following police contact, which related to other types of contact.

- 2 people died after contact with the police who were assisting medical staff.
- 3 people died after police officers attended a report of a disturbance.
- 3 people died after contact with the police who were conducting enquiries.
- 3 people died after avoiding police contact or arrest.
- 1 person died following other contact with the police.

Key findings

Mental health, alcohol and drugs

As in previous years, mental health and links to drugs or alcohol were common factors among many of those who died.

- Over 2/3 of those who died (43) following other police contact were reported to have mental health concerns. 12 of these deaths related to a concern about risk of self-harm, suicide, or mental health.
- 18 of 27 people who died in or following police custody had mental health concerns.
- Of 67 apparent suicides, 43 people had known mental health concerns and 29 people were reported to be intoxicated with drugs and/or alcohol during arrest, or drugs and/or alcohol featured heavily in their lifestyle.
- Over 50% of people who died (37) following other police contact were reported to be intoxicated by drugs and/or alcohol, or it featured heavily in their lifestyle. 22 people had links to drugs and/or alcohol.

Key findings

Use of force

- Of the 27 people who died in or following police custody, 12 had some force used against them by the police officers or members of the public.
 - 10 of the 12 people were physically restrained by the police.
 - 1 death also involved restraint by members of the public
 - 5 people had leg restraints applied by police
 - 1 death involved use of PAVA incapacitant spray and another involved discharge of a Taser
- Of the 63 other deaths following police contact, 12 had force used against them.
 - 11 people were restrained and 6 had leg restraints applied by police officers.
 - 3 deaths also involved restraint by members of the public.
 - 1 death involved use of a bite guard and PAVA incapacitant spray.
 - 1 incident also involved discharge of a Taser.

Key findings

Use of force (continued)

- Of the 12 deaths in or following custody, that involved use of force, 10 of the deceased were White and 2 were Asian.
- Of the 12 'other contact deaths' that involved use of force:
 - 8 people were White
 - 1 person was Black
 - 1 person was Asian
 - 1 person was of mixed ethnicity
 - 1 person was of other ethnicity

To find out more

Our full report is available on our website.
If you have difficulties accessing our report
please email:

content_design_team@policeconduct.gov.uk

For any questions or comments about our
report or the statistics please email:

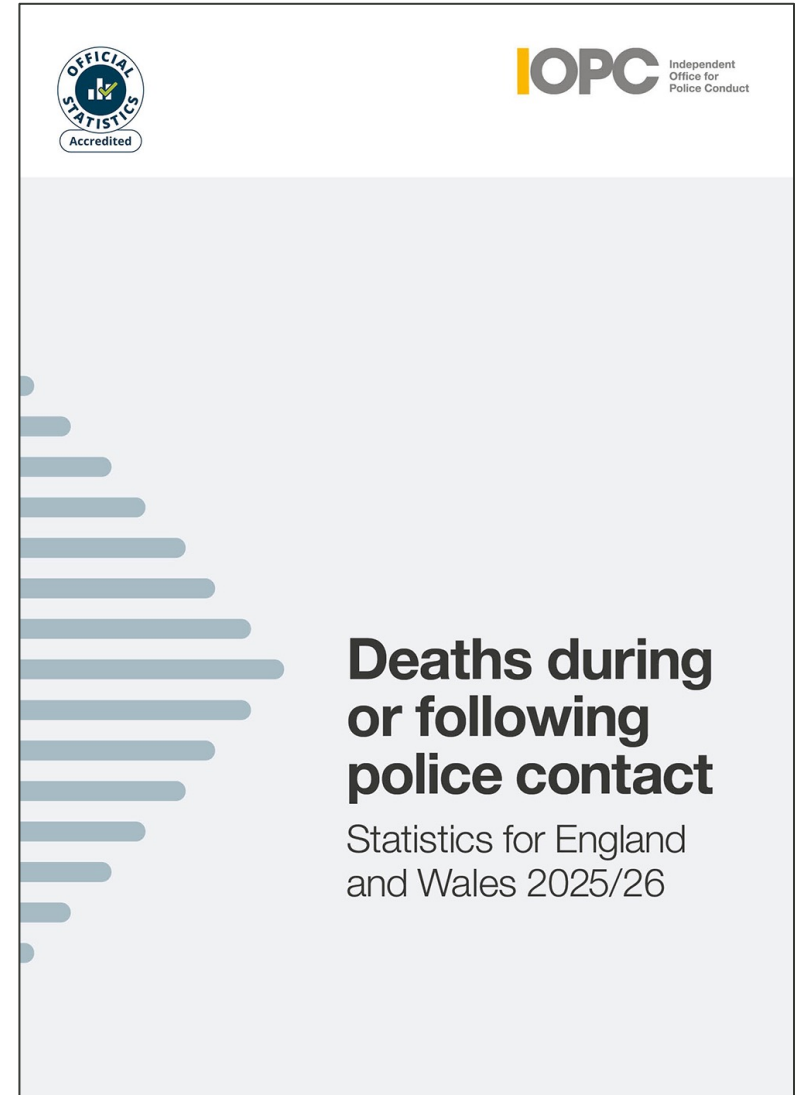
research@policeconduct.gov.uk

Website: www.policeconduct.gov.uk

Twitter: @policeconduct

Email: enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 020 0096



Thank you

policeconduct.gov.uk

  @policeconduct

0300 020 0096