

Freedom of Information Request

Date of receipt: 20 April 2023

Date of response: 30 May 2023

Suicide Data

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Code I request answers to the following please:

1. How many people in Guernsey died by committing suicide shown on a yearly basis in the last 5 years?
2. How many of these people, shown on a yearly basis, were under the age of 18 years old?
3. How many people in Guernsey were admitted to hospital in an attempt to commit suicide (but did not succeed) shown on a yearly basis in the last 5 years?
4. How many of these people (detailed in question 3.), shown on a yearly basis, were under the age of 18 years old?
5. How many times was the Guernsey Joint Emergency Services Control Centre contacted in relation to suicides in the last 5 years shown on a yearly basis?

Response provided by the Office of the Committee for Health & Social Care:

1. **How many people in Guernsey died by committing suicide shown on a yearly basis in the last 5 years?**

Background and Methods

Mortality codes are assigned by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for each death registered in Guernsey and Alderney. The coding consists of an 'underlying cause' code and, for some, one or more 'secondary cause' codes. The coding system is the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Version 10 ("ICD10"). Codes are determined from the causes of death listed on the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

and, where an inquest has taken place, supplementary information including the inquest verdict. The ICD10 codes that relate to suicide and injury of undetermined intent are X60-X84 and Y10-Y34, respectively. This is the current standard set of codes used within Public Health for looking at trends in suicide and possible suicide deaths.

Deaths registered in Guernsey and Alderney in the period 2017–2022 with underlying cause codes in this range are shown below.

Limitations

There are 12 inquests that remain open for the years 2017-2022, 5 of which relate to 2022. Open inquests are not included in the counts below as the cause of death is yet to be determined. The numbers of open inquests are shown below in a separate column. Please note that using rates rather than counts is usually a more meaningful way to compare deaths with other jurisdictions and over time as the underlying population will differ in size. Often with small numbers of deaths (such as the below) there will be greater fluctuations year-on-year. The possible influence of chance fluctuations should be borne in mind when interpreting local data. Age-standardised rates relating to suicide and injury of undetermined intent will be released later this year as part of Public Health's Mortality Report 2021.

Results

The table below summarises the number of deaths registered in Guernsey and Alderney where the underlying cause was suicide or injury of undetermined intent in the years 2017 to 2022.

Year	Number of deaths due to suicide or injury of undetermined intent	Number of open inquests
2017	7	2
2018	6	1
2019	6	3
2020	9	1
2021	11	0
2022	<5	5

2. How many of these people, shown on a yearly basis, were under the age of 18 years old?

There were no deaths due to suicide or injury of undetermined intent in those aged under 18 registered in Guernsey and Alderney over the period 2017 to 2022.

3. How many people in Guernsey were admitted to hospital in an attempt to commit suicide (but did not succeed) shown on a yearly basis in the last 5 years?

4. How many of these people (detailed in question 3.), shown on a yearly basis, were under the age of 18 years old?

Attempted suicide is not coded as such following admission into hospital. Intentional self-harm is coded, but without a review of each of the patient records it is not possible to identify whether the self-harm was an attempted suicide.

5. How many times was the Guernsey Joint Emergency Services Control Centre contacted in relation to suicides in the last 5 years shown on a yearly basis?

Response provided by the Office of the Committee for Home Affairs:

The Joint Emergency Services Control Centre code calls regarding a suicidal person under the Police protocol 127, this can include but is not limited to an attempt to take their life, a threat to do so or an actual suicide.

Between 26 April 2018 and 26 April 2023 there were a total of 1212 calls that were triaged under protocol 127.

Date Range	Number of calls
26 April 2018 to 25 April 2019	218
26 April 2019 to 25 April 2020	254
26 April 2020 to 25 April 2021	309
26 April 2021 to 25 April 2022	227
26 April 2022 to 26 April 2023	204