



Deaths during or following police contact:



Statistics for England and Wales
2014/15

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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:

- 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.

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1. Introduction

This report presents figures on deaths during or following police contact that happened between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015. 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 eleventh in a series of statistical reports on this subject published annually by the IPCC. To produce the IPCC annual statistics on deaths, the circumstances of all deaths referred to the IPCC are examined to decide whether they meet the criteria for inclusion in the report under one of the following five 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](#) 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.

1. Introduction

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 jurisdiction¹. 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 occur:

- 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 includes 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

¹ See background note 2.

2. Overall findings

In 2014/15 the following number of fatalities occurred within each category:

- 14 road traffic fatalities
- one fatal police shooting
- 17 deaths in or following police custody
- 69 apparent suicides following police custody
- 41 other deaths following police contact that were subject to an IPCC independent investigation

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. 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

Once 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 a case is best dealt with locally by the police Professional Standards Department (PSD) or other equivalent department. [Box B](#) on page five 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 2014/15. 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. A total of 65 incidents were subject to an independent investigation and one investigation was supervised by the IPCC. Across all death categories, and similar to recent years, no incidents were subject to a managed investigation.

Table 2.1 Incidents by type of death and investigation type, 2014/15

Type of investigation	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Independent	4	1	16	3	41
Managed	0	0	0	0	0
Supervised	0	0	0	1	0
Local	6	0	1	41	0
Back to force	3	0	0	24	0
Total incidents	13	1	17	69	41

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 2004/05. It would not be meaningful to produce trend analysis across the total of all five categories due to a change

in definition of the category of other deaths following police contact and the wide variation in the circumstances of deaths reported.

Table 2.2 Fatalities by type of death and financial year, 2004/05 to 2014/15

Category	Fatalities										
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Road traffic fatalities	44	48	36	24	40	29	26	19	31	12	14
Fatal shootings	3	5	1	5	3	2	2	2	0	0	1
Deaths in or following police custody	36	28	27	22	15	17	21	15	15	11	17
Apparent suicides following custody	46	40	47	45 [^]	56	54	46	39	65	70 [~]	69
Other deaths following police contact*	24	40	22	30	35	39	56	47	22	43 [~]	41

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

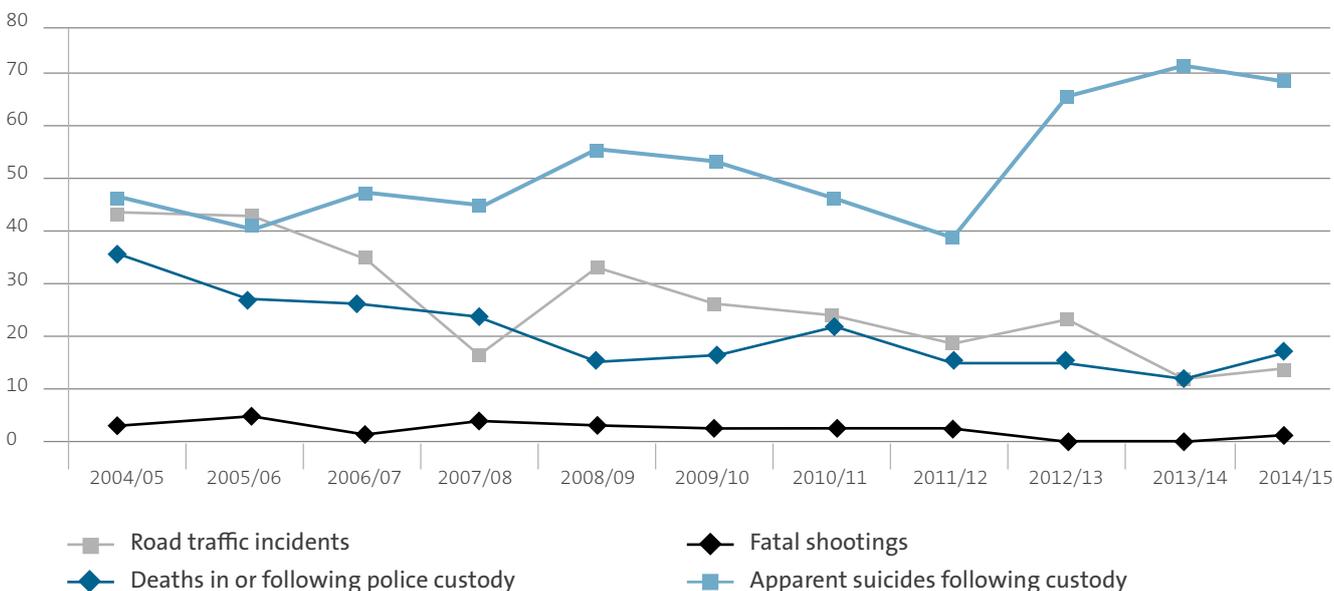
* Change in definition of other deaths following contact in 2010/11 to include only cases subject to an independent investigation.

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

Figure 2.1 shows the number of separate incidents that resulted in fatalities. There are fewer incidents than fatalities 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 slightly over the last year from 11 to 13, but has remained notably lower than over the previous nine years.

Figure 2.1 Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2004/05 to 2014/15



2. Overall findings

This year there was one fatal police shooting: the first since 2011/12.

The number of deaths in or following police custody has increased to 17, similar to the levels seen in the previous five years following the 11 year low of 11 deaths observed last year.

The number of recorded apparent suicides following custody is comparable to the previous year, 69 deaths this year compared to 70 last year. Reporting of these deaths relies on police forces making the link between an apparent suicide and a recent period of custody. The overall increase in these deaths over the 11 year period may therefore be influenced by improved identification and referral of such cases.

Other deaths following police contact are not included in Figure 2.1. Including a death in this category is dependent on the IPCC deciding to independently investigate a death. The criteria for making this decision may vary over time, for example in response to current public and community concerns, therefore trend analysis would not be meaningful. In addition, over the last year, the IPCC has increased the number of independent investigations it is undertaking which could also have an impact on the number of deaths reported on in this category.

Figures on all fatal incidents are provided in table A1 in the appendix. Trend data on ethnicity, age, gender, police force and category of death since 2004/05 can be found on the [IPCC website](#).

Box B Type of investigation

Independent investigations are carried out by the IPCC's own investigators and are often used for the most serious incidents and/or those with the greatest public concern.

Managed investigations are carried out by police 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 without external help.

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

3. Road traffic fatalities

Demographics

In 2014/15 there were 13 fatal police-related Road Traffic Incidents (RTIs), resulting in 14 fatalities. Of those who died, three were under 18 years; the youngest was a 15 year old girl who was also the only female fatality. A further seven people were aged between 18 and 29 years; the eldest was 63 years. Ten people were reported to be White, three of Asian origin and one from a Mixed ethnic group.

Circumstances of death

Pursuit-related

Pursuit-related incidents are classified as pursuit-related if they involved a pursuit or a 'follow'. Not all of these incidents will have entered an official pursuit phase as defined in the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on police pursuit². Incidents that involved a collision of a vehicle that had recently been pursued by police, but where the police had lost sight of the vehicle, will be included. Incidents where police are 'following' a vehicle before obtaining permission to pursue will also be included as pursuit-related.

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

- Three people, in three separate incidents, were the driver of a vehicle being pursued by the police when it crashed. One of these men was taken to hospital and discharged the same day. However, he died at home the following day of the injuries sustained in the crash.

- Three people were passengers in a car being pursued by officers; two were under 18 years old when they died.
- One man was riding a motorcycle when he lost control and collided with a stationary vehicle after police officers, in an unmarked car, had started to follow it.

Two of the pursuit-related incidents were subject to an independent investigation. The remaining four were investigated 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. For the second year there were no deaths as a result of emergency response-related incidents.

Other police traffic activity

This category includes RTIs that did not happen during pursuit-related activity or an emergency response. There were seven such incidents resulting in seven fatalities. Two are being investigated independently; the remaining five are being dealt with locally by the force.

- One man was being pursued by officers on foot when he ran into a road. An officer deployed incapacitant spray and immediately after, a collision happened between the man and a police vehicle.
- One incident happened when the driver of a van apparently lost control and hit an oncoming police car; he was thrown from the vehicle receiving fatal injuries.

²See 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](#).

3. Road traffic fatalities

- There were two pedestrian deaths. One man died after being hit by a speeding car that officers on foot had tried to stop moments before. In another incident, a patrolling police car collided with a teenage boy who had run out into the road. The boy later died in hospital of his injuries.
- Two incidents involved a motorbike or a moped. In one incident a motorbike struck a police van as it was performing a U–turn. In the other, police officers made several attempts to flag down a scooter reported as being driven erratically by a rider wearing no helmet. Later, the rider crashed into a building and suffered fatal injuries.
- In one incident, officers who were following up a sighting of a car that was allegedly being driven erratically, came upon a fatal collision moments after it happened. The car that crashed was trying to avoid the car officers had seen earlier. It hit a tree, resulting in the death of the passenger.

Trends

This year there were 14 deaths from 13 separate incidents, two more than in 2013/14. This number is notably lower than in the previous years and continues to reflect an overall downward trend seen over the 11 year period.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 provide details of the type of road traffic fatalities and incidents over the past 11 years. The tables break down the incidents into the three broad categories previously described: pursuit-related, emergency response-related and other police traffic activity. This year, the number of pursuit-related incidents is the lowest over the 11 year reporting period, accounting for six of the 13 incidents. In previous years, pursuit-related incidents have made up the majority of fatal incidents: last year nine of the 11 incidents were pursuit-related. This year a greater proportion³ of incidents resulted from other police traffic activity than in any previous year and for the second year, no incidents were emergency response-related.

Table 3.1 Type of road traffic fatality, 2004/05 to 2014/15

RTI type	Fatalities										
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Pursuit-related	23	32	19	17	22	19	13	12	27	10	7
Emergency response-related	6	4	3	2	6	3	4	2	2	0	0
Other	15	12	14	5	12	7	9	5	2	2	7
Total fatalities	44	48	36	24	40	29	26	19	31	12	14

Table 3.2 Type of road traffic incident, 2004/05 to 2014/15

RTI type	Incidents										
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Pursuit-related	22	27	19	11	16	17	13	12	19	9	6
Emergency response-related	6	4	3	2	6	3	3	2	2	0	0
Other	15	11	13	5	11	6	8	5	2	2	7
Total incidents	43	42	35	18	33	26	24	19	23	11	13

³Proportions should be treated with caution given the small numbers described.

4. Fatal shootings

This year there was one fatal police shooting, the first time in three years that a person has been fatally shot by police officers.

This incident involved armed response officers from the Metropolitan Police who were called to a hostage situation at a residential address where a 40 year old man was reportedly threatening a woman with a knife. Officers apparently tried to resolve the situation and engaged with the man for an hour and a half. It is reported that the situation escalated and an officer fired two shots hitting the deceased in the back of his chest and upper arm. He died of his injuries on the way to the hospital. The incident is subject to an ongoing independent investigation.

5. Deaths in or following police custody

Demographics

Seventeen people died in or following police custody; 14 were men and three were women. Their ages ranged from 22 to 57 years. Fifteen people were reported to be White, one was of Asian ethnicity, and one person was from a Black background.

Eight people were identified as having mental health concerns. The types of mental health concern identified included schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and paranoia; one man had been detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Sixteen people were known to have a link to alcohol and / or drugs in that they had recently consumed, were intoxicated from, were in possession of, or had known issues with drugs or alcohol at the time of their arrest. In six of these cases, a pathologist stated that alcohol or drug toxicity or long term abuse was likely to be a contributing factor in the cause of death.

Circumstances of detention

Table 5.1 shows why the person was arrested or detained by the police. Five people were detained for an alleged assault; three were domestic related and two were assaults on a police officer. Four people were detained for theft or shoplifting and two people were arrested for an offence relating to alcohol or drugs: one for being drunk and disorderly and the other for possession of drugs with intent to supply.

⁴ 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 This device is designed and 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.

Table 5.1 Deaths in or following police custody: reason for detention, 2014/15

Reason for detention	Number of fatalities
Assault	5
Theft / shoplifting	4
Drug / alcohol related (excl. drink driving) [^]	2
Harassment / threatening behaviour	1
Breach of non-molestation order	1
Possession of weapon	1
Detained under the Mental Health Act	1
Criminal damage	1
Murder	1
Total fatalities	17

[^]One of these individuals was also arrested for criminal damage

As shown in Table 5.2, it is known that ten of the 17 people had been restrained by officers before their death. It is important to note however that the use of restraint⁴, or other types of force, did not necessarily contribute to the death. In four of these ten incidents incapacitant spray was also used. Two incidents involved the use of Taser, of which one also included the use of a police dog. Two of these ten people also had restraint equipment applied such as fast straps⁵ or leg restraints.

Table 5.2 Deaths in or following police custody: type of force, 2014/15

Type of force [^]	Number of fatalities
Restraint only	4
Restraint* and incapacitant spray	4
Restraint~ and Taser	1
Restraint, Taser and police dog	1
No restraint / use of force	7
Total fatalities	17

[^]The following types of force are recorded: restraint, restraint equipment, Taser, incapacitant spray, police dog.

* Leg restraints were also used in one incident.

~Fast straps were also used.

Circumstances of death

In the circumstances of the deaths described below, cause of death, as taken from the pathologist’s report following a post-mortem⁶, is reported for 13 of the 17 people who died. At the time of reporting, cause of death was pending for four people. An inquest has been held in one of the 17 cases; 16 cases are awaiting an inquest where cause of death will be finally determined and may change from that reported by the pathologist.

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

- The three men who died in a police cell were all reportedly intoxicated on arrest. Two of these men died after becoming unresponsive in their cell: one man’s cause of death was recorded as *dissection of the aorta* and the other man’s cause of death was recorded as a *heart attack*. The third man was restrained by officers shortly after arriving in custody and incapacitant

spray was used. He was taken to hospital after complaining of chest pain but was returned to custody after being declared fit to be detained. He is recorded as having died of a *pulmonary embolism in the heart* the following day.

- Three of those who died in hospital had apparently been found unresponsive in their cell. An inquest has been held for one woman, who had recently been returned to police custody following treatment in hospital, and returned a narrative verdict of *sudden death in association with longstanding alcohol misuse and withdrawal*. One man, who had been restrained in a cell when initially brought into custody, is recorded as having died of *hypoxic brain injury due to cardio-respiratory arrest* and one woman choked on an item of clothing in an apparent suicide attempt.
- One woman, who was a known drug user with existing medical conditions, was taken to hospital by officers after becoming unwell in her cell. She died in hospital the following day of *sepsis and intestinal infarction due to vasculitis*.
- One man was reportedly restrained by officers while in custody and incapacitant spray was used. He became unresponsive and was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital. His cause of death is awaited.

Four people were taken ill at the **scene of arrest** and then died either at the scene, or after having been taken to hospital:

- Two men were taken ill, or suspected of being unwell, in their homes. One man apparently attempted to flee while being questioned and was restrained by family members and an officer. He reportedly collapsed while being arrested; his cause of death was recorded as a *heart attack*. In another incident, officers arrested a man for a domestic assault.

⁶ 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 being formally disputed at the time of analysis, the cause of death will be recorded as ‘awaited’.

5. Deaths in or following police custody

He was suspected of having taken a drugs' overdose and was taken to hospital by officers where he died the following morning. His cause of death was reported as *combined venlafaxine and propranolol toxicity*.

- One man reportedly collapsed while being arrested in a town centre following a suspected theft. He was taken to hospital by ambulance where he died later that day. His cause of death is awaited.
- One man died after police were called to reports of a murder taking place. Upon attendance, officers discharged a Taser and the man was placed in fast straps⁷. Due to concerns regarding his health, medics attended and placed him in an ambulance where he was subsequently pronounced dead. His cause of death was reported as *sudden unexpected death following a struggle against restraint (including discharge of a Taser), in a man with a history of schizophrenia who had taken amphetamine and cannabis*.

Three people were taken ill, or concern was raised, while they were in a **vehicle**: two were in a police vehicle and one was in an ambulance:

- One man, who had a Taser used on him, was bitten by a police dog and was restrained during arrest, collapsed after being placed in a police vehicle. He was transferred to an ambulance but died at the scene. His cause of death is awaited.
- One man allegedly assaulted an officer during arrest and was restrained using leg restraints after having incapacitant spray used on him. He was placed in a police van where he became unresponsive. He was taken to hospital by ambulance where he died a few days later. His cause of death was reported as *complications of cardiorespiratory arrest occurring in*

very close temporal proximity to a period of prone restraint with mephedrone and benzoylecgonine intoxication.

- One man, who was allegedly behaving erratically in a shop was restrained by members of the public and police. He was detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act and escorted by officers to hospital in an ambulance. On the way to hospital he went into cardiac arrest and he died in hospital the following day. His cause of death is awaited.

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

- One man, who had incapacitant spray used on him and was restrained during an alleged struggle on arrest, was reportedly seen swallowing unknown substances on three separate occasions while in custody. He was twice sent to hospital where he received medical attention before being returned to custody. He was found unconscious the day after his release and was taken to hospital where he died a few weeks later. His cause of death was reported as *brain injury and aspiration pneumonia*⁸.
- One man, who had allegedly been involved in a struggle with police officers and was restrained on arrest, collapsed the day after his release having apparently swallowed a package of drugs at some point before his death. His cause of death was reported as *cocaine toxicity*.

All but one of these 17 deaths is subject to an IPCC independent investigation. The death being locally investigated is that of the man who had apparently taken a fatal overdose before arrest, and was taken directly to hospital by officers but remained under arrest until his death.

⁷ See footnote five.

⁸ The pathologist noted that drug toxicity was a likely contributory factor.

Trends

Between 2004/05 and 2008/09 there was a year-on-year reduction in the number of deaths in or following custody from 36 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, with a further fall to 11 in 2013/14. This year has seen a rise to 17 fatalities, which while it is an increase compared to last year, is more in-line with the average number of deaths recorded in the previous six years.

This is the first year since 2008/09 where a person has died after making an apparent suicide attempt while being held in police custody. Over the 11 year reporting period, six people are known to have made a fatal suicide attempt in a police cell.

6. Apparent suicides following police custody

Apparent suicides following police custody are reported if they happen within two days of a person being released from police custody, or where the time spent in custody may have been relevant to the subsequent death, and the death has been referred to the IPCC. The police may not always be told of an apparent suicide that happens after time spent in custody as this association may not always be clear. Therefore, there may be additional deaths in these circumstances that are not reported on here.

The term 'suicide' does not necessarily relate to a coroner's verdict as, 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 69 apparent suicides following police custody. Of these, 61 were male and eight were female. Half of those who died were aged between 21 and 40 years; nearly one in three was aged 41 to 49; and the youngest was 20 years old. Sixty-two people were reported to be White; three were from a Black ethnic group; three were of Asian origin; and one was of a Mixed ethnic background.

Half of the individuals (35) were reported to have mental health concerns. Of these, five had been detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983. Other mental health concerns included depression, bi-polar

disorder, personality disorders or previous thoughts or incidents of suicide attempts or self-harm. Twenty-six people were reported to be intoxicated with drugs and / or alcohol at the time of the arrest, or it featured heavily in their lifestyle: 19 of these related to alcohol and nine to drugs.

Circumstances of death

Twenty-two apparent suicides occurred on the day of release from police custody, 33 occurred one day after release, and 14 occurred two days after release.

Table 6.1 shows why these people had been detained. Just under half (33) of those who died had been arrested for a sexual offence. Of these, 28 were in connection with sexual offences or indecent images involving children. Other common reasons for detention included: failure to appear in court / breach of bail / breach of other court orders (seven); violence related offences (six); and breach of the peace / criminal damage (six).

6. Apparent suicides following police custody

Table 6.1 Apparent suicides following police custody: reason for detention, 2014/15

Reason for detention	Number of fatalities
Sexual offences	33
Failure to appear in court / breach of bail / breach of other court orders	7
Violence related (non-sexual or murder)	6
Breach of peace / criminal damage [^]	6
Drug / alcohol related (excl. drink driving)	5
Detained under the Mental Health Act	5
Driving offences, including drink driving	5
Possession of weapon	2
Total fatalities	69

[^]One man was arrested for criminal damage and for being drunk and disorderly .

The majority of recorded apparent suicides following custody were dealt with locally by the police force (65); three were subject to an independent investigation and one was supervised.

Trends

The number of apparent suicides following custody is similar to the 70 recorded last year, which was the highest number recorded in this category since 2004/05. Reporting of these deaths relies on police forces making the link between an apparent suicide and a recent period of custody. The overall increase in these deaths may therefore be influenced by improved identification and referral of such cases.

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 subject to an IPCC independent investigation.

Demographics

The IPCC independently investigated the deaths of 41 people who died during or following other contact with the police. Thirty-four were male and seven were female. Thirty-three people were White, five were from a Black ethnic group, two were of an Asian background, and one was of Mixed heritage. Four were young adults aged between 16 and 21 and one was a six month old baby. Nearly one in three (13) were aged between 41 and 50 years and six were over 60 years.

Circumstances of death

This category includes deaths that have happened across a diverse range of circumstances. The police contact may not have been directly with the deceased, but – as demonstrated in some of the case examples below – with a third party. Cause of death, as taken from the pathologist’s report following a post-mortem⁹, is known for 38 of the 41 people who died and is reported where known.

As shown in Table 7.1, the most common reason for contact with the police relates to **concern for welfare**: that is, 26 people died after concerns were raised with police about their safety or wellbeing.

⁹ See footnote 6.

Table 7.1 Other deaths following police contact: reason for contact, 2014/15

Reason for contact		Number of fatalities
Concern for welfare	Health / injuries / intoxication / general	9
	Self-harm / suicide risk / mental health	6
	Missing person	5
	Domestic related	5
	Threatening behaviour	1
	Subtotal	26
Other contact	Avoiding contact / arrest	4
	Execute search / arrest warrant / investigation enquires	3
	Assist medical staff	3
	Attending a disturbance	2
	Other	3
	Subtotal	15
Total fatalities		41

Of these 26, in nine incidents there was a concern relating to their **health, possible injuries, intoxication or general well-being**:

- In two separate incidents, a person apparently drowned in a river. One man had allegedly jumped into the water after an argument with friends and in the other incident, a woman had reportedly gone for a swim. Efforts to rescue both individuals were unsuccessful and both were later recovered from the water deceased.

7. Other deaths following police contact – IPCC independent investigations only

- Two men were hit by vehicles in separate incidents, following concerns raised by the public after each had been seen walking in traffic on a busy road. One died at the scene of the incident and the other was taken to hospital where he later died of his injuries.
 - One man died after police officers attended a property following reports of an alleged assault. Officers returned after further concerns were reported and found the man unresponsive. He died sometime later in hospital of injuries sustained during the incident.
 - One man was found deceased in his home after it was alleged that concerns for his welfare had previously been raised with police by his friend. The cause of death was recorded as *acute chest infection and heart disease*.
 - One incident involved a bus driver seeking assistance at a police station in dealing with an intoxicated man on his bus: no action was taken. A passenger also reported concerns for the man's welfare to the police. An ambulance attended but the man died at the scene. Cause of death was recorded as an *accidental overdose of a combination of alcohol and drugs*.
 - One woman was found deceased in her home, having apparently taken her own life by *hanging*, after concerns were raised following an abandoned 999 call.
 - In one incident, concern was raised by two members of the public, a short time apart, about a man who was seen lying at the side of a road. The police did not attend and the man, who had been in police custody and released from court the previous day, was taken to hospital by ambulance where he died later that day. The cause of death is currently awaited.
- apparently taken their own lives.
 - One man died after falling from a balcony while officers were attending a call regarding his behaviour. The man was taken to hospital where he later died of his injuries.
 - In one incident, police were alerted by the ambulance service to a man who was suspected of having taken an overdose. Officers attended and a siege followed, during which the man made threats to harm himself. After 14 hours officers forced entry and found the man had taken his own life by *hanging*.
 - One man flagged down a police car stating he was feeling paranoid. The officer drove him to hospital and continued on his patrol. Later, the hospital contacted the police on a number of occasions to report that the man had left and that they were concerned about his welfare. The police did not take any action. The man died after being hit by a train shortly after leaving the hospital.

Five men, four of whom had known mental health concerns, were **reported missing** to the police and were later found deceased. Four had apparently taken their own lives and the cause of death for one man was recorded as *amphetamine toxicity*.

Five fatalities were **domestic-related**, where 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 associated family members. Three of these individuals, one man and two women, were allegedly the victims of a murder committed by their current or ex-partner. One man was allegedly murdered by his daughter and one woman apparently took her own life following a domestic incident attended by the police.

One person died following concern relating to **threatening behaviour**. A man was found stabbed after police had responded to reports that one or more young people were being chased by a number of individuals armed with knives.

Six fatalities related to concern regarding a person's risk of **self-harm, suicide or mental health**. Of these:

- Three men in separate incidents were reported to the police as being suicidal: one man jumped from a roof while officers were present and the other two men were found deceased in their homes having

Fifteen deaths were recorded as relating to **other types of contact**. In four of these instances the individual who died was apparently attempting to **avoid contact or arrest** by the police:

- One man drowned after reportedly jumping into water apparently to evade capture by officers and one man was hit by a train after running on to a train track while being pursued by officers on foot.
- Two men died after allegedly attempting to swallow a drug package. Both had reportedly engaged in a struggle with officers and had been restrained; one also had incapacitant spray used on him. In both cases the cause of death was due to an *obstruction in the upper airway*: for one restraint was also listed in the post-mortem¹⁰.

There were three fatalities after police had attended an address to **execute a search, arrest warrant or to conduct investigation enquiries**:

- In one incident police had attended to execute a search warrant and found a man apparently choking. The man was taken to hospital where he later died due to a *hypoxic brain injury*.
- One man died after police had attended the address to make an arrest for a domestic violence related offence. Upon entry to the property officers reported being presented with a man holding a knife to his neck. After two hours of negotiation the man reportedly began to injure himself. Tasers were discharged and leg restraints were applied. The man was taken to hospital but subsequently died of neck injuries.
- One man apparently took his own life following a visit from police regarding an investigation into offences relating to indecent images of children.

Three men died after police were called to **assist medical staff**:

- In two incidents police were called to assist with a patient who had allegedly assaulted a member of staff. One of these men was restrained by officers using handcuffs and leg restraints. The following day he was transferred by medical staff to a mental health unit where he later died. His cause of death is awaited. The other man had attended hospital complaining of a headache. An officer attended and during this time he fell from a wheelchair and remained on the floor until medics could assist him. The man later died from a reported *bleed on the brain*.
- In one incident police were requested to assist with the removal of a man refusing to leave a hospital after being discharged. Officers attended the hospital and the man agreed to leave, stating he would walk home. On his way home he was hit by a bus on an unlit road during the early hours of the morning and later died of his injuries in hospital.

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

- One man, who allegedly had serious injuries and was behaving erratically, was physically restrained by officers. His condition deteriorated and he died at the scene while officers and paramedics were attending to him. His cause of death was recorded as *multiple incised and lacerated injuries, in an individual exhibiting features of acute behavioural disturbance and experiencing the toxic effects of cocaine*.
- In one incident, officers attended a property following a report of an intruder. The resident, who allegedly reported he was assaulted by the intruder, fell in his flat a week later and died in hospital of *pneumonia following a long lie*.

¹⁰ Cause of death was reported as *acute cardiorespiratory failure due to a mechanical obstruction of the upper airway by a foreign object, in a restrained individual with a cystic tumour of the atrioventricular node, experiencing the effects of cocaine and heroin*.

Three deaths occurred following **other contact** with police:

- In one incident a six month old baby died of injuries sustained during an attack by the family dog. The dog had been reported as potentially dangerous to the police ten months earlier, but allegedly no follow up action was taken.
- One woman died after allowing officers to search her garden for a suspect. During the search a police dog entered her home and bit her. The woman was taken to hospital but later died. Her cause of death was recorded as existing health conditions complicated by the dog bite¹¹.
- One person was murdered by a man who had recently been released from prison. While in police custody, the man who was subsequently convicted of the murder, had reportedly threatened to harm someone if he was released.

In total, five people who died following police contact where known to have been restrained by officers: in two of these instances leg restraints were applied, one followed the use of Taser, and in one incident incapacitant spray was also used.

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 subject to an IPCC independent investigation. It would therefore not be meaningful to provide any trend analysis for this category. The deaths included in this category involve a diverse range of circumstances which makes it difficult to identify one specific set of events that accounts for changes in the number of fatalities. However this year, the proportion of cases that related to a concern for welfare in domestic related circumstances (12%) was notably lower than in recent years, with a larger proportion of cases relating to concern about someone's health, injury, intoxication or general well-being (22%).

¹¹ Cause of death was reported as *cardio-respiratory arrest, lobar pneumonia, peritonitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and dog bite*.

8. Background

1. Under the Police Reform Act 2002, forces in England and Wales have a statutory duty to refer to the IPCC any complaint or incident involving a death that has happened during or following police contact and where there is an allegation or indication that the police contact, be it direct or indirect, contributed to the death¹². The IPCC considers the circumstances of all the cases referred to it and decides 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),¹³ the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), and since October 2013, SOCA's replacement, the National Crime Agency (NCA). It also received cases from the UK Border Agency (UKBA)¹⁴ until March 2013, when its executive agency status was ended and its functions were brought back within 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 and therefore, any deaths that have happened during or following contact with these organisations or individuals will also be presented in this report.
3. The IPCC is currently undergoing a significant period of change. The change programme, which is running from 2014 to 2017, will see the IPCC become a new organisation delivering significantly more independent investigations of serious and sensitive cases. This may have an impact on the number of deaths recorded in the category of *other deaths following police contact that were subject to an independent investigation*. This will be monitored in future years.
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 subject to an IPCC independent investigation. 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 occur within two days of release from police custody or apparent suicides that occurred more than two days after release but where there was a possible link between the time spent in custody and the death.

Changes and revisions

¹² 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.

¹³ Regulation 34 of the Revenue and Customs (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2005.

¹⁴ Regulation 25 of the UK Boarder 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, six fatalities have been added to previous years' figures. Four *deaths following other police contact* and two *apparent suicides following police custody* have been added to the 2013/14 figures. These deaths were not subject to an IPCC investigation or had not been referred to the IPCC at the time the previous report was released.
10. The report provides data and information about a highly sensitive topic area. It is used to promote and inform debates and discussions 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.

Methods and definitions

7. For more detailed definitions and for information on 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. This includes information on:

- 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, which 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.

11. Additional [in-depth studies](#) and [learning bulletins](#) have been conducted and produced by the IPCC to further aid learning.
12. Users of the statistics should be aware that care needs to be taken when looking at the time series data as 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.

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 publication date. 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 due to differences in death classifications or how other details have been collated.

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

Further information

14. In March 2014, the IPCC published the [findings from its review into its work in cases involving a death](#). The purpose of this review was to engage with all of those who have experience of our work investigating deaths, including our critics, to increase public confidence in this important area of our work. Alongside the findings we published an action plan. The actions included delivering changes in approach and procedure, including ensuring effective engagement with families. The IPCC published an update [report](#) in March 2015 which provides a summary of the progress made against the action plan detailed in the report.
15. In July 2014, the IPCC published its [oversight and confidence strategy](#). This recognises the importance of findings from complaints and investigations feeding into better policing practice. It is vital that our recommendations are implemented, and learning is embedded in forces and in the training and standards that are set for policing. This requires partnership between the IPCC and other policing bodies: the College of Policing, the Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Police and Crime Commissioners, among others. The IPCC work must complement, not duplicate, their work.
16. In September 2014 the IPCC established a formal agreement, known as a [concordat](#), outlining how the IPCC, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the College of Policing intend to work together to promote best practice. The agencies have committed to:
- regularly consult one another on areas of mutual interest
 - share information and analysis as appropriate to promote timely, well-informed decision making, to assist the planning and prioritisation of work
- ensure that the data collection and inspection regimes for police forces minimise unnecessary bureaucracy
 - promote clarity about their roles and responsibilities, recognising separate, discrete and complementary jurisdictions
17. Relevant examples of where the IPCC is working with the College of Policing and HMIC to raise standards in policing include:
- Working with the College of Policing on their revision of Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on detention and custody. This provides national policing standards on custody. The revised APP document will reflect changes in technology, legislative developments and learning from cases that the IPCC has investigated. This is due for publication in July 2015.
 - Worked with the College of Policing on their review of the training and guidance for police officers responding to victims, witnesses and offenders suffering mental ill-health. This will feed into the development of APP on mental health and an updated set of learning tools to help officers and staff understand how they can best support vulnerable people in mental health crises.
 - We share 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 any relevant IPCC recommendations.
18. All [previous](#) annual deaths in or following police contact reports can be found on our website.

19. Electronic versions of the tables presented in the report are available on our [website](#). In addition, [time series tables](#) are available looking at ethnicity, age and gender of the deceased, and police force area by death category from 2004/05 up to the current reporting year.
20. In addition to the annual reports on deaths, the IPCC also periodically produces one-off research studies which 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.
21. Following a recommendation by the [National Statistician](#) in 2012, this annual report was [assessed](#) by the UK Statistics Authority and granted National Statistics designation.
22. If you have any questions or comments about the annual death report, please email the IPCC research team at research@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk.
23. Estimated publication date for 2015/16 report: July 2016.

Appendix A: Additional tables

Table A1 Incidents by type of death and financial year, 2004/05 to 2014/15

Category	Incidents										
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Road traffic incidents	43	42	35	18	33	26	24	19	23	11	13
Fatal shootings	3	5	1	4	3	2	2	2	0	0	1
Deaths in or following police custody	36	28	27	22	15	17	21	15	15	11	17
Apparent suicides following custody	46	40	47	45 [^]	56	54	46	39	65	70 [~]	69
Other deaths following police contact*	23	38	21	29	33	37	48	37	20	40 [~]	41

[^] 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.

[~] 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, 2014/15

Gender	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Male	13	1	14	61	34
Female	1	0	3	8	7
Total fatalities	14	1	17	69	41

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

Table A3 Type of death by age group, 2014/15

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	3	0	0	0	3
18 - 20	3	0	0	1	1
21 - 30	4	0	4	18	7
31 - 40	2	1	6	17	8
41 - 50	1	0	5	20	13
51 - 60	0	0	2	9	3
61 & over	1	0	0	4	6
Total fatalities	14	1	17	69	41

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

Table A4 Type of death by ethnicity, 2014/15

Ethnic group	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
White	10	0	15	62	33
Asian	3	0	1	3	2
Black	0	1	1	3	5
Mixed	1	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total fatalities	14	1	17	69	41

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

Table A5 Type of death by police force, 2014/15

Force	Road traffic incidents	Fatal shootings	Deaths in or following police custody	Apparent suicides following custody	Other deaths following police contact*
Avon & Somerset	0	0	1	2	1
Bedfordshire	0	0	0	1	0
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	0	0
Cheshire	0	0	0	1	1
City of London	0	0	0	0	0
Cleveland	0	0	0	3	1
Cumbria	1	0	0	2	0
Derbyshire	0	0	0	1	1
Devon & Cornwall	0	0	0	4	2
Dorset	0	0	0	0	0
Durham	1	0	0	0	1
Dyfed Powys	0	0	1	0	1
Essex	0	0	1	1	3
Gloucestershire	0	0	0	1	0
Greater Manchester	1	0	0	3	1
Gwent	0	0	1	1	1
Hampshire	0	0	1	1	0
Hertfordshire	0	0	0	0	1
Humberside	0	0	0	2	1
Kent	0	0	1	3	0
Lancashire	0	0	0	3	2
Leicestershire	1	0	0	1	0
Lincolnshire	0	0	1	1	0
Merseyside	0	0	0	2	1
Metropolitan	1	1	1	4	4
Norfolk	0	0	0	1	1
North Wales	0	0	0	0	0
North Yorkshire	0	0	0	2	0
Northamptonshire	0	0	0	0	1
Northumbria	0	0	2	4	3
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	1	0
South Wales	2	0	0	2	3
South Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	0
Staffordshire	0	0	1	2	0
Suffolk	1	0	0	0	1
Surrey	0	0	0	3	0
Sussex	0	0	1	4	0
Thames Valley	1	0	0	2	3
Warwickshire	0	0	1	0	0
West Mercia	1	0	0	2	2^
West Midlands	3	0	1	3	3
West Yorkshire	1	0	3	3	2
Wiltshire	0	0	0	1	0
British Transport Police	0	0	0	1	0
HMRC	0	0	0	0	0
Ministry of Defence	0	0	0	0	0
NCA	0	0	0	1	0
Home Office	0	0	0	0	0
Total fatalities	14	1	17	69	41

^One of these investigations is looking at the actions of two forces, West Mercia and Northumbria

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

Deaths during or following police contact: Statistics for England and Wales 2014/15

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