

SIDS & SUDC Facts and Figures



- There are approximately 230 unexplained deaths of babies & toddlers every year in the UK
- The Lullaby Trust’s definition of sudden infant death syndrome and sudden unexpected death in childhood:

The sudden and unexpected death of a baby is usually referred to by professionals as ‘sudden unexpected death in infancy’ (SUDI) or ‘sudden unexpected death in childhood’ (SUDC), if the baby was over 12 months old. The death of a baby which is unexpected is also sometimes referred to as ‘sudden infant death’.

Some sudden and unexpected deaths can be explained by the post-mortem examination, revealing, for example, an unforeseen infection or metabolic disorder. Deaths that remain unexplained after the post-mortem are usually registered as ‘sudden infant death syndrome’ (SIDS) or SUDC in a child over 12 months. Sometimes other terms such as SUDI or ‘unascertained’ may be used.

- SIDS in the UK (babies aged under 12 months):

	England & Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland	UK Total	UK rate (per 1000 live births)
2015	191	21	4	216	0.28
2014	217	14	4	235	0.30
2013	252	17	9	278	0.36
2012	234	29	2	265	0.33
2011	247	29	5	281	0.34
2010	261	26	5	292	0.36
2009	283	24	3	310	0.39
2008	287	22	3	312	0.39
2007	273	31	4	308	0.40
2006	285	29	1	315	0.42
2005	325	20	2	347	0.48
2004	317	29	0	346	0.48
2003	315	44	0	359	0.52

- SUDC in the UK (babies aged 12–24 months):

	England & Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland	Total
2015	14	4	0	18
2014	15	2	1	18
2013	18	0	1	19
2012	17	0	0	17
2011	11	0	0	11
2010	16	3	0	19
2009	18	2	0	20
2008	8	2	0	10
2007	19	0	4	23
2006	16	3	0	19
2005	16	1	0	17
2004	19	3	1	23
2003	11	1	1	13

The majority of sudden unexpected deaths of children occur in babies aged under one year. In the UK in 2015, 7.7% of sudden unexplained deaths of children under 2 were amongst children aged 12-24 months.

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

England & Wales 2015¹

- 191 unexplained infant deaths occurred in England and Wales in 2015, a rate of 0.27 deaths per 1,000 live births. Apart from a slight rise in unexplained infant deaths in 2013, the rate has fallen steadily from 0.39 in 2009.
- 60% of these deaths were recorded as sudden infant deaths, and 40% were recorded as unascertained (where no other cause of death is recorded).
- Just under two thirds (66%) of all unexplained infant deaths were boys in 2015 (127 deaths) an increase from 2014 (55%).
- The rate of infant deaths decreased by 41% for mothers aged under 20. Although numbers are very small, the risk is three times greater than for babies born to mothers aged 20 and over.

Statistician's Quote

"Unexplained infant deaths in 2015 were the lowest on record, driven by a further decrease in sudden infant deaths from 2014. This could be due to a greater awareness of safe sleeping practices and a reduction in the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy."

Office for National Statistics

1991-2015

- Since the launch of the Back to Sleep Campaign in England and Wales in 1991, the number of SIDS deaths has fallen by 81%.

SIDS by Government Office region, 2015 England and Wales:

	England & Wales	North East	North West	Yorkshire & The Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	Wales
No	191	8	34	27	13	26	19	17	22	15	10
Rate	0.27	0.28	0.40	0.42	0.24	0.37	0.26	0.13	0.21	0.26	0.30

¹The statistics above are reproduced from ONS publications and relate (unless otherwise stated) to babies in England and Wales aged birth to one year, and include those whose deaths were certified as 'unascertained'. More information can be found at www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_413784.pdf

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