

SIDS & SUDC Facts and Figures



- There are 200 unexplained deaths of babies & toddlers every year in the UK
- The Lullaby Trust’s definition of sudden infant death syndrome and sudden unexplained 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 that 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 ‘sudden unexpected death in childhood’ (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)
2017	183	15	2	200	0.26
2016	226	18	3	247	0.32
2015	195	21	4	220	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

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

	England & Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland	Total
2017	14	1	1	16
2016	15	2	0	17
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

The majority of sudden unexplained deaths of children occur in babies aged under one year. In the UK in 2017, 7.4% of sudden unexplained deaths of children under 2 were amongst children aged 12-24 months.

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

England & Wales 2017

- 183 unexplained infant deaths occurred in England and Wales in 2017, a rate of 0.27 deaths per 1,000 live births a statistically significant decrease from 0.31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016.
- Just over half (55.2%) of all unexplained infant deaths were boys in 2017 (0.29 deaths per thousand live births). This is a slight increase of from 51.3% in 2016.
- The number of unexplained infant deaths has decreased for mothers of all age groups since 2004 but the smallest decline was for mothers aged under 20 years.

Statistician's Quote

“The rate at which babies died from an unexplained cause before their first birthday fell to the lowest level on record in 2017 – almost halving since records began in 2004. The new low comes after our last set of figures showed an increase between 2015 and 2016, and re-establishes the long-term trend. The fall in unexplained deaths may be due to factors such as fewer expectant mothers smoking and more awareness of safer sleeping practices.”

Office for National Statistics

1991-2017

- Since the launch of the Back to Sleep Campaign in England and Wales in 1991, the number of SIDS deaths has fallen by 82%.

SIDS by Government Office region, 2017 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	183	11	30	17	19	24	11	20	26	16	9
Rate	0.27	0.40	0.36	0.27	0.37	0.35	0.16	0.16	0.26	0.29	0.28

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