

SIDS & SUDC Facts and Figures



- There are 230 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)
2018	198	28	4	230	0.31
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

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

	England & Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland	Total
2018	9	5	1	16
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

The majority of sudden unexplained deaths of children occur in babies aged under one year. In the UK in 2018, 6.5% 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 2018

- 198 unexplained infant deaths occurred in England and Wales in 2018, a rate of 0.30 deaths per 1,000 live births an increase from 0.28 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017.
- Just over half (57.6%) of all unexplained infant deaths were boys in 2018 (0.34 deaths per thousand live births). This is a slight increase of from 55.2% in 2017.
- 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 of unexplained infant deaths had been decreasing since records began in 2004, but today's figures help confirm that these improvements have levelled off since 2014.

“There are a range of factors that influence the risk of an unexplained infant death, from sleeping practices to the age of the mother. Overall, the risk is relatively small, but we will continue to monitor the figures closely for further changes.”

Office for National Statistics

1991-2018

- Since the launch of the Back to Sleep Campaign in England and Wales in 1991, the number of SIDS deaths has fallen by over 80%.

SIDS by Government Office region, 2018 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	198	7	33	24	17	26	14	23	26	17	11
Rate	0.30	0.26	0.41	0.40	0.34	0.39	0.20	0.19	0.27	0.31	0.35

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The Lullaby Trust
34 New House, 67 - 68 Hatton Garden, London, EC1N 8JY
Tel 020 7802 3200 www.lullabytrust.org.uk office@lullabytrust.org.uk
Registered charity number:262191