

CRUK data brief

Cancer mortality in the UK, 2024

March 2026

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About this document

Reference

This report should be referred to as follows:

Cancer Research UK, 2026. CRUK data brief: Cancer mortality in the UK, 2024.

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the many organisations across the UK which collect, analyse, and share the data which we use, and to the patients and public who consent for their data to be used. Find out more about the sources which are essential for our statistics here <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/cancer-stats-explained/data-collection-implications>.

About Cancer Research UK

We're the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving and improving lives through research. We fund research into the prevention, detection and treatment of more than 200 types of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses. In the last 50 years, we've helped double cancer survival in the UK and our research has played a role in more than half of the world's essential cancer drugs. Our vision is a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.



Cancer Research UK is a registered charity England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666), the Isle of Man (1103) and Jersey (247).

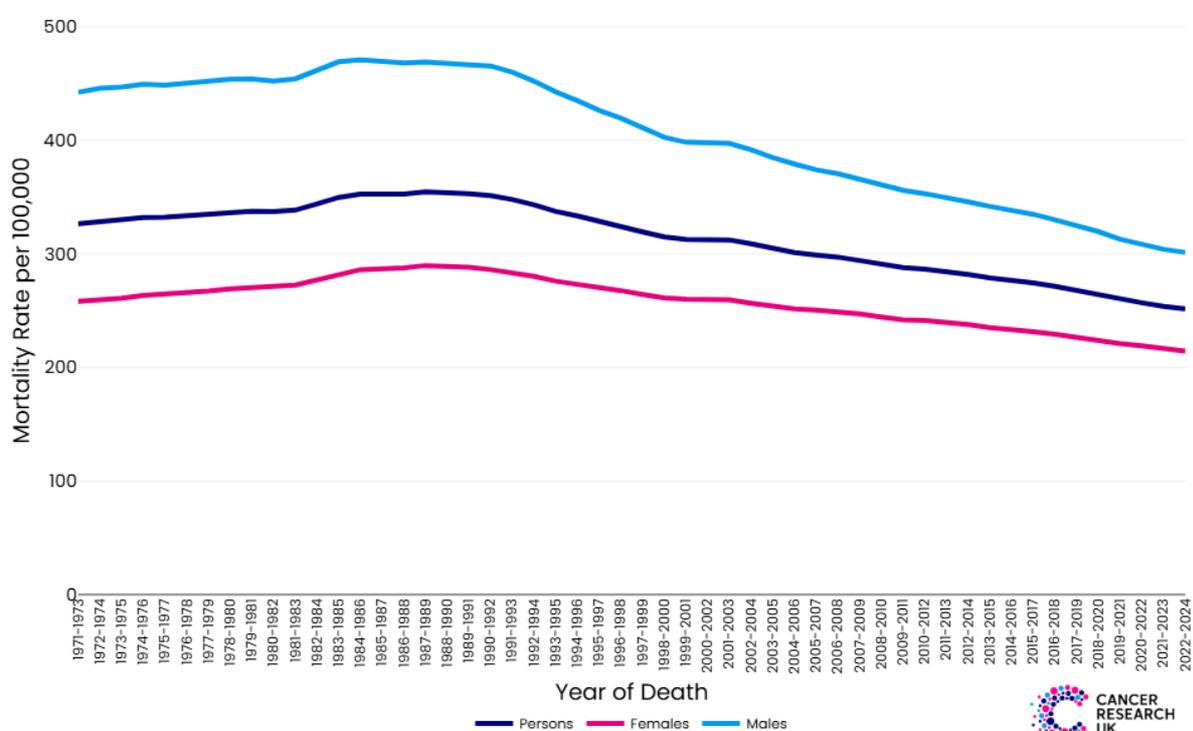
Key insights

- There are around 170,000 cancer deaths in the UK every year (2022–24). In females there are around 79,300 cancer deaths each year, and in males there are around 90,600 deaths each year.
- Almost three-fifths (57%) of all cancer deaths in the UK are in people aged 75 and over, and the highest mortality rates are in people aged 90+ (2022–24).
- Cancer remains the leading cause of death in the UK, accounting for 26% of all deaths in 2024.
- Over the past 50 years, UK cancer mortality rates have fallen by almost a quarter (23%) – from 326.5 deaths per 100,000 people in 1971–73 to 251.4 per 100,000 people in 2022–24. Over the last decade alone, rates have fallen by around a tenth (11%).
- However, despite this decline in the rate of cancer deaths, the number of deaths due to cancer has increased to a record high of around 170,000 in 2024. This is largely due to the growing and aging UK population, and the fact that cancer is more frequently diagnosed in older people.
- Lung, bowel, prostate, and breast cancers accounted for more than 4 in 10 (44%) cancer deaths in 2022–24, with lung cancer alone accounting for around 1 in 5 (19%) cancer deaths.
- Please find our 2022–24 UK cancer mortality statistics on our [Cancer Statistics Data Hub](#)

All cancers combined

Overall, cancer mortality rates have fallen by 11% in the UK over the last decade (Figure 1). Rates in females are significantly lower than those in males and have decreased by 10%, and rates in males have decreased by 13%. Despite the gap in cancer mortality rates between males and females narrowing, males continue to have more deaths from cancer than females with 90,600 deaths in the UK each year compared with 79,300 in females (2022-24).

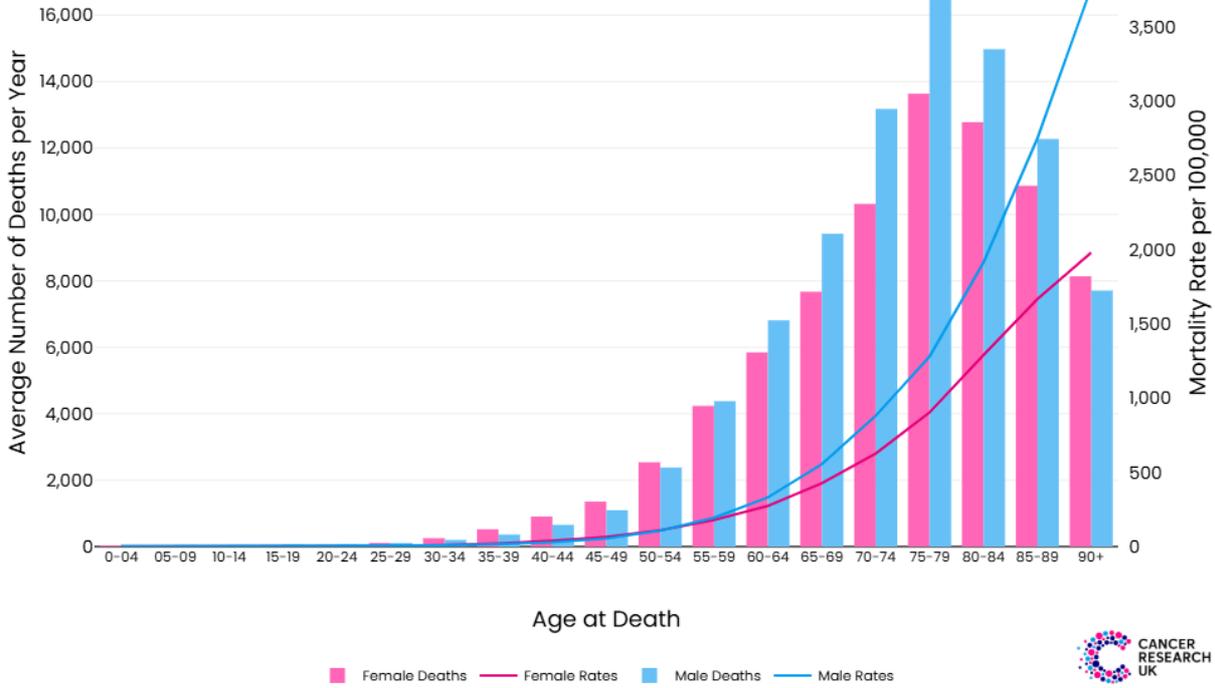
Figure 1: All Cancers (C00-C97), European Age-Standardised Mortality Rates per 100,000 Persons, UK, 1971-2024



The number and rate of cancer deaths increase with age. Each year almost three-fifths (57%) of all cancer deaths are in people aged 75 and over (2022-24) (Figure 2). The highest number of cancer deaths occur in the 75-79 age group for both males and females (around 16,800 and 13,600 deaths respectively, 2022-24), with numbers declining after this peak due to the size of the population decreasing. In contrast, mortality rates continue to rise with age, with the highest cancer mortality rates in the UK in people aged 90+.

For people aged 30-54 mortality rates are higher in females than in males, but from age 55 onwards rates are higher in males. These age differences in cancer mortality between males and females largely reflect differences in cancer incidence by age.

Figure 2: All Cancers (C00–C97) Average Number of Deaths per Year and Age-Specific Mortality Rates per 100,000 Females and Males, UK, 2022–2024



Cancers compared

Overall cancer mortality rates have declined in the UK over the last decade and this trend is reflected by most cancer sites (Table 1). Some of the biggest decreases in mortality rates in the past decade are seen in stomach, lung, and ovarian cancer:

- Stomach cancer mortality rates have decreased by 34% (from 8.1 per 100k in 2012-14, to 5.4 per 100k in 2022-24). There are now around 3,600 stomach cancer deaths in the UK every year.
- Lung cancer mortality rates have decreased by 22% (from 62.1 per 100k in 2012-14, to 48.6 per 100k in 2022-24). There are now around 32,800 lung cancer deaths in the UK every year.
- Ovarian cancer mortality rates have decreased by 19% (from 13.2 per 100k in 2012-14 to 10.7 per 100k in 2022-24). There are now around 3,900 ovarian cancer deaths in the UK every year.

However, some other cancer sites have seen increases in mortality rate over the same period, for example:

- Non-melanoma skin cancer mortality rates have risen by 43% (from 1.2 per 100k in 2012-14, to 1.7 per 100k in 2022-24). There are now around 1,200 non-melanoma skin cancer deaths in the UK every year.
- Small intestine cancer mortality rates have risen by 41% (from 0.8 per 100k in 2012-14, to 1.1 per 100k in 2022-24). There are now around 740 small intestine cancer deaths in the UK every year.
- Anal cancer mortality rates have risen by 39% (from 0.6 per 100k in 2012-14, to 0.8 per 100k in 2022-24). There are now around 530 anal cancer deaths in the UK every year.

The increase in mortality rate for these cancer sites reflect increasing incidence rates over the same time period.

Table 1: The 10 Most Common Causes of Cancer Death, Percentage Change in European Age-Standardised Mortality Rates (ASMR), UK, 2012-2014 to 2022-2024

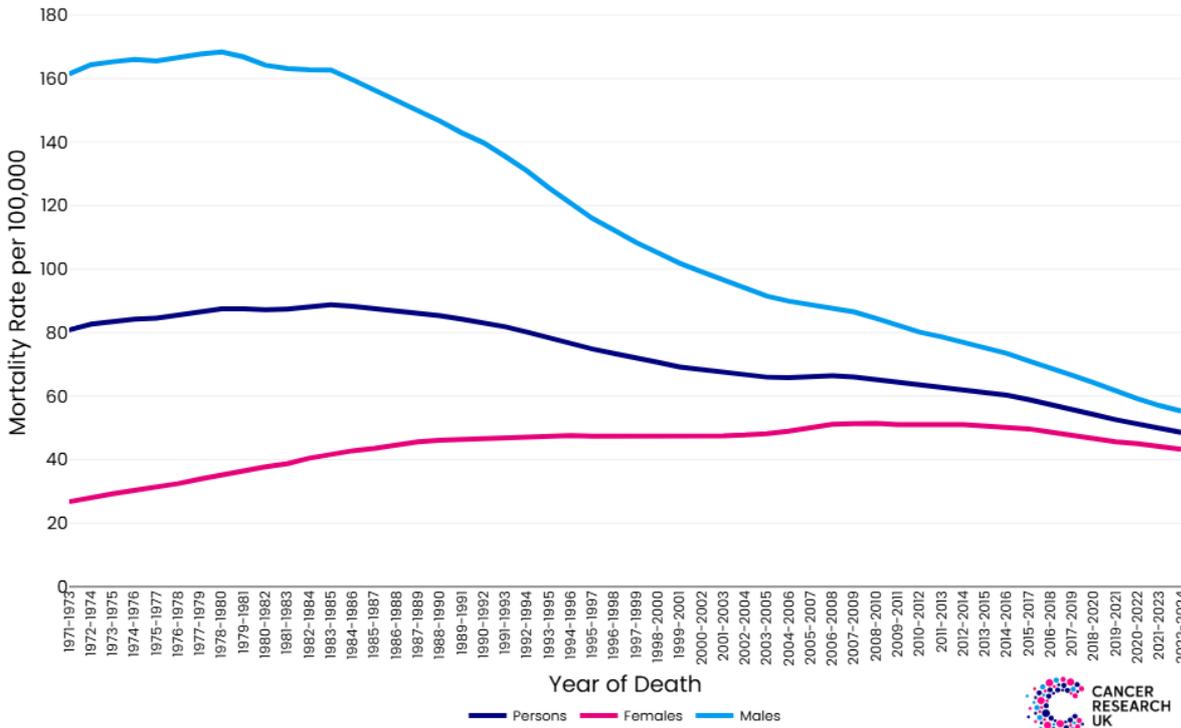
Cancer	Sex	2012-2014 ASMR	2022-2024 ASMR	Percentage change
Lung	Male	76.9	55.3	-28.1%
	Female	51.1	43.3	-15.2%
Bowel	Male	35.2	32.2	-8.5%
	Female	22.3	21.3	-4.2%
Prostate	Male	48.4	43.1	-11.0%
Breast	Female	35.5	30.4	-14.5%
Pancreas	Male	16.9	16.9	-
	Female	13.6	13.6	-
Cancer of Unknown Primary	Male	20.1	15.7	-21.6%
	Female	16.7	13.6	-18.2%
Oesophagus	Male	20.4	18.0	-11.5%
	Female	7.7	6.4	-16.8%
Liver	Male	11.2	12.7	+13.4%
	Female	6.0	6.8	+13.8%
Bladder	Male	15.2	13.9	-8.3%
	Female	5.2	4.9	-6.1%
Brain, Other CNS, and intracranial tumours	Male	10.6	10.0	-6.1%
	Female	7.3	6.7	-7.9%

Common cancers

Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death for both males and females in the UK and accounts for around 1 in 5 (19%) of all cancer deaths (2022-24). More than half (54%) of lung cancer deaths are in people aged 75 and over, reflecting both the growing and aging UK population but also the impact of long-term exposure to risk factors such as smoking.

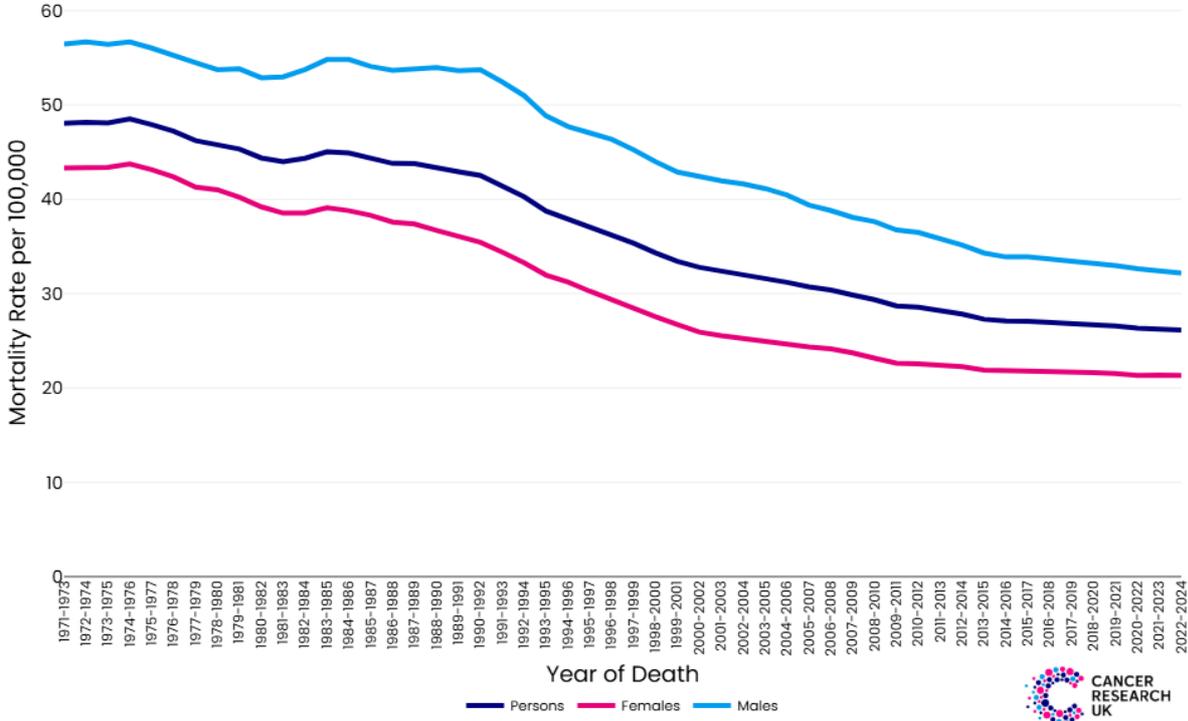
There has been a decrease in lung cancer mortality over time, with rates falling by around a fifth (22%) over the past decade, but this has been driven mostly by falling rates in males (Figure 3). While lung cancer mortality rates are significantly lower in females than in males, rates have fallen by more than a quarter (28%) over the last decade in males, but only by 15% in females. This reflects an increase in lung cancer incidence in females over the past decade, while rates in males decreased, as well as improvements in lung cancer survival.

Figure 3: Lung Cancer (C33-C34), European Age-Standardised Mortality Rates per 100,000 Persons, UK, 1971-2024



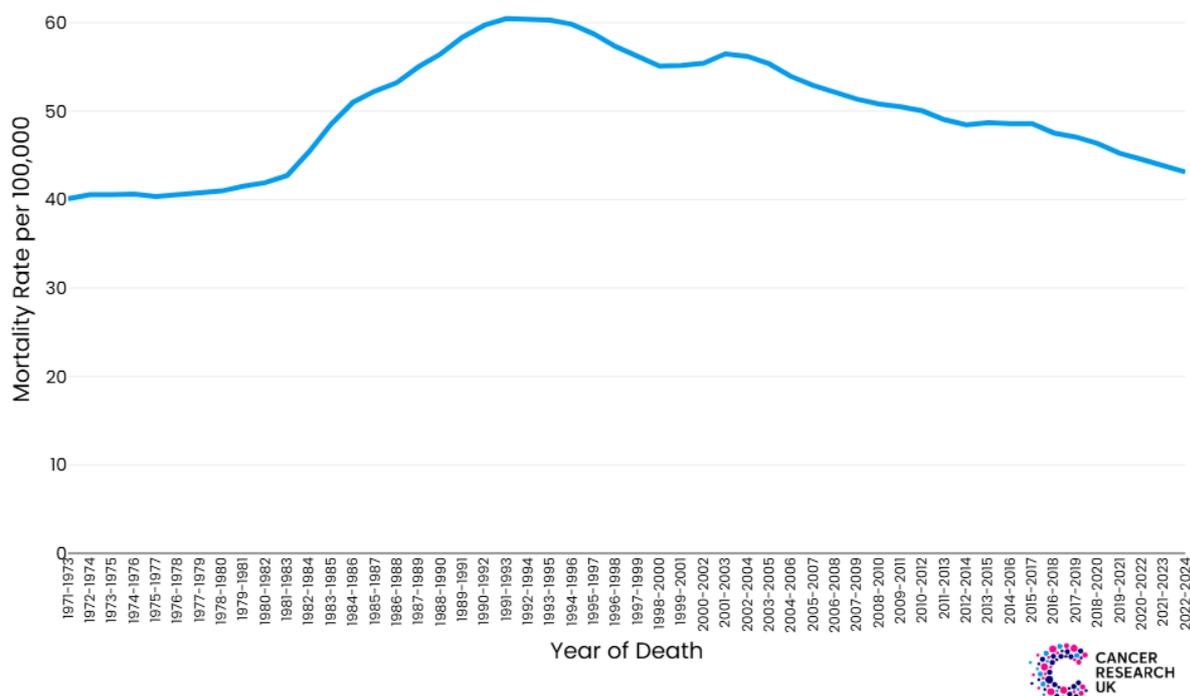
Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in the UK, accounting for 10% of all cancer deaths (2022–24). Around three-fifths (59%) of bowel cancer deaths are in people aged 75 and over. There has been a decrease in bowel cancer mortality over time, with rates falling by 6% over the past decade (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Bowel Cancer (C18–C20), European Age-Standardised Mortality Rates per 100,000 Persons, UK, 1971–2024



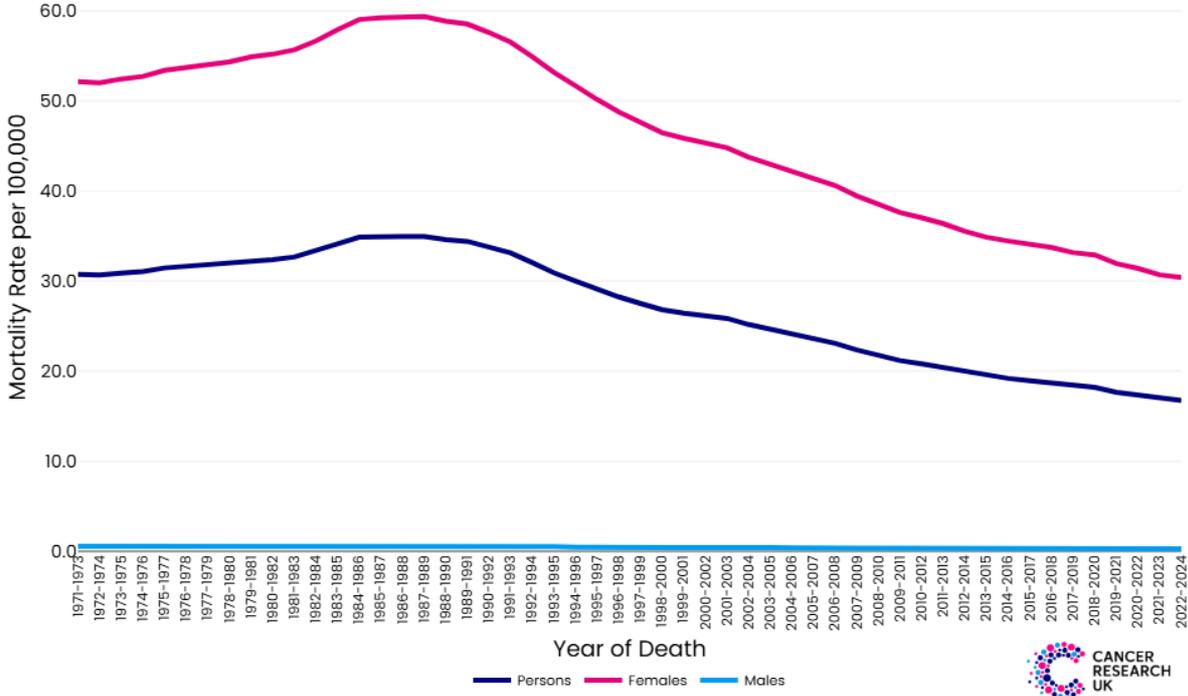
Prostate cancer is the third most common cause of cancer death overall, but the second leading cause for males, accounting for 14% of all male cancer deaths in the UK (2022–24). Prostate cancer has an older age profile than most other cancers, with more than three-quarters (77%) of prostate cancer deaths occurring in males aged 75 and over. There has been a decrease in prostate cancer mortality rates over time, with rates falling by around a tenth (11%) over the past decade (Figure 5). Despite this, there were around 12,300 prostate cancer deaths in 2022–24, the highest on record, reflecting increasing incidence rates.

Figure 5: Prostate Cancer (C61), European Age-Standardised Mortality Rates per 100,000 Men, UK, 1971–2024



Breast cancer is the fourth most common cause of cancer death overall, but the second leading cause for females, accounting for 14% of all female cancer deaths in the UK (2022–24). While around half (51%) of breast cancer deaths are in people aged 75 and over, more than a fifth (23%) occur in people aged 50–64, and almost a tenth (8%) in people aged under 50. There has been a decrease in breast cancer mortality rates over time, with rates falling by 14% in females over the past decade to a rate of 30 per 100k females, the lowest breast cancer mortality rate on record (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Breast Cancer (C50), European Age-Standardised Mortality Rates per 100,000 Persons, UK, 1971–2024



Appendix

Table 1: All Cancers (C00–C97), Annual Average Number of Deaths and European Age–Standardised Rates per 100,000 Population, UK, 2022–2024

		England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
Females	Deaths	64,918	7,934	4,279	2,218	79,349
	Crude Rate	220.2	280.9	265.6	227.6	227.4
	ASR	209.3	252.3	226.6	226.8	214.3
	ASR 95% LCI	208.4	249.1	222.7	221.4	213.4
	ASR 95% UCI	210.2	255.5	230.5	232.3	215.2
Males	Deaths	74,736	8,558	4,908	2,428	90,630
	Crude Rate	263.8	320.5	316.7	256.9	270.6
	ASR	296.4	340.8	314.2	307.2	301.3
	ASR 95% LCI	295.1	336.6	309.1	300.2	300.1
	ASR 95% UCI	297.6	345.0	319.2	314.3	302.4
Persons	Deaths	139,654	16,492	9,187	4,646	169,979
	Crude Rate	241.6	300.1	290.6	242.0	248.6
	ASR	246.5	289.8	264.1	261.2	251.4
	ASR 95% LCI	245.7	287.2	261.0	256.9	250.7
	ASR 95% UCI	247.2	292.3	267.3	265.6	252.1