

SAMARITANS

The economic cost of suicide in the UK

March 2024





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Key findings

In the UK, in 2022:

6588 deaths by suicide were recorded

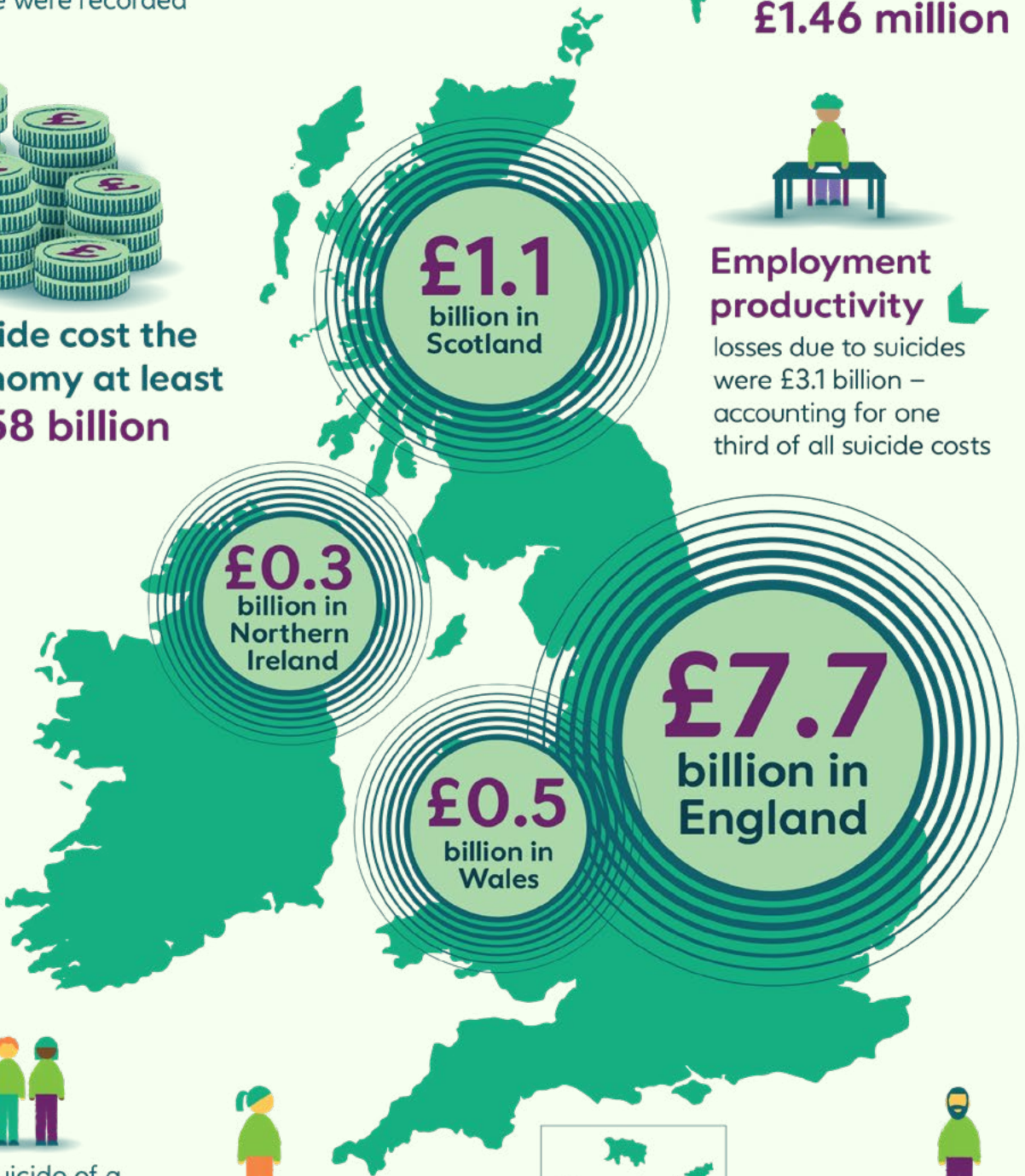


Suicide cost the economy at least **£9.58 billion**

One death by suicide cost on average **£1.46 million**



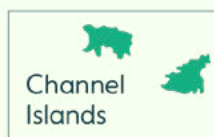
Employment productivity losses due to suicides were **£3.1 billion** – accounting for one third of all suicide costs



One suicide of a **10-14 year old** cost on average **£2.85 million**



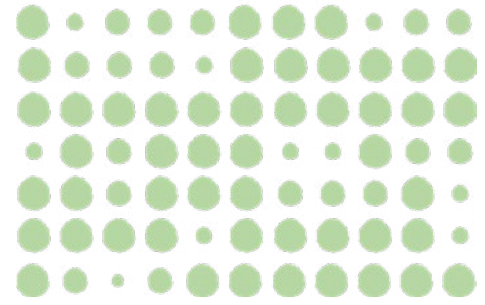
One suicide of a **woman aged 25-29** cost on average **£1.96 million**



One suicide of a **man aged 30-34** cost on average **£1.7 million**



Introduction



Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy

Suicide has a devastating impact on families and communities. It is estimated that up to 135 people are impacted by every suicide¹ – meaning that nearly 900,000 people a year could be affected across the UK. Losing someone to suicide can also increase a person’s risk of taking their own life.

“ The second year was a lot worse than the first year in many respects, I think because of shock. I think you start to live alongside all the mishmash of feelings and they... they don’t go away...they haven’t gone away or subsided. ”

Tasha, bereaved parent²

At Samaritans, there wasn’t a single second in 2022 when we weren’t on the phone providing emotional support. In 1 in 4 of these calls the person expressed suicidal feelings, and in 30,000 emotional support calls the person mentioned losing someone to suicide.



It is estimated that up to 135 people are impacted by every suicide¹

In 2022, 6588 people died by suicide in the UK*:

- **England 5284³**
- **Wales 339⁴**
- **Scotland 762⁵**
- **Northern Ireland 203⁶**

Suicide rates change each year, however in England they are currently the same as they were over 20 years ago. While the most significant impact of these high suicide rates is the devastating loss felt by families and communities, this paper focuses specifically on the economic impacts caused by suicides. These impacts range from financial losses due to lost years of life in employment, to costs felt by the healthcare system, police and coroners.

In this paper, we present analysis of the societal costs caused by suicides in the UK in 2022, with a focus on England. These figures demonstrate that suicide prevention is a crucial area for public investment due to the significant financial and emotional costs which are caused by suicides every year.

* 6588 deaths were registered as suicide in 2022. Because of delays in the way suicide is registered after someone dies, these numbers can include deaths which occurred in previous years.

The cost of a suicide

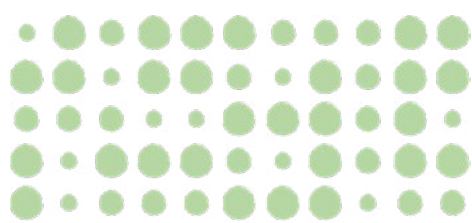


In 2022, the cost of suicide to the economy was substantial - at a total cost of at least **£9.58 billion across the UK**, and an average cost of at least **£1.46 million for every life lost to suicide**. In England alone, the economy lost £7.7 billion, Scotland lost £1.1 billion, Wales lost £0.48

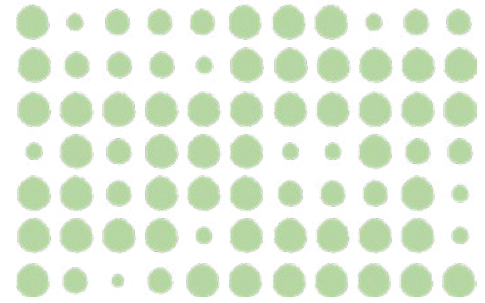
billion, and Northern Ireland lost £0.3 billion. Table 1 shows the different types of costs related to suicides in 2022 in the UK – these are conservative estimates, and in reality may be even greater (see Appendix 1 and 2).

Table 1: Summary of conservative cost estimates for suicides and self-harm recorded in 2022, according to 2022 prices

	Costs in £				
	UK	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Employment productivity losses	3,075,960,216	2,479,420,721	98,118,192	342,671,694	155,749,609
Other productivity losses	1,793,783,884	1,435,194,911	56,355,631	211,301,061	90,932,281
Intangible costs	4,306,734,989	3,449,064,560	136,429,782	503,881,712	217,358,935
Suicide health care costs	1,765,738	1,415,757	54,483	204,513	90,984
Self-harm health care costs	352,501,640	297,293,953	11,411,240	28,048,127	15,748,320
Emergency services costs	6,508,968	5,218,849	200,839	753,889	335,391
Coroner / legal costs	29,772,230	23,871,310	918,649	3,448,330	1,533,941
Family costs	16,600,611	13,310,264	512,224	1,922,734	855,389
Total	9,583,628,277	7,704,790,325	304,001,041	1,092,232,059	482,604,852
Average cost per suicide	1,454,710	1,458,136	1,497,542	1,433,375	1,423,613



The cost of a suicide



Employment productivity losses account for one third of all suicide costs in 2022 in England, reaching £2.48 billion. When someone dies by suicide, this means that the economy loses years of employment productivity, and these costs are highest for people who die by suicide around age 30-34. For this age group, employment losses come to half of all suicide costs.



Employment productivity losses account for one third of all suicide costs in 2022 in England, reaching £2.48 billion ↗

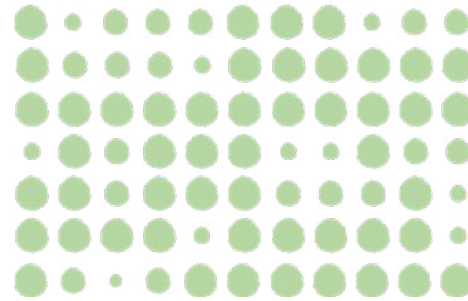
The costs related to one suicide vary depending on age and gender – **in England in 2022, the death of one young person age 10-14 cost the economy at least £2.95 million** (£2.85 million in the UK), going up to £3.72 million for a girl of this age. This is because a person who dies at a younger age loses more years of their life, which could have been spent in paid and unpaid work (such as volunteering) and contributing to the economy. It also considers the gender pay gap, which impacts the difference in economic loss between men and women, and the longer life expectancies experienced by women. **Costs related to suicides of women are therefore significant, in England this was an**

average of £1.58 million per death by suicide, and £1.96 million on average for a woman aged 25-29. Middle-aged men aged 45 to 64 have had the highest rates of suicide since 2010⁷, and the total cost of suicides of men this age in England in 2022 were £1.93 billion (£1.3 million per suicide, on average).

A suspected suicide leads to an inquest into the person's death. In 2022, these coronial and legal costs came to at least £23.87 million in England. The largest economic cost, however, is the intangible cost of a suicide. This is the value that society places on immediate unexpected loss of life. Working this out can be complex - here we value each year of life lost to be equivalent to the value the HM Treasury places on a year lived in good quality health⁸. In this context, this means that when a suicide happens, years of life in good health are lost. To be conservative and avoid counting some costs twice, these costs are net of lost productivity costs, but they still amount to almost half (45%) of all suicide costs in England at £3.45 billion in 2022.



In 2022, suicides of middle-aged men in England cost £1.93 billion ↗



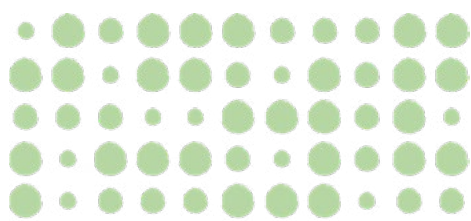
Appendix

Methodology for the cost of suicide

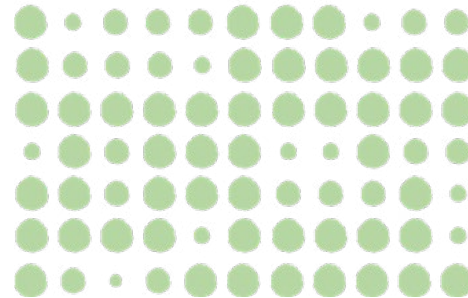
This methodology provides an updated figure on the cost of a suicide. The previous commonly-used figure for the cost of a suicide was based on 2009 data, at £1.67 million for one suicide of someone aged 30-34⁹. The methodology for this figure has since been updated so that people of all ages, including the oldest are included in the analysis, which reduced the mean lifetime cost per suicide.

Suicide data used are based on suicides registered in 2022 in the UK. Data used in the analysis cover all suicide from age 10 upwards, with estimates of costs made by gender and five-year age groups. While age bands in England and Wales are the same, with 5 year age bands up to 95+, in Northern Ireland the lower age band is under 20 and highest age band is 75+, while in Scotland the upper age band is 85+. All results are reported in 2022 UK pounds.

UK government life tables are used to estimate the number of years of expected life lost for suicides at different ages for men and women. Value is then attached to expected years of life lost from productivity losses and intangible value of lost life. Paid productivity losses in the base case scenario are valued using UK-wide age group and gender-specific median wage rates (ONS), while unpaid productivity losses for people of working age, as well as 16 and 17 year olds are valued using 2022 minimum wage rates¹⁰. The estimate conservatively assumes that paid productivity losses end at age 67, beyond which productivity losses at older ages are valued using mean gross single pensioner income for 2022¹¹. The intangible value per year of lost life is assumed to be £70,000 based on HM Treasury's estimate of the value of a year of full quality life¹². This intangible value of lost life is assumed to include the costs of lost productivity, so to avoid double counting only intangible costs of lost life, net of all productivity losses, are included in this estimate of costs. All costs beyond one year are discounted at 3.5% per annum in line with recommended practice.



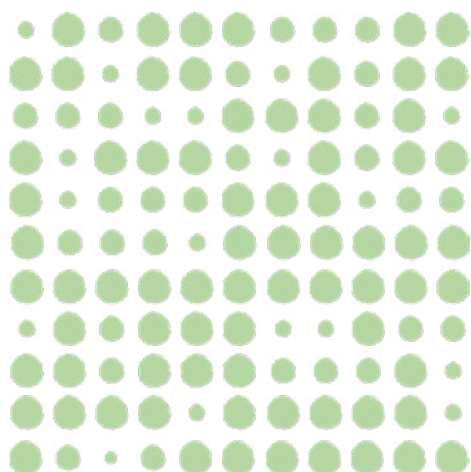
Appendix



Productivity and intangible losses account for the majority of total costs. There are, however, some immediate costs to the NHS, both for deaths by suicide and for treating non-fatal self-harm events in hospital. There are also costs incurred by emergency services; we have conservatively included some costs only for the police, assuming an average of 30 hours investigation per suicide (6 officers x 5 hours each), based on experience in the Metropolitan Police Service¹³. This time is valued using ONS Median Wage Rates Police plus 31% pension costs^{14,15}. There are also medico-legal costs associated with deaths by suicide; much of these costs are borne by local authorities or by families. We include fees charged for post-mortem examinations and the average cost for a coronial inquest, making use of data from England and Wales on inquests which draw a conclusion of suicide¹⁶ and the total costs of coronial investigations¹⁷.

Families will be deeply affected by suicide, and it is very difficult to quantify these costs. We conservatively estimate immediate productivity losses associated with an unexpected death. We assume that two people will both have five days bereavement leave, plus a further 10 days of productivity loss for any other individuals.

Rates of hospital presenting self-harm in England are applied to population estimates to estimate the number of hospital presenting self-harm cases in Great Britain¹⁸. In Northern Ireland, rates of self-harm are based on data reported in the Northern Ireland Registry of Self-Harm, which includes data on the number of presentations per individual per annum¹⁹. The expected average cost per hospital presenting self-harm event in the UK is taken from a previous modelling paper which drew on hospital records in several English hospitals^{20,21}.



Data tables for the cost of a suicide in England

The cost of suicide in England in 2022 (£)

Table 2: people age 10-29

All	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29
Employment productivity losses	11,152,272	131,473,451	273,445,470	351,329,175
Other productivity losses	4,010,166	41,656,558	83,731,483	101,669,034
Intangible costs	14,593,309	133,299,127	249,379,473	294,522,119
Suicide health care costs	4,294	45,090	91,253	115,676
Self-harm health care costs	20,258,546	19,084,721	19,972,665	33,344,278
Emergency Services costs	15,830	166,212	336,381	426,412
Coroner / legal costs	72,406	760,262	1,538,625	1,950,433
Family costs	40,372	423,910	857,913	1,087,531
Total	50,147,195	326,909,330	629,353,261	784,444,658
Average cost per suicide	2,949,835	1,945,889	1,851,039	1,820,057

Table 3: people age 30-49

All	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Employment productivity losses	463,892,623	337,656,121	293,143,115	234,347,554
Other productivity losses	125,474,475	125,983,561	135,751,121	140,494,801
Intangible costs	277,282,459	347,582,740	353,985,388	360,647,339
Suicide health care costs	138,221	134,732	135,537	135,269
Self-harm health care costs	35,971,144	33,009,620	31,439,291	29,592,770
Emergency Services costs	509,518	496,656	499,624	498,635
Coroner / legal costs	2,330,564	2,271,734	2,285,310	2,280,785
Family costs	1,299,485	1,266,683	1,274,253	1,271,729
Total	906,898,490	848,401,848	818,513,639	769,268,882
Average cost per suicide	1,750,769	1,683,337	1,614,425	1,523,305

Table 4: people age 50-69

All	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69
Employment productivity losses	202,447,959	113,560,797	52,918,273	14,053,911
Other productivity losses	179,387,965	143,247,267	117,483,435	85,131,723
Intangible costs	432,294,408	334,857,106	246,076,972	154,110,757
Suicide health care costs	158,887	126,680	98,768	68,439
Self-harm health care costs	32,906,654	8,896,989	7,804,081	6,544,939
Emergency Services costs	585,698	466,976	364,083	252,286
Coroner / legal costs	2,679,017	2,135,973	1,665,335	1,153,969
Family costs	1,493,777	1,190,985	928,564	643,435
Total	851,954,366	604,482,772	427,339,511	261,959,458
Average cost per suicide	1,441,547	1,280,684	1,161,249	1,023,279

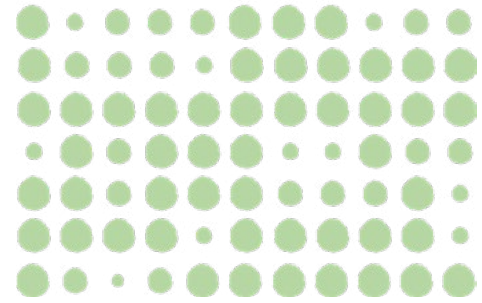


Table 5: people age 70-90+

All	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+
Employment productivity losses	0	0	0	0	0
Other productivity losses	67,140,856	37,155,894	21,279,339	15,819,689	9,777,544
Intangible costs	109,395,662	61,894,144	38,076,277	25,796,097	15,271,184
Suicide health care costs	56,094	37,843	28,449	22,813	17,714
Self-harm health care costs	6,191,693	5,350,662	3,416,847	2,192,454	1,316,597
Emergency Services costs	206,775	139,499	104,872	84,095	65,297
Coroner / legal costs	945,802	638,077	479,689	384,656	298,674
Family costs	527,364	355,781	267,467	214,478	166,536
Total	184,464,245	105,571,900	63,652,940	44,514,283	26,913,547
Average cost per suicide	882,604	748,737	600,499	523,697	407,781

Total costs for people of all ages

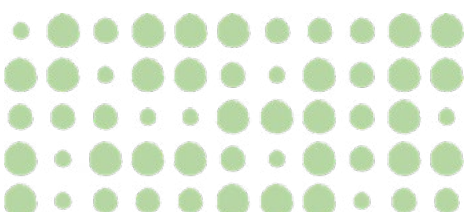
- Employment productivity losses 2,479,420,721
- Other productivity losses 1,435,194,911
- Intangible costs 3,449,064,560
- Suicide health care costs 1,415,757
- Self-harm health care costs 297,293,953
- Emergency Services costs 5,218,849
- Coroner / legal costs 23,871,310
- Family costs 13,310,264

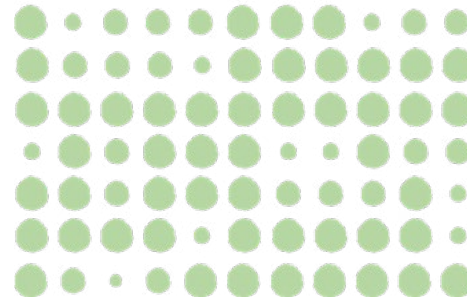
 **Total**

7,704,790,325

Average cost per suicide

1,458,136





The cost of male suicide in England in 2022 (£)

Table 6: men age 10-29

Men	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29
Employment productivity losses	7,437,050	102,777,697	217,128,537	290,158,571
Other productivity losses	2,129,378	28,502,069	57,127,774	72,466,143
Intangible costs	7,100,477	81,368,764	155,702,351	195,586,208
Suicide health care costs	2,416	31,402	64,950	86,690
Self-harm health care costs	7,345,453	6,963,636	7,142,398	11,524,453
Emergency Services costs	8,904	115,755	239,424	319,562
Coroner / legal costs	40,728	529,468	1,095,139	1,461,693
Family costs	22,709	295,223	610,632	815,017
Total	24,087,115	220,584,013	439,111,205	572,418,338
Average cost per suicide	2,408,711	1,885,333	1,814,509	1,772,193

Table 7: men age 30-49

All	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Employment productivity losses	382,940,716	282,523,918	247,011,615	197,690,531
Other productivity losses	88,520,083	91,069,067	100,444,482	104,463,432
Intangible costs	165,047,852	232,053,147	240,211,237	248,463,587
Suicide health care costs	102,257	101,451	102,525	102,257
Self-harm health care costs	12,138,253	11,108,566	10,706,268	10,204,134
Emergency Services costs	376,944	373,976	377,934	376,944
Coroner / legal costs	1,724,165	1,710,589	1,728,690	1,724,165
Family costs	961,367	953,797	963,890	961,367
Total	651,811,638	619,894,511	601,546,641	563,986,417
Average cost per suicide	1,697,426	1,635,606	1,566,528	1,476,404

Table 8: men age 50-69

All	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69
Employment productivity losses	169,424,270	93,055,845	46,276,370	12,034,627
Other productivity losses	132,206,333	102,146,065	92,877,670	66,089,898
Intangible costs	295,968,572	220,926,819	183,489,444	111,313,210
Suicide health care costs	118,092	90,716	77,833	52,068
Self-harm health care costs	11,318,725	3,055,672	2,682,810	2,215,568
Emergency Services costs	435,316	334,402	286,913	191,935
Coroner / legal costs	1,991,161	1,529,574	1,312,356	877,921
Family costs	1,110,240	852,866	731,749	489,515
Total	612,572,709	421,991,959	327,735,145	193,264,742
Average cost per suicide	1,395,382	1,248,497	1,130,121	991,101

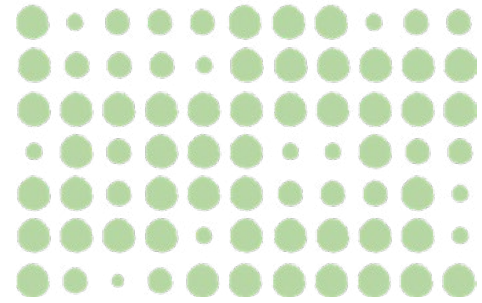


Table 9: men age 70-90+

Men	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+
Employment productivity losses	0	0	0	0	0
Other productivity losses	48,231,427	26,591,776	13,956,997	12,301,454	8,011,089
Intangible costs	71,536,402	40,170,510	22,889,311	18,543,187	11,724,273
Suicide health care costs	39,185	26,034	18,251	16,909	13,956
Self-harm health care costs	2,041,142	1,718,229	1,024,205	593,883	276,032
Emergency Services costs	144,446	95,967	67,276	62,329	51,446
Coroner / legal costs	660,704	438,961	307,725	285,098	235,319
Family costs	368,398	244,757	171,583	158,966	131,210
Total	123,021,702	69,286,234	38,435,347	31,961,827	20,443,326
Average cost per suicide	842,614	714,291	565,226	507,331	393,141

Total costs for men of all ages

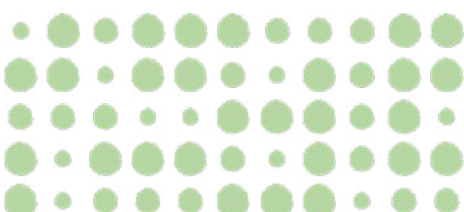
- Employment productivity losses 2,048,459,748
- Other productivity losses 1,047,135,136
- Intangible costs 2,302,095,352
- Suicide health care costs 1,046,989
- Self-harm health care costs 102,059,427
- Emergency Services costs 3,859,475
- Coroner / legal costs 17,653,456
- Family costs 9,843,287

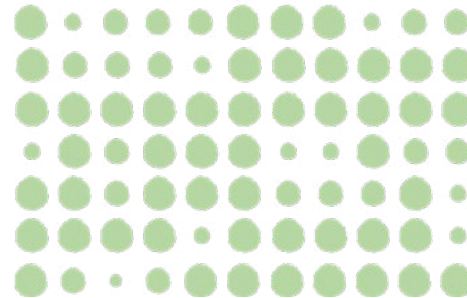
 **Total**

5,532,152,870

Average cost per suicide

1,415,235





The cost of female suicide in England in 2022 (£)

Table 10: women age 10-29

Women	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29
Employment productivity losses	3,715,222	28,695,753	56,316,933	61,170,603
Other productivity losses	1,880,789	13,154,489	26,603,709	29,202,890
Intangible costs	7,492,832	51,930,363	93,677,121	98,935,911
Suicide health care costs	1,879	13,688	26,302	28,986
Self-harm health care costs	12,913,093	12,121,085	12,830,267	21,819,826
Emergency Services costs	6,925	50,457	96,957	106,850
Coroner / legal costs	31,678	230,794	443,486	488,740
Family costs	17,663	128,687	247,281	272,513
Total	26,060,080	106,325,316	190,242,056	212,026,320
Average cost per suicide	3,722,869	2,084,810	1,941,245	1,963,207

Table 11: women age 30-49

Women	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Employment productivity losses	80,951,907	55,132,203	46,131,500	36,657,023
Other productivity losses	36,954,392	34,914,494	35,306,639	36,031,368
Intangible costs	112,234,606	115,529,593	113,774,151	112,183,752
Suicide health care costs	35,964	33,280	33,012	33,012
Self-harm health care costs	23,832,891	21,901,055	20,733,023	19,388,636
Emergency Services costs	132,574	122,680	121,691	121,691
Coroner / legal costs	606,399	561,145	556,620	556,620
Family costs	338,119	312,886	310,363	310,363
Total	255,086,852	228,507,336	216,966,998	205,282,465
Average cost per suicide	1,903,633	1,828,059	1,763,959	1,668,963

Table 12: women age 50-69

Women	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69
Employment productivity losses	33,023,689	20,504,953	6,641,904	2,019,284
Other productivity losses	47,181,633	41,101,201	24,605,765	19,041,825
Intangible costs	136,325,836	113,930,286	62,587,528	42,797,547
Suicide health care costs	40,795	35,964	20,934	16,372
Self-harm health care costs	21,587,929	5,841,317	5,121,272	4,329,371
Emergency Services costs	150,382	132,574	77,170	60,351
Coroner / legal costs	687,856	606,399	352,979	276,047
Family costs	383,537	338,119	196,815	153,920
Total	239,381,657	182,490,813	99,604,366	68,694,717
Average cost per suicide	1,574,879	1,361,872	1,276,979	1,126,143

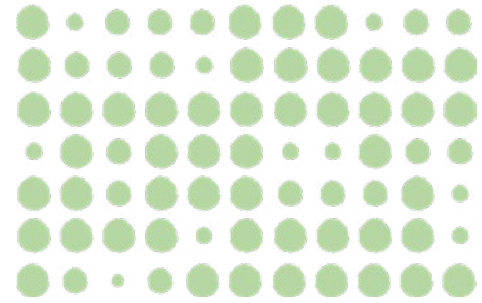


Table 13: women age 70-90+

Women	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+
Employment productivity losses	0	0	0	0	0
Other productivity losses	18,909,430	10,564,118	7,322,342	3,518,235	1,766,455
Intangible costs	37,859,260	21,723,634	15,186,966	7,252,909	3,546,912
Suicide health care costs	16,909	11,809	10,199	5,905	3,757
Self-harm health care costs	4,150,551	3,632,433	2,392,642	1,598,571	1,040,565
Emergency Services costs	62,329	43,532	37,595	21,766	13,851
Coroner / legal costs	285,098	199,116	171,964	99,558	63,355
Family costs	158,966	111,024	95,884	55,512	35,326
Total	61,442,543	36,285,666	25,217,593	12,552,456	6,470,221
Average cost per suicide	975,278	824,674	663,621	570,566	462,159

Total costs for women of all ages

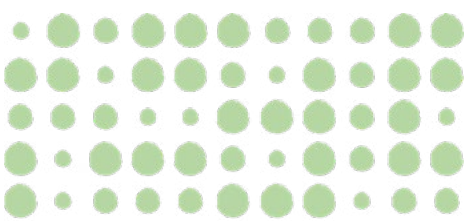
- Employment productivity losses 430,960,974
- Other productivity losses 388,059,775
- Intangible costs 1,146,969,207
- Suicide health care costs 368,768
- Self-harm health care costs 195,234,526
- Emergency Services costs 1,359,374
- Coroner / legal costs 6,217,854
- Family costs 3,466,977

 **Total**

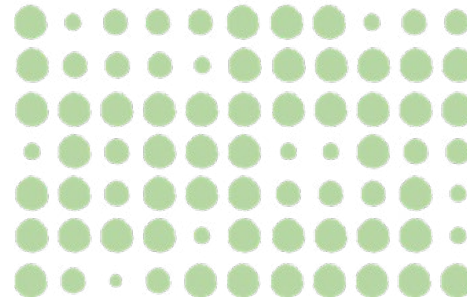
2,172,637,455

Average cost per suicide

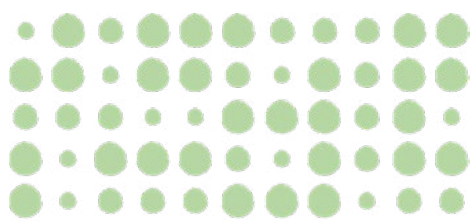
1,580,100



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