

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2022/23

Self-harm

Women and men of all ages and backgrounds do things that are harmful to themselves, especially during times of pressure and emotional distress. Self-harm refers to an intentional act of self-poisoning or self-injury. Common examples include overdosing, cutting, burning, biting, taking substances or self-strangulation. Whilst much self-harm will go on unrecorded by professionals, many individuals require hospital treatment for self-inflicted injuries.

Self-harm is also associated with suicide, and a fifth of all people who died of suicides attended A&E following self-harm in the year prior to their deaths. Emergency hospital admissions for self-harm are a proxy measure of population mental health and a suicide risk after an episode of self-harm.

Summary points

- There were 1,423 emergency admissions for self-harm in Bristol in 2021/22 – 70% of them were female.
- The rates of self-harm admissions in Bristol are higher than England average for both men and women in 2021/22. The rate of admissions among women is over twice as high as the rate among men.
- The 2021/22 rate of admissions has decreased by 19% comparing to the previous year.
- The self-harm admissions rate in the most deprived areas of Bristol is 2.7 times higher than in the least deprived.

Emergency hospital admissions for self-harm

In 2021/22 there were 1,423 emergency admissions for self-harm in Bristol, a rate of 268 per 100,000 population, 19% lower than in 2020/21 but still significantly higher than England average of 165.3 per 100,000. The rates in Bristol have been rising since 2015/16, but the 2021/22 saw a significant decrease – Figure 1.

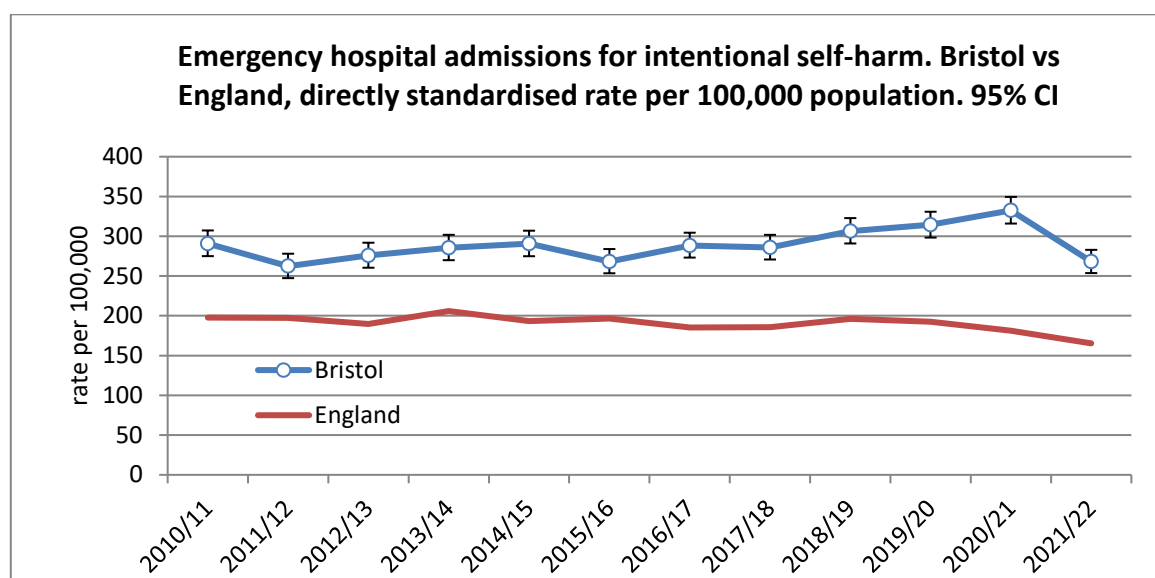


Figure1: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, directly age standardised rate, all ages, Persons.
Source: OHID Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA; Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS Digital for 2021/22 figures.

The decrease in the number of admissions for self-harm has been higher among people aged 25 and over (24.4% fall in 2021/22 comparing to previous year). The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on hospital activity generally during this period and it is not known at the current time what impact it had on these admissions.

Among the Core Cities¹ in 2020/21 Bristol had the highest rate of emergency admissions for self-harm among men and women.²

In Bristol rates of intentional self-harm were over 2 times higher among women than men. In 2021/22, there were 1,000 female admissions in Bristol, a rate of 366.5 per 100,000 (Figure 2), a 17.4% decrease on the last year. Number of male admissions was significantly lower at 423 – a rate of 170.3 per 100,000 in 2021/22.

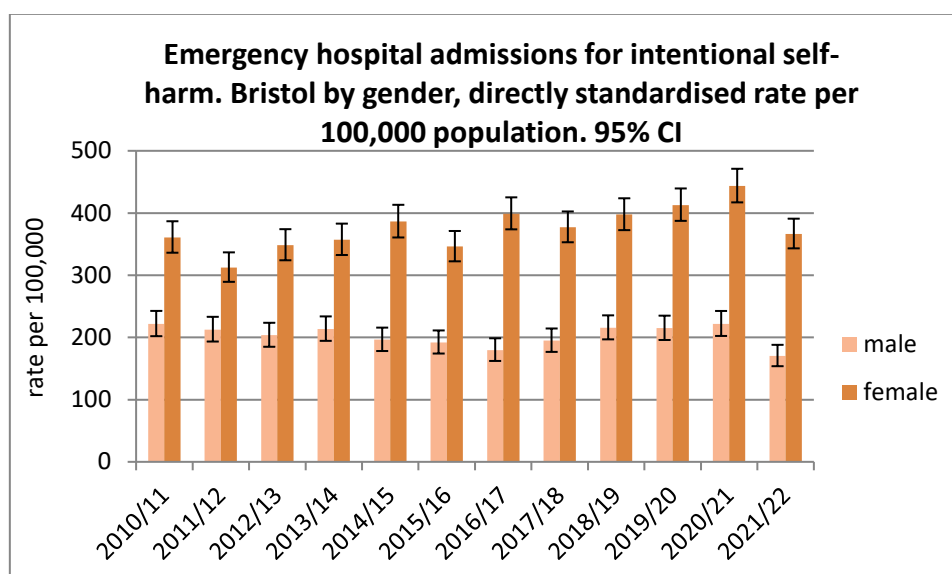


Figure 2: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, directly age standardised rate, all ages, male and female. Source: OHID Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA; Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS Digital for 2021/22 figures.

The most common method of self-harm was self-poisoning by nonopioid analgesics, antipyretics and antirheumatics (which include, among others, drugs like: paracetamol, NSAID and salicylates).

Local picture

Rates of self-harm admissions vary considerably across Bristol, with the Bristol East and North and West (Outer) localities having the highest rates (377.1 and 382.1 per 100,000 population respectively) and the North and West (inner) locality – the lowest rate at 197.7 per 100,000 population on average in the last 3 years (2019/20-2021/22).

There is a strong association between the rates of admissions and deprivation within the city. The rate in the most deprived area is 2.7 times higher than in the least deprived – Figure 3.

¹ The Core Cities Group is a self-selected and self-financed collaborative advocacy group of large regional cities in the United Kingdom outside Greater London. In England Core Cities include: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield

² The latest data available

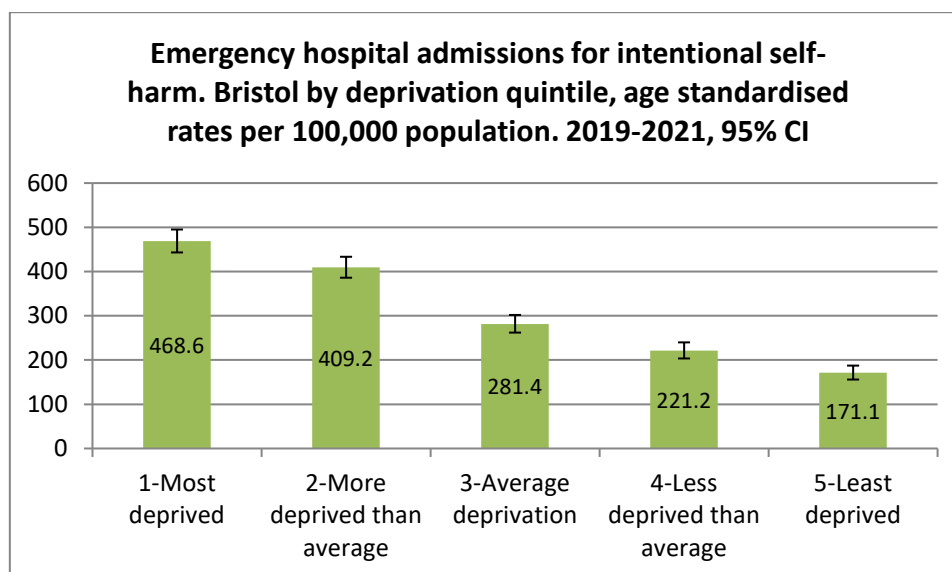


Figure 3: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, crude rates by deprivation quintile, all ages, 2019/20 to 2021/22. Source: Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS Digital; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - English indices of deprivation 2019

The Bristol Self-harm Surveillance Register³ is a database maintained in the Emergency Department of Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) (part of the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust) and Southmead Hospital (North Bristol NHS Trust). It records detailed information on patients presenting to hospital for self-harm. There were 1,750 self-harm presentations to the Bristol Royal Infirmary's Emergency Department in 2018. Data for Southmead Hospital are only available for the year 2017 – there were 1,608 episodes of self-harm recorded that year. Roughly one in three was a repeat episode.

In the BRI (data for Southmead Hospital were not available) female patients made up a greater proportion of the self-harm patients than males (59.8% vs. 40.2% respectively). Women were also on average younger than men⁴.

Young people

There were 652 admissions for self-harm in 10 to 24 age group in Bristol in 2021/22 – a rate of 639.4 per 100,000 population of that age and significantly higher than England average of 425 per 100,000 population in the same year⁵.

The rate of self-harm admissions among young women at 1,075.8 per 100,000 was over 5 times higher than the rate among young men (at 201.5 per 100,000) in 2021/22. The rate of admissions among women has increased significantly in 2016/17 and continued an upward trend. Even though the rates for men and women have decreased slightly in 2021/22, they are still significantly higher than the England's average. The rate of admissions among young men

³Bristol Self-harm Surveillance Register https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.bristol.ac.uk/dist/3/343/files/2019/09/BSHSR_AnnualReport-27062019-PRINT.pdf

⁴ Bristol Self-harm Surveillance Register https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.bristol.ac.uk/dist/3/343/files/2019/09/BSHSR_AnnualReport-27062019-PRINT.pdf

⁵ Data calculated from the Hospital Episode Statistics (via NHS Digital).

has increased significantly in 2018/19 – Figure 4 – and remains higher than England's average since.

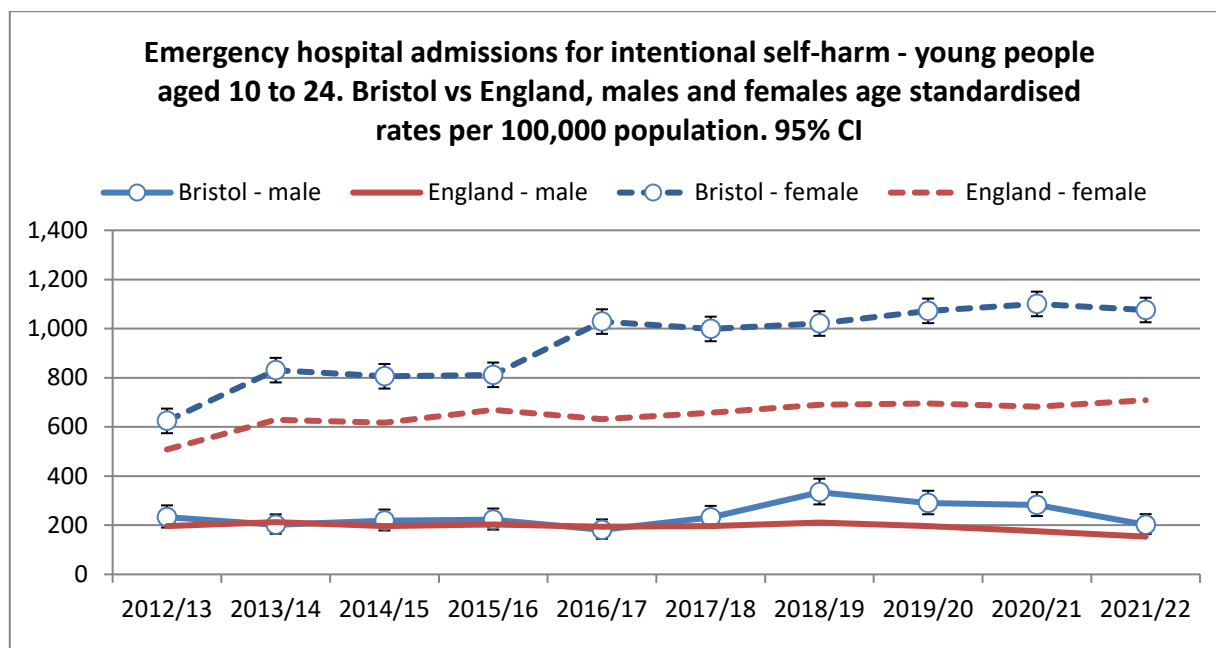


Figure 4: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm in 10-24 age group, directly standardised rates by gender. Bristol and England. Source: OHID Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA; Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS Digital for 2021/22 figures

Almost half of all self-harm admissions occurred to residents of the most deprived areas of Bristol (the first and the second most deprived quintiles), with the highest numbers seen in the Bristol South locality.

Further data / links:

- Public Health Outcomes Framework, <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework>
- Public Health England Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA, <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/mh-jsna>
- Bristol Self-harm Surveillance Register annual reports: <https://bristolsash.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/resources-downloads/>

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