

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024/25

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 1,295 emergency admissions for self-harm in Bristol in 2022/23 – 67% of them were female.
- The rates of self-harm admissions in Bristol are higher than England average for both men and women in 2022/23. The rate of admissions among women is almost twice as high as the rate among men.
- The 2022/23 rate of admissions has decreased by 11% comparing to the previous year.
- The self-harm admissions rate in the most deprived areas of Bristol is 2.8 times higher than in the least deprived.

Emergency hospital admissions for self-harm

In 2022/23 there were 1,295 emergency admissions for self-harm in Bristol, a rate of 238.2 per 100,000 population, significantly lower than in 2021/22, but still and significantly higher than England average of 126.3 per 100,000. The rates in Bristol have been falling from 2020/21 – fig.1.

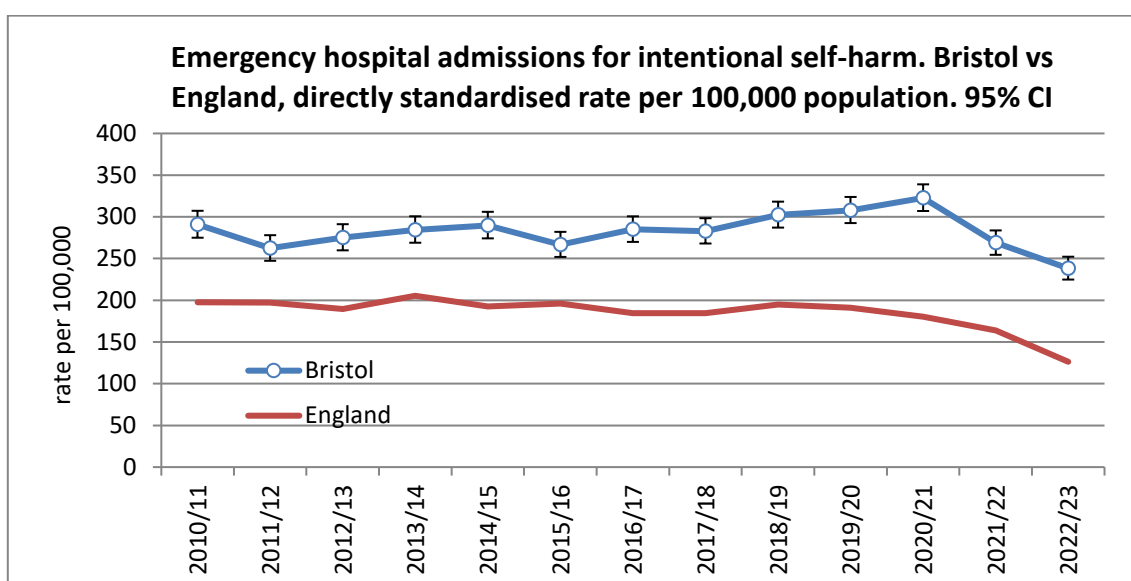


Fig.1: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, directly age standardised rate, all ages, Persons.
Source: OHID Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA.

Among the Core Cities¹ in 2022/23 Bristol had the highest rate of emergency admissions for self-harm among women and men.

In Bristol rates of intentional self-harm were almost 2 times higher among women than men. In 2022/23, there were 865 female admissions in Bristol, a rate of 311.1 per 100,000 (fig. 2), a slight decrease on the last year. Number of male admissions was significantly lower at 430 – a rate of 164.4 per 100,000.

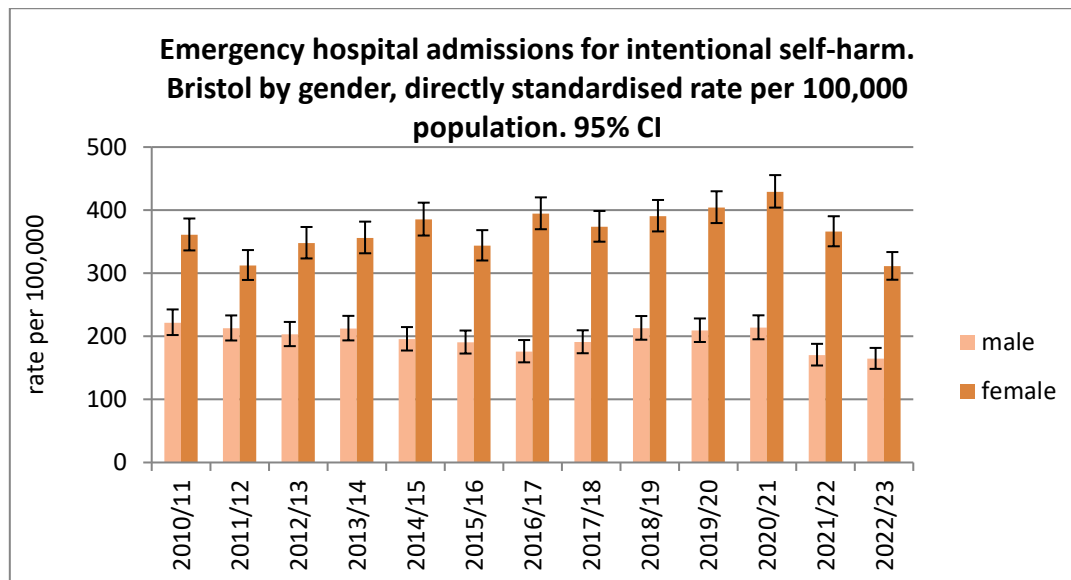


Fig.2: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, directly age standardised rate, all ages, male and female. Source: OHID Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA

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 (342.4 and 335.1 per 100,000 population respectively) and the North and West (inner) locality – the lowest rate at 190.4 per 100,000 population on average in the last 3 years (2020/21-2022/23).

There is a strong association between the rates of admissions and deprivation within the city. The rate in the most deprived areas is 2.8 times higher than in the least deprived – fig.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

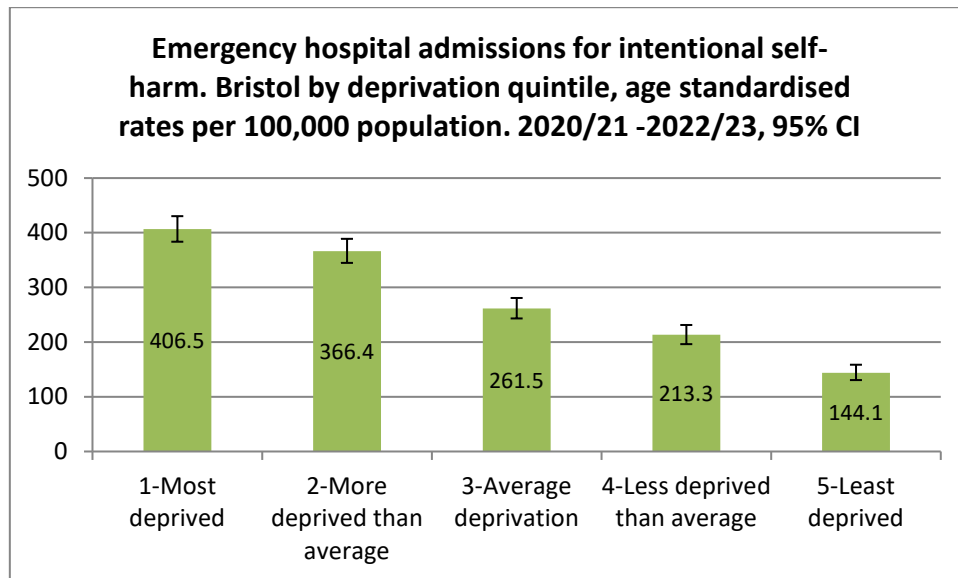


Fig.3: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, crude rates by deprivation quintile, all ages, 2020/21 to 2022/23. Source: Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS England; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - English indices of deprivation 2019

Young people

There were 575 admissions for self-harm in 10 to 24 age group in Bristol in 2022/23 – a rate of 525.3 per 100,000 population of that age and significantly higher than England average of 319.0 per 100,000 population in the same year.

The rate of self-harm admissions among young women at 814.8 per 100,000 was almost 4 times higher than the rate among young men (at 224.7 per 100,000) in 2022/23. The rate of admissions among women has increased significantly in 2016/17 and continued to increase in 2019/20 and 2020/21. The 2022/23 saw a significant fall in self-harm admissions, but the rates are still significantly higher than the England’s average. The rate of admissions among young men has increased significantly in 2018/19 and in 2022/23 remains significantly higher than England’s average.

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.

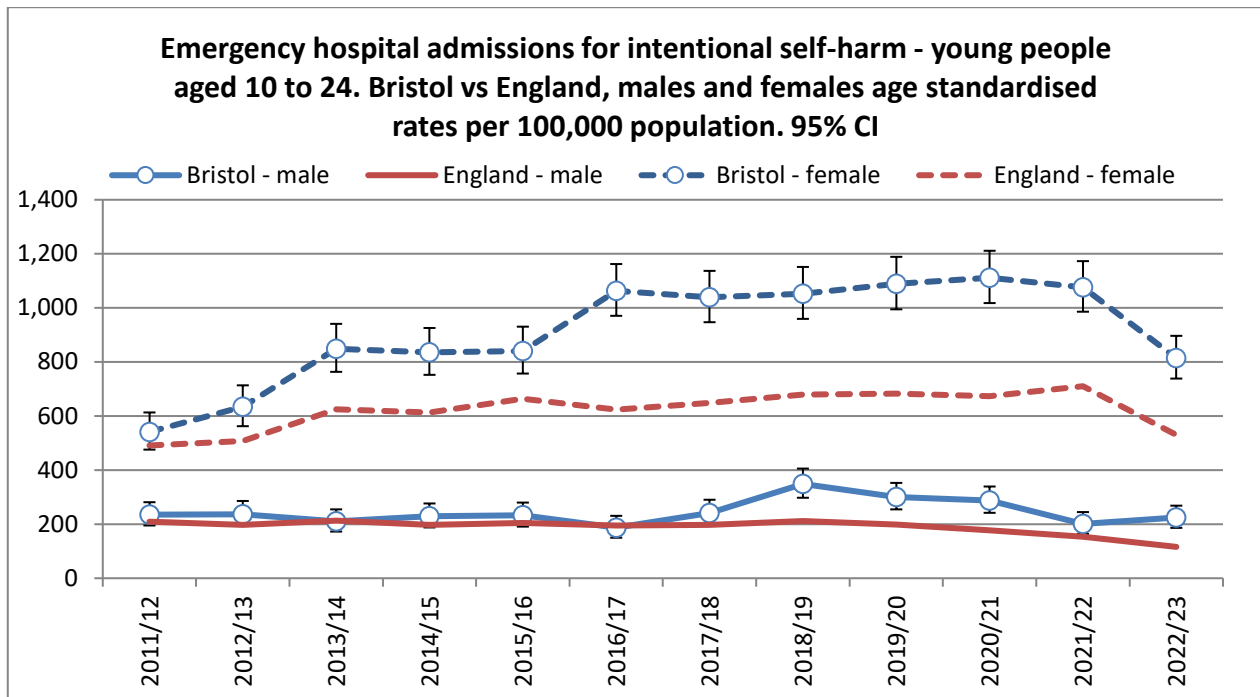


Fig.4: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm in 10-24 age group, directly standardised rates by gender. Bristol and England. Source: OHID Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA

Further data / links:

- Public Health Outcomes Framework, <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework>
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities 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/>

Date updated: October 2024

Date of next update: October 2025