

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

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. There are some communities who encounter more circumstances and experiences that make people more likely to self-harm; for example, the discrimination and stigma members of the LGBTQ+ community experience, and racial discrimination experienced by different ethnic groups. Self-harm levels are also higher in people who are neurodiverse¹. 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 1,220 emergency admissions for self-harm in Bristol in 2023/24 – 67% of them were female.
- The rates of self-harm admissions in Bristol are higher than England average for both men and women in 2023/24. The rate of admissions among women is almost twice as high as the rate among men.
- The 2023/24 rate of admissions has decreased by 6% comparing to the previous year.
- The self-harm admissions rate in the most deprived areas of Bristol is 3 times higher than in the least deprived.

Emergency hospital admissions for self-harm

In 2023/24 there were 1,220 emergency admissions for self-harm in Bristol, a rate of 222.9 per 100,000 population, slightly lower than in 2022/23, but still significantly higher than England average of 117.0 per 100,000. The rates in Bristol have been falling from 2020/21 and are at the lowest level since 2010/11 – fig.1.

¹ [Self-harm | YoungMinds](#)

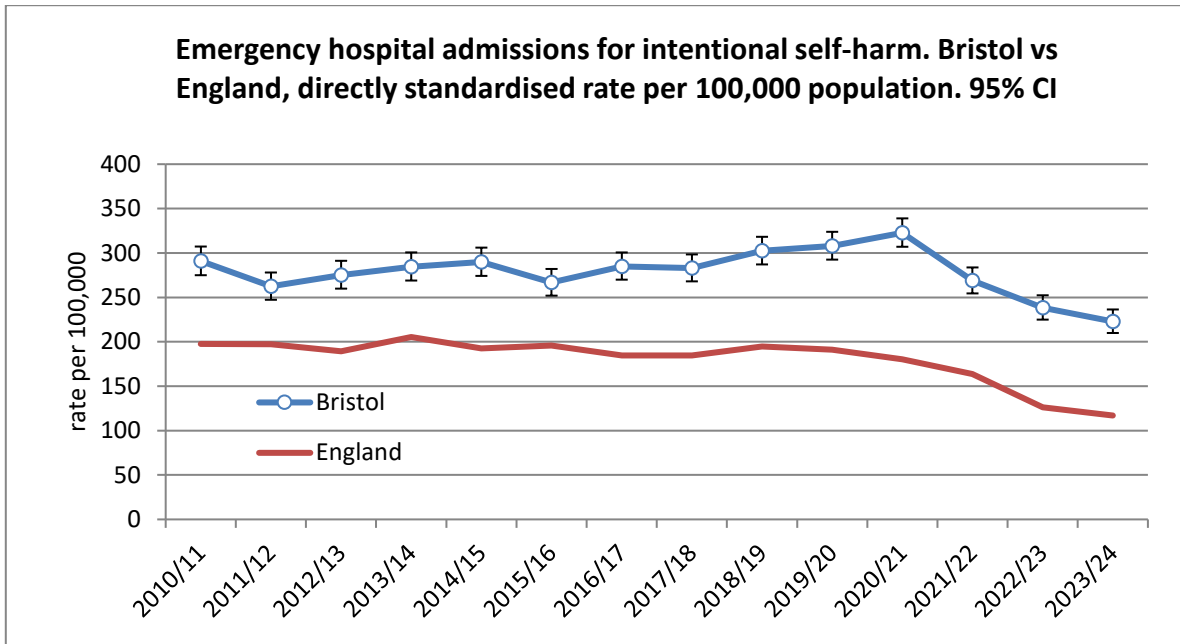


Fig.1: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, directly age standardised rate, all ages, Persons. Source: DHSC Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing profile.

Among the Core Cities² in 2023/24 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 2023/24, there were 815 female admissions in Bristol, a rate of 292.5 per 100,000 (fig. 2), a slight decrease on the last year. Number of male admissions was significantly lower at 395 – a rate of 150.5 per 100,000.

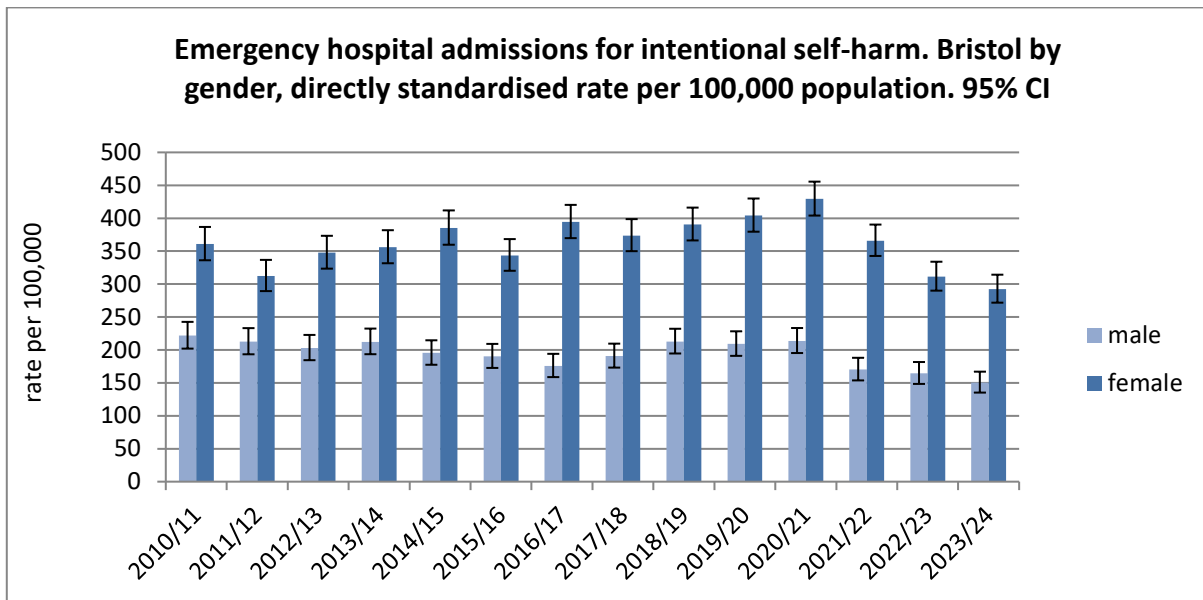


Fig.2: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, directly age standardised rate, all ages, male and female. Source: DHSC Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing profile

² 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

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 (282.9 and 298.7 per 100,000 population respectively) and the North and West (inner) locality having the lowest rate at 157.1 per 100,000 population on average in the last 3 years (2021/22-2023/24).

There is a strong association between the rates of admissions and deprivation within the city. The rate in the most deprived areas is 3 times higher than in the least deprived – see figure 3 below.

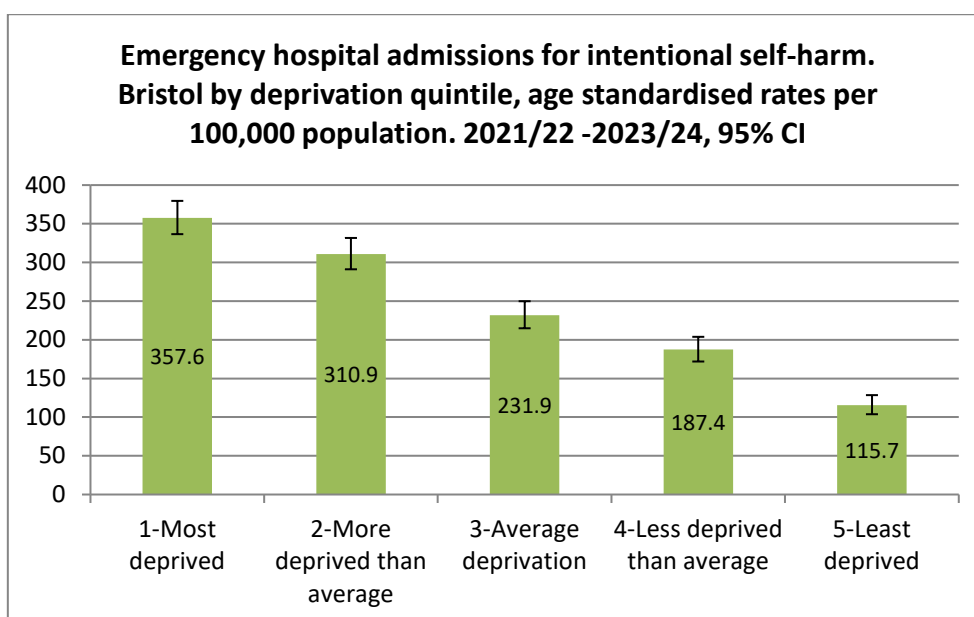


Fig.3: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, crude rates by deprivation quintile, all ages, 2021/22 to 2023/24. Source: Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS England; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - English indices of deprivation 2025

Young people

There were 525 admissions for self-harm in 10 to 24 age group in Bristol in 2023/24 – a rate of 482.8 per 100,000 population of that age and significantly higher than England average of 266.6 per 100,000 population in the same year.

The rate of self-harm admissions among young women at 759.8 per 100,000 was 4 times higher than the rate among young men (at 192.1 per 100,000) in 2023/24. The rate of admissions among women increased significantly in 2016/17 and continued to increase in 2019/20 and 2020/21. The 2022/23 and 2023/24 saw a significant fall in self-harm admissions, but the rates were still significantly higher than the England’s average. The rate of admissions among young men decreased slightly in 2023/24 but still 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.

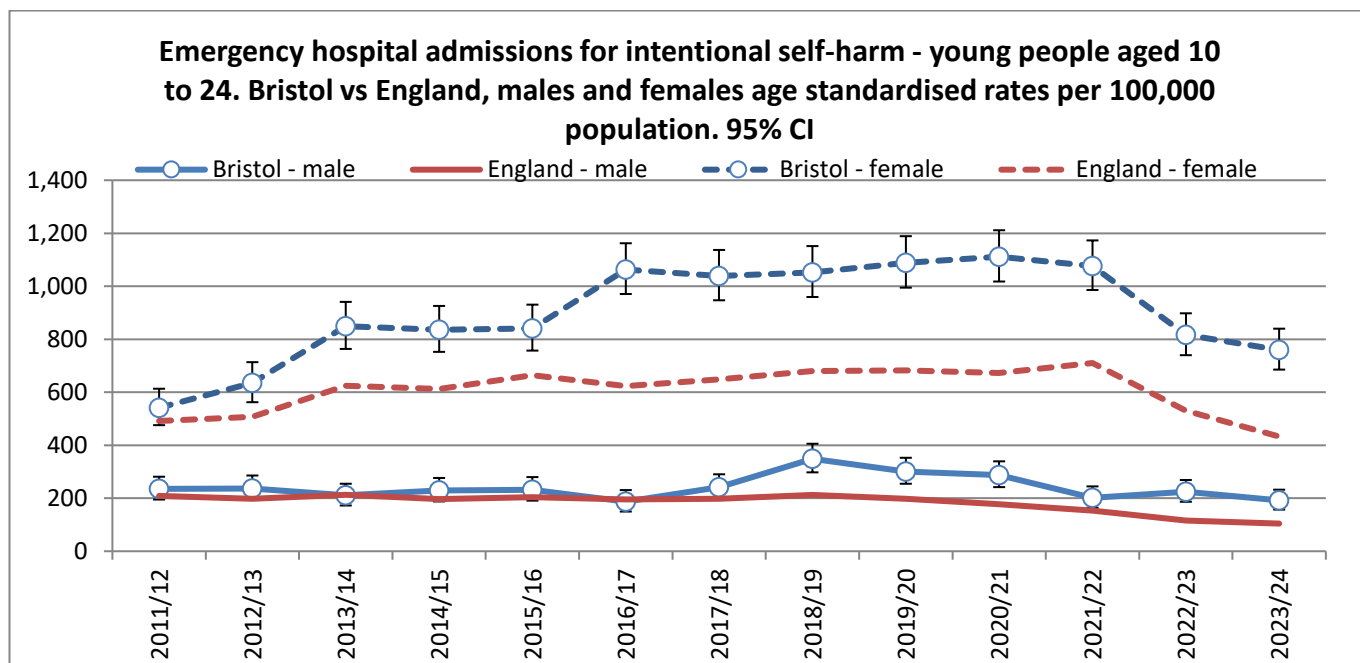


Fig.4: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm in 10-24 age group, directly standardised rates by gender. Bristol and England. Source: DHSC [Perinatal, children and young people's mental health](#)

The latest findings from the Pupil Voice Survey (2024) showed that 12% of female respondents and 3% male reported that they ‘cut or hurt themselves’ as one way to deal with problems, similar proportions to 2022³. This shows a large gender difference that female pupils were significantly more likely to report cutting/hurting themselves in response to their problems.

Further data / links:

- [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#)
- Department of Health & Social Care Public Health Profiles: [Perinatal, children and young people's mental health - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- Department of Health & Social Care Public Health Profiles: [Adult mental health and wellbeing | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- Bristol Self-harm Surveillance Register annual reports: <https://bristolsash.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/resources-downloads/>
- Bristol JSNA data profiles – Mental Health and Wellbeing: [JSNA data profiles](#)

Date updated: December 2025

Date of next update: October 2026

³ [The Bristol Pupil Voice Report \(2024\)](#)