About this release

This release by Information Services Division reports on the setting where people died from cancer in Scotland in 2009-2018. Information is presented for deaths in Scotland for the four most common causes of death from cancer (lung, colorectal, breast and prostate cancers) and from all cancers combined.

Main Points

- In 2009, one in two people who died from cancer did so in an NHS hospital (49%); this figure was 4 in 10 (41%) in 2016. However, since 2016 the percentage of deaths in NHS hospitals has not changed.

- Over the same period (2009-2016), the percentage of people who died at home increased from a quarter (25%) to 3 in 10 (30%). Similarly to hospital deaths, the percentage of home deaths has not changed since 2016.
In the latest five year time period, 2014-2018, for people who lived in urban areas, 30% died at home and 21% died in a hospice. For residents of rural areas, 34% died at home and 15% died in a hospice. This may reflect differences in hospice availability between urban and rural areas, as well as patient preference. Slightly higher percentages of people who lived in rural areas died at NHS hospitals (44%) compared to those who lived in urban areas (42%).

One in four (24%) of those who lived in the least deprived areas died at a hospice, compared to one in five (18%-20%) of those who lived in the other deprivation quintiles.

Background

The Scottish Government’s Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care together with Beating Cancer: Ambition and Action address palliative and end of life care for patients with life limiting conditions. The Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care states that “the focus must be on how health and social care integration will improve the organisation and delivery of palliative and end of life care within hospitals and communities, including hospices, care at home, in care homes and other relevant social care services.” It further specifies as one of the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes, that “people, including those with disabilities or long term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community.” Information in this report could assist the NHS and social care partners in Scotland in assessing the palliative and end of life care needs in all care settings.

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Further Information

Find out more in the full report. Further Information can be found on the ISD website.
You can find all our cancer information on our website including cancer incidence, mortality and survival statistics.

The next release of this publication will be in 2023.