

NCMD

National Child Mortality Database

Knowledge, understanding and
learning to improve young lives

Deaths of children aged under 11 years as a result of a fall from a window or balcony

August 2025

We thank all Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs) who submitted data for the purposes of this report and all child death review professionals for submitting data and providing additional information when asked.

Falls can result in serious head trauma, which can lead to death or life-changing injuries, the consequences of which can last for a lifetime and affect the whole family. Falls included in this briefing include both falls from a window or balcony in England, where the child was aged under 11 years.

[The Child Accident Prevention Trust \(CAPT\)](#) highlights that one of the most common reasons that young children fall is that their rapid development takes parents and carers by surprise, for example, a toddler might take his parents by surprise when he climbs on something that he had previously been unable to reach.

Data from the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) highlights:

- Between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025 (6 years and 2 months) there have been a total of 16 deaths of children aged under 11 years in England as a result of a fall from a window or balcony.
- 12 children were aged under 5 years, and 4 were aged between 5 and 10 years.
- 11 children were from Asian, black, mixed, or other ethnic backgrounds, and 4 were from a white ethnic background. In 1 case this information was not known.
- The deaths occurred across all periods in the year with 6 in Spring (March, April and May), 4 in Summer (June, July and August), 4 in Autumn (September, October and November) and 2 in Winter (December, January and February).
- In 12 cases the child fell from a flat, 2 were from a house, and 1 from a hotel. In 1 case this information was not known.
- The property was social housing in 9 cases, privately rented in 3 cases, and 1 was a temporary accommodation. In 3 cases this information was not known.
- For deaths from a window (n=13), in 4 cases there was no lock or restrictor present and in 8 cases the window lock or restrictor was present but broken (n=4) or disabled / not in use (n=4). In 1 case this information was not known.
- The child was supervised by an adult at the time of the event in 2 deaths. In both cases the window lock or restrictor was present but broken. The child was unsupervised in 12 deaths and in 2 cases this information was not known.

Themes identified from NCMD review of deaths:

- Families reporting windows as broken, sometimes on multiple occasions and the landlord / Local Authority not fixing them quickly enough.
- Over-riding of window restrictors / closing devices in hot weather or when cooking / cleaning to let smoke / smells out.
- Items available for children to climb on close to the window or on the balcony.
- In some instances, other housing issues were reported, for example, overcrowded accommodation. This meant that the physical living space was small for the family leading to limited space to position furniture in places that were safe for young children.
- Non-supervision of children in areas where windows are not locked.

Actions for local authorities, private landlords and professionals who work with families with young children:

- Prioritise fixing windows when reported by residents with young children.
- Ensure appropriate locks are in place on windows and balcony doors to protect families with young children.
- Use [Child Accident Prevention Trust resources](#) including posters and leaflets to raise awareness among tenants of how to keep young children safe from falls. These are available in a number of different languages.

Current advice for families from the Child Accident Prevention Trust:

- Keep low furniture away from open windows and balconies so that children can't climb up and fall out – even on the ground floor.
- If you can, install window catches (to limit how far they can open) and locks.
- If you opt for a lock, keep the keys somewhere you can find them in case there's a fire and you need to get out.
- If your window won't lock or you need to open the window wider because of heat or cooking, don't leave young children alone in the room.
- Keep young children away from balconies unless they are supervised and keep balcony doors locked when not in use.

Data tables

Table 1. Number of deaths of children (aged under 11 years) as a result of a fall from a window or balcony between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025, by age, ethnicity and deprivation

	Number of deaths
Total	16
Window	13
Balcony	3
Age at death	
Under 5 years	12
5-10 years	4
Ethnicity	
Asian, Black, Mixed, Other ethnicities	11
White ethnicity	4
Not known	1
Social deprivation	
1 (most deprived)	7
2	5
3	3
4	1
5 (least deprived)	0

Table 2. Number of deaths of children (aged under 11 years) as a result of a fall from a window or balcony between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025, by season

	Number of deaths
Season	
Spring (Mar, Apr, May)	6
Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug)	4
Autumn (Sep, Oct, Nov)	4
Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)	2

Please note the figures for Spring include data for April and May 2025.

Table 3. Number of deaths of children (aged under 11 years) as a result of a fall from a window or balcony between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025, by property details

	Number of deaths
Type of property	
Flat	12
House	2
Hotel	1
Not known	1
Tenure of property	
Owner occupied	0
Privately rented	3
Social housing	9
Temporary accommodation	1
Not known	3
Window locks / restrictors (fall from a window only)	
No window lock or restrictor present	4
Window lock or restrictor present but disabled or not in use	4
Window lock or restrictor present but broken	4
Not known / unclear	1

Table 4. Number of deaths of children (aged under 11 years) as a result of a fall from a window or balcony between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025, by presence of adult supervision

	Number of deaths
Presence of adult supervision	
Supervised by an adult	2
Not supervised by an adult	12
Not known	2

Methodology and limitations

Cohort identification

Deaths of children aged 0-10 years (inclusive) that occurred between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025 and notified to NCMD were identified, where they were coded as trauma by one or more clinician using information recorded at notification; and where the information in the record contained the word 'fall' or 'fell'. Extracted cases were then reviewed to identify deaths as a result of a fall from a window or balcony.

Exclusions

Deaths that occurred abroad or falls from another location other than a window or balcony (e.g., a roof) have been excluded. Deaths of children aged 11 or over have been excluded from this analysis. As different factors may contribute to the deaths of children aged 11 years or over, these deaths were excluded to ensure the learning identified in this report was appropriately themed around accidental falls from windows or balconies. The exclusion criteria outlined here mean that the data published here may differ to previous reporting.

Data extraction

The data used for deaths that occurred between 1 April 2019 and 31 May 2025 within this briefing was extracted on 18 July 2025.

Limitations

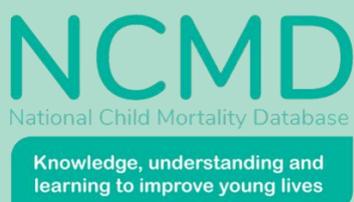
This work is based on statutory data reported to NCMD, and previous work has shown good validation and coverage. However, whilst 81% of deaths had been reviewed by a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), the reviews of the remaining deaths had not concluded, meaning that in some cases information was limited, such as supervision or property type, which should be considered when interpreting this work. The identification of deaths for this work is dependent on the key word being recorded in the case information, and this therefore may lead to a small underestimation.

Acknowledgements

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