



England & Wales mortality monitor – Q1 2024

Summary

Mortality in the first quarter of 2024 compared to the first quarter of recent years was lower than 2021 and 2023 and similar to 2019, 2020 and 2022.

The latest annual average mortality is lower than at any time since 2019.

At the end of Q1 2024, the cumulative standardised mortality rate for 2024 was 2.1% below the 2014-2023 average and 2.9% below 2023, the previous year.

Note: Results for week 13 of 2024 and weeks 12 and 13 of the 2014-2023 average are affected by bank holidays.

Background

This is the latest in a series of quarterly updates monitoring mortality in England & Wales. It is based on provisional weekly deaths data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) up to 29 March 2024 (i.e. week 13 of 2024) on 10 April 2024. We intend to publish the next quarterly update, for data to Q2 of 2024, in July 2024.

We are also publishing briefer weekly summaries, which include Charts D and E from the quarterly monitor.

All updates are publicly available from the CMI pages of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries website: <https://www.actuaries.org.uk/learn-and-develop/continuous-mortality-investigation/other-cmi-outputs/mortality-monitor>. The same page has “beta” mortality monitor software, which is available to Authorised Users. This enables users to produce their own ad hoc updates to the results of this report.

Notes

We have used our standard approach in producing this report, basing it on data published by the Office for National Statistics.

Our calculations rely on data for registered deaths, and we are conscious that during the coronavirus pandemic the timing of registration of deaths may have differed from previous years. Consequently, comparisons of mortality between years may not be entirely on a like-for-like basis. Also, results for individual weeks may not be consistent between years due to the timing of public holidays. We included analysis of the difference between when deaths were registered and when they occurred in Appendix 3 of the end-2023 mortality monitor.

All of our analysis in this update is based on Standardised Mortality Rates (SMRs). These adjust the provisional weekly deaths data published by the Office for National Statistics to control for changes in the size and age and gender distribution of the population over time.

Contents

Charts A, B and C show centred averages of weekly SMRs. The annual averages smooth out seasonal variations. The quarterly averages smooth short-term variations but still show seasonal patterns, allowing the identification of, for example, winters with particularly heavy or light mortality.

Chart D shows cumulative standardised mortality (cSMR) for each year, relative to the average for 2014-2023, and Chart E shows cumulative standardised mortality improvements (cSMRI) for each year (i.e. the progression of annual mortality improvements over the course of each year). Charts D2 and E2 show the same information as charts D and E respectively in a different format and may be easier to interpret for those with colour vision deficiency.

Charts A to E show results for males and females combined, for ages 20-100. Charts F and G show variations in the cSMR and cSMRI by gender and age band.

Full details of the methods used are included in [Working Paper 111](#).



The numerical results underlying the charts are provided in an accompanying spreadsheet, together with further results, including SMRs by gender and age band.

Use of this document

Please note that:

- The CMI disclaims any liability from use of or reliance on these calculations, including in relation to financial transactions such as longevity swaps; and
- The CMI does not guarantee that it will continue to publish quarterly updates.

Please also see the reliances and limitations, disclaimer, and copyright notice on the final page of this document.

This document is categorised as a “Research Report” as defined in the Terms and Conditions.

TAS compliance

This paper is intended to translate publicly available demographic information published by the Office for National Statistics and similar bodies into indicative mortality measures to illustrate recent mortality experience primarily in England & Wales. The paper is intended for use by actuaries and other parties interested in detailed mortality statistics and is for information only.

The paper complies with the principles in the Financial Reporting Council’s Technical Actuarial Standard “TAS 100: General Actuarial Standards”. Any person using this paper should exercise judgement over its suitability and relevance for their purpose.



Smoothed mortality at a point in time

Chart A shows quarterly (13-week) and annual (53-week) centred averages of SMR, since weekly deaths data became available. Note that although we have used data from 31 July 1999 to 29 March 2024, the quarterly and annual averages start 6 and 26 weeks later and stop 6 and 26 weeks earlier.

The annual average SMR shows a fairly steady fall from 1.71% in early 2000 to 1.29% by mid-2011. From mid-2011 to mid-2018 the annual average SMR was fairly flat, remaining within the range from 1.25% to 1.35%, but it reached a new low of 1.22% in early 2019. It rose rapidly because of the coronavirus pandemic, reaching 1.48% in September 2020, but has since fallen. The latest value is 1.24%, the lowest value since 2019.

The quarterly average SMR shows that mortality typically peaks near the start of each year. However during the pandemic the quarterly average SMR peaked at 1.79% in week 15 of 2020 and 1.77% in weeks 1 and 2 of 2021. In contrast, the low of 1.09% in week 30-33 of 2020 was the lowest ever seen. The 2023/24 winter peak of 1.36% is the lower than any prior winter peak.

Chart A: Quarterly and annual centred average SMRs – whole period

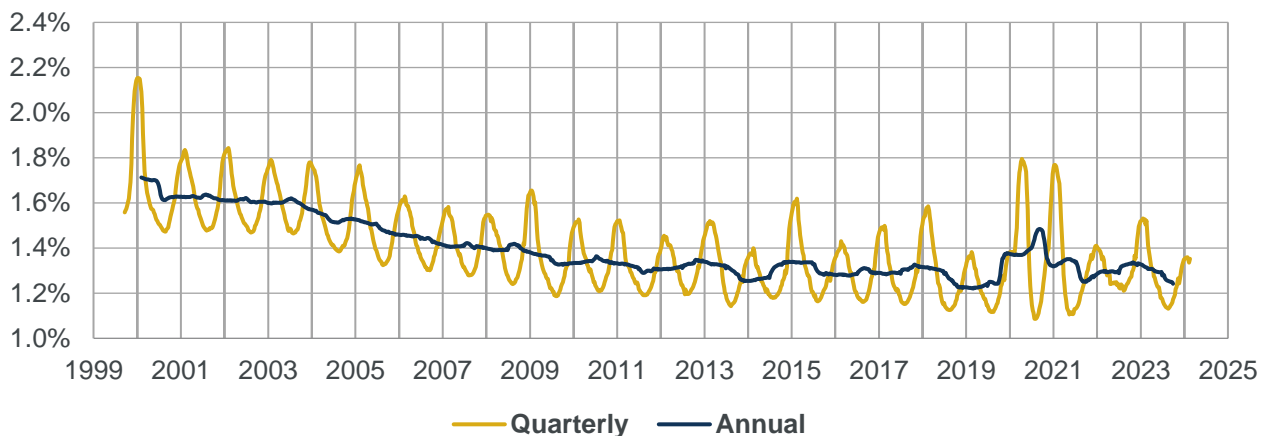


Chart B shows the same information as Chart A, magnified to show the current year and the previous five years more clearly.

Chart B: Quarterly and annual centred average SMRs – current and previous five years

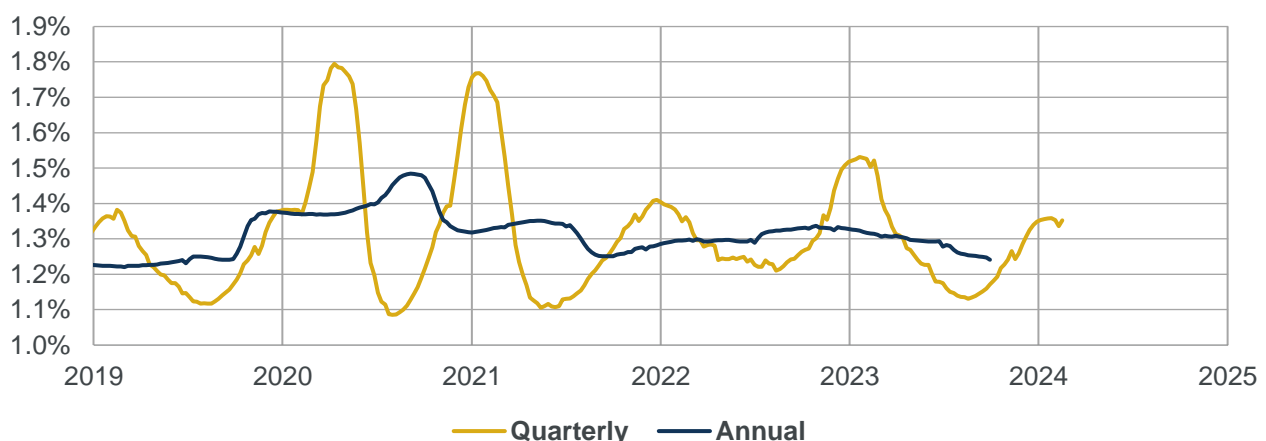
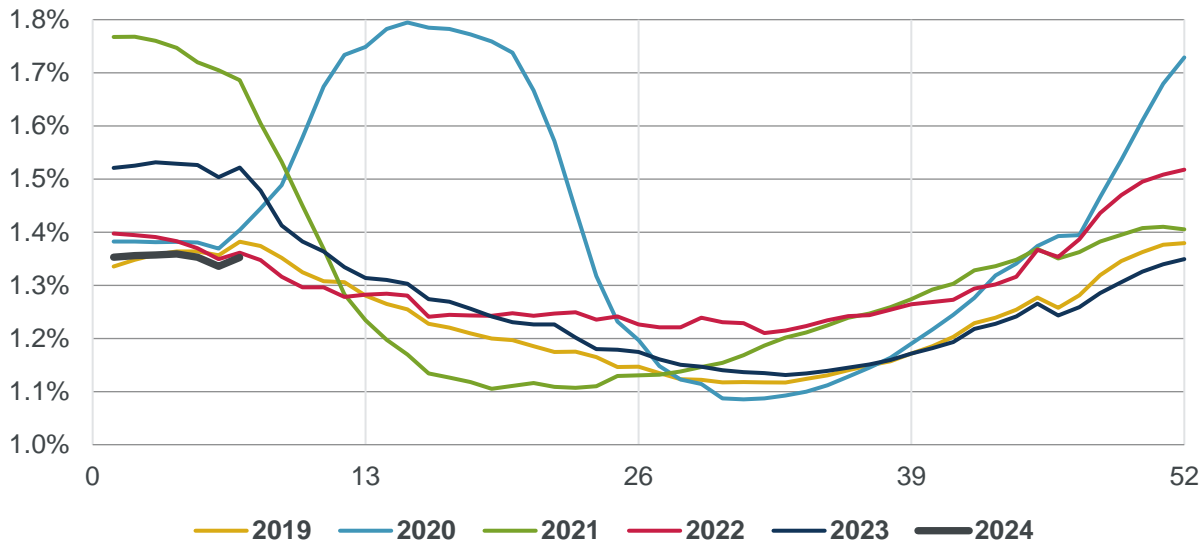


Chart C shows the quarterly average SMRs from Chart B for each year, with values plotted by week number to aid comparison. Although lines are labelled by calendar year, the quarterly averages for weeks towards the start and end of each year will be affected by mortality in earlier and later years respectively. The chart again illustrates the exceptional nature of mortality during the pandemic, with highs in Q2 of 2020 and Q1 of 2021, and lows in Q3 of 2020 and Q2 of 2021. The latest figure is lower than the corresponding point of any prior year.

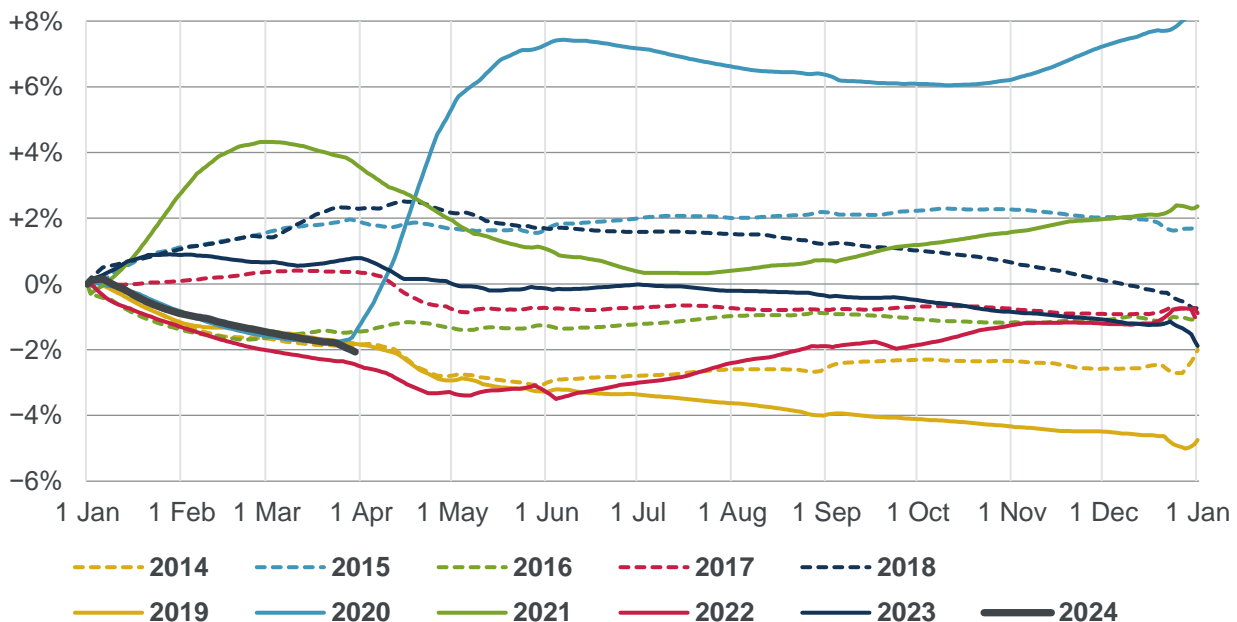
Chart C: Quarterly centred average SMRs, by week number



Cumulative mortality

Chart D shows cumulative standardised mortality rates for 2024 and the previous ten years compared to the 2014-2023 average. The calculation method is described in Section 4.2 of Working Paper 111. Chart D2 (in Appendix 1) shows the same information in a different format and may be easier for those with colour vision deficiency.

Chart D: Cumulative standardised mortality rate (cSMR) compared to the 2014-2023 average



All years have a value of 0% at the start of the year, by definition, as there has been no mortality at that point of the year; the year-end values show how mortality for each year as a whole compares to the 2014-2023 average; and intermediate points show how mortality has developed during the year, relative to the average. If mortality improvements had been constant throughout the period considered then the lines for each year would form a “fan”, with the end-year values decreasing steadily from year to year. While we saw a decrease of this sort in the years up to 2011 (not shown), there is no clear pattern to the end-year values for later years, as mortality has been volatile with low improvements. Mortality for complete calendar years was lowest in 2019 and highest in 2020 (of the years shown).

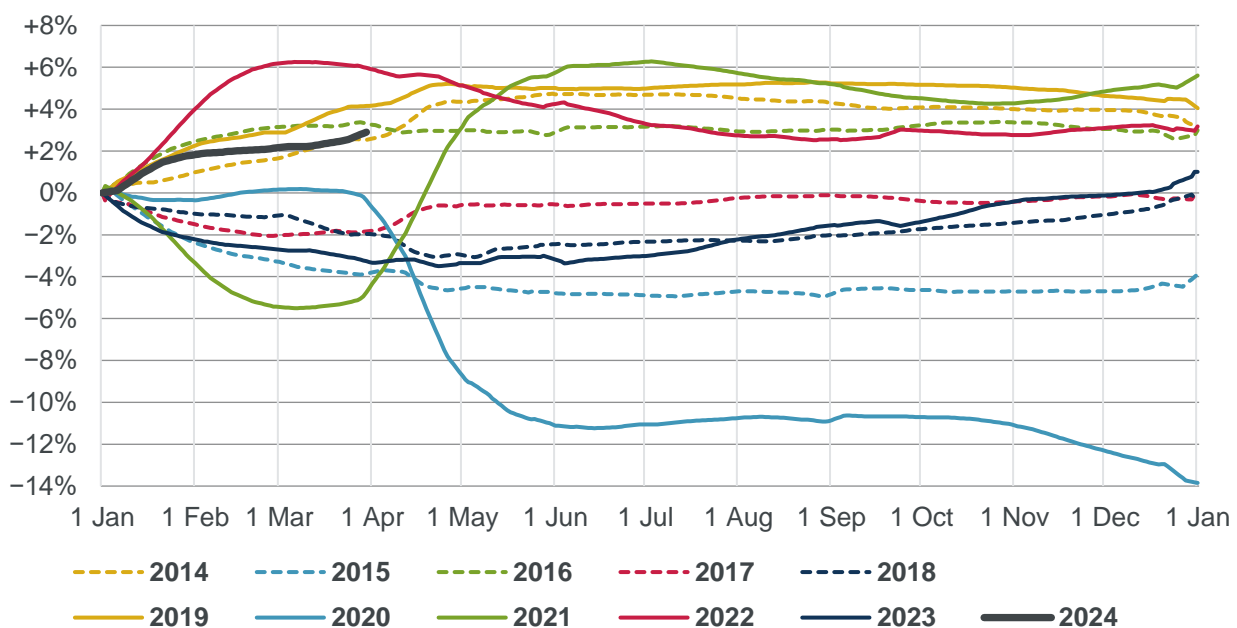
Chart D shows that cumulative standardised mortality to week 13 of 2024 was 2.1% lower than the ten-year average.

Chart E shows the cumulative annual standardised mortality improvement (also described in Section 4.2 of Working Paper 111) for 2024 and for the previous ten years. Chart E2 (in Appendix 1) shows the same information in a different format and may be easier for those with colour vision deficiency.

All years have a value of 0% at the start of the year, by definition, as there has been no mortality at that point of the year; the year-end values show how mortality for each year as a whole compares to the previous year; and intermediate points show how mortality improvements have developed during the year.

Note that Chart E shows cumulative improvements, so a higher value represents a higher improvement and lower mortality; whereas in Chart D a higher value represents higher mortality.

Chart E: Cumulative annual standardised mortality improvement (cSMRI)



The cumulative mortality improvement at week 13 of 2024, relative to 2023, is +2.9%.

Note that:

- The cumulative values at the end of the year in Charts D and E may not necessarily agree precisely with the corresponding values based on annual data. This is because some weeks span two years, requiring us to estimate in which year those deaths were registered.
- Mortality improvements vary by age (as shown later in this report) and the mortality improvements shown in Chart E are sensitive to the age distribution of the chosen standard population.

Implication for future versions of the CMI Model

In previous years we have included a section showing indicative results from the next version of the CMI Model for a range of scenarios for mortality in the current year.

We intend to publish the next version of the CMI Model, CMI_2023, on 18 April 2024. CMI_2023 will be based on data up to the end of 2023.

We aim to publish the following version, CMI_2024, in March 2025. We have not included any indicative results for that version at this stage as the Mortality Projections Committee is considering what methods and parameters to use.



Variation by gender and age

Charts F and G shows how cSMR and cSMRI have varied by gender and age band. Tables 1 and 2 show the values at 29 March 2024.

We note that results by age should currently be treated with particular caution as delays in registrations versus occurrences, described in Appendix 3, could have impacted different age ranges to different degrees.

Table 1: Cumulative standardised mortality rate (cSMR) compared to the 2014-2023 average, by gender and age-band, at 29 March 2024

	0-64	65-84	85+	20-100	20-44	45-64	65-74	75-84
Male	-0.3%	-2.1%	-2.5%	-2.0%	+0.7%	-0.8%	-1.4%	-2.5%
Female	-0.4%	-2.1%	-2.6%	-2.1%	+0.2%	-0.8%	-1.4%	-2.5%
Combined	-0.4%	-2.1%	-2.5%	-2.1%	+0.5%	-0.8%	-1.4%	-2.5%

Table 2: Cumulative annual standardised mortality improvement (cSMRI), by gender and age-band, at 29 March 2024

	0-64	65-84	85+	20-100	20-44	45-64	65-74	75-84
Male	+1.7%	+2.7%	+3.1%	+2.7%	+2.0%	+1.8%	+2.4%	+2.9%
Female	+1.5%	+3.0%	+3.7%	+3.1%	+2.7%	+1.5%	+2.8%	+3.1%
Combined	+1.6%	+2.8%	+3.4%	+2.9%	+2.3%	+1.7%	+2.6%	+3.0%

Mortality rose during 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic:

- For over-65s and above, mortality was higher in 2020 than in 2021.
- For under-65s, mortality was higher in 2021 than in 2020.

In 2022 and 2023, cumulative mortality rates:

- fell below the 2014-2023 average for over-65s; but
- remained above the 2014-2023 average for under-65s.

In the first quarter of 2024:

- Cumulative mortality was below the 2014-2023 average for all groups other than 20-44.
- Mortality improvements were positive for all age groups.



Chart F: Cumulative standardised mortality rate (cSMR) compared to the 2014-2023 average, by gender and age-band

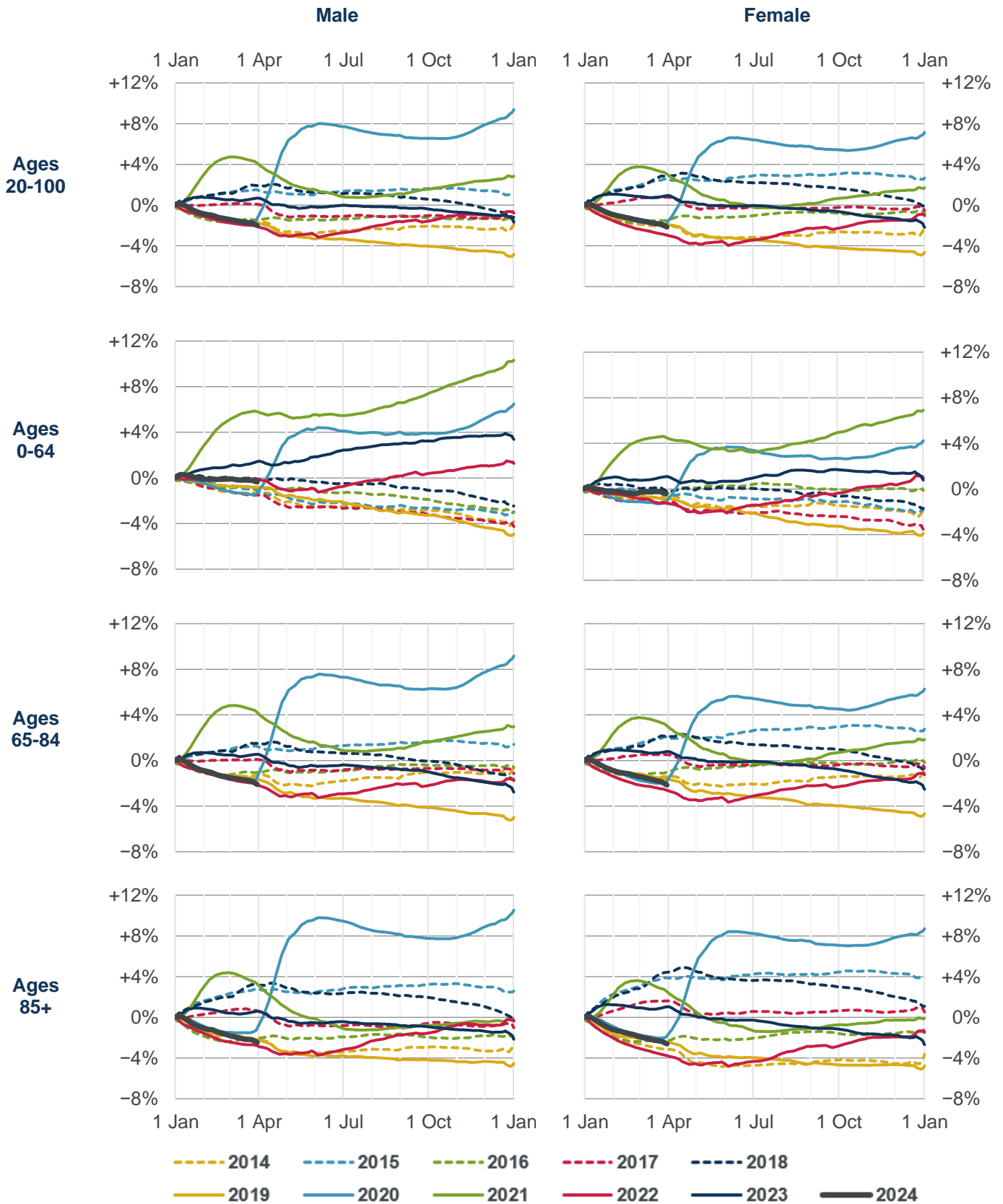




Chart F (cont): Cumulative standardised mortality rate (cSMR) compared to the 2014-2023 average, by gender and age-band

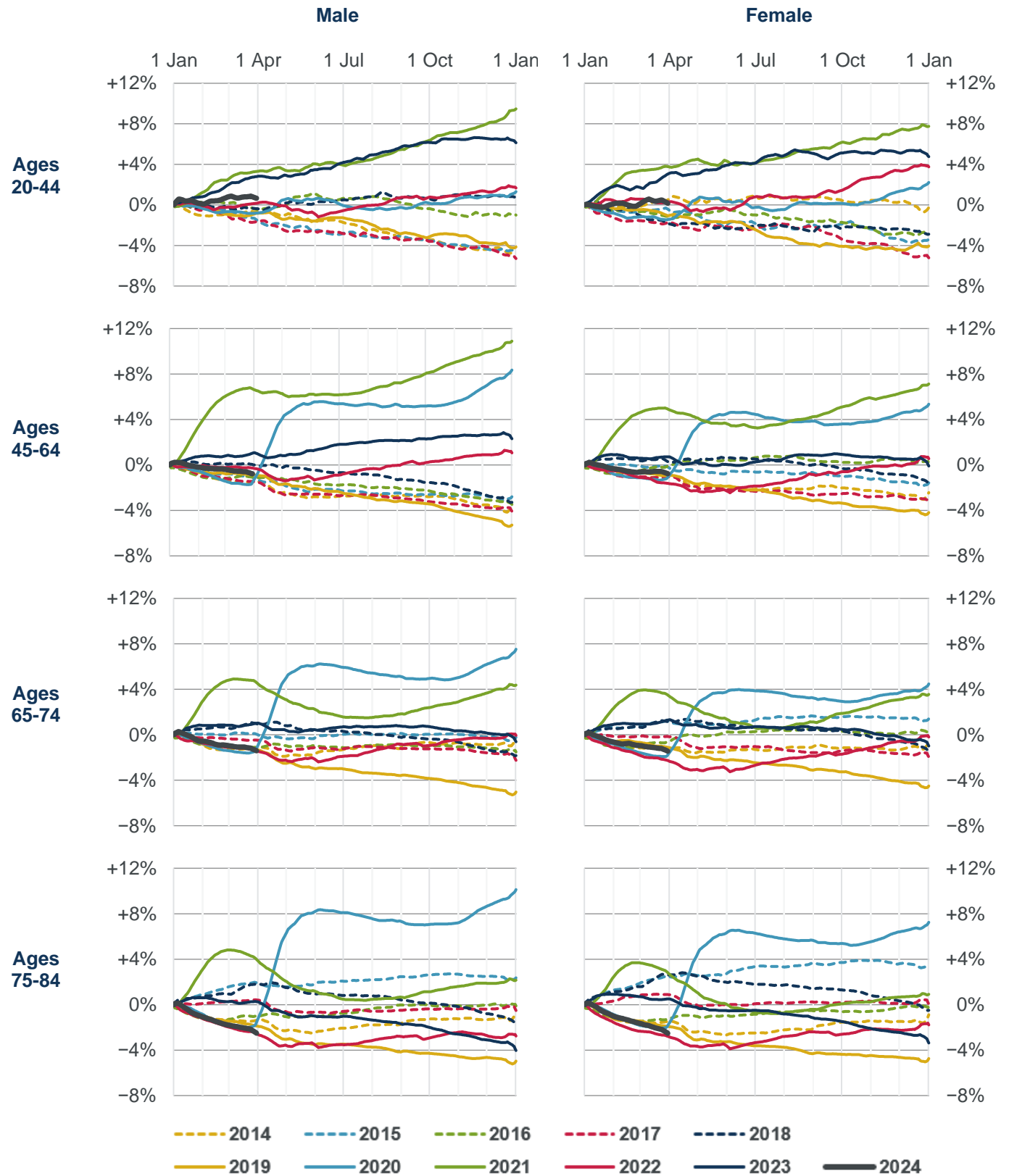




Chart G: Cumulative annual standardised mortality improvement (cSMRI), by gender and age band

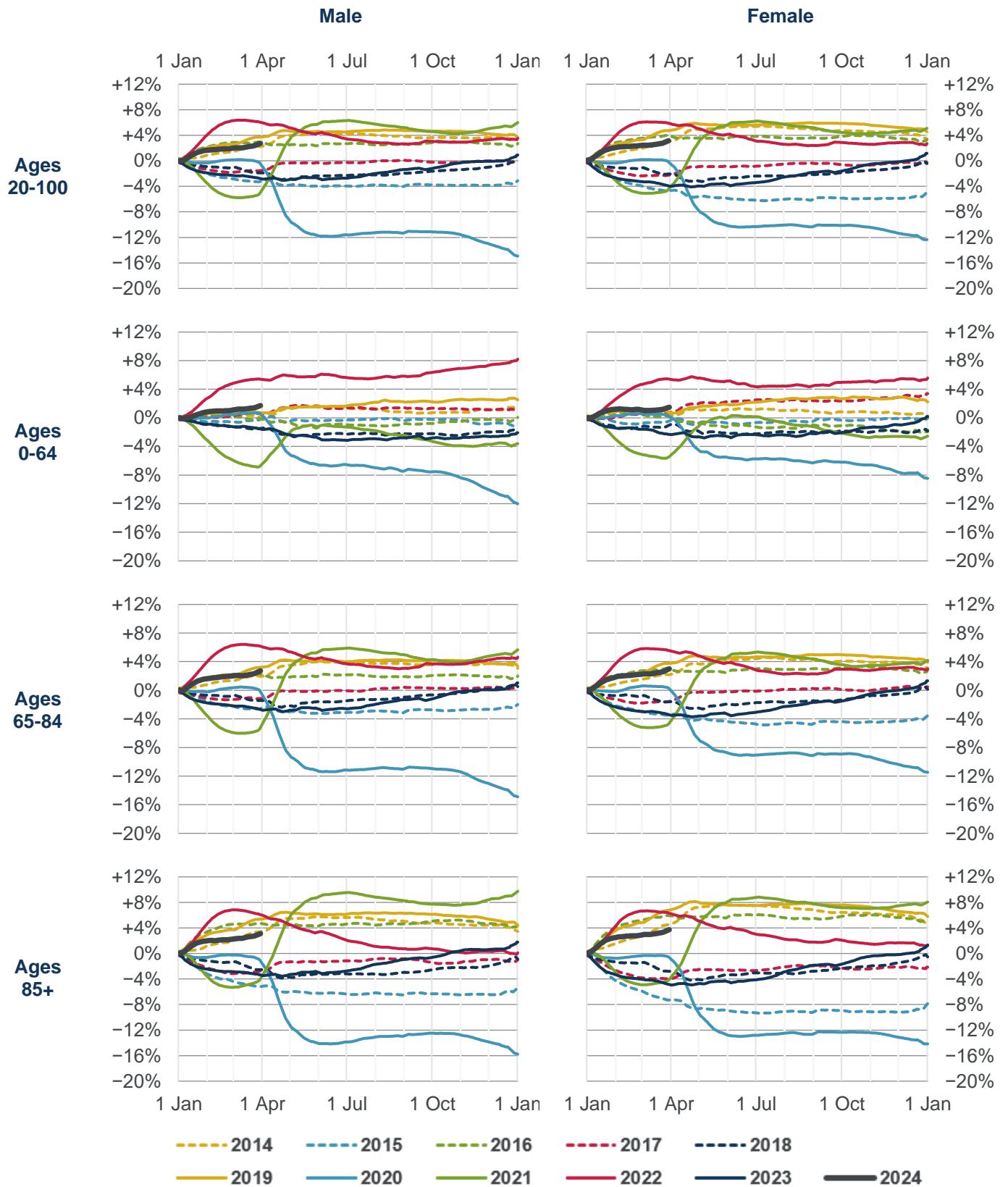
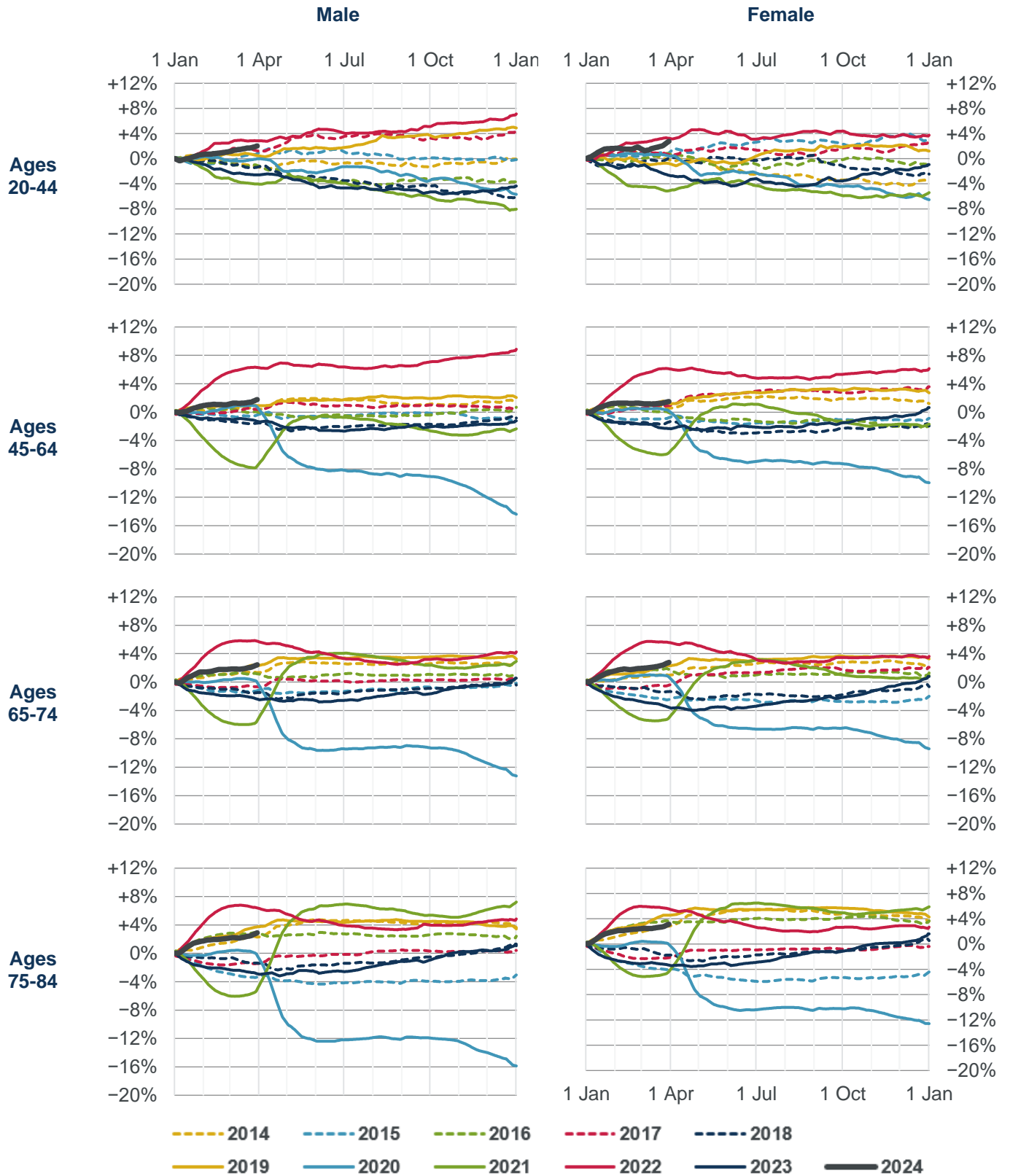




Chart G (cont): Cumulative annual standardised mortality improvement (cSMRI), by gender and age band





Appendix 1 – Accessible versions of charts D and E

Chart D2: Cumulative standardised mortality rate (cSMR) compared to the 2014-2023 average, showing 2014-2024 and highlighting individual years

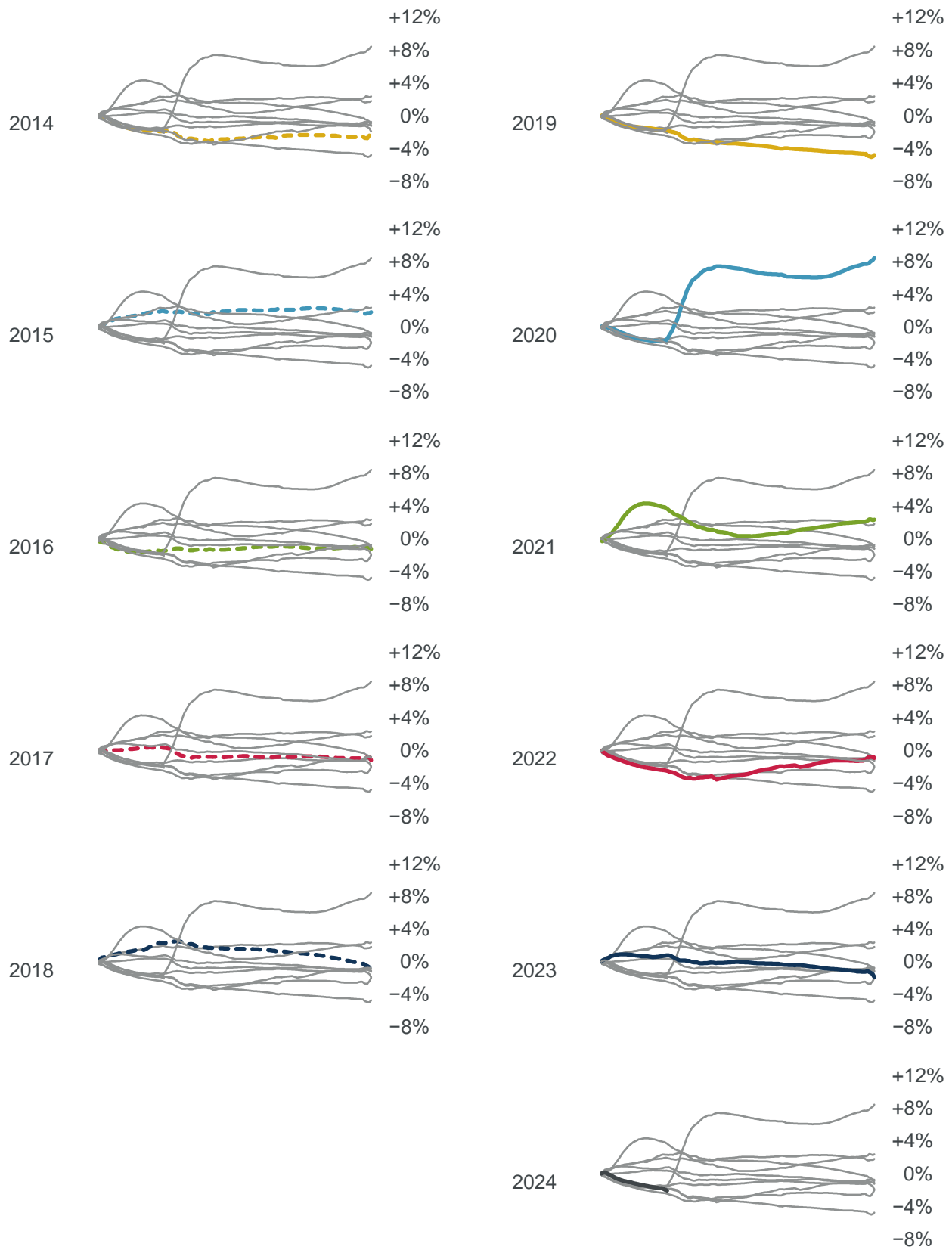
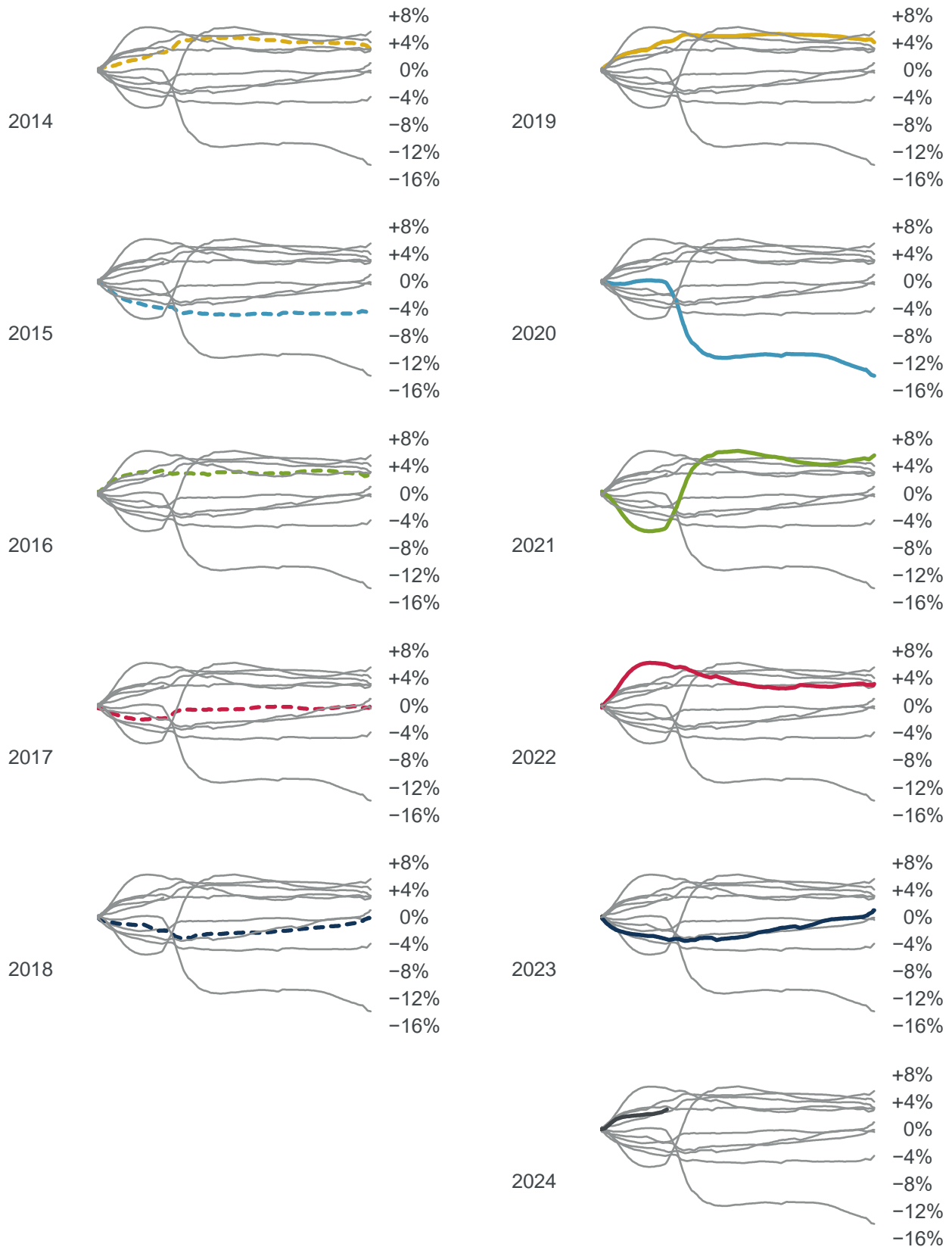




Chart E2: Cumulative annual standardised mortality improvement (cSMRI) for 2014-2024, highlighting individual years





Reliances and limitations

The purpose of the mortality monitor is to provide regular updates on standardised mortality in England & Wales, adjusting ONS data to allowing for changes in the size and age of the population. This can be used to inform a view on the outcome of the next version of the CMI Model, in the absence of any change in method.

The CMI aims to produce high-quality outputs and takes considerable care to ensure that the mortality monitor and the accompanying spreadsheet of results are accurate. However:

- We cannot guarantee their accuracy (see the Disclaimer).
- There is a reliance on the underlying data, published by the ONS and described as provisional.
- We have also applied judgement and assumptions in deciding on the calculation methods and the presentation of results.
- Anyone using the results of the mortality monitor should ensure that it is appropriate for their particular use and note that care is needed when estimating full year experience from partial year experience. This is particularly true during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Population estimates for the latest years reflect our own estimates and are less certain than published ONS figures for earlier years.

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