

Statistical bulletin

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 20 March 2020

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.



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1 . Main points

- The provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending 20 March 2020 (week 12) was 10,645; this represents a decrease of 374 deaths registered compared with the previous week (week 11).
- The average number of deaths for the corresponding week over the previous five years was 10,573; this means that the overall number of deaths in week 12 of 2020 was slightly higher than previous years.
- Of the deaths registered in week 12, 103 mentioned novel coronavirus (COVID-19), which is 1.0% of all deaths.
- This is lower than the figures reported by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as it takes time for deaths to be reported.
- If we analyse the data by date of death and look at registrations after 20 March, then 181 deaths involving COVID-19 occurred in week 12, which is higher than the figures the DHSC publish as it includes deaths related to COVID-19 that took place outside of hospitals and those not tested for COVID-19.
- This number is different from the count of deaths published on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website because of different reporting methods and timing: Office for National Statistics (ONS) weekly deaths figures are based on deaths registered in the stated week, and we have counted all deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate as “deaths involving COVID-19”; the GOV.UK figures are based on deaths occurring to date, among hospital patients who have tested positive for COVID-19, and include deaths that have not yet been registered.
- A total of 138,913 deaths were registered in England and Wales between 28 December 2019 and 20 March 2020 (year to date), and of these, 108 involved COVID-19 (0.1%); deaths that occurred in up to 20 March but were registered up to 25 March, the number involving COVID-19 is 210.
- These figures are based on the date the death was registered, not when it occurred; there is usually a delay of at least five days between occurrence and registration (more information is available in our [impact of registration delays release](#)).

2 . Overall deaths and the coronavirus (COVID-19)

To meet user needs, we publish very timely but provisional counts of death registrations in England and Wales in our [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional](#) dataset. These are presented by sex, age group and regions (within England) as well as for Wales as a whole. To allow time for registration and processing, these figures are published 11 days after the week ends. Because of the rapidly changing situation, in this bulletin we have also given provisional updated totals based on the latest available death registrations, up to 25 March 2020. These deaths will be included in the dataset in a subsequent week.

Because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our regular weekly deaths release now provides a separate breakdown of the numbers of deaths involving COVID-19. That is, where COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, including in combination with other health conditions. If a death mentions COVID-19, it will not always be the main cause of death, it will sometimes be a contributory factor. This new bulletin summarises the latest weekly information and will be updated each week during the pandemic.

We will publish accompanying articles periodically, giving enhanced information such as age-standardised and age-specific mortality rates for recent time periods and breakdowns of deaths involving COVID-19 by associated pre-existing health conditions.

These figures are different from the daily surveillance figures on COVID-19 deaths published by Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website, for the UK as a whole. Figures in this report are derived from the formal process of death registration and may include cases where the doctor completing the death certificate diagnosed possible cases of COVID-19, for example, where this was based on relevant symptoms but no test for the virus was conducted. Our figures also include any deaths that occur outside hospital. In contrast to the GOV.UK figures, we include only deaths registered in England and Wales, which is the Office for National Statistics's (ONS's) legal remit.

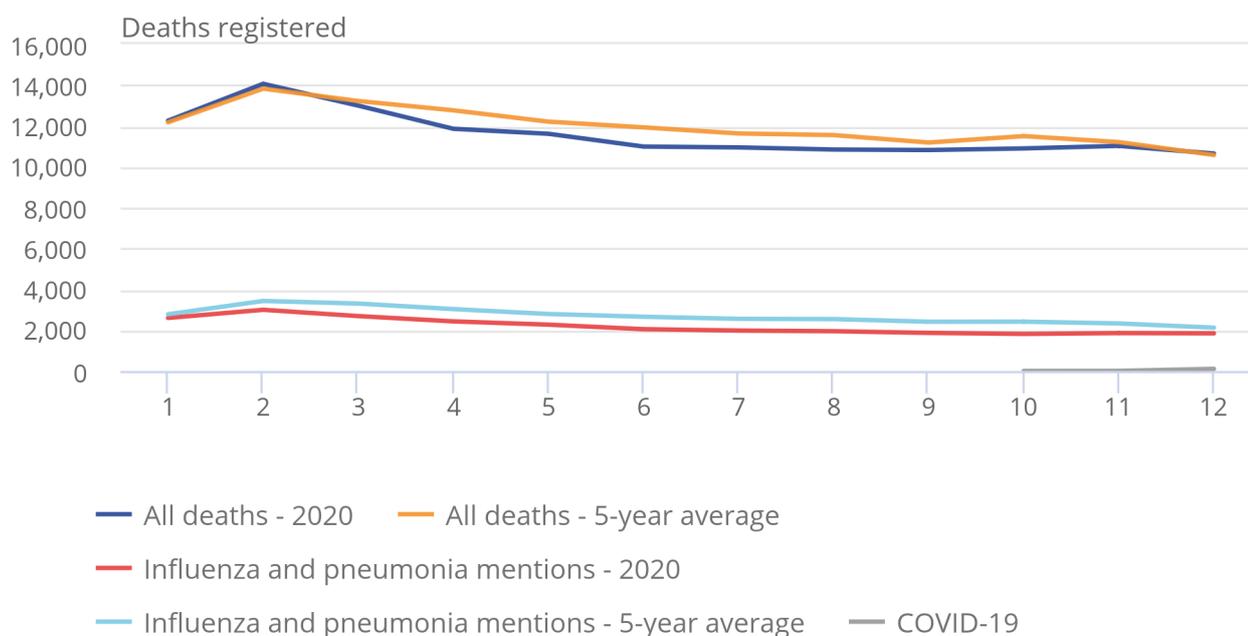
3 . Deaths registered by week

Figure 1: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 increased, while the number of deaths from “Influenza and Pneumonia” decreased compared with the previous week

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 20 March 2020

Figure 1: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 increased, while the number of deaths from “Influenza and Pneumonia” decreased compared with the previous week

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 20 March 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. Estimates for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions are as follows: COVID-19 (U07.1 and U07.2), Influenza and Pneumonia (J09-J18).
5. A death can be registered with both Covid-19 and Influenza or Pneumonia mentioned on the death certificate, therefore a death may be counted in both categories.

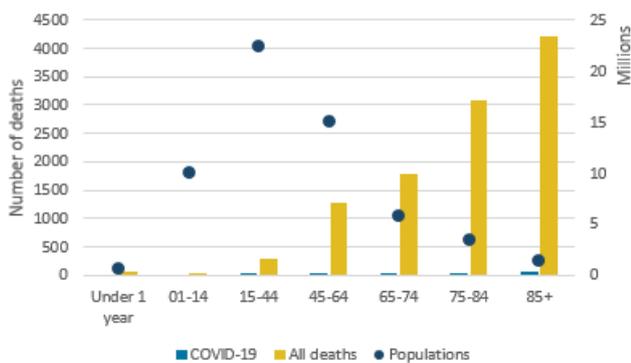
The provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales in week 12 (week ending 20 March 2020) decreased from 11,019 in week 11 (week ending 13 March 2020) to 10,645; this is 72 more deaths than the five-year average of 10,573. The number of death registrations involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) increased from 5 in week 11 to 103 in week 12. Including deaths that occurred in week 12 but were registered up to 25 March, the number involving COVID-19 was 181 (this is not shown in the chart).

In week 12, 18% of all deaths mentioned “Influenza or Pneumonia”, COVID-19, or both. In comparison, for the five-year average, 20% of deaths mentioned “Influenza and Pneumonia”. “Influenza and Pneumonia” has been included for comparison, as a well understood cause of death involving respiratory infection that is likely to have somewhat similar risk factors to COVID-19.

4 . Deaths registered by age group

Figure 2: Deaths involving COVID-19 were registered in all age groups apart from those aged under 15 years

Deaths by age group, England and Wales, week ending 20 March 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales

Notes:

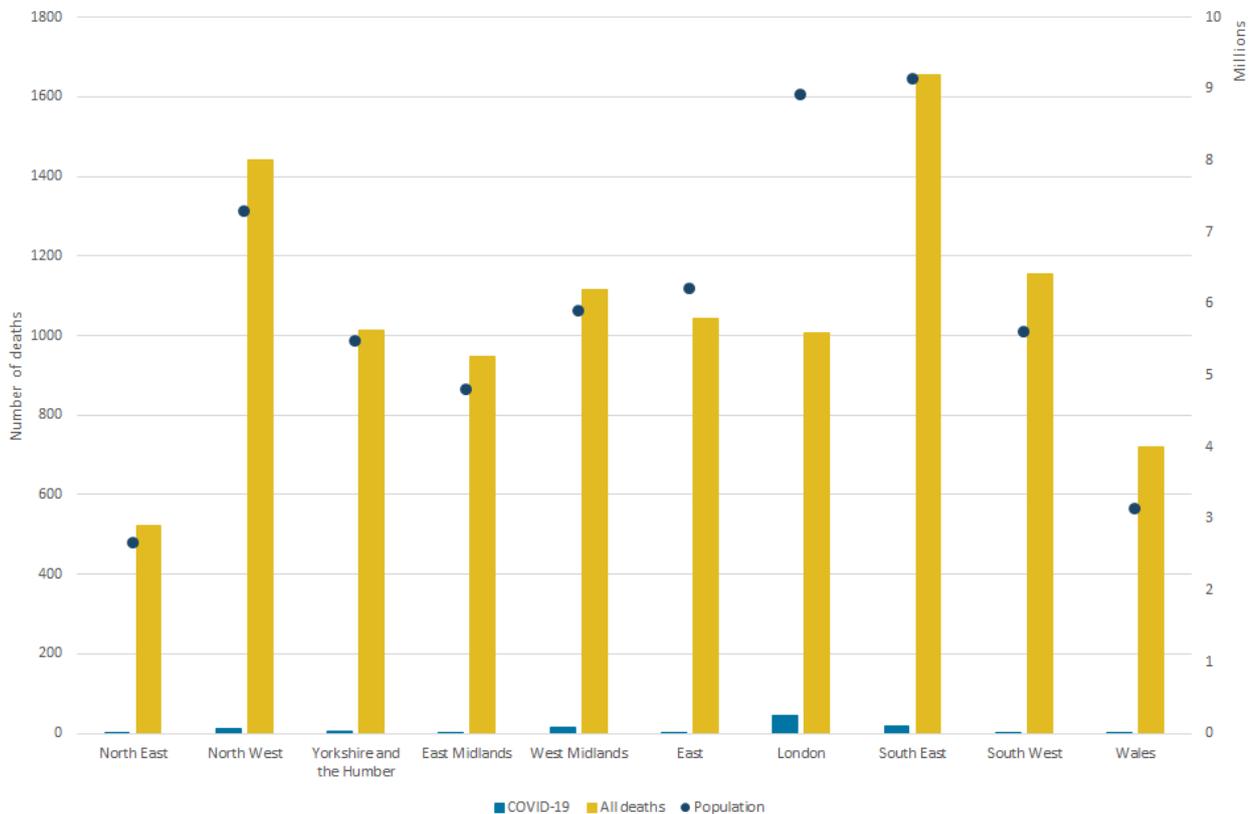
1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. Estimates for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2 ICD-10.
5. Numbers of deaths are provided rather than rates. The latest population estimate for each age group is provided in order to aid comparison.

In week 12 (week ending 20 March 2020), there were no deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the two youngest age groups (that is, those aged 1 year or under and those aged 1 to 14 years). There were 20 deaths among those aged 65 to 74 years, which was 1.1% of deaths of that age group, the highest proportion. The highest number of deaths in a specific age group occurred in those aged 85 years and over, with 45 deaths (1.1% of deaths in this age group).

5 . Deaths by region

Figure 3: The highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 was recorded in London, while the lowest number was in the North East and South West

Deaths by regions in England, and Wales, week ending 20 March 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales

Notes:

1. Based on area of usual residence.
2. Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.
3. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
4. Estimates for 2020 are provisional.
5. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2.
6. Numbers of deaths are provided rather than rates. The latest population estimate for each region is provided in order to aid comparison.

In week 12 (week ending 20 March 2020), there was one death involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) registered in both the North East and South West. The largest number of deaths in a specific region was 44 deaths in London; this is also the region with the highest proportion of COVID-19 deaths, with 4.4% of all deaths in London.

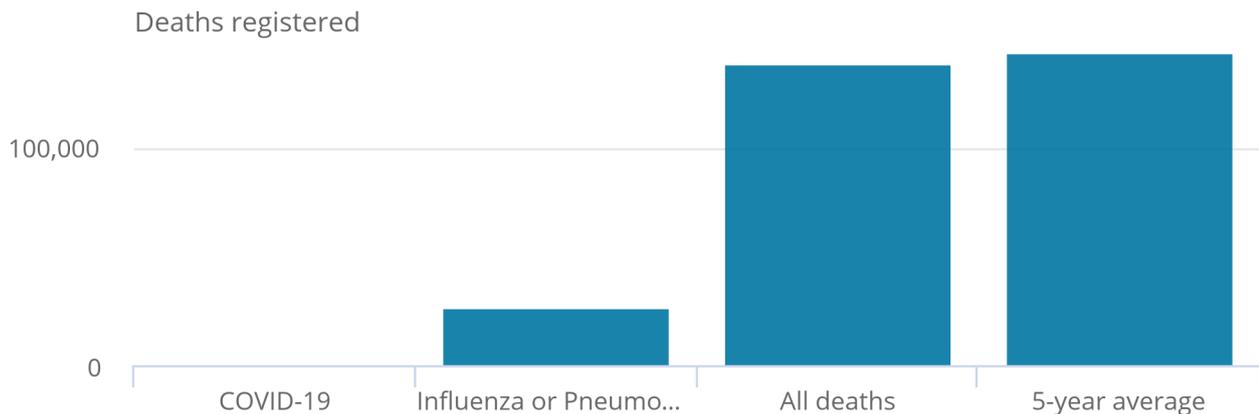
6 . Deaths registered in the year-to-date, week 1 to 12

Figure 4: The number of deaths in the year-to-date was lower than the five-year average

Year-to-date analysis for deaths registered in England and Wales, 2020

Figure 4: The number of deaths in the year-to-date was lower than the five-year average

Year-to-date analysis for deaths registered in England and Wales, 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. Estimates for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2.
5. Individual weeks may not sum to the year-to-date analysis as previous weeks have been recalculated in order to have the most up-to-date estimates.

Looking at the year-to-date (using refreshed data to get the most accurate estimates), the number of deaths is currently lower than the five-year average. The current number of deaths is 138,913, which is 4,869 fewer than the five-year average. Of the deaths registered so far in 2020, 108 mentioned the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the death certificate; this is 0.1% of all deaths. Including deaths that occurred in week 12 but were registered up to 25 March, the number involving COVID-19 was 210 (this is not shown in the chart).

7 . Deaths data

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional](#)

Dataset | Released 31 March 2020

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available. Includes data on the coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths.

8 . Glossary

Coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths

Coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths are those deaths registered in England and Wales in the stated week where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate as “deaths involving COVID-19”. These figures do not include deaths that have not yet been registered and so differ from the [GOV.UK](#) figures (which are deaths occurring to date).

9 . Measuring the data

We publish timely but provisional counts of death registrations in England and Wales each week alongside our annual bulletin. To meet user needs in the current situation, we are including data and additional analysis on deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) for the first time.

The data include information on age, sex and region in the latest weeks for which data are available. To allow time for registration and processing, the data are published 11 days after the week ends.

Our [User guide to mortality statistics](#) provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to mortality and includes a [glossary of terms](#).

10 . Strengths and limitations

Figures are based on the date the death was registered, not when it occurred. There is usually a delay of at least five days between occurrence and registration. More information on this issue can be found in our [impact of registration delays release](#).

More quality and methodology information on strengths and limitations is available in the [Mortality statistics in England and Wales QMI](#).

11 . Related links

[Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2018](#)

Bulletin | Released 6 August 2019

Registered deaths by age, sex, selected underlying causes of death and the leading causes of death. Contains death rates and death registrations by area of residence and single year of age.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) product page](#)

Product page | Updated when new data are available

Brings together the latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.