

Statistical bulletin

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 1 January 2021

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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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Deaths registered by week](#)
3. [Deaths registered by age group](#)
4. [Deaths by region in England and Wales](#)
5. [Deaths registered by place of occurrence](#)
6. [Deaths registered in the UK](#)
7. [Comparison of weekly deaths occurrence in England and Wales](#)
8. [Deaths data](#)
9. [Glossary](#)
10. [Measuring the data](#)
11. [Strengths and limitations](#)
12. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

- Weekly deaths for 2020 are for the period from 28 December 2019 to 1 January 2021; therefore, these figures do not represent the calendar year 2020.
- The number of deaths registered in England and Wales was affected by the Boxing Day and New Year's Day Bank Holidays; 10,069 deaths were registered in the week ending 1 January 2021 (Week 53), 1,451 fewer deaths than in Week 52; trends in this week's release should be interpreted with caution.
- In Week 53, the number of deaths registered was 26.6% above the five-year average (2,115 deaths higher) but this increase should be treated with caution.
- Of the deaths registered in Week 53, 3,144 mentioned "novel coronavirus (COVID-19)", accounting for 31.2% of all deaths in England and Wales; in Week 53, deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) increased compared with Week 52 (by 232 deaths).
- Of the 3,144 deaths involving COVID-19, 2,741 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (87.2%).
- Of the 2,494 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 187 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (7.5%).
- In England, the total number of deaths decreased from 10,680 (Week 52) to 9,325 (Week 53); all English regions had a higher number of deaths than the five-year average for the eighth week in a row.
- In Week 53, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in four of the nine English regions compared with Week 52, but increased in the other five (North West, East of England, London, South East and South West).
- In Wales, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 increased from 278 (Week 52) to 310 (Week 53) while the total number of deaths in Week 53 was 209 higher than the five-year average.
- In this week's bulletin, we use the Week 52 five-year average to compare against Week 53 deaths as only one other year in the last five years had a Week 53; because of this, we are unable to provide estimates for the number of deaths that actually occurred in Week 53.
- The number of deaths registered in the UK in the week ending 1 January 2021 was 11,541, which was 2,304 higher than the five-year average; of deaths registered in the UK in Week 53, 3,417 deaths involved COVID-19, 220 higher than in Week 52.

2 . Deaths registered by week

Figure 1: The number of deaths was above the five-year average in Week 53

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 1 January 2021

Notes:

1. Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The number of deaths registered in Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 were affected by the early May, late May, August, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays (Friday 8 May 2020, Monday 25 May 2020, Monday 31 August 2020, Friday 25 December 2020, Monday 28 December 2020, Friday 1 January 2021); the impact of the early May Bank Holiday was analysed in our [Week 20 bulletin](#).
5. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

[Download the data](#)

The provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales decreased from 11,520 in Week 52 (week ending 25 December 2020) to 10,069 in Week 53 (week ending 1 January 2021). The number of deaths was 26.6% above the five-year average (2,115 deaths higher).

A decrease between Weeks 51 and 52 is usually observed because of the impact of the Christmas bank holidays. One of the reasons that Week 52 of 2020 was above the five-year average is because it had one bank holiday compared with Week 52 having two bank holidays in four of the five years (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019) in the five-year average. Week 53, however, included both the Boxing Day and New Year's Day Bank Holidays, which may account for the decrease in comparison with Week 52. We use the Week 52 five-year average to compare against Week 53 deaths as only one other year in the last five years had a Week 53. Like last week, the trends should therefore be interpreted with caution this week.

In England, the number of deaths decreased from 10,680 in Week 52 to 9,325 in Week 53, which was 1,904 deaths (25.7%) higher than the Week 52 five-year average (Figure 1).

In Wales, the number of deaths decreased from 825 in Week 52 to 727 in Week 53, which was 209 deaths (40.3%) higher than the Week 52 five-year average (Figure 1).

Figure 2: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 increased in Week 53

Deaths involving and due to COVID-19, and Influenza and Pneumonia, England and Wales, deaths registered in 2020

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2) and Influenza and Pneumonia (J09-J18).
5. A death can be registered with both COVID-19 and Influenza and Pneumonia mentioned on the death certificate. Deaths where both were mentioned have been counted in both categories.
6. We use the term "due to COVID-19" or "due to Influenza and Pneumonia" when referring only to deaths where that illness was recorded as the underlying cause of death. We use the term "involving COVID-19" or "involving Influenza and Pneumonia" when referring to deaths that had that illness mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, whether as an underlying cause or not.
7. The number of deaths registered in Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 were affected by the early May, late May, August, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays (Friday 8 May 2020, Monday 25 May 2020, Monday 31 August 2020, Friday 25 December 2020, Monday 28 December 2020, Friday 1 January 2021); the impact of the early May Bank Holiday was analysed in our [Week 20 bulletin](#).
8. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

[Download the data](#)

The number of death registrations in England and Wales involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) increased from 2,912 in Week 52 to 3,144 in Week 53 – an 8.0% increase. Of all deaths registered in Week 53, 31.2% mentioned COVID-19; this is the highest proportion of deaths involving COVID-19 since Week 18 (week ending 1 May 2020).

In England, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 was 2,831, accounting for 30.4% of all deaths. In Wales, 310 deaths involved COVID-19, 42.6% of all deaths.

Of the 3,144 deaths in England and Wales that involved COVID-19, 2,741 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (87.2%, Figure 2). Of the 2,494 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 187 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (7.5%).

Deaths that involved both COVID-19, and Influenza and Pneumonia have been included in both categories for consistency when comparing with the underlying cause of death. 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. More detailed analysis is available in our [Deaths due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) compared with deaths from influenza and pneumonia](#) release.

We have developed an experimental statistical model to estimate the number of deaths that actually occurred in a given week, rather than the number registered. However, for Week 53 of 2020 (week ending 1 January 2021) we are not currently able to provide an estimate of death occurrences in addition to the registration figures. This is because a "53rd week" occurs only in a minority of years; and when it does occur, contains a variable number of bank holidays, affecting the patterns of death registration. Our statistical model based on the years 2015 to 2018 cannot provide reliable estimates for this exceptional situation. We will publish estimated occurrences for Week 1 of 2021 in the next weekly bulletin and then calculate estimates for Week 53 of 2020 retrospectively.

Figure 3: Deaths not involving COVID-19 were below the five-year average in Week 53

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 1 January 2021

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows; coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
5. The number of deaths registered in Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 were affected by the Early May, Late May, August, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays (Friday 8 May 2020, Monday 25 May 2020, Monday 31 August 2020, Friday 25 December 2020, Monday 28 December 2020, Friday 1 January 2021); the impact of the Early May Bank Holiday was analysed in our [Week 20 bulletin](#).
6. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

[Download the data](#)

Between Weeks 1 and 12 in 2020, 138,916 deaths were registered, which was 4,822 fewer than the five-year average for these weeks. However, between Weeks 13 and 53, 475,198 deaths were registered, which was 79,853 more than the five-year average.

Using the most up-to-date data we have available, the number of deaths up to 1 January 2021 was 614,096, which is 75,013 more than the five-year average. Of the deaths registered by 1 January 2021, 81,669 mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate. This is 13.3% of all deaths in England and Wales.

In England, the number of deaths up to 1 January 2021 was 575,461, which is 71,731 (14.2%) more than the five-year average. Of these, 76,610 deaths (13.3%) mentioned COVID-19.

In Wales, the number of deaths up to 1 January 2021 was 37,794, which is 3,945 (11.7%) more than the five-year average. Of these, 4,963 deaths (13.1%) mentioned COVID-19.

3 . Deaths registered by age group

In Week 53 (week ending 1 January 2021), the number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England and Wales increased in most age groups compared with Week 52, except for people aged between 45 and 49 years (1 fewer death) and 80 and 84 years (22 fewer deaths). The biggest increase was seen in those aged between 85 and 89 years (100 more deaths). More than three-quarters (75.3%) of deaths involving COVID-19 were in people aged 75 years and over.

Across Weeks 1 to 53 of 2020, 55.3% of all deaths involving COVID-19 were in males. There were more deaths in females aged 85 years and over (18,333) than males aged 85 years and over (15,984). However, these numbers do not account for the [population structure](#) where there are more women aged over 85 years than men.

Looking at excess deaths by age group, the number of deaths up to 1 January 2021 was above the five-year average for all age groups above 14 years (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The number of deaths in 2020 exceeded the five-year average in age groups 15 years and over

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
5. Individual weeks may not sum to the year-to-date analysis as previous weeks have been recalculated to have the most up-to-date figures.
6. Does not include deaths where age is either missing or not yet fully coded.
7. The number of deaths registered in Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 were affected by the Early May, Late May, August, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays (Friday 8 May 2020, Monday 25 May 2020, Monday 31 August 2020, Friday 25 December 2020, Monday 28 December 2020, Friday 1 January 2021); the impact of the Early May Bank Holiday was analysed in our [Week 20 bulletin](#).
8. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths. [Download the data](#)

4 . Deaths by region in England and Wales

Figure 5: The number of deaths in Week 53 was higher than the five-year average in all English regions and Wales

Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered between 28 December 2019 and 1 January 2021

Notes:

1. Based on area of usual residence. Geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.
2. Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.
3. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
4. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
5. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows; coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
6. The number of deaths registered in Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 were affected by the Early May, Late May, August, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays (Friday 8 May 2020, Monday 25 May 2020, Monday 31 August 2020, Friday 25 December 2020, Monday 28 December 2020, Friday 1 January 2021); the impact of the Early May Bank Holiday was analysed in our [Week 20 bulletin](#).
7. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

[Download the data](#)

In Week 53 (week ending 1 January 2021), the total number of deaths registered was higher than the five-year average in all English regions and Wales for the eighth week in a row (Figure 5). The largest increase on the five-year average was for London (54.3% higher).

In Week 53, there were 310 deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) registered in Wales – an 11.5% increase compared with Week 52 (278 deaths).

Across the English regions, the South East had the largest number of deaths involving COVID-19 (523 deaths), while the English region with the highest proportion of deaths involving COVID-19 was London.

Deaths involving COVID-19 increased in Week 53 in five out of nine English regions, with the largest increase seen in London. More detailed geographic analysis can be found in our [Monthly mortality analysis release](#).

Table 1: The number of deaths registered was above the five-year average in all English regions and Wales
Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered week ending 1 January 2021

Region name	Number of deaths	Five-year average	Difference	Percentage above average
London	1,159	751	408	54.3
Wales	727	518	209	40.3
West Midlands	1,024	753	271	36.0
South East	1,595	1,209	386	31.9
East	997	796	201	25.3
East Midlands	842	706	136	19.3
North West	1,346	1,134	212	18.7
North East	547	461	86	18.7
South West	929	822	107	13.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	886	790	96	12.2

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

Notes

1. Based on area of usual residence. Geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.
2. Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.
3. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
4. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
5. The averages are based on the number of death registrations in each region, recorded for each corresponding week over the previous five years. Moveable public holidays, when register offices are closed, affect the number of registrations made in the published weeks and in the corresponding weeks in previous years. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

5 . Deaths registered by place of occurrence

The year-to-date analysis shows that, of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) up to Week 53 (week ending 1 January 2021), 67.8% (55,372 deaths) occurred in hospital, with the remainder occurring in care homes (20,661 deaths), private homes (3,942 deaths), hospices (1,100 deaths), other communal establishments (315 deaths) and elsewhere (279 deaths).

Between Weeks 52 and 53, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 increased in hospitals, care homes, private homes, hospices and elsewhere (167, 30, 25, 9 and 1 more death respectively). Deaths involving COVID-19 in hospitals as a proportion of all deaths in hospitals increased to 47.7% in Week 53 (from 40.2% in Week 52). Deaths involving COVID-19 in care homes accounted for over one-quarter of all deaths in care homes in Week 53 (27.6%), an increase from Week 52 (24.0%).

Detailed analysis on deaths of care home residents is available in [Deaths involving COVID-19 in the care sector, England and Wales: deaths occurring up to 12 June 2020 and registered up to 20 June 2020](#).

From next week (19 January 2021) the weekly deaths publication will also include a dataset of weekly deaths to care home residents. The term "care home resident" used in this dataset refers to all deaths where either (a) the death occurred in a care home or (b) the death occurred elsewhere but the place of residence of the deceased was recorded as a care home. The figures should not be confused with "deaths in care homes" as reported within this bulletin, which refers only to category (a).

As well as Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) provides numbers of deaths involving COVID-19 in care homes in England that are based on the date the death was notified to the CQC. From 10 April (the first day when data were collected using the CQC's new method of identifying deaths involving COVID-19) to 8 January 2021, there were 20,042 deaths of residents in care homes involving COVID-19. Of these deaths, 824 were notified in the week up to 8 January. More information on the data provided by the CQC can be found in our [joint transparency statement](#).

In Wales, the Welsh Government publishes [the number of deaths of care home residents involving COVID-19](#) notified to the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Between 1 March 2020 and 1 January 2021, there were 1,269 deaths of residents in care homes involving COVID-19.

More information on how these numbers have compared throughout the pandemic can be found in our previous [Comparison of weekly death occurrences in England and Wales release](#).

Figure 6: Excess deaths in private homes, hospitals and care homes fell in Week 53, while deaths were below the five-year average in other locations

Number of excess deaths by place of occurrence, England and Wales, registered between 7 March 2020 and 1 January 2021

Notes:

1. Based on area of usual residence. Geographical boundaries and communal establishments are based on the most up-to-date information available.
2. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
3. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
4. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
5. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
6. "Other" includes deaths in communal establishments other than hospitals and care homes, in hospices, and that occurred "elsewhere". More information on the place of death definitions used is available in the accompanying dataset.
7. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

[Download the data](#)

In Week 53, the numbers of deaths in private homes, hospitals and care homes were above the five-year average (Figure 6). The largest proportion of excess deaths was registered in hospitals (1,272 deaths), followed by private homes (679 deaths) and care homes (185 deaths). The number of deaths in other locations was below the five-year average (22 deaths fewer).

These increases compared with the five-year average must be interpreted with caution, because of the impact of moveable public holidays on the number of deaths registered.

Looking in more detail at deaths in private homes in Week 53, males accounted for 365 excess deaths compared with 314 for females. Overall, 82.0% of the excess deaths in private homes were of those aged 70 years and over (557 excess deaths); this proportion has increased from 74.9% (1,029 excess deaths) in Week 52.

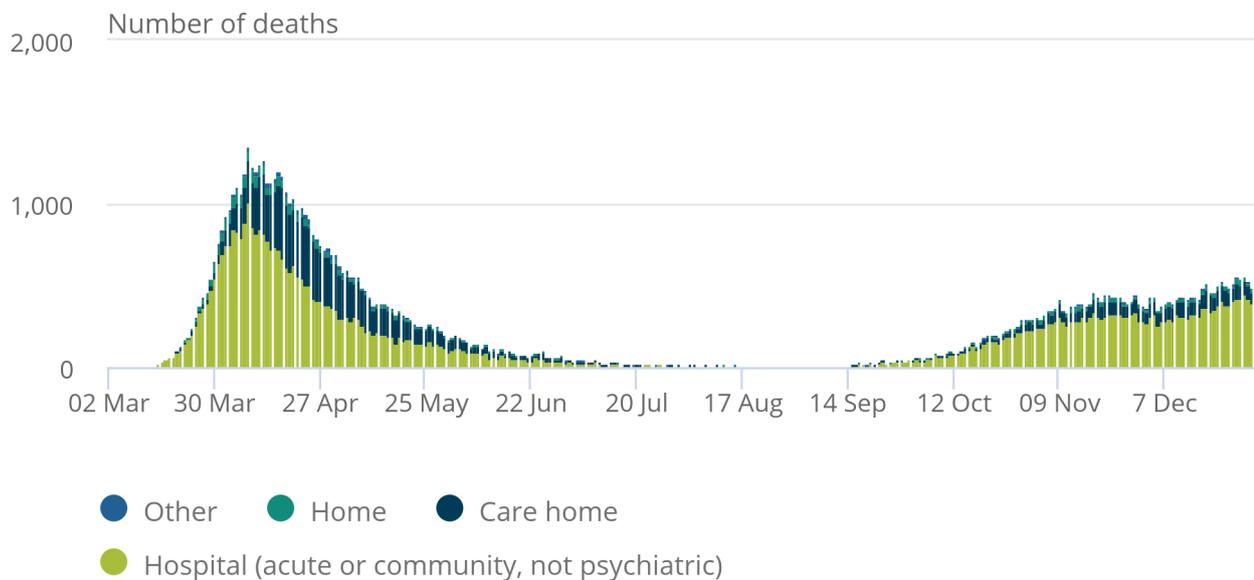
The [Deaths in private homes](#) release provides analysis for deaths registered from 28 December 2019 to 11 September 2020. In addition, more [detailed analysis of excess deaths in England](#) is produced by Public Health England (PHE) on a weekly basis.

Figure 7: Over 75% of deaths involving COVID-19 occurring in Week 53 were in hospital

Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by place of occurrence, England and Wales, occurring up to 1 January 2021 and registered up to 9 January 2021

Figure 7: Over 75% of deaths involving COVID-19 occurring in Week 53 were in hospital

Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by place of occurrence, England and Wales, occurring up to 1 January 2021 and registered up to 9 January 2021



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

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date of death, registered up to 9 January 2021.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
5. This chart includes deaths from week ending 6 March 2020 onwards. Three deaths involving COVID-19 occurring prior to this (in the week ending 31 January (Week 5), week ending 7 February (Week 6) and week ending 28 February (Week 9) are not included in the chart.

Figure 7 is based on date of death for deaths registered up to 9 January 2021, rather than date of registration. As more deaths are registered, deaths per day are likely to increase, especially for later dates. Looking at the number of deaths that occurred in Week 53, 79.2% of deaths occurred in hospitals, and care homes accounted for 15.0% of all deaths involving COVID-19; this may change as more deaths are registered.

A death of a man aged 80 to 84 years was registered in the week ending 4 September 2020 (Week 36) that occurred in the week ending 31 January 2020 (Week 5). This is the earliest known death involving COVID-19 in the UK. There was also a death of a man aged 55 to 59 years registered in the week ending 21 August 2020 (Week 34) that occurred in the week ending 7 February 2020 (Week 6), and a death of a woman aged 30 to 34 years that was registered by 24 October 2020 and occurred in the week ending 28 February 2020 (Week 9).

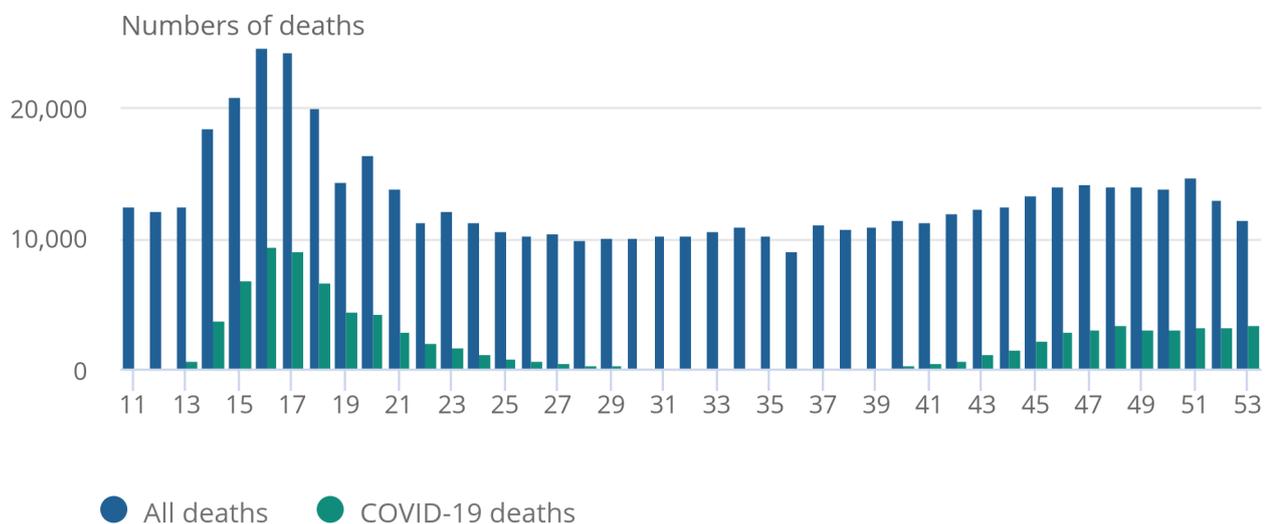
6 . Deaths registered in the UK

Figure 8: Deaths in the UK involving COVID-19 increased in Week 53

Number of deaths registered by week, UK, week ending 13 March 2020 to week ending 1 January 2021

Figure 8: Deaths in the UK involving COVID-19 increased in Week 53

Number of deaths registered by week, UK, week ending 13 March 2020 to week ending 1 January 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Notes:

1. Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
5. [National Records of Scotland](#) produce figures for Scotland.
6. [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) produce figures for Northern Ireland.

Across the UK, there were 11,541 deaths (all causes) registered in Week 53 (week ending 1 January 2021), which was 2,304 deaths higher than the UK five-year average and 1,479 fewer deaths than in Week 52. Of these deaths, 3,417 involved the coronavirus (COVID-19), 220 more deaths than in Week 52 (6.9% increase) (Figure 8).

In Week 53, England had the highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 with 2,831 deaths, followed by Wales with 310 deaths, Scotland with 183 deaths and Northern Ireland with 93 deaths.

7 . Comparison of weekly deaths occurrence in England and Wales

We previously published this section as a [separate article](#) on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website, which provided a more thorough description of the differences between different data sources. This section will look at the number of deaths by date of death produced by the ONS compared with death notifications reported by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). For Wales, we can also compare the reconciled DHSC data by date of death released by Public Health Wales (PHW).

On 12 August 2020, Public Health England (PHE) revised their data series to include two measures: deaths of positively tested individuals where the death occurred within 28 days and deaths within 60 days of a positive test. More information on these changes can be found in their [technical summary](#).

In England, including deaths that occurred up to 1 January 2021 but were registered up to 9 January 2021, of those we have processed so far, the number involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) was 79,180.

The [comparative number of death notifications](#) reported by the DHSC on GOV.UK (based on data from PHE) where the deaths occurred within 28 days of testing was 65,080 and the number of deaths by date of death showed 67,232.

In Wales, including deaths that occurred up to 1 January 2021 but were registered up to 9 January 2021, of those we have processed so far, the number involving COVID-19 was 5,169. The comparative number of death notifications reported by the DHSC on GOV.UK (based on data from PHW) where the death occurred within 28 days of testing was 3,564 and the number of deaths by date of death was 3,765 deaths.

8 . Deaths data

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

Dataset | Released 12 January 2021

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 coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths.

[Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board](#)

Dataset | Released 12 January 2021

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, by local authority, health board and place of death in the latest weeks for which data are available.

[Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England](#)

Dataset | Released 12 January 2021

Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by COVID-19 by local authority. Published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Try the new way to filter and download these data:

- [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales by age and sex: COVID-19](#)
- [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales by region: COVID-19](#)
- [Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and place of death](#)
- [Death registrations and occurrences by health board and place of death](#)

9 . 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. A doctor can certify the involvement of COVID-19 based on symptoms and clinical findings – a positive test result is not required. Definitions of COVID-19 for deaths in Scotland and Northern Ireland are similar to England and Wales.

10 . Measuring the data

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Mortality statistics in England and Wales QMI](#).

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 for death occurrences based on the latest available death registrations, up to 9 January 2021.

Because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our regular weekly deaths release now provides a separate breakdown of the number 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 certificate mentions COVID-19, it will not always be the main cause of death but may be a contributory factor. This bulletin summarises the latest weekly information and will be updated each week during the pandemic.

From the bulletin dated 3 November 2020, we have added two additional analyses.

Previously, we gave a breakdown of deaths involving COVID-19 into those where COVID-19 was the underlying cause of death ("due to COVID-19") and those where it was a contributory factor ("involving COVID-19") in the [monthly mortality analysis](#); because of high public interest, this distinction is now shown in Figure 2 of the weekly bulletin.

This bulletin is based mainly on the date deaths are registered, not the date of death, because of the [time taken for a death to be registered](#). Deaths in England and Wales are normally registered within five days, but there can be a considerably longer delay in some circumstances, particularly when the death is referred to a coroner.

We have developed a statistical model to estimate the number of deaths likely to have occurred in each week, based on previous experience of the pattern of registration delays, including the effects of bank holidays. The method is described in the article [Predicting total weekly death occurrences in England and Wales: methodology](#) and the results are shown in the tab, "Estimated total deaths 2020", of the [accompanying dataset](#).

These figures are different from the [daily surveillance figures on COVID-19 deaths](#) published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on the GOV.UK website, for the UK as a whole and its constituent countries. 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.

From 29 April 2020, the DHSC started to publish as their [daily announced figures on deaths from COVID-19](#) for the UK a new series that uses improved data for England produced by Public Health England (PHE). These figures provide a count of all deaths where a positive test for COVID-19 has been confirmed, wherever that death has taken place, a change from previously reporting only confirmed COVID-19 deaths in hospitals. Figures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland had already begun to include deaths outside hospitals, so this change ensured that the UK-wide series had a shared and common definitional coverage. A [statement](#) was published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which provides more detail of the changes.

On 12 August 2020, the PHE data series was revised to include two measures: deaths of positively tested individuals where the death occurred within 28 days and deaths within 60 days of a positive test. More information on these changes can be found in their [technical summary \(PDF, 854KB\)](#).

In contrast to the GOV.UK figures, we include only deaths registered in England and Wales, which is the legal remit of the ONS. Tables 2 and 3 provide an overview of the differences in definitions between sources.

Table 2: Definitions of COVID-19 deaths between different sources

	DHSC COVID-19 (as published on GOV.UK) before 29 April	DHSC COVID-19 (as published on GOV.UK) between 29 April and 12 August	DHSC COVID-19 (as published on GOV.UK) from 12 August	ONS COVID-19 deaths registered	ONS COVID-19 death occurrence (actual date of death)	NHS England	Public Health Wales
Coverage	UK (however we only include England and Wales breakdowns for comparable coverage with ONS data)	UK (however we only include England and Wales breakdowns for comparable coverage with ONS data)	UK (however we only include England and Wales breakdowns for comparable coverage with ONS data)	Registrations in England and Wales	Registrations in England and Wales	England only	Wales only
				Selected UK figures are included in the weekly release	In discussions with devolved nations to create UK estimates in the near future		
Inclusion	Deaths in hospitals	Includes any place of death, including care homes and community	Includes any place of death, including care homes and community	Any place of death, including care homes and community	Any place of death, including care homes and community	Deaths in hospitals	Includes any place of death, including care homes and community
	Deaths where the patient has tested positive for COVID-19	Deaths where the patient has tested positive for COVID-19	Deaths where the patient has tested positive for COVID-19 within 28 and 60 days of testing	Deaths where COVID-19 has been mentioned on the death certificate	Deaths where COVID-19 has been mentioned on the death certificate	Deaths where patient has been tested for COVID-19	Deaths where patient has been tested for COVID-19
Timeliness	Provided daily but not officially registered	Provided daily but not officially registered	Provided daily but not officially registered	Weekly registrations are 11 days behind because of the time taken to register, process and publish	Weekly registrations are 11 days behind because of the time taken to register, process and publish	Updated daily for each date of death	Updated daily for each date of death
				Registered in the week ending 1 January 2021 (week 53)	Deaths which occurred in week 53 but were registered up to 9 January 2021		

Table 3: Definitions of COVID-19 deaths in care homes between different sources

	ONS COVID-19 deaths registered	ONS COVID-19 death occurrence (actual date of death)	Care Quality Commission deaths in care homes (date of notification received)	Care Inspectorate Wales deaths in care homes (date of notification received)
Coverage	Registrations in England and Wales	Registrations in England and Wales	Death notifications sent by registered care home operators in England to CQC	Death notifications sent by registered care home operators in Wales to CIW
	Selected UK figures are included in the weekly release	In discussions with devolved nations to create UK estimates in the near future		
Inclusion	Any place of death, including care homes	Any place of death, including care homes	Deaths in care homes - deaths of care home residents that occurred elsewhere are also collected	Deaths in care homes - deaths of care home residents that occurred elsewhere are also collected
	Deaths where COVID-19 has been mentioned on the death certificate	Deaths where COVID-19 has been mentioned on the death certificate	Deaths where the care home provider has stated COVID-19 as a suspected or confirmed cause of death on the death notification	Deaths where the care home provider has stated COVID-19 as a suspected or confirmed cause of death on the death notification
Timeliness	Weekly registrations are 11 days behind because of the time taken to register, process and publish	Weekly registrations are 11 days behind because of the time taken to register, process and publish	Daily deaths notifications by date of notification - these take on average 4 days to receive and process	Daily deaths notifications by date of notification
			Data are published weekly by ONS	Data are published weekly by Welsh Government

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

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.

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](#).

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

11 . 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](#).

12 . Related links

[Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 July 2020

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.

[Monthly mortality analysis, England and Wales: November 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 17 December 2020

Provisional death registration data for England and Wales, broken down by sex, age and country. Includes analysis of deaths due to COVID-19 compared with the leading causes of death. Data tables include deaths due to COVID-19 by local area and socioeconomic deprivation.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest insights](#)

Interactive tool | Updated as and when data become available

Explore the latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the ONS and other official sources.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roundup](#)

Blog | Updated as and when new data become available

Catch up on the latest data and analysis related to the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on our economy and society.

[Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society](#)

Bulletin | Released 7 January 2021

Early experimental data on the impact of the coronavirus on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) weekly insights: latest health indicators in England](#)

Article | Released 8 January 2021

This article brings together latest coronavirus (COVID-19) data in England. This weekly summary gives an overview of the current situation and explores variations for different age groups and regions.