Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 5 March 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

- The number of deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending 5 March 2021 (Week 9) was 11,592; this was 1,022 fewer deaths than the previous week (Week 8).
- In Week 9, the number of deaths registered in England and Wales was 3.7% above the five-year average (409 deaths higher).
- Of the deaths registered in Week 9 in England and Wales, 2,105 mentioned "novel coronavirus (COVID-19)", a decrease of 809 deaths compared with Week 8.
- In Week 9, deaths involving COVID-19 accounted for 18.2% of all deaths in England and Wales, compared with 23.1% in Week 8.
- Of the 2,105 deaths involving COVID-19 in Week 9 in England and Wales, 1,685 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (80.0%).
- Of the 2,350 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 308 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (13.1%).
- In England, the total number of registered deaths decreased from 11,844 (Week 8) to 10,882 (Week 9); total deaths have decreased in all English regions for the third week in a row.
- In Week 9, the number of deaths registered involving COVID-19 decreased in all English regions compared with Week 8, with the South East of England recording the largest decrease of 153 deaths.
- In Wales, the total number of deaths registered decreased from 759 (Week 8) to 689 (Week 9); this was lower than the five-year average for the first time in 2021 (698 deaths).
- In Wales, the number of deaths registered involving COVID-19 decreased from 138 (Week 8) to 103 (Week 9).
- We estimate that the number of deaths actually occurring (rather than registered) in Week 8 in England and Wales was between 9,461 and 11,718.
- The number of deaths registered in the UK in the week ending 5 March 2021 was 13,107, which was 403 higher than the five-year average; of deaths registered in the UK in Week 9, 2,279 deaths involved COVID-19, that is, 920 lower than in Week 8.

2 . Deaths registered by week

Figure 1: The number of deaths registered in England was above the five-year average in Week 9, but was below the five-year average in Wales

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 5 March 2021

Download the data

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 2020 Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 and in Week 1 2021 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 ourWeek 20 bulletin.

5. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

6. The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

The provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales decreased from 12,614 in Week 8 (week ending 26 February 2021) to 11,592 in Week 9 (week ending 5 March 2021). The number of deaths was 3.7% above the five-year average (409 deaths higher).

In England, the number of deaths decreased from 11,844 in Week 8 to 10,882 in Week 9, which was 434 deaths (4.2%) higher than the Week 9 five-year average (Figure 1).

In Wales, the number of deaths decreased from 759 in Week 8 to 689 in Week 9, which was nine deaths (1.3%) lower than the Week 9 five-year average (Figure 1). This is the first time deaths have been lower than the five-year average, in Wales, in 2021.

Figure 2: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in Week 9

Deaths involving and due to COVID-19, and Influenza and Pneumonia, England and Wales, deaths registered in 2020 and 2021

Download the data

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, U07.2, U09.9 and U10.9) and Influenza and Pneumonia (J09 to 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 2020 Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 and in Week 1 2021 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.

9. The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

The number of death registrations in England and Wales involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) decreased from 2,914 in Week 8 to 2,105 in Week 9 - a 27.8% decrease. Of all deaths registered in Week 9, 18.2% mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate.

In England, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 in Week 9 was 1,994, accounting for 18.3% of all deaths compared with 23.4% in Week 8.

In Wales, there were 103 deaths involving COVID-19, accounting for 14.9% of all deaths compared with 18.2% in Week 8.

Of the 2,105 deaths in England and Wales that involved COVID-19, 1,685 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (80.0%, Figure 2). Of the 2,350 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 308 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (13.1%).

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. For Week 9, we estimate that 10,480 deaths occurred in England and Wales, with a 95% confidence interval of 9,461 to 11,718. This is within the range of deaths observed in years 2015 to 2019 for Week 9, with 812 less deaths than the mean, and a decrease of 1,265 from the Week 8 2021 estimate of 11,745 (11,408 to 12,161).

These are provisional estimates that assume the pattern of occurrences can be predicted based on experience in previous years. The estimate for the most recent week always has a wider margin of error than for earlier weeks, so it should be treated with caution.

Figure 3: Deaths not involving COVID-19 were below the five-year average in Week 9

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 5 March 2021

Download the data

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 available in the measuring the data section.
5. The number of deaths registered in 2020 Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 and in Week 1 2021 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.
7. The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

Analysis in this section includes deaths from Week 11 of 2020 (week ending 13 March 2020, the week of the first registration of a death involving COVID-19) through to Week 9 of 2021 (week ending 5 March 2021), to ensure full coverage of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Using the most up-to-date data we have available, the number of deaths from the week ending 13 March 2020 up to 5 March 2021 was 640,322 in England and Wales. Of the deaths registered by 5 March 2021, 134,256 (21.0%) mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate. During this period, the number of excess deaths above the five-year average was 109,193 deaths.

In England, the number of deaths between the week ending 13 March 2020 and 5 March 2021 was 600,762 and of these, 126,432 deaths (21.0%) mentioned COVID-19. This was 104,453 deaths above the five-year average.

In Wales, the number of deaths was 38,769 and of these, 7,649 deaths (19.7%) mentioned COVID-19. This was 5,438 deaths above the five-year average.

3 . Deaths registered by age group

In Week 9 (week ending 5 March 2021), the number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England and Wales decreased or remained the same in all age groups (except those aged 15 to 19 years, 30 to 34 years and 40 to 44 years, which increased by one death, three deaths and five deaths respectively) compared with Week 8. The biggest decrease was seen in those aged 90 years and over (193 fewer deaths). The majority (63.6%) of deaths involving COVID-19 were in people aged 75 years and over, however the proportion has been decreasing.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic (up to week ending 5 March 2021), 54.3% of all deaths involving COVID-19 have been in males (Figure 4). There have been more deaths in females aged 85 years and over (30,642) than males aged 85 years and over (25,583). However, these numbers do not account for the population structure where there are more women aged 85 years and over than men.

Figure 4: The majority of deaths involving COVID-19 have been in people aged 75 years and over

Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by sex and age group, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 5 March 2021

Download the data

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 available in the measuring the data section.
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.

4 . Deaths by region in England and Wales

Figure 5: The number of deaths in Week 9 was higher than the five-year average in the majority of the English regions, but was lower than the five-year average in Wales

Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered between 28 December 2019 and 5 March 2021

Download the data

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 available in the measuring the data section.

6. The number of deaths registered in 2020 Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53 and in Week 1 2021 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 ourWeek 20 bulletin.

7. The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

8. The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

In Week 9 (week ending 5 March 2021), the total number of deaths registered was higher than the five-year average in seven out of the nine English regions (Figure 5). The largest increase on the five-year average was in the East Midlands (16.4% higher).

Across the English regions, the South East had the largest number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), with 328 deaths, while the English regions with the highest proportions of deaths involving COVID-19 were the East Midlands (21.4%) and East of England (21.2%).

Deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in all regions, with the South East of England reporting the largest decrease (153 fewer deaths). This is the fourth consecutive week in which all English regions recorded a decrease. More detailed geographic analysis can be found in our Monthly mortality analysis release.

In Week 9, there were 103 deaths involving COVID-19 registered in Wales - a 25.4% decrease compared with Week 8 (138 deaths).

Table 1: The number of deaths registered was above the five-year average in the majority of the English regions, but lower than the five-year average in Wales
Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered week ending 5 March 2021

Region name	Number of deaths	Five-year average	Difference	Percentage above average
East Midlands	1,091	937	154	16.4
East	1,309	1,231	78	6.3
North West	1,564	1,474	90	6.1
London	1,093	1,031	62	6.0
West Midlands	1,250	1,195	55	4.6
South West	1,191	1,181	10	0.8
South East	1,703	1,701	2	0.1
North East	581	583	-2	-0.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,100	1,115	-15	-1.3
Wales	689	698	-9	-1.3

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.

6. 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 number of deaths registered in Week 1 2021 was affected by the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays (Monday 28 December 2020 and Friday 1 January 2021).

7. The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

5 . Deaths registered by place of occurrence

Of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2020 and up to Week 9 (week ending 5 March 2021), 69.1% (92,714 deaths) occurred in hospitals, with the remainder occurring in care homes (31,278 deaths), private homes (7,339), hospices (1,966), other communal establishments (486) and elsewhere (473).

Between Weeks 8 and 9, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in hospitals (614 fewer), care homes (127 fewer), private homes (41 fewer), hospices (18 fewer), other communal establishments (7 fewer) and elsewhere (2 fewer).

Deaths involving COVID-19 in hospitals as a proportion of all deaths in hospitals fell to 28.2% in Week 9 (36.1% in Week 8). Deaths involving COVID-19 in care homes accounted for 17.4% of deaths, a decrease from Week 8 (22.0%).

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 Week 1 2021 (week ending 8 January 2021) onwards, we have published a dataset of weekly deaths to care home residents. The term "care home resident" used in this dataset refers to all deaths where either the death occurred in a care home, or 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 the first category.

As well as the 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 2020 (the first day when data were collected using the CQC's new method of identifying deaths involving COVID-19) to 12 March 2021, there were 28,709 deaths of residents in care homes involving COVID-19. Of these deaths, 157 were notified in the week up to 12 March 2021. 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 26 February 2021, there were 1,890 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: Deaths in Week 9 were above the five-year average in private homes but below the five-year average in care homes, hospitals and other settings

Number of excess deaths by place of occurrence, England and Wales, registered between 7 March 2020 and 5 March 2021

Download the data

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 available in the measuring the data section.

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.

8. The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

In Week 9, the numbers of deaths in private homes was above the five-year average (Figure 6). The largest proportion of excess deaths was registered in private homes (934 excess deaths, 36.8% above the five-year average).

In Week 9, the numbers of deaths in care homes, hospitals and other settings were below the five-year average. Deaths within care homes were 12.5% below the five-year average (313 deaths), deaths in hospital were 2.2% below the five-year average (115 deaths) and deaths in other settings were 11.6% below the five-year average (96 deaths).

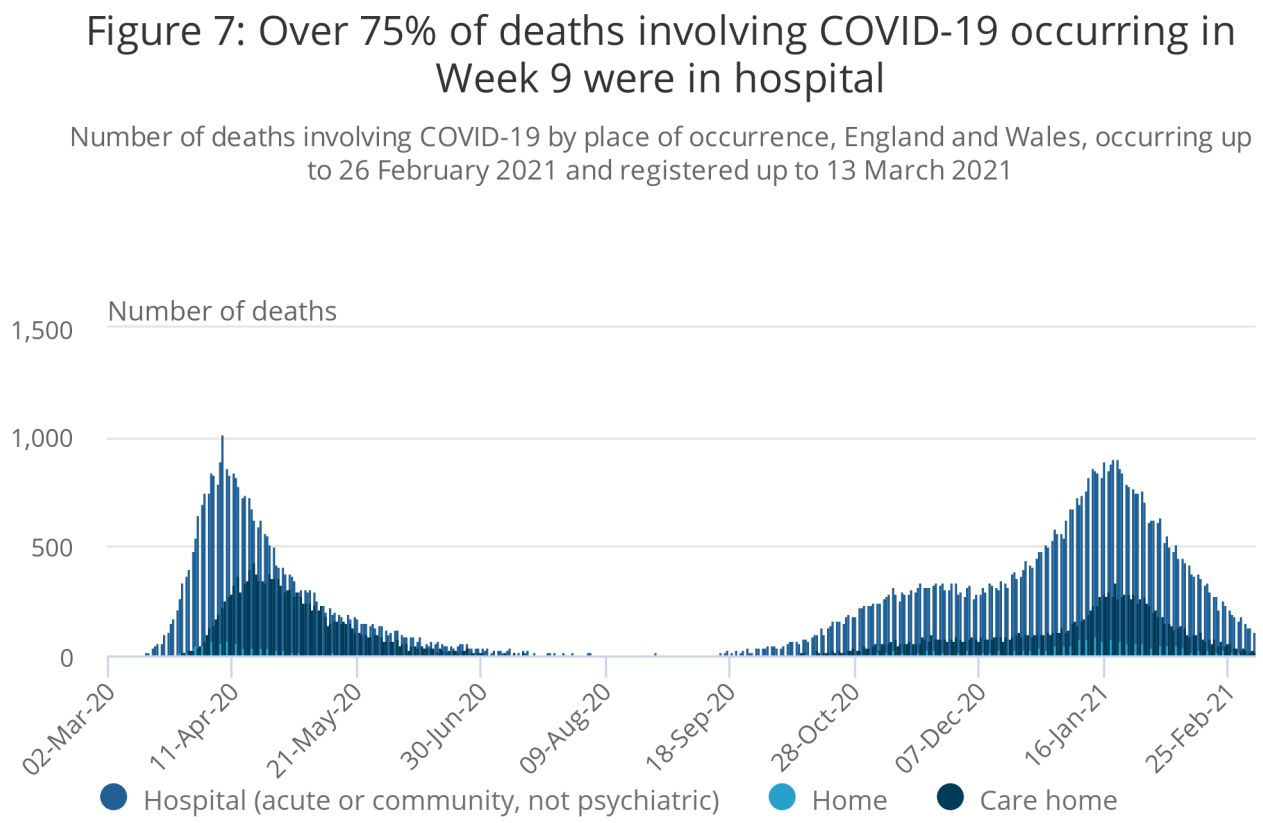
This was the second consecutive week that deaths registered in care homes were below the five-year average, the fifth week in a row that deaths registered in other settings were below the five-year average and the first week since Week 42 2020 that deaths in hospitals were below the five-year average.

Looking in more detail at deaths in private homes in Week 9, females accounted for 489 excess deaths compared with 445 for males. Overall, 72.3% of the excess deaths in private homes were of those aged 70 years and over (675 excess deaths); this proportion has decreased from 79.6% (913 excess deaths) in Week 8.

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 9 were in hospital

Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by place of occurrence, England and Wales, occurring up to 26 February 2021 and registered up to 13 March 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 13 March 2021.
3. All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are available in the measuring the data section.
5. This chart includes deaths from week ending 13 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.

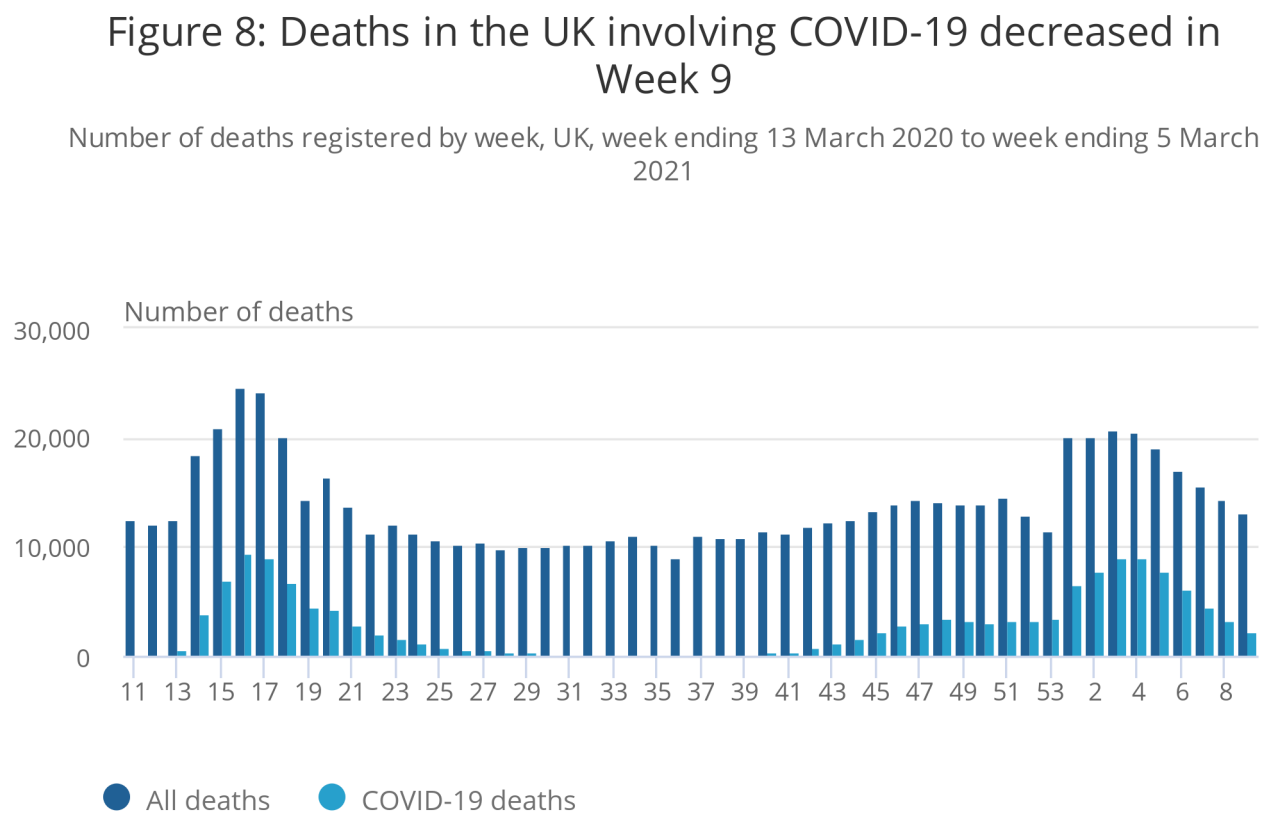
Figure 7 is based on date of death for deaths registered up to 13 March 2021, rather than date of registration. As more deaths are registered, deaths per day are likely to increase, especially for later dates. Looking at the number of deaths that occurred in Week 9, 75.6% of deaths occurred in hospitals, and care homes accounted for 15.5% of all deaths involving COVID-19; this may change as more deaths are registered.

The earliest known death involving COVID-19 occurred in the week ending 31 January 2020 (Week 5).

6 . Deaths registered in the UK

Figure 8: Deaths in the UK involving COVID-19 decreased in Week 9

Number of deaths registered by week, UK, week ending 13 March 2020 to week ending 5 March 2021



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

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents that were registered in each country.
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 available in the measuring the data section.
5. National Records of Scotland produce figures for Scotland with an updated back series. We update the backseries until the end of the calendar year, therefore the UK total in 2021 may differ from previous weeks in 2021, but the 2020 UK total will remain constant.
6. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency produce figures for Northern Ireland.

Across the UK, there were 13,107 deaths (all causes) registered in Week 9 (week ending 5 March 2021), which was 403 deaths higher than the UK five-year average, and 1,182 fewer deaths than in Week 8 (week ending 26 February 2021). Of these deaths, 2,279 involved the coronavirus (COVID-19), 920 fewer deaths than in Week 8 (28.8% decrease) (Figure 8).

In Week 9, England had the highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 with 1,994 deaths, followed by Scotland with 141 deaths, Wales with 103 deaths and Northern Ireland with 33 deaths.

7 . Comparison of weekly deaths occurrence in England and Wales

We previously published this section as a separate article, 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 Office for National Statistics (ONS) compared with death notifications reported on the GOV.UK dashboard. For Wales, we can also compare the 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 5 March 2021 but were registered up to 13 March 2021, of those we have processed so far, the number involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) was 127,270.

The comparative number reported on GOV.UK (based on data from PHE) where the deaths occurred within 28 days of testing was 109,541 for deaths based on date of notification, and the number of deaths by date of death showed 109,811.

In Wales, including deaths that occurred up to 5 March 2021 but were registered up to 13 March 2021, of those we have processed so far, the number involving COVID-19 was 7,673.

The comparative number of deaths reported on GOV.UK (based on data from PHW) where the death occurred within 28 days of testing was 5,385 for deaths based on date of notification, and the number of deaths by date of death was 5,419.

8 . Deaths data

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional
Dataset | Released 16 March 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 16 March 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 16 March 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).

Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional
Dataset | Released 16 March 2021
Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered of care home residents in England and Wales, by region. Includes data on coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths. Data are weekly and provisional.

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- 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 13 March 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.

The data for 2020 are based on a 53-week year. Because the number of days in a week is seven, when there are 52 weeks, we only cover 364 days of the 365 days in the year, which results in one remaining day each calendar year not included in the 52 weeks. With the occurrence of leap years, it is sometimes necessary to add a 53rd week to the end of the calendar, which was the case in 2020. This happens every five years, with the last time there was a Week 53 being in 2015. Given the low frequency of Week 53, it is more appropriate to compare the 2020 figures with the average for Week 52, than to compare it with a single year from five years previous. Therefore, the five-year average used in this bulletin for 2020 is the same as the five-year average used for Week 52.

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.

From the week ending 26th February 2021 (Week 8), new International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes for COVID-19 issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) have been implemented for deaths involving COVID-19. The new codes are U09.9 (Post-COVID condition, where the acute COVID had ended before the condition immediately causing death occurred) and U10.9 (Multisystem inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID-19 (also called Kawasaki-like syndrome), a specific, uncommon effect of COVID-19 in children). These are in addition to the existing codes of U07.1 (COVID-19, virus identified) and U07.2 (COVID-19, virus not identified, that is, COVID-19 stated to be unconfirmed or suspected).

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 5 March 2021 (week 9)	Deaths which occurred in week 9 but were registered up to 13 March 2021		

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

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)
	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
Coverage	Selected UK figures are included in the weekly release	In discussions with devolved nations to create UK estimates in the near future		
	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
Inclusion	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: January 2021
Bulletin | Released 25 February 2021
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 11 March 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.