

Statistical bulletin

# Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 31 December 2021

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



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# 1 . Main points

- In the week ending 31 December 2021 (Week 52), 8,477 deaths were registered in England and Wales; this was 4,536 fewer deaths than the previous week (Week 51) and 6.6% above the five-year average (523 more deaths).
- The number of deaths registered in England in the week ending 31 December 2021 (Week 52) was 7,906; this was 4,249 fewer deaths than the previous week (Week 51) and 6.5% above the five-year average (485 more deaths).
- The number of deaths registered in Wales in the week ending 31 December 2021 (Week 52) was 559; this was 269 fewer deaths than the previous week (Week 51) and 7.9% above the five-year average (41 more deaths).
- Of the deaths registered in Week 52 in England and Wales, 582 mentioned "novel coronavirus (COVID-19)", accounting for 6.9% of all deaths; this was a decrease in the number of deaths compared with Week 51 (852 deaths, 6.5% of all deaths).
- The number of deaths involving COVID-19 in England decreased to 557 in Week 52, compared with 797 in Week 51; for Wales, deaths involving COVID-19 decreased to 24 in Week 52, compared with 49 in Week 51.
- Using the most up-to-date data we have available, the number of deaths from the week ending 13 March 2020 to the week ending 31 December 2021 was 1,083,166 in England and Wales; of these, 1,015,137 were recorded in England and 66,592 were recorded in Wales.
- From the week ending 13 March 2020 to the week ending 31 December 2021, the number of excess deaths above the five-year average in England and Wales was 134,914; of these, 129,178 were recorded in England and 6,991 were recorded in Wales.
- In Week 52 in England and Wales, the number of deaths was above the five-year average in private homes (29.7% above, 529 excess deaths) and hospitals (1.0% above, 36 excess deaths), but below the five-year average in care homes (1.0% below, 16 fewer deaths) and other settings (4.2% below, 27 fewer deaths).
- The number of deaths registered in the UK in the week ending 31 December 2021 was 9,796, which was 5.4% above the five-year average (501 more deaths); of the deaths registered in the UK in Week 52, 640 involved COVID-19, which was 295 fewer than in Week 51 (for a full breakdown of UK deaths registered in Week 51 and 52 please see the accompanying dataset).

The number of deaths registered in England and Wales was affected by the Christmas and Boxing Day bank holidays; more information on the effect of bank holidays can be found in [Section 4](#).

## Figure 1: Total deaths from all causes were above the five-year average in Week 52

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 31 December 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 available in the [Measuring the data section](#).
5. The number of deaths registered in a week are affected when bank holidays occur.
6. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

#### Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

## 2 . Deaths data

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

Dataset | Released 11 January 2022

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 11 January 2022

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 11 January 2022

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

### [Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional](#)

Dataset | Released 11 January 2022

Provisional counts of the number of care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, by region, including deaths involving COVID-19, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

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](#)

## 3 . 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.

## 4 . Measuring the data

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
- by age group
- for regions (within England)
- for Wales as a whole

To allow time for registration and processing, figures are published 11 days after the week ends. Because of the rapidly changing situation, we also provide provisional updated totals for death occurrences based on the latest available death registrations, up to 8 January 2022.

The number of registration days in a reference period can affect mortality statistics. For example, bank holidays can affect the number of registrations within a week or month because of the closure of registration offices. We often see high death registrations in the first two weeks of January when registration services are back in office and dealing with any backlog from the bank holiday period because of the Christmas period.

### Coronavirus

This weekly release now provides a separate breakdown of the number of deaths involving coronavirus (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 coronavirus pandemic.

### Data coverage

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. This results in one remaining day each calendar year not being 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 – the last time there was a Week 53 was 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. View more detail on the data coverage for the weekly deaths bulletin in our [Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

Influenza and pneumonia has been included for comparison in the [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional dataset](#) as a well-understood cause of death involving respiratory infection that is likely to have somewhat similar risk factors to COVID-19.

## Registration delays

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. More information on this issue can be found in our [Impact of registration delays on mortality statistics article](#).

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. You can find out more about this statistical model in our [Predicting total weekly death occurrences in England and Wales methodology](#). Results are shown in the "Estimated total deaths 2021" tab of the [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional dataset](#).

## Classification codes

From the week ending 26 February 2021 (Week 8), new International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes for COVID-19 issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) were implemented for deaths involving COVID-19. View more detail about the additional classification codes for COVID-19 in the [Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

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.

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

# 5 . Strengths and limitations

## Comparability

These weekly figures are for England and Wales only (as this is the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) legal remit). They are from the formal death registration process and may include cases where the doctor completing the death certificate diagnosed possible cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), for example, where this was based on relevant symptoms, but no test was conducted. The ONS figures are different from the [daily surveillance figures on COVID-19 deaths published by the Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\)](#) on GOV.UK, which are for the UK as a whole and its constituent countries.

From 29 April 2020, the DHSC published improved data for England from Public Health England (PHE) to include a count of all deaths, regardless of location, where a positive COVID-19 test was confirmed. Previously, only confirmed COVID-19 deaths in hospitals were reported. This improved the comparability with figures for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, where deaths outside of hospitals were already being included, and ensured that the UK-wide series had a shared and common definitional coverage. View the [ONS statement regarding different uses of figures on deaths related to COVID-19](#) for more detail on these data changes.

On 12 August 2020, the PHE data series was revised to include deaths of positively tested individuals where the death occurred within 28 days, and deaths within 60 days of a positive test. The [Public Health England technical summary \(PDF, 854KB\)](#) provides more detail on these changes.

View more detail on the differences in definitions of COVID-19 deaths between sources and differences in definitions of COVID-19 deaths in care homes in the [Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

## Quality

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](#).

## 6 . Related links

### [Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 6 July 2021

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 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 21 December 2021

Provisional death registration data for England and Wales, broken down by sex, age and country. Includes analysis of deaths due to coronavirus (COVID-19), compared with the leading causes of death. Datasets 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

The latest data and trends about the coronavirus pandemic from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other official sources.

### [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 23 December 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 December 2021

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

### [Excess mortality and mortality displacement in England and Wales: 2020 to mid-2021](#)

Article | Released 15 October 2021

Deaths registered in England and Wales by week, from 28 December 2019 to 2 July 2021. Breakdowns include country, sex, age group, region, place of death, and leading cause. Includes analysis of excess deaths and relative cumulative age-standardised mortality rates.

### [Deaths registered in private homes, England and Wales: 2020 final and January to June 2021, provisional](#)

Article | Released 10 November 2021

Deaths registered in private homes by age, sex, place of occurrence and selected underlying causes of death and the leading causes of death.