

Statistical bulletin

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 24 May 2024

Provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales in the latest weeks.



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1 . Main points

- In the week ending 24 May 2024 (Week 21), 10,909 deaths were registered in England and Wales (including non-residents), a decrease from 11,255 in the week ending 17 May 2024 (Week 20).
- The number of deaths registered in the week ending 24 May 2024 (Week 21) was 6.1% lower than the expected number (711 fewer deaths).
- In the week ending 24 May 2024 (Week 21), 13.9% of registered deaths involved influenza or pneumonia (1,517 deaths), while 1.3% involved coronavirus (COVID-19) (147 deaths).
- In the same week, influenza or pneumonia were the underlying cause of 3.8% of deaths (414 deaths), while COVID-19 was the underlying cause of 0.9% of deaths (99 deaths).
- Of deaths registered in the week ending 24 May 2024 (Week 21), 44.8% occurred within the previous seven days; the median time from death to registration was seven days.
- In Week 21 of 2024, 12,412 deaths were registered in the UK.

2 . Deaths registered in England and Wales

In the week ending 24 May 2024 (Week 21), 10,909 deaths were registered in England and Wales. Of these, 10,216 were registered in England and 678 were registered in Wales (Table 1).

Table 1: Deaths registered in England and Wales, week ending 24 May (Week 21 2024)

Week 21 2024	England and Wales (including non-residents)	England Wales	
Total deaths (all causes)	10,909	10,216	678
Difference compared with expected deaths	-711	-673	-32
Percentage change compared with expected deaths	-6.1%	-6.2%	-4.6%

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

Notes

1. Figures for "England and Wales" include non-residents. Therefore, the sum of "England" and "Wales", which exclude non-residents, will differ from "England and Wales".
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred. All figures are provisional.
3. The number of deaths registered in a week is affected when bank holidays occur.
4. A statistical model is used to estimate the expected number of deaths. The model accounts for changes in population size, age structure, and trends in mortality over time. Estimates for expected deaths, derived from the statistical model, are not whole numbers but have been rounded. The percentage change has been calculated from the unrounded numbers of expected deaths.

Figure 1: Number of deaths was lower than expected in Week 21

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 31 December 2022 to 24 May 2024

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred. All figures are provisional.
3. The number of deaths registered in a week is affected when bank holidays occur.
4. A statistical model is used to estimate the expected number of deaths. The model accounts for changes in population size, age structure, and trends in mortality over time.

3 . Deaths data

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

Dataset | Released 5 June 2024

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 the most up-to-date figures available for deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19).

Try the new way to filter and download these data:

- [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales by age and sex](#)
- [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales by region](#)

4 . Measuring the data

We publish timely, provisional counts of death registrations in our [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional dataset](#). These are presented:

- by sex
- by age group
- by place of death
- by selected causes of death
- for regions (within England)
- for Wales as a whole

To allow time for registration and processing, figures are published 12 days after the end of the week. We also provide provisional updated totals for death occurrences based on the latest available death registrations.

With each week's publication, we also update the data for previous weeks within our dataset, for both death registrations and occurrences.

Death registrations and occurrences

Weekly death registrations are revised over time to provide users with the most accurate data. Changes in numbers of death registrations in each period will usually be minor, but numbers for a given week can either increase or decrease. This can be because of:

- additional deaths having been registered, but not being available in the Registration Online (RON) system by the time data are extracted, either because of manual registrations that have not been entered into RON or technical issues
- change of date of registration (because of an error at the registration office)
- deduplication of death records (removal of an accidental double entry)
- cancellation of a registration (for instance, because of an error at the registration office)

Revisions to numbers of deaths by cause will likely be more pronounced, because cause of death is not always available at the time of the weekly publication. This is because text from the death registration must be converted to the International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision (ICD-10) codes for cause of death. Most deaths records (over 80%) have cause information available at the time of publication, and the remaining records are updated over time.

As we receive more death registrations from RON over time, the number of deaths that are known to have occurred in a period will increase. We are only informed about a death when it is registered, so numbers of death occurrences are never final; it is impossible to know definitively whether all deaths have been registered. The reported number of death occurrences depends on when data were extracted and increases as time between date of occurrence and data extraction increases.

The proportion of deaths occurring in a week that are registered in the same week is affected by the workloads of doctors certifying deaths, bank holidays and other closures of local registration offices, and other circumstances. Because of all these factors, the provisional death occurrence numbers for different weeks are not easily comparable, and numbers of death occurrences for previous weeks will change with each publication.

Excess mortality

Excess mortality is the difference between the observed number of deaths in a particular period and the number of deaths that would have been expected in that period, based on historical data.

To estimate the expected number of deaths, we fit a quasi-Poisson regression model to aggregated death registration data. The statistical model provides the expected number of deaths registered in the current period, had trends in mortality rates remained in keeping with those from recent periods and in the absence of extraordinary events affecting mortality, such as the peak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Our approach moves away from using averages drawn from raw numbers and instead uses age-specific mortality rates, taking into account how the population has grown and aged over time. The models also account for trends and seasonality in population mortality rates, and allow for estimates of excess deaths to be broken down by age group, sex, constituent countries of the UK, and English region.

For further information on our methods to estimate excess deaths, see our [Estimating excess deaths in the UK, methodology changes: February 2024 article](#).

Underlying cause of death versus contributory causes

In this release, we discuss both deaths "involving" a particular cause, and deaths "due to" a particular cause. Those "involving" a cause include all deaths that had the cause mentioned on the death certificate, whether as the underlying or a contributory cause. Deaths "due to" a particular cause refer to the underlying cause of death.

Data coverage

The number of weeks in the year will affect how many days the data cover in the year. Leap years require a 53rd week to be added to the end of the calendar year. The last leap year was in 2020. It is more appropriate to compare 2020 figures with the average for Week 52 than with a single year from five years previously. Read more on the data coverage in this bulletin in [Section 1 of our Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

Registration delays

This bulletin is based mainly on the date that deaths are registered, not the date of death. In this bulletin, we consider deaths to be registered within the previous seven days, when the time between death occurrence and registration is between zero and six days. The number of days between death occurrence and registration depends on many factors and there might be longer delays sometimes, particularly if the death is referred to a coroner. Read more in our [Impact of registration delays on mortality statistics in England and Wales: 2021 article](#).

For registration delays, we look at deaths registered each week and check how many out of these occurred within the previous seven days. For instance, for deaths registered on 8 January, this will include deaths occurring between 2 and 8 January. This will be different to numbers of deaths occurring that week.

Classification codes

From the week ending 26 February 2021 (Week 9), new International Classification of Diseases codes for COVID-19 issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) were used for deaths involving COVID-19. Read more in our [Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

Further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to mortality, and a glossary of terms, is available in our [User guide to mortality statistics methodology](#).

5 . Strengths and limitations

The weekly figures that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces are for England and Wales only and are from the formal death registration process. They are published each week to provide users with timely data, and capture seasonal trends. Data for Scotland and Northern Ireland are provided to us by the [National Records of Scotland](#) and the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#), respectively, to produce numbers and rates for the UK overall.

Quality

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

6 . Related links

[Estimating excess deaths in the UK, methodology changes: February 2024](#)

Article | Released 20 February 2024

Overview of a new method for estimating excess deaths across UK countries, and a comparison of estimates from the new and current methods.

[Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 December 2023

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.

[Death registration summary statistics, England and Wales: 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 May 2024

Number of deaths registered by year, sex, area of usual residence and selected underlying cause of death.

[Excess deaths in England and Wales: March 2020 to December 2022](#)

Article | Released 9 March 2023

Number of excess deaths, including deaths due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and due to other causes. Includes breakdowns by age, sex and geography.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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