

Statistical bulletin

Mortality by ethnic group following death certification reform, England and Wales: 2025

Analysis of the ethnic group field on the medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) from deaths registered in 2025.

Contact:
Population Life Events team
health.data@ons.gov.uk
+44 1329 444110

Release date:
25 September 2026

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Data on Mortality by ethnic group following death certification reform](#)
3. [Data sources and quality](#)
4. [Related links](#)
5. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

- In 2025, 79.6% of the 570,988 deaths registered in England and Wales had a known ethnic group recorded on their death certificate; the proportion with an unknown ethnic group decreased from 20.7% in September 2024 to 19.2% in December 2025.
- Deaths registered in 2025 were linked to Census 2021 and Hospital Episode Statistics (HES); ethnic groups reported on death certificates were compared with these other sources to check if they matched for each person.
- Most deaths were successfully linked to Census 2021 and HES data (between 77.4% and 83.7% across the data sources).
- The vast majority of all deaths that were linked had the same ethnic group on both sources (with an 18-category ethnic group agreement by source of 94.5% for Census 2021, 93.9% for HES modal, and 93.3% for HES recency); there was minimal change in agreement rates (with Census 2021) when compared with data in our [Death certification reform, England and Wales: 9 September 2024 to 30 June 2025 \(provisional data\) article](#).
- For the broader five-category ethnic groups, agreement is generally high across data sources for the "White", "Asian", and "Black" ethnic groups, and low for the "Mixed or Multiple" and "Other" ethnic groups.
- For more the detailed 18-category ethnic groups, agreement is high across data sources for "White British", "Bangladeshi", "Pakistani", "Chinese", and "Indian" ethnic groups, but it is lower for all other groups.
- The ethnic group data from death registrations is complete and accurate enough to enable statistics on mortality broken down by ethnic groups, although quality is lower for smaller groups; we advise users to carefully consider the data's limitations and bias when drawing conclusions.

2 . Data on Mortality by ethnic group following death certification reform

[Mortality by ethnic group following death certification reform, England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 25 September 2026

Death registrations in England and Wales in 2025 by ethnic group, month, age and area; agreement of recorded ethnic group in death registrations in 2025, Census 2021, and Hospital Episodes Statistics by 18 category and 5 category ethnic group.

3 . Data sources and quality

Registered Deaths 2025

The ethnic group of a deceased person is recorded on their medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) using the self-declared ethnicity recorded on the patient's medical record.

The 18-category MCCD ethnic groups are:

1. White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
2. White: Irish
3. White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. White: any other White background
5. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean
6. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African
7. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian
8. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
9. Asian or Asian British: Indian
10. Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
11. Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
12. Asian or Asian British: Chinese
13. Asian or Asian British: any other Asian Background
14. Black or African or Caribbean or Black British: Caribbean
15. Black or African or Caribbean or Black British: African
16. Black or African or Caribbean or Black British: Other Black or African or Caribbean background
17. Other ethnic group: Arab
18. Other ethnic group: any other ethnic group

There is also a 19th category for when the ethnic group is not known.

The 18 MCCD ethnic groups have been aggregated to the following five-category ethnic groups:

1. White
2. Mixed or Multiple
3. Asian or Asian British
4. Black or African or Caribbean or Black British
5. Other

Census 2021

Census 2021 includes 19 ethnic groups of a known ethnicity, including a newly implemented Roma category, while the MCCD has 18 categories of a known ethnicity. Individuals who self-reported their ethnicity in Census 2021 as Roma were therefore not included in the dataset linking together Census 2021 and MCCD data.

Census data are the most complete source of self-reported ethnicity information for the whole population, and therefore widely regarded as the most reliable source of ethnicity data for England. Some ethnic group responses in the census data may be provided by a proxy; for example, a parent on behalf of a child who cannot respond for themselves.

Of all 570,988 deaths registered in 2025, 477,665 (83.7%) were successfully linked to the corresponding Census 2021 record for that individual. This is small decrease compared with our [previous analysis](#), which looked at death registrations from September 2024 to June 2025, and had an achieved linkage of 84.2%. This is because more time has passed since Census Day 2021 and the population has changed over time.

Hospital Episode Statistics

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) are a database containing details of all attendances at NHS hospitals in England. It is made up of three sub-datasets:

- accident and emergency
- admitted patient care
- outpatients

HES data only contains 16 ethnic group categories and it does not include the "White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller" or "Other ethnic group: Arab" categories.

Ethnic group is collected per hospital visit, and some individuals have multiple different ethnic groups recorded. The HES ethnic groups were processed into two categories: the most recent ethnic group provided (HES recency), and the most common ethnic group provided (HES modal).

Of all 570,988 deaths registered in 2025, 441,728 (77.4%) were successfully linked to the corresponding HES recency record for that individual.

Of all 570,988 deaths registered in 2025, 442,809 (77.6%) were successfully linked to the corresponding HES modal record for that individual.

HES data sources contain health records collected from hospitals in England only, so most deaths in Wales are not expected to link.

Quality

Limitations regarding our methodology, which are applicable to this current release, are detailed in Section 7: Data sources and quality of our [Quality of ethnicity data in health-related administrative data sources, England: November 2023 article](#).

4 . Related links

[Death certification reform. England and Wales: 2025](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 September 2026

Assessment of data quality for death registrations since death certification reform. Includes analysis of certification type, time taken to register death and cause of death data.

[Mortality by pregnancy status following death certification reform. England and Wales: 2025](#)

Headline release | Released 25 September 2026

Analysis of pregnancy fields on the medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) from deaths registered in 2025, following the implementation of death certification reform (DCR) on 9 September 2024; this reform included adding new fields on whether the deceased was pregnant at death, or in year prior to death, and whether this contributed to the death.

[Death certification reform. England and Wales](#)

Article | Released 9 October 2025

Analysis on the time taken to register a death, cause of death, new ethnicity fields and new pregnancy fields since death certification reform (DCR) came into force on 9 September 2024.

[An overview of the death certification reforms](#)

Guidance | Last updated 14 August 2024

UK Government guidance on death certification reform, published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

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

Dashboard | Released 23 September 2026

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

[Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2025](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 September 2026

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

[User guide to mortality statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 9 October 2025

Supporting information for mortality statistics, which present figures on deaths registered in England and Wales in a specific week, month, quarter or year.

[Quality of ethnicity data in health-related administrative data sources by sociodemographic characteristics, England: May 2024](#)

Article | Released 3 May 2024

Comparing the quality of ethnicity data recorded in health-related administrative data sources with Census 2021.

5 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 25 September 2025, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Mortality by ethnic group following death certification reform. England and Wales: 2025](#)