

Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland

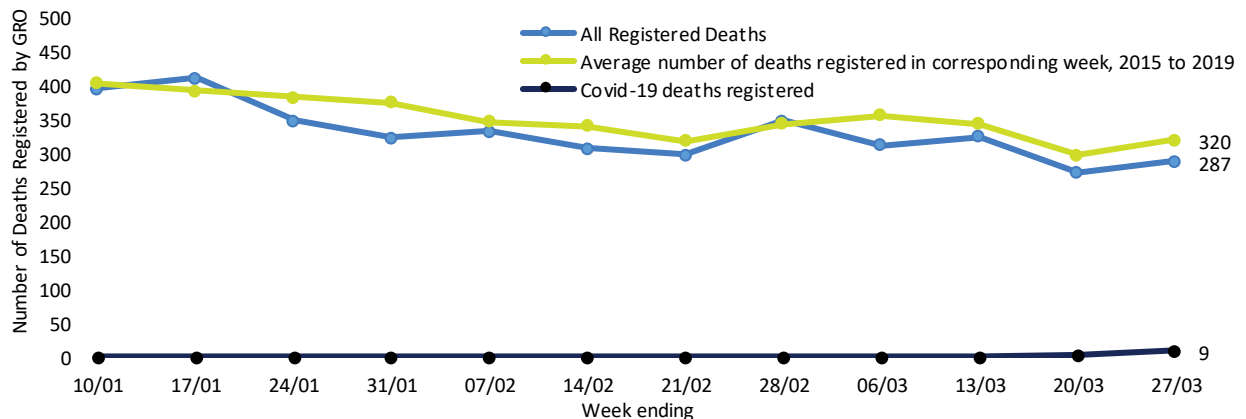
Weekly Statistics

Week ending 27th March 2020 (Week 12)

Provisional statistics

Overall, there were fewer deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 27th March than there have typically been in the same week in recent years. Nine COVID-19 related deaths were registered by the General Register Office (GRO) in that week.

Fig 1: Weekly number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland



Key Points

- The provisional number of deaths registered* in Northern Ireland in the week ending 27 March 2020 (week 12) was 287; 16 more than in week 11 and 33 fewer than the 5-year average of 320.
- Around a quarter of all deaths (27%) in week 12 were classified as ‘respiratory’.
- There have been 3,952 deaths registered in the year-to-date, 28% of which (1,119) were classified as ‘respiratory’. The number and proportion of respiratory deaths is lower in the year-to-date than the 5-year average.
- Nine deaths mentioning COVID-19 on the death certificate were registered by GRO in week 12, bringing the total number of COVID-19 related deaths registered to 10. The first death related to COVID-19 occurred in Northern Ireland on 18th March 2020.
- We understand that, in the current circumstances, users will want the best estimate of the total number of deaths related to COVID-19 **occurring*** in NI (rather than restrict analysis to the date that deaths are **registered***). Based on the latest data, 19 deaths occurred in NI between 18th March and 27th March which mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate (see below for definitional explanations).
- All COVID-19 deaths registered to date were of persons aged 45+.

* The data in this bulletin are based on the date of the death registration, not on the date the death occurred. It can take up to five days for a death to be registered in Northern Ireland.



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Background

Deaths occurring in Northern Ireland are registered on the NI General Register Office's Registration System (NIROS). Daily extracts of registration records from NIROS are processed by the NISRA Vital Statistics Unit. Provisional data on deaths registered in each week (ending on a Friday) are compiled at the end of the following week*.

Cause of death coding to the [ICD-10 classification](#) is carried out by ONS on NISRA's behalf on a quarterly basis. This means that quarterly statistics are the first output to report deaths according to underlying cause. These statistics are currently available up to [Quarter 1 2019](#); Quarter 2 2019 statistics are due to be published on 29th April 2020.

To meet user needs, NISRA publish timely but provisional counts of death registrations in Northern Ireland in the weekly deaths provisional dataset. Weekly totals are presented alongside a 5-year weekly average as well as the minimum and maximum number of deaths for the same week over the last five years. To allow time for registration and processing, these figures are published 7 days after the week ends.

Because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, from 3rd April 2020 the NISRA weekly deaths release has been supplemented with the numbers of respiratory deaths (respiratory deaths include any death where Pneumonia, Bronchitis, Bronchiolitis or Influenza are mentioned on the death certificate); and deaths relating to 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).

This bulletin will be developed and more detail will be presented over the coming weeks.

Differences between NISRA's death registration statistics and the Public Health Agency's (PHA) Daily Surveillance bulletins

PHA COVID-19 Daily Surveillance Bulletin

The [PHA's COVID-19 Surveillance Bulletin](#) describes COVID-19 activity in Northern Ireland and is produced daily. Alongside information on confirmed cases and numbers of individuals tested, this includes deaths reported on the following basis:

- Case definition: Patients who have died within 28 days of first positive COVID-19 test result, whether or not COVID-19 was the cause of death
- Data source: Clinician reports (e.g. HSC Trusts), Regional Virus Laboratory and local laboratory reports.
- Reporting period: 09.30 am (individuals who have been reported in the previous 24 hours)

PHA figures therefore include the number of deaths reported who have tested positive for coronavirus. These are valuable because they are available very quickly, and give a good indication of what is happening day by day. Their definition is also clear, so the limitations of the data can be understood. But they won't necessarily include all deaths involving COVID-19. **PHA figures report 16 deaths associated with COVID-19 by 27th March 2020.**

NISRA weekly death registration statistics

NISRA figures (**which show 19 deaths associated with COVID-19 occurring by 27th March**) are different from the PHA's daily surveillance figures on COVID-19 deaths described above. The NISRA figures are derived from the formal process of death registration and may include cases where the doctor completing the death certificate diagnosed suspected cases of COVID-19, for example, where this was based on relevant symptoms but no test for the virus was conducted. The NISRA figures also include all deaths that occur outside hospital.

Figures produced by NISRA are slower to prepare, because they have to be certified by a doctor, registered and processed. But once ready, they are the most complete statistical information.

* Bank Holidays could affect the number of registrations made within those weeks.

Latest statistics

The provisional number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 27 March 2020 (week 12) was 287; 16 more (+6%) than in week 11 and 33 fewer (-10%) than the 5-year average of 320.

In terms of the year-to-date figures (weeks 1 to 12), the total number of deaths registered (3,952) is currently lower (-6%) than the 5-year average (4,211).

Table 1: Deaths registered¹ weekly in Northern Ireland, 2020^P

Registration week	Week ending (Friday)	2020 ^P	Previous 5 Years: 2015 - 2019 ^P		
		Total number of deaths registered in week	Average number of deaths registered in corresponding week	Range	
				Minimum	Maximum
11	20/03/2020	271	297	251	326
12	27/03/2020	287	320	306	356
Year-to-date (week 1-12) Total		3,952	4,211		

Note: Statistics for the full year are available in the accompanying spread sheet.

^P Weekly published data are provisional.

¹ This data are based on registrations of deaths, not occurrences. It can take up to five days for a death to be registered in Northern Ireland.

The number of death registrations mentioning COVID-19 increased from 1 in week 11 to 9 in week 12.

In week 12, 27% of all deaths registered mentioned terms relating directly to respiratory causes on the death certificate. These are counted as 'respiratory' deaths in the table below and are provided to aid comparison with the COVID-19 statistics (COVID-19 deaths are also included in the respiratory category).

There have been 1,119 respiratory deaths registered in the year-to-date; this equates to 28% of all deaths so far in 2020. The number and proportion of respiratory deaths is lower in the year-to-date than the 5-year average (1,354, 32%).

This release focuses on deaths **registered** by the General Register Office (GRO) during the week ending 27th March 2020. We understand that, in the current circumstances, users will want the best estimate of the total number of deaths related to COVID-19. Based on the latest¹ data, 19 COVID-19 deaths **occurred** in NI between 18th March and 27th March.

Please refer to the highlighted section on page 2 of this bulletin to understand why these figures differ from those provided by the Public Health Agency in its daily COVID-19 Surveillance Bulletin.

¹ deaths registered by GRO up to and including 1st April 2020

Table 2: COVID-19 and respiratory deaths registered¹ weekly in Northern Ireland, 2020^P

Registration week	Week ending (Friday)	2020 ^P				Previous 5 Years: 2015 - 2019 ^P	
		Total number of deaths registered in week	COVID-19 ³ deaths registered in week	Respiratory ² deaths registered in week (2020 ^P)		Average number of respiratory deaths registered in corresponding week	
				N	%	N	%
11	20/03/2020	271	1	84	31%	95	32%
12	27/03/2020	287	9	77	27%	98	31%
Year-to-date (week 1-12) Total		3,952	10	1,119	28%	1,354	32%

Note: Statistics for the full year are available in the accompanying spread sheet.

^P Weekly published data are provisional.

¹ This data are based on registrations of deaths, not occurrences. It can take up to five days for a death to be registered in Northern Ireland.

² Respiratory deaths include any death where terms directly relating to respiratory causes were mentioned anywhere on the death certificate (this includes COVID-19 deaths). This is not directly comparable to the ONS figures relating to 'deaths where the underlying cause was respiratory disease'.

³ COVID-19 deaths include any death where Coronavirus or COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed) was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate.

Deaths registered by age-group

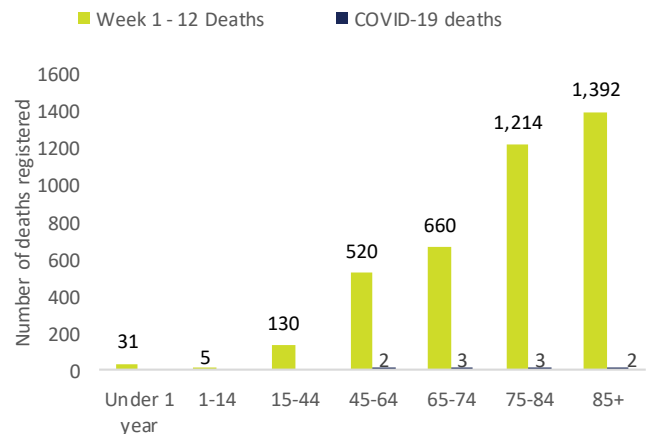
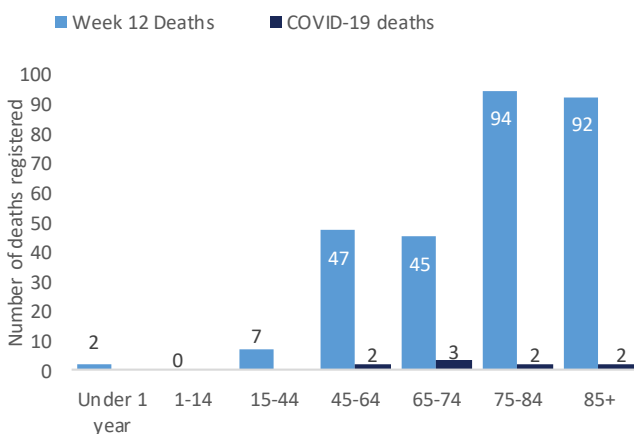
The majority of deaths registered in week 12 and the year-to-date were of persons aged 75 and above, with this age-group accounting for around two-thirds of all deaths.

The four COVID-19 deaths registered among those aged 75+ in week 12 equated to 2.2% of all deaths registered for this age-group during the week. In contrast, the 5 deaths registered among those aged 45-74 equated to 5.4% of all deaths for this age-group. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been no registered death in Northern Ireland involving COVID-19 among those aged under 45.

Two-thirds of all registered deaths in Northern Ireland in week 12 and in the year-to-date were aged 75+. By 27th March 2020, none of the deaths registered for those aged under 45 involved COVID-19.

Fig 2: Deaths by age-group, week 12 2020

Deaths by age-group, year-to-date 2020



Links to relevant publications

Deaths registered weekly in England & Wales

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths>

Weekly Data on Deaths Registered in Scotland

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/general-publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-births-and-deaths/weekly-data-on-births-and-deaths>

Vital statistics (Central Statistics Office, Ireland)

<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/birthsdeathsandmarriages/>

Northern Ireland PHA COVID-19 Surveillance Bulletin

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/covid-19-surveillance-reports>

Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

COVID-19 Health Surveillance Monitor (Ireland)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/0039bc-view-the-covid-19-coronavirus-dashboard-showing-the-latest-stats-and/>

List of Tables

Data accompanying this bulletin are available from the [NISRA website](#) in CSV and Excel format. The spreadsheet includes the following tables.

Table 1: Deaths registered each week in Northern Ireland, 2020

Table 2: Deaths registered each week in Northern Ireland, by age-group, 2020

Table 3: Covid-19 deaths registered each week in Northern Ireland, by age-group, 2020

This is a National Statistics publication.

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). They are produced free from any political interference.

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Contact Details

We welcome feedback from users, please contact

NISRA Vital Statistics,
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency,
Colby House,
Stranmillis Court,
Belfast BT9 5RR

E-mail: info@nisra.gov.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)300 200 7836

Twitter: [@NISRA](https://twitter.com/NISRA)

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics>

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