Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 12 February 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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Next release:
2 March 2021

Correction

23 February 2021 16:00

The difference between the number of deaths for the UK in week 6 compared to the five-year average was incorrectly reported as 3,575, this has now been revised to 3,617. We apologise for any inconvenience this has caused.

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1 . Main points

- The number of deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending 12 February 2021 (Week 6) was 15,354; this was 1,838 fewer deaths than in the previous week (Week 5).
- In Week 6, the number of deaths registered in England and Wales was 28.8% above the five-year average (3,429 deaths higher).
- Of the deaths registered in Week 6 in England and Wales, 5,691 mentioned "novel coronavirus (COVID-19)"; a decrease of 1,629 deaths compared with Week 5.
- In Week 6, deaths involving COVID-19 accounted for 37.1% of all deaths in England and Wales.
- Of the 5,691 deaths involving COVID-19 in Week 6 in England and Wales, 5,035 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (88.5%).
- Of the 4,262 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 296 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (6.9%).
- In England, the total number of registered deaths decreased from 16,259 (Week 5) to 14,572 (Week 6); all English regions had a higher number of deaths than the five-year average for the 14th week in a row.
- In Week 6, the number of registered deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in all English regions compared with Week 5, with the South East of England recording the largest decrease of 441 deaths.
- In Wales, the total number of registered deaths in Week 6 was 31 higher than the five-year average but within the range of 2015 to 2019 deaths for Week 6; total deaths in Wales have decreased by 143 in Week 6.
- In Wales, the number of registered deaths involving COVID-19 decreased from 314 (Week 5) to 216 (Week 6).
- We estimate that the number of deaths actually occurring (rather than registered) in Week 6 in England and Wales was between 12,689 and 15,735.
- The number of deaths registered in the UK in the week ending 12 February 2021 was 17,136, which was 3,617 higher than the five-year average; of deaths registered in the UK in Week 6, 6,113 deaths involved COVID-19, that is, 1,710 lower than in Week 5.

2 . Deaths registered by week

Figure 1: The number of deaths was above the five-year average in Week 6, but within the range of 2015 to 2019 deaths for Wales

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 12 February 2021

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 our Week 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.

Download the data

The provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales decreased from 17,192 in Week 5 (week ending 5 February 2021) to 15,354 in Week 6 (week ending 12 February 2021). The number of deaths was 28.8% above the five-year average (3,429 deaths higher).

In England, the number of deaths decreased from 16,259 in Week 5 to 14,572 in Week 6, which was 3,418 deaths (30.6%) higher than the Week 6 five-year average (Figure 1).

In Wales, the number of deaths decreased from 903 in Week 5 to 760 in Week 6, which was 31 deaths (4.3%) higher than the Week 6 five-year average (Figure 1), but within the range of 2015 to 2019 deaths for Week 6 (699-803 deaths).

Figure 2: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in Week 6

Deaths involving and due to COVID-19, and Influenza and Pneumonia, England and Wales, deaths registered in 2020 and 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 as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2) 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.

Download the data

The number of death registrations in England and Wales involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) decreased from 7,320 in Week 5 to 5,691 in Week 6 – a 22.3% decrease. Of all deaths registered in Week 6, 37.1% mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate.

In England, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 in Week 6 was 5,464, accounting for 37.5% of all deaths compared with 43.0% in Week 5.

In Wales, there were 216 deaths involving COVID-19, accounting for 28.4% of all deaths compared with 34.8% in Week 5.

Of the 5,691 deaths in England and Wales that involved COVID-19, 5,035 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (88.5%, Figure 2). Of the 4,262 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 296 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (6.9%).

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 6, we estimate that 14,064 deaths occurred in England and Wales, with a 95% confidence interval of 12,689 to 15,735. This is 2,436 more than the mean observed in years 2015 to 2019 and a decrease of 1,891 from the Week 5 2021 estimate of 15,955 (15,495 to 16,523).

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 6

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 12 February 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 as follows; coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
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.

Download the data

Analysis in this section includes deaths from Week 11 (week ending 13 March 2020, the week of the first registration of a death involving COVID-19) through to Week 6 (week ending 12 February 2021), to ensure full coverage of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In previous bulletins, we looked at Week 1 2020 to the current week.

Using the most up-to-date data we have available, the number of deaths from week ending 13 March 2020 up to 12 February 2021 was 602,313. Of the deaths registered by 12 February 2021, 124,978 mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate. This is 20.7% of all deaths in England and Wales. During this period the number of excess deaths above the five-year average was 117,040 deaths.

In England, the number of deaths between the week ending 13 March 2020 and 12 February 2021 was 565,041, of these, 117,596 deaths (20.8%) mentioned COVID-19. This was 111,591 deaths above the five-year average.

In Wales, the number of deaths was 36,534, of these, 7,228 deaths (19.8%) mentioned COVID-19. This was 6,067 deaths above the five-year average.

3 . Deaths registered by age group

In Week 6 (week ending 12 February 2021), the number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England and Wales decreased or remained the same in all age groups compared with Week 5. The biggest decrease was seen in those aged 90 years and over (424 fewer deaths). The majority (70.5%) of deaths involving COVID-19 were in people aged 75 years and over.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic (up to week ending 12 February 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 (28,649) than males aged 85 years and over (24,005). 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 registered by week and age group, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 12 February 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 as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
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.

Download the data

4 . Deaths by region in England and Wales

Figure 5: The number of deaths in Week 6 was higher than the five-year average in all English regions and Wales

Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered between 28 December 2019 and 12 February 2021

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 as follows; coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).

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 our Week 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.

Download the data

In Week 6 (week ending 12 February 2021), the total number of deaths registered was higher than the five-year average in all English regions and Wales for the 14th week in a row (Figure 5). The largest increase on the five-year average was for London (42.4% higher).

Across the English regions, the South East had the largest number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), with 974 deaths, while the English region with the highest proportion of deaths involving COVID-19 was London (46.5%).

Deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in all regions, with the South East of England reporting the largest decrease (441 fewer deaths). This is the second 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 6, there were 216 deaths involving COVID-19 registered in Wales – a 31.2% decrease compared with Week 5 (314 deaths).

Table 1: The number of deaths registered was above the five-year average in all English regions and Wales
Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered in week ending 12 February 2021

Region name	Number of deaths	Five-year average	Difference	Percentage above average
London	1,545	1,085	460	42.4
East Midlands	1,456	1,024	432	42.2
East	1,866	1,314	552	42.0
South East	2,446	1,816	630	34.7
West Midlands	1,670	1,260	410	32.5
North West	2,002	1,566	436	27.8
North East	763	635	128	20.2
South West	1,550	1,297	253	19.5
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,274	1,156	118	10.2
Wales	760	729	31	4.3

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 6 (week ending 12 February 2021), 68.9% (86,101 deaths) occurred in hospitals, with the remainder occurring in care homes (29,584 deaths), private homes (6,617), hospices (1,774), other communal establishments (457) and elsewhere (445).

Between Weeks 5 and 6, the number of deaths involving COVID-19 decreased in all settings: hospitals (941 fewer), care homes (566 fewer), hospices (58 fewer), private homes (52 fewer), other communal establishments (8 fewer) and elsewhere (4 fewer). Deaths involving COVID-19 in hospitals as a proportion of all deaths in hospitals fell to 53.5% in Week 6 (58.0% in Week 5). Deaths involving COVID-19 in care homes accounted for 37.8% of deaths, a decrease from Week 5 (45.5%).

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 (a) the death occurred in a care home, or (b) 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 category (a).

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 19 February 2021, there were 27,875 deaths of residents in care homes involving COVID-19. Of these deaths, 649 were notified in the week up to 19 February 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 12 February 2021, there were 1,844 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 were above the five-year average in private homes, hospitals and care homes in Week 6

Number of excess deaths by place of occurrence, England and Wales, registered between 7 March 2020 and 12 February 2021

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 as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).

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.

Download the data

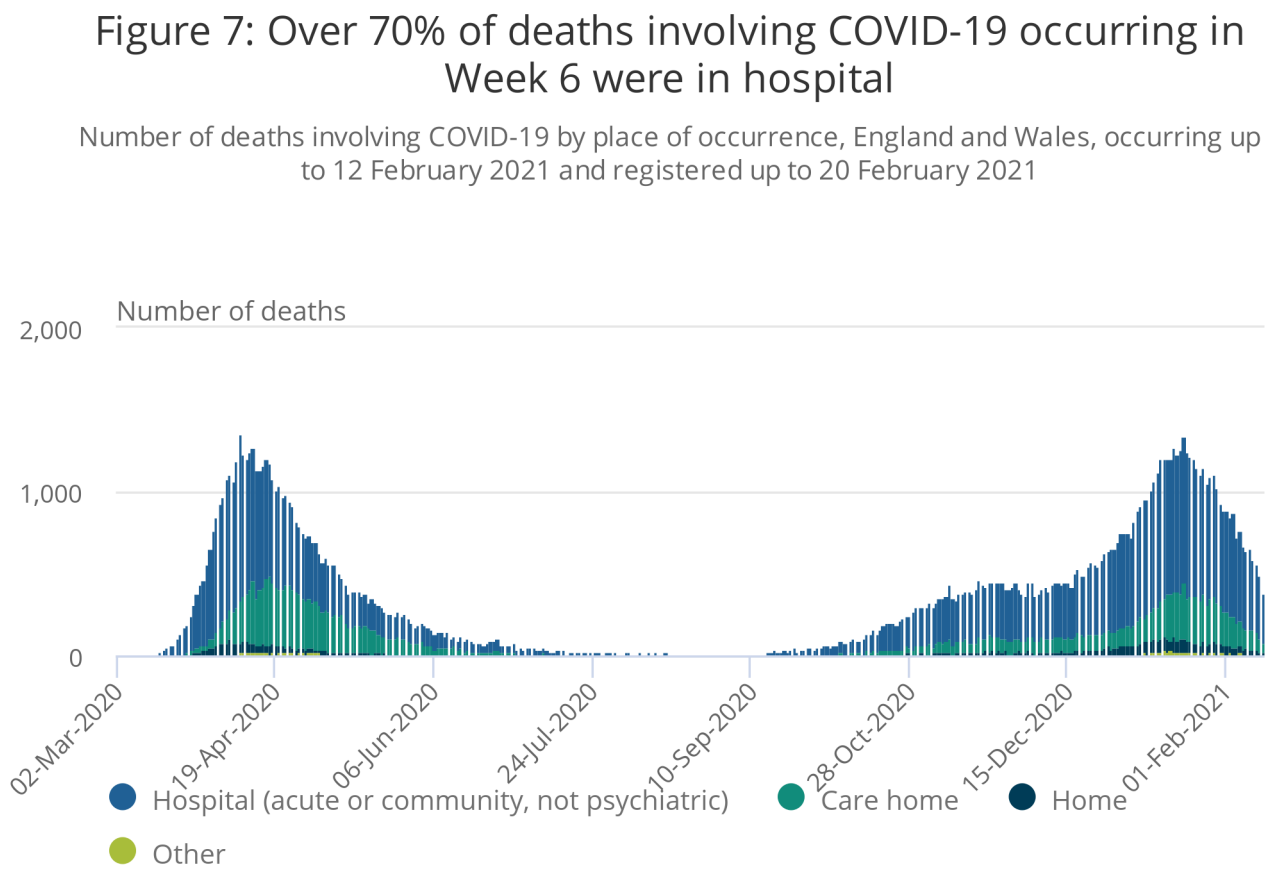
In Week 6, the numbers of deaths in private homes, hospitals and care homes were above the five-year average (Figure 6). The largest proportion of excess deaths was registered in private homes (1,293 excess deaths, 47.6% of the five-year average) followed by hospitals (1,834 excess deaths, 32.6% of the five-year average).

Looking in more detail at deaths in private homes in Week 6, males accounted for 650 excess deaths compared with 643 for females. Overall, 78.2% of the excess deaths in private homes were of those aged 70 years and over (1,011 excess deaths); this proportion has decreased slightly from 78.9% (1,053 excess deaths) in Week 5.

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 70% of deaths involving COVID-19 occurring in Week 6 were in hospital

Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by place of occurrence, England and Wales, occurring up to 12 February 2021 and registered up to 20 February 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 20 February 2021.
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 and U07.2).
5. This chart includes deaths from week ending 6 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.

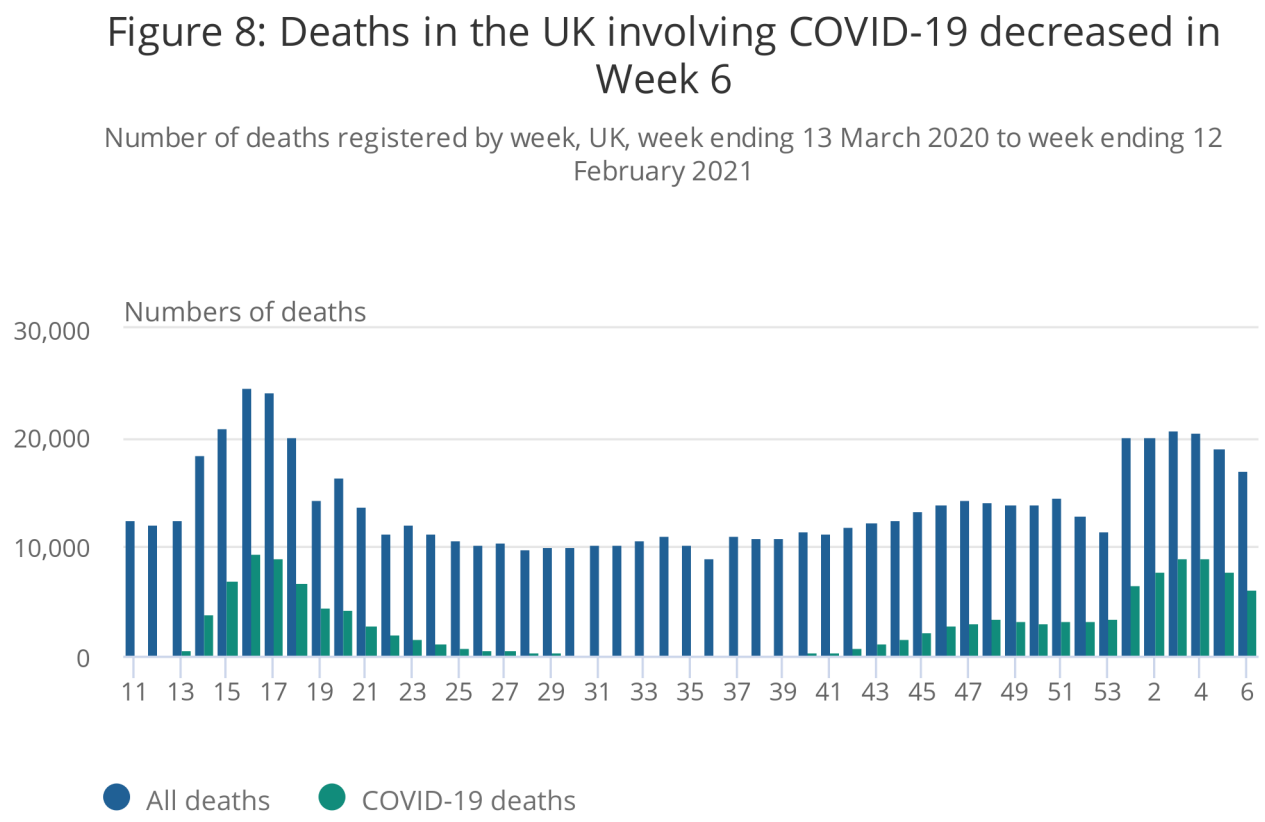
Figure 7 is based on date of death for deaths registered up to 20 February 2021, rather than date of registration. As more deaths are registered, deaths per day are likely to increase, especially for later dates. Looking at the number of deaths that occurred in Week 6, 74.9% of deaths occurred in hospitals, and care homes accounted for 18.6% 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 6

Number of deaths registered by week, UK, week ending 13 March 2020 to week ending 12 February 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 as follows: coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).
5. National Records of Scotland produce figures for Scotland with an updated backseries. 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 17,136 deaths (all causes) registered in Week 6 (week ending 12 February 2021), which was 3,617 deaths higher than the UK five-year average and 2,024 fewer deaths than in Week 5 (week ending 5 February 2021). Of these deaths, 6,113 involved the coronavirus (COVID-19), 1,710 fewer deaths than in Week 5 (21.9% decrease) (Figure 8).

In Week 6, England had the highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 with 5,464 deaths, followed by Scotland with 323 deaths, Wales with 216 deaths and Northern Ireland with 99 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 12 February 2021 but were registered up to 20 February 2021, of those we have processed so far, the number involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) was 119,447.

The comparative number reported on GOV.UK (based on data from PHE) where the deaths occurred within 28 days of testing was 103,106 for deaths based on date of notification and the number of deaths by date of death showed 104,390.

In Wales, including deaths that occurred up to 12 February 2021 but were registered up to 20 February 2021, of those we have processed so far, the number involving COVID-19 was 7,296. The comparative number of deaths reported on GOV.UK (based on data from PHW) where the death occurred within 28 days of testing was 5,106 for deaths based on date of notification and the number of deaths by date of death was 5,167.

8 . Deaths data

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional
Dataset | Released 23 February 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 23 February 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 23 February 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 23 February 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.

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

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 20 February 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 of the number of days in a week being 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.

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		
	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
Inclusion	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
	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

Timeliness	Registered in the week ending 12 February 2021 (week 6)	Deaths which occurred in week 6 but were registered up to 20 February 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
Office for National Statistics – Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales

	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)
Coverage	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
	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

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: December 2020
Bulletin | Released 18 January 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 18 February 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.