

Statistical bulletin

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 22 May 2020

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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Table of contents

1. [Other pages in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Deaths registered by week](#)
4. [Deaths registered by age group](#)
5. [Deaths by region in England and Wales](#)
6. [Deaths registered by place of occurrence](#)
7. [Deaths registered in the UK](#)
8. [Deaths data](#)
9. [Glossary](#)
10. [Measuring the data](#)
11. [Strengths and limitations](#)
12. [Related links](#)

1 . Other pages in this release

- [Comparison of weekly death occurrences in England and Wales: up to week ending 22 May 2020](#)
- [Where to find statistics on UK deaths involving the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and infection rates by country](#)

2 . Main points

- The number of deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending 22 May 2020 (Week 21) was 12,288; this was 2,285 less than Week 20 but 2,348 more than the five-year average.
- Of the deaths registered in Week 21, 2,589 mentioned "novel coronavirus (COVID-19)", the lowest number of deaths involving COVID-19 in the last seven weeks; accounting for 21.1% of all deaths and 1,221 deaths lower than Week 20.
- People aged 90 years and over continued to have the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in Week 21.
- In Week 21, the proportion of deaths occurring in care homes decreased to 27.3% while deaths involving COVID-19 as a percentage of all deaths in care homes decreased to 32.5%.
- In Week 21, the number of deaths in care homes was 1,289 higher than the five-year average, while in hospitals the number of deaths was 24 fewer than the five-year average; the total number of excess deaths involving COVID-19 continued to decrease.
- The percentage of deaths involving COVID-19 continued to decrease across all English regions; the South East had the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in Week 21 (409).
- In Wales, there were 134 deaths registered in Week 21 involving COVID-19, accounting for 19.4% of all deaths registered.
- Of all deaths in England and Wales involving COVID-19 registered up to Week 21, 64.2% occurred in hospital with the remainder mainly occurring in care homes (29.1%), private homes (4.5%) and hospices (1.3%).
- The number of deaths registered in the UK in the week ending 22 May 2020 (Week 21) was 13,826, of which 2,872 deaths involved COVID-19.

3 . Deaths registered by week

Figure 1: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 continued to decrease

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 22 May 2020

The provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales decreased from 14,573 in Week 20 (week ending 15 May 2020) to 12,288 in Week 21 (week ending 22 May 2020). This was 2,348 more deaths than the five-year average (Figure 1). More information is in [Measuring the data](#).

The number of deaths was around or below the five-year average up to Week 12. The number of deaths increased between Weeks 13 and 16 before decreasing between Weeks 17 and 21, with the exception of Week 20 where the deaths increased.

The number of death registrations in Week 20 was impacted by the early May Bank Holiday, which took place on Friday 8 May 2020 (in Week 19). The number of deaths registered on the early May Bank Holiday fell to 88 deaths compared with 2,950 deaths registered on the previous Friday (Friday 1 May 2020). Trends seen in Week 19 and Week 20 should therefore be interpreted with caution, as deaths not registered on the early May Bank Holiday were likely registered in the following week (Week 20).

The number of death registrations involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) decreased from 3,810 in Week 20 to 2,589 in Week 21. Of all deaths registered in Week 21, 21.1% mentioned COVID-19; down from 26.1% in Week 20.

Similar patterns can be seen for England and Wales separately, with the number of deaths in England decreasing from 13,783 in Week 20 to 11,586 in Week 21, which was 2,287 above the Week 21 average. Of the Week 21 deaths, 21.2% (2,455 deaths) involved COVID-19.

In Wales, the number of deaths decreased from 772 in Week 20 to 692 in Week 21, 78 deaths higher than the Week 21 average. Of these, 19.4% (134 deaths) involved COVID-19.

The number of deaths mentioning "Influenza and Pneumonia" on the death certificate (without COVID-19) decreased from 1,194 in Week 20 to 1,066 in Week 21 and remained below the five-year average. The number of deaths that mentioned both "Influenza and Pneumonia" and COVID-19 on the death certificate also decreased to 910 compared with 1,382 deaths in Week 20.

In Week 21, 29.7% of all deaths mentioned "Influenza and Pneumonia", COVID-19, or both compared with 34.3% in Week 20. "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 about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how our studies and surveys are [serving public need](#).

Figure 2: The number of excess deaths involving COVID-19 continued to decrease

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 2020

As COVID-19 was not a cause of death prior to 2020, any deaths involving COVID-19 appear in the counts above the five-year average and are known as excess deaths. This means that when the number of deaths involving COVID-19 is higher than the number of excess deaths, the bar indicating deaths not involving COVID-19 makes a negative contribution.

Between Weeks 1 and 12, 138,916 deaths were registered, which was 4,822 fewer than the five-year average for these weeks. However, between Weeks 13 and 21, 147,863 deaths were registered, which was 56,308 more than the five-year average. Week 21 showed a continuation of the decreasing trend in excess deaths (both involving COVID-19 and involving other causes); the number of deaths involving COVID-19 in Week 21 was higher than the number of deaths above the five-year average (Figure 2). We are continuing to investigate the number of non-COVID-19 related deaths and will publish [detailed analysis on this](#) on 5 June 2020.

Looking at the year-to-date (using the most up-to-date data we have available), the number of deaths up to 22 May was 286,759, which is 51,466 more than the five-year average. Of the deaths registered by 22 May 2020, 43,837 mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate; this is 15.3% of all deaths.

4 . Deaths registered by age group

Figure 3: People aged 90-years and over continued to have the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in Week 21

Deaths by age group, England and Wales, week ending 22 May 2020

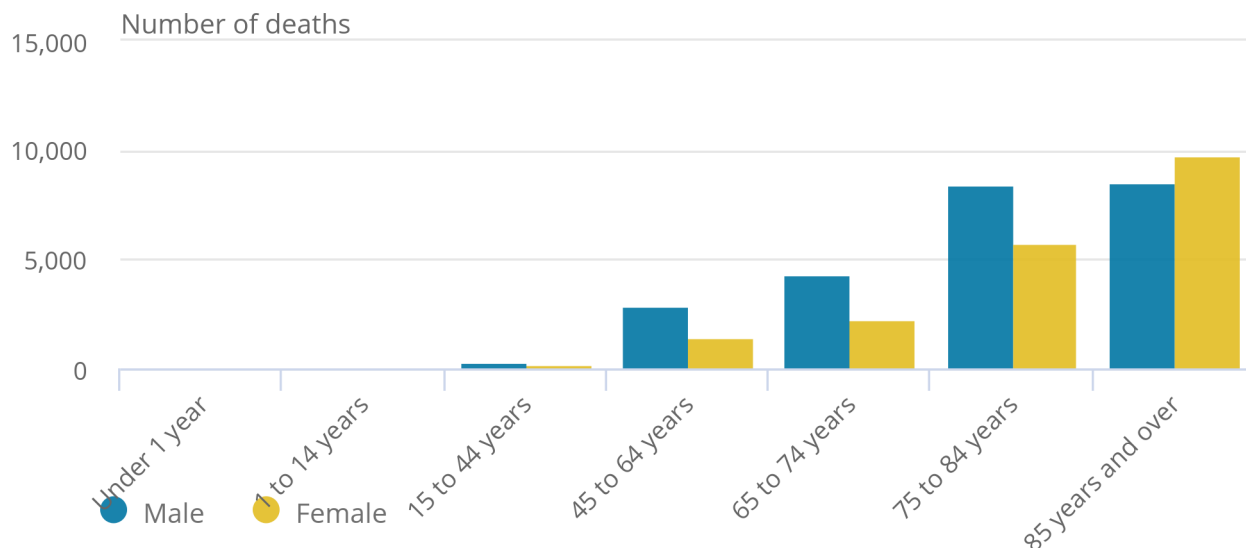
In Week 21 (week ending 22 May 2020), there was a decrease in all deaths for age groups over 45 to 49 years. The highest proportion of coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths was in age group 85 to 89 years where 26.0% of deaths involved COVID-19 (593 deaths). The largest number of COVID-19 deaths was in those aged 90 years and over with 693 deaths (Figure 3). In comparison with Week 20, the number of COVID-19 deaths decreased or remained the same in every age group, except those aged 40 to 44 years where there was an increase of five deaths.

Figure 4: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 was highest in females aged 85 years and over for the fourth week running

Deaths involving COVID-19 registered between Week 1 and Week 21 of 2020 by sex and age group, England and Wales

Figure 4: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 was highest in females aged 85 years and over for the fourth week running

Deaths involving COVID-19 registered between Week 1 and Week 21 of 2020 by sex and age group, England and Wales



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

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2.
5. Individual weeks may not sum to the year-to-date analysis as previous weeks have been recalculated in order to have the most up-to-date figures.

Looking at the year-to date, for most age groups, there have been more deaths involving COVID-19 in males than in females (Figure 4). However, there were more deaths for females aged 85 years and over (9,774) than males (8,489). This could be because [the over-85 years female population \(939,000\) is larger than the over-85 male population \(564,000\)](#) in England and Wales.

5 . Deaths by region in England and Wales

Figure 5: The number of deaths involving COVID-19 was highest in the South East

Figure 6: The number of deaths registered across all English regions and Wales decreased

Deaths by region in England, and Wales, week ending 22 May 2020

Table 1: Deaths by region in England, and Wales, week ending 22 May 2020

Region name	Number of deaths	5-year average	Difference	Percentage above average
North East	718	510	208	40.8
East	1,397	1,072	325	30.3
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,236	960	276	28.8
West Midlands	1,319	1,031	288	27.9
South East	1,937	1,547	390	25.2
London	1,125	910	215	23.6
East Midlands	1,041	843	198	23.5
North West	1,636	1,338	298	22.3
Wales	692	614	78	12.7
South West	1,177	1,089	88	8.1

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

In Week 21 (week ending 22 May 2020), there were 134 deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) registered in Wales. Out of the English regions, the South East had the largest number of deaths involving COVID-19 with 409 deaths, whereas the North East had the highest proportion of COVID-19 deaths, with 28.1% of all deaths being COVID-19 related (Figure 6).

6 . Deaths registered by place of occurrence

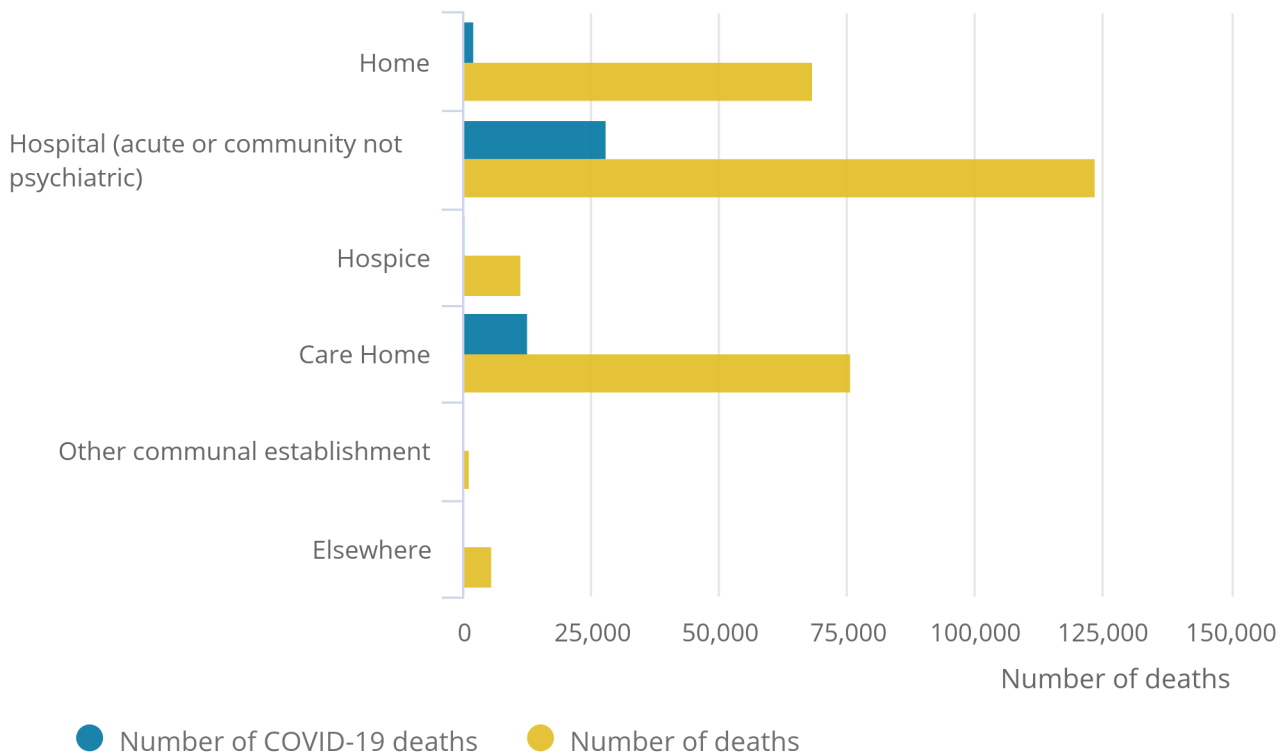
The year-to-date analysis shows that, of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) up to Week 21 (week ending 22 May 2020), 64.2% (28,159 deaths) occurred in hospital, with the remainder occurring in care homes (12,739 deaths), private homes (1,991 deaths), hospices (582 deaths), other communal establishments (197 deaths), and elsewhere (169 deaths) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: The highest number of COVID-19 deaths occurred in hospitals

Deaths involving COVID-19 registered between Week 1 and Week 21 of 2020 by place of occurrence, England and Wales

Figure 7: The highest number of COVID-19 deaths occurred in hospitals

Deaths involving COVID-19 registered between Week 1 and Week 21 of 2020 by place of occurrence, England and Wales



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

Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2.
5. Individual weeks may not sum to the year-to-date analysis as previous weeks have been recalculated in order to have the most up-to-date figures.

The proportion of deaths from all causes that occurred in care homes continued to decrease to 27.3% in Week 21. The proportion of care home deaths that involved COVID-19 also decreased; 32.5% of all deaths in care homes involved COVID-19 in Week 21, compared with 37.2% in Week 20.

Between Week 20 and Week 21, there was a decrease in the number of deaths occurring in all settings with the exception of COVID-19 deaths in hospices, which remained the same. The proportions of COVID-19 deaths in hospital (51.0% in Week 21 and 50.1% in Week 20) and care homes (42.1% in Week 21 and 43.6% in Week 20) remained similar.

Figure 8: The number of excess deaths decreased in all settings

Number of excess deaths by place of death between Week 1 and Week 21 of 2020 by place of occurrence, England and Wales

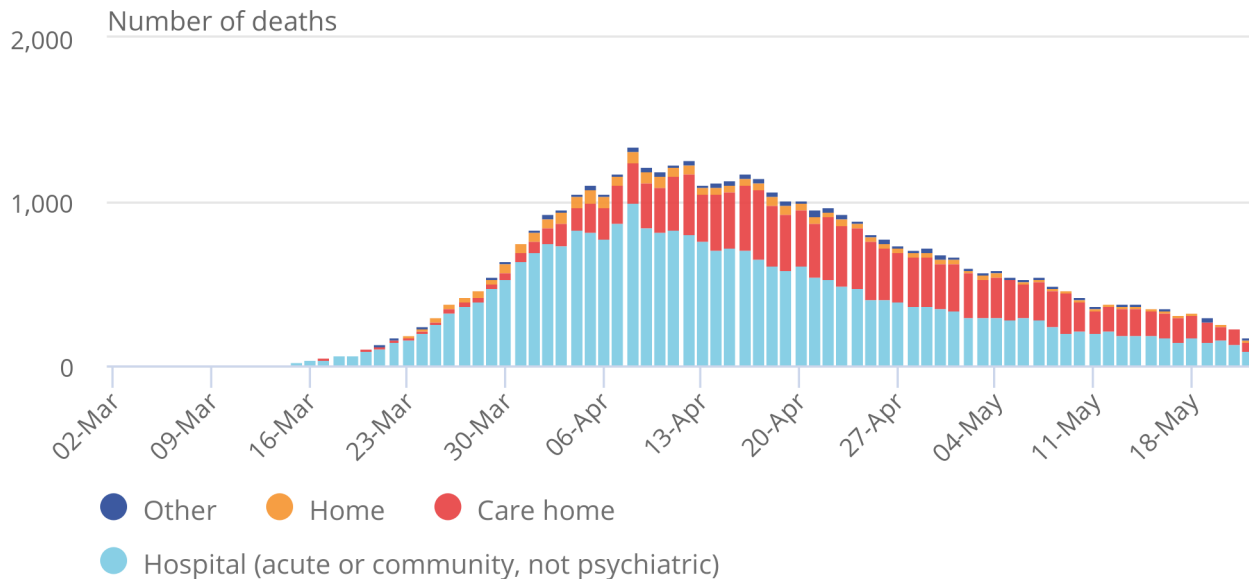
The number of excess deaths in Week 21 decreased in all settings compared with Week 20 (Figure 8). In Week 21, there were 24 deaths fewer than the five-year average in hospitals, similarly the number of deaths in other communal establishments was 23 deaths fewer than the five-year average.

Figure 9: Just over half of the COVID-19 deaths that occurred in Week 21 happened in hospital

Number of deaths by actual date of death registered up to 30 May, by the place the death occurred and per day for England and Wales, 2020

Figure 9: Just over half of the COVID-19 deaths that occurred in Week 21 happened in hospital

Number of deaths by actual date of death registered up to 30 May, by the place the death occurred and per day for England and Wales, 2020



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 30 May.
3. All figures for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2.

Figure 9 is based on date of death for deaths registered up to 30 May 2020, rather than date of registration. This means as more deaths are registered, deaths per day are likely to increase, especially later dates. Looking at the most recent week, on average, deaths occurring in hospitals have accounted for 53.8% of all deaths involving COVID-19 and deaths in care homes have accounted for a further 39.8%; this may change as more deaths are registered. Although we expect numbers of deaths to increase as more are registered, it currently appears that deaths per day are decreasing.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Public Health England to better understand deaths that are occurring in care homes. From 28 April, we have published counts of deaths reported by care home operators to CQC involving COVID-19. More information can be found in our [comparisons article](#).

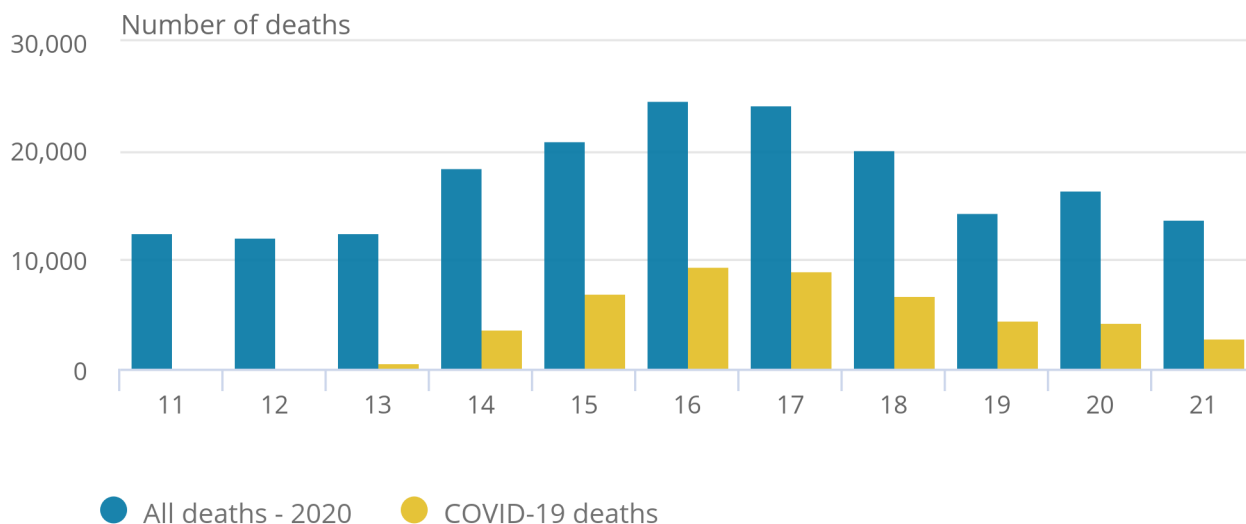
7 . Deaths registered in the UK

Figure 10: The number of deaths registered in the UK decreased in Week 21

Number of deaths registered by week, UK, week ending 13 March to week ending 22 May 2020

Figure 10: The number of deaths registered in the UK decreased in Week 21

Number of deaths registered by week, UK, week ending 13 March to week ending 22 May 2020



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

Notes:

1. Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures for 2020 are provisional.
4. The ICD-10 definitions for COVID-19 are U07.1 and U07.2.
5. [National Records of Scotland](#) produce figures for Scotland.
6. [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) produce figures for Northern Ireland.

Across the UK, there were 13,826 deaths (all causes) registered in Week 21 (ending 22 May 2020), of which 2,872 deaths involved the coronavirus (COVID-19) (Figure 10). There were five deaths involving COVID-19 in the UK in Week 11 (ending 13 March); this increased to 9,495 deaths registered in Week 16 (ending 17 April) but has fallen to 2,872 deaths registered in Week 21.

In Week 21, England had the highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 with 2,455 deaths, followed by Scotland with 230 deaths, Wales with 134 deaths and Northern Ireland with 53 deaths.

8 . Deaths data

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

Dataset | Released 2 June 2020

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 the coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths.

[Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board](#)

Dataset | Released 2 June 2020

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving the coronavirus (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 2 June 2020

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

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. 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 based on the latest available death registrations, up to 30 May 2020.

Because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our regular weekly deaths release now provides a separate breakdown of the numbers 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 new bulletin summarises the latest weekly information and will be updated each week during the pandemic.

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 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. Our figures also include any deaths that occur outside hospital.

In contrast to the GOV.UK figures, we include only deaths registered in England and Wales, which is the legal remit of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Table 1 provides an overview of the differences in definitions between sources.

From 29 April 2020, 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 have already begun to include deaths outside hospitals, so this change ensured that the UK-wide series has a shared and common definitional coverage. A [statement](#) was published by the ONS which provides more detail of the changes.

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) from 29 April	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)	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		
Inclusion	Deaths in hospitals	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
	Deaths where patient has been tested for COVID-19	Deaths where patient has been tested for COVID-19	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
Timeliness	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
			Registered in the week ending 22 May (week 21)	Deaths which occurred in week 21 but were registered up to 30 May		

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

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.

Within the accompanying dataset we have also provided weekly provisional figures on COVID-19 deaths registered in the UK along with age breakdowns by UK and sex and age breakdowns by Great Britain estimates.

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: 2018](#)

Bulletin | Released 6 August 2019

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.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) product page](#)

Product page | Updated when new data are available

Brings together the latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.