

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland: March-May 2020



9:30am Wednesday 17th June 2020

Analysis of COVID-19 related deaths: March – May 2020

Latest figures published today by NISRA show that COVID-19 related deaths (764) accounted for 17.2% of all deaths in Northern Ireland from 1st March to 31st May 2020.

The figures released today include the age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) for deaths involving Covid-19 over the same period for the first time. **The ASMRs are used to directly compare mortality rates for different groups, including males with females, or regions, using the age structure of a standard population.** It shows the ASMR for Northern Ireland was 48.2 per 100,000 persons for the time period.

Males had a significantly higher rate of death linked to COVID-19: the ASMR for males was 60.4 deaths per 100,000 of the male population compared with 40.4 deaths per 100,000 females.

Belfast Local Government District (LGD) had the highest COVID-19 related ASMR with 81.1 deaths per 100,000, followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD at 64.4 (per 100,000). Fermanagh and Omagh had the lowest COVID-19 related ASMR of 16.2 (per 100,000), followed by Derry and Strabane with an ASMR of 25.0 (per 100,000).

Adjusting for differing age structures within the population, COVID-19 related ASMRs were highest for the 20% most deprived areas at 60.5 deaths per 100,000 population. This compares with an ASMR of 48.2 per 100,000 persons for Northern Ireland as a whole.

The highest COVID-19 related ASMR was found in urban areas (59.0 deaths per 100,000 population). This was significantly higher than ASMRs in areas categorised as mixed urban/rural (37.7 deaths per 100,000 population) and rural (30.4 deaths per 100,000 population).

Proportions of COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland by Country of birth are in line with proportions from the Northern Ireland Census in 2011 and show that 89.9% of COVID-19 related deaths were of people born in Northern Ireland.

Eighty six of the 764 (11.3%) COVID-19 related deaths were persons of working age (aged 20-69), of which 35 (40.7%) were in the skilled trades, elementary occupations or process, plant and machine operative occupational groups.

NISRA

June 2020

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Statistics on weekly deaths registered in Northern Ireland can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/weekly-deaths>
2. All media queries to Department of Finance Press Office at dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk or on Tel: 028 90816724. Out of office hours please contact the Duty Press Officer on 028 9037 8110 and your call will be returned.
3. Differences between NISRA's death registration statistics and the daily totals reported via the Department of Health are as follows:
 - The **daily updates** provided by the Department of Health (DoH) count the number of deaths reported by Trusts, where the deceased had a positive test for COVID-19 and died within 28 days, whether or not COVID-19 was the cause of death. DoH figures will not capture all deaths that do not meet this definition. These data are important because they are available earlier, and therefore give a quicker indication of what is happening day by day and are broadly comparable with the figures released daily in other parts of the United Kingdom (UK). The DoH reported 537 deaths associated with COVID-19 by 5th June 2020 (including revisions up to 10th June).
 - These statistics, like the NISRA weekly, provisional death statistics, are based on death registration information collected by the General Register Office, and count all deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate by the doctor who certified the death, whether or not COVID-19 was the primary underlying cause of death. The figures include cases where the doctor noted that there was suspected or probable coronavirus infection involved in the death. As a result totals from this source will usually be higher than the relevant daily figures - because the DoH daily updates only include those who have tested positive for the virus.
4. These occurrence based statistics (to end May 2020) take into account registrations up to 10th June 2020, to allow for delays in death registrations.
5. Mortality rates generally increase with age. A population with a greater proportion of older people is expected to have more deaths per population. To adjust for different age profiles in different populations (e.g. different regions or countries), statistical techniques are used to adjust or 'standardize' mortality rates among populations to be compared. **Age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs)** are presented per 100,000 people and are standardised to the [2013 European Standard Population](#).
6. The age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) presented are not comparable with those released by the ONS on Friday 12th June in their report 'Deaths involving COVID-19, UK: Deaths occurring from 1 March to 30 April 2020'. Rates used in the ONS release were adjusted to take into account the period observed, therefore effectively annualising the rates. This allowed the rates to be comparable with rates in other annual publications.
7. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:

Telephone: +44 (0)300 200 7836 E-mail: demography@nisra.gov.uk

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