

# STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – Covid-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland: March-August 2020



9:30am Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

## Analysis of Covid-19 related deaths: March – August 2020

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published a quarterly Covid-19 bulletin reflecting Covid-19 related deaths that occurred (based on the date of death) in Northern Ireland between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

The statistics show that Covid-19 related deaths (875) accounted for 10.9% of all deaths in Northern Ireland over the six-month period.

Age-standardised mortality rates (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.** The Covid-19 related ASMR for March to August was 55.2 per 100,000 persons. Males had a significantly higher rate of death linked to Covid-19: the ASMR for males was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 of the male population compared with 45.8 deaths per 100,000 females.

Monthly Covid-19 ASMRs per 100,000 were highest in April (36.7 for males and 23.4 for females) and lowest in August (1.9 for males and 0.6 for females).

Belfast Local Government District (LGD) had the highest Covid-19 related ASMR with 90.0 deaths per 100,000, followed by the neighbouring Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD at 73.1 (per 100,000). Fermanagh and Omagh had the lowest Covid-19 related ASMR of 17.2 (per 100,000), followed by the neighbouring Derry and Strabane with an ASMR of 27.0 (per 100,000). For Assembly Areas, Belfast West (113.7), Belfast North (93.5) and Belfast East (90.8) had the highest Covid-19 related ASMRs per 100,000 while South Down had the lowest ASMR (19.9).

Adjusting for differing age structures within the population, Covid-19 related ASMRs were highest for the 20% most deprived areas at 66.0 deaths per 100,000 population, followed by the 20% least deprived areas at 60.4 deaths (per 100,000). This compares with an ASMR of 55.2 per 100,000 persons for Northern Ireland as a whole.

The highest Covid-19 related ASMR was found in urban areas (66.9 deaths per 100,000 population). This was significantly higher than ASMRs in areas categorised as mixed urban/rural (43.3 deaths per 100,000 population) and rural (36.3 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 2011 Census and show that 90.3% of Covid-19 related deaths were of people born in Northern Ireland.

One hundred and two of the 875 (11.7%) Covid-19 related deaths were persons of working age (aged 20-69), of which the largest group (40 persons; 39.2%) were in the skilled trades, elementary occupations or process, plant and machine operative occupational groups.

**NISRA**

**October 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](mailto: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 561 deaths associated with Covid-19 by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 (including revisions up to 28<sup>th</sup> September).
  - 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 August 2020) take into account registrations up to 21<sup>st</sup> September 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. 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](mailto:demography@nisra.gov.uk)

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