

# **STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – Excess deaths and COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland: March-June 2020**



**9:30am Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

## **Excess deaths and COVID-19 related deaths: March – June 2020**

Latest figures published today by NISRA show that there were 885 excess deaths from 1st March to 30th June 2020, 17.4% above expected levels (average deaths for the same period over the last five years). In the same period, there were 837 COVID-19 related deaths.

The number of excess deaths for females (474) is higher than that for males (411), whilst the number of COVID-19 related deaths is slightly higher (421 compared to 416).

The vast majority of excess deaths (78.4%) and COVID-19 related deaths (79.8%) are accounted for by those aged 75 and over. In this age group, excess deaths were 21.3% above expected levels, compared to 17.4% for all ages. For both males and females aged 55 to 64 (older working age), excess deaths as a proportion of expected levels, were higher than the equivalent proportions for those aged 65 to 74 (younger pensionable age).

The number of deaths in hospitals was slightly lower than expected levels, despite 434 COVID-19 related deaths occurring in hospitals. Care homes had similar levels of excess deaths (336) and COVID-19 related deaths (346). In contrast, the majority of excess deaths (556 or 62.8%) occurred at home, while 44 COVID-19 related deaths occurred at home.

Belfast LGD had the largest number of excess deaths (218), accounting for a quarter (24.6%) of the total number of excess deaths in Northern Ireland. However, Antrim & Newtownabbey LGD had the highest excess deaths as a proportion above expected levels (28.4%), while Mid Ulster LGD had the lowest (7.0%).

Excess deaths were highest in the least deprived areas, with just over a 20% increase in deaths compared to expected levels. Excess deaths were lower in rural areas at 14.3% above expected levels, compared to 18.7% in urban areas. Excess deaths were associated with proximity of area of main residence to Belfast, with decreasing proportions of excess deaths with increasing travel times to Belfast, from 23.3% within 20 minute drive-time to 8.8% for a drive-time between 45 and 60 minutes.

**NISRA**

**July 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. These provisional statistics are based on death registration information collected by the General Register Office. The occurrence based statistics (to end June 2020) take into account registrations up to 15th July 2020, to allow for delays in death registrations.
4. Excess mortality can be used to measure of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it does not rely on the availability or interpretation of the (primary and secondary) causes of death. It captures deaths from all causes, which may be related to a range of factors associated with the pandemic, for example, changes in the availability or uptake of health care services including screening and diagnosing, or the impact of 'lock-down' on people's mental health. Some of these effects may take months or years to be fully understood.
5. Excess mortality is the difference between actual deaths from all causes in a period minus the expected number of deaths, which is based on the number of deaths in the previous five years.
6. COVID-19 related deaths are 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.
7. The identification of the underlying or main cause of death (coding) of deaths occurring from March to June 2020 has not been completed yet. Such information for deaths registered up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 is due to be published on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
8. 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)

Responsible Statistician: Deborah Lyness