COVID-19 related deaths: week ending 29th May

Latest figures published today by NISRA show that 36 deaths involving COVID-19 occurred in the last week, from 23rd to 29th May, bringing the total of COVID-19 related deaths to 757.

Of this total, 381 (50.3%) took place in hospital, 328 (43.3%) in care homes, eight (1.1%) in hospices and 40 (5.3%) at residential addresses or other locations. The 336 deaths which occurred in care homes and hospices involved 78 separate establishments.

The comparative number of deaths reported daily by the Department of Health to 29th May was 528. These figures are based on patients having previously tested positive for the virus, whereas NISRA figures are based on the information entered on death certificates, completed by medical professionals. They may or may not have previously tested positive for the virus.

Further analysis, which includes deaths of care home residents in hospital shows that of the 396 deaths of care home residents involving COVID-19 in the year to date to 29th May 2020, 82.8% (328) occurred in a care home, with the remaining 68 occurring in hospital. On this basis deaths of care home residents account for 52.3% of all COVID-19 related deaths; however, no assumptions can be made in relation to where or when the deceased contracted the disease.

Separate analyses based on the date of death registration, shows that the provisional number of total deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 29th May 2020 (week 21) was 316, 9 fewer than in week 20 and 37 more than the 5-year average of 279. Over the last nine weeks in total, 939 'excess deaths' (deaths above the average for the corresponding period in previous years) have been registered in Northern Ireland, with the number of ‘excess deaths’ in the year to date to 29th May totalling 680.

COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate for 49 (15.5%) of the 316 deaths registered in week 21, the fifth consecutive weekly fall in the number of registered COVID-19 related deaths and bringing the total number of COVID-19 related deaths registered in the calendar year 2020 to 754.

Persons aged 75 and over accounted for two-thirds (66.8%) of all deaths and 80.0% of COVID-19 related deaths registered this calendar year up to 29th May.
For COVID-19 related deaths, those with an address in Belfast Local Government District (LGD) accounted for 226 (30.0%) of the 754 deaths registered in the calendar year to 29th May.

NISRA

May 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 528 deaths associated with COVID-19 by 29th May 2020 (including revisions up to 3rd June).

   - NISRA weekly, provisional death statistics, which are based on death registration information collected by the General Register Office, 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 the weekly totals will usually be higher than the relevant daily figures - because the DoH daily updates only include those who have tested positive for the virus.

3. Quoted figures based on occurrence take into account registrations up to 3rd June 2020, to allow for delays in death registrations.

4. Analysis of care home residents refers to deaths where either (a) the death occurred in a care home, or (b) the death occurred elsewhere but the place of usual residence of the deceased was recorded as a care home. It should be noted
that the statistics will not capture those cases where a care home resident died in hospital or another location and the usual address recorded on their death certificate is not a care home; however no assumptions can be made about where or when the deceased contracted COVID-19 (and all figures include probable or suspect cases).

5. 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

   Responsible Statistician: Deborah Lyness