

**STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE –
REGISTRAR GENERAL
QUARTERLY REPORT
(Provisional Statistics for Quarter 4
2020)**



9:30am Wednesday 24th March 2021

**Registrar General Quarterly Report:
Provisional Statistics for Quarter 4 2020**

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published the Registrar General Quarterly Report: Quarter 4 2020 which provide details regarding deaths, births, marriages and civil partnerships.

The statistics, which cover 1st October to 31st December show there was a provisional total of 4,786 deaths registered. The rate of deaths per 1,000 population increased from 8.1 in Quarter 3 2020, to 10.1 in Quarter 4. Covid-19 was the underlying cause of 819 (17.1%) of these registered deaths. This brings the provisional total number of registered deaths with an underlying cause of death of Covid-19 to 1,626 (9.2%) for the calendar year 2020.

In comparison, the provisional number of deaths where Covid-19 was *mentioned anywhere* on the death certificate in the calendar year 2020 was 1,833. This means that Covid-19 was the underlying cause of death in 88.7% of all deaths that mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate.

The provisional number of deaths in Quarter 4 2020 where the underlying cause was cancer was 1,130 (23.6%), 444 (9.3%) were due to non-covid respiratory conditions and 396 (8.3%) were due to ischaemic heart disease. On average over the previous five years (2015-2019) 28.3% of annual deaths were due to cancer, 13.4% from respiratory conditions and 10.5% from ischaemic heart disease.

There were 44 suicide deaths (including events of undetermined intent) registered in Quarter 4, bringing the provisional total (including revised Quarter 1 to 3 estimates) to 263 in 2020. This is 66 more than registered in 2019 (197). These figures should not be interpreted as the number of suicides occurring during lockdown periods, however, due to the time for such deaths to be investigated by the Coroner and then subsequently registered.

During the Quarter, 5,582 births, 1,294 marriages and 12 civil partnerships were registered. For comparative purposes there were 5,322 births, 1,469 marriages and 16 civil partnerships registered in the same Quarter of 2019. The lower than usual number of marriages registered in Quarter 4 may be a result of the lockdown restrictions because of Covid-19. The number of births in this Quarter appears to be at a level comparable to the same period in previous years. However, the number of births registered may not be a true reflection of births occurring in Quarter 4 as Register Offices have given continued priority to death registrations.

Of the 1,294 registered marriages in Quarter 4, 111 (8.6%) were same sex marriages (including both civil and religious marriages). Over half (55.0% or 61) of the 111 same-sex marriages were female unions. Over two-thirds (77) of same-sex marriages were conversions from a previous civil partnership. No opposite-sex civil partnerships, nor conversions from a previous marriage, were registered in Northern Ireland in 2020.

NISRA

March 2021

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The "Registrar General Quarterly Report - Quarter 4, 2020" contains standard, provisional statistics based on information sourced from the General Register Office relating to vital events in Northern Ireland which were registered from 1st October to 31st December 2020. Quarterly statistics on births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/registrar-general-quarterly-tables-2020>

2. Differences between NISRA's weekly provisional COVID-19 death statistics and the quarterly provisional totals reported here are as follows:
 - 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.

 - Statistics quoted in the Quarterly Report are presented based on the **primary underlying cause** of death, which have been classified using the tenth revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death (ICD10). The code used for 'COVID-19' is U07. As a result the weekly totals will usually be higher than the quarterly figures quoted - because the weekly mentions include cases which go on to be coded as not having COVID-19 as the underlying cause of death.

3. Death Statistics in Northern Ireland are based on deaths which have been registered with the General Register Office (GRO). There are some situations where the registration of the death can be delayed, specifically where the death has been accidental, unexpected or suspicious, and must be referred to the Coroner.
A death which is suspected to be suicide must therefore be referred to the Coroner and can only be registered after the Coroner has completed his/her investigation. The time taken to carry out this investigation can result in a delay in registration. Given the delay in registration of suicide deaths, these deaths may not appear in published statistics until subsequent years.

4. Since 2001, in line with the rest of the UK, the tenth revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death (ICD10) is used to classify cause of death. The codes used for 'Suicide and self-inflicted injury' are X60-X84 and Y87.0 and the codes used for 'Undetermined intent' are Y10-Y34 and Y87.2. At present, NISRA recommends that users of suicide statistics refer to the subset of **self-inflicted harm only (ICD-10 codes X60-X84, Y87.0)**. This is due to an ongoing review in relation to the quality of reported suicide figures. Details of the review are outlined in the 'Guidance Note to Users on Suicide Statistics in Northern Ireland' published on 30th July 2020 and available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Guidance%20Note%20to%20Users%20Northern%20Ireland%20Suicide%20Statistics.pdf>.

5. Due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 there was a delay in the coding of deaths where a Coroner's verdict was required. This mainly impacts deaths

where suicide is the underlying cause. It is only now that the full information for 2020 deaths is available, illustrated by the revision of the number of suicide deaths in quarters 1 to 3 in 2020.

6. Due to the coronavirus situation, a number of registrations offices reduced routine processing of births and marriage registrations with effect from 15th March 2020, and continued priority was given to death registrations. As a result, the number of births and marriages registered during Quarter 2 were unusually low and birth registrations during the 3rd Quarter of 2020 unusually high.
7. Corresponding information for England and Wales is published by the [Office for National Statistics](#) and for Scotland by the [National Records of Scotland](#). Similar figures for the Republic of Ireland are available from the Central Statistics Office Ireland.
8. The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 enabled same sex civil marriages through the Marriage (Same-sex Couples) and Civil Partnership. The regulations came into force on the 13 January 2020 with the first same sex civil marriage taking place on the 11 February 2020. The legislation also enabled opposite sex civil partnerships to take place. On the 1 September 2020 the Marriage and Civil Partnership (NI) Regulations 2020 introduced same sex religious marriage. From the 7 December 2020 the Marriage and Civil Partnership (NI)(No2) Regulations 2020 allowed a same sex couple to convert a previous civil partnership to a marriage. The regulations also permitted opposite sex couples to convert a previous marriage to a civil partnership.
9. All media queries to Department of Finance Press Office at dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk or on Tel: 028 90816724. The Executive Information Service operates an out of hours service **For Media Enquiries Only** between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted on 028 9037 8110.
10. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:
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