

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – Covid-19 related deaths and pre-existing conditions in Northern Ireland: March 2020 to February 2021



9:30am Wednesday 31st March 2021

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published a report on pre-existing conditions associated with Covid-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland.

Between 1st March and 31st December 2020, there were 1,831 Covid-19 related deaths registered in Northern Ireland. Covid-19 was the underlying cause of death (that is, the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death) for 1,626 deaths (88.8% of Covid-19 related deaths).

Pre-existing conditions are defined as any mention on the death certificate of a condition that pre-dated or was independent of Covid-19. There were no pre-existing conditions for 157 of the 1,626 Covid-19 deaths (9.7%), while just over half (816) of Covid-19 deaths (50.2%) had one or two pre-existing conditions. On average, there were 2.4 pre-existing conditions per Covid-19 death.

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease was the most common pre-existing condition, appearing in 524 of the 1,626 Covid-19 deaths (32.2%). The next most common pre-existing conditions were diabetes (335 deaths) and hypertensive diseases (332).

During January and February 2021, a further 975 Covid-19 related deaths were registered.

Over the entire period between 1st March 2020 and 28th February 2021, there were 2,814 Covid-19 related deaths registered in Northern Ireland. Covid-19 was reported in the causal chain of events leading to death for 2,451 deaths, and for 216 of these 2,451 deaths (8.8%), there were no pre-existing conditions. At present, there is insufficient information to identify the number and type of pre-existing conditions over this entire twelve-month period.

NISRA

March 2021

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. A detailed report on Covid-19 related deaths and pre-existing conditions can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-related-deaths-and-pre-existing-conditions>
2. Statistics on weekly deaths registered in Northern Ireland can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/weekly-deaths>
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).
 - 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. Death statistics based on underlying cause are published quarterly. Latest figures are for deaths registered up to the end of December 2020 and are available at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/registrar-general-quarterly-tables-2020>
5. 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.
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

Responsible Statistician: Dr Jos IJpelaar