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Covid: Hospital-linked deaths in Scotland under investigation

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Coronavirus



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By Andrew Picken

BBC Scotland News

A special Crown Office unit set up to probe Covid-linked deaths is considering 827 cases in Scotland's hospitals, latest figures show.

The unit was set up to consider the circumstances of Covid-linked deaths such as those in care homes.

But the prosecution service has also received reports of hundreds of hospital-related virus deaths.

Prosecutors will eventually decide if these deaths should be the subject of a fatal accident inquiry or prosecution.

As of 7 October, Crown Office figures show Scotland's biggest hospital, the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow, has the highest number of reported Covid-linked deaths at 113.

This was followed by the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley and Glasgow Royal Infirmary which both had 71 Covid-related deaths referred to the Crown Office.

The figures do not include deaths at home addresses or hospices, or where a care home resident died in hospital after contracting Covid-19 in a home.

- [Scottish Covid inquiry to start later this year](#)
- [The full picture of Covid-linked deaths in Scotland's care homes](#)

Care home Covid death figures are published separately by the Crown Office.

These show the Crown's Covid-19 Deaths Investigation Team (CDIT) had received 3,491 Covid-linked death reports for care homes as of the end of September.

A spokesman for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service said it had established the dedicated CDIT team to receive and consider reports of Covid-19 deaths.

He added: "CDIT receives and deals with those reports and carries out any investigation which may be justified in the particular circumstances of any particular death or deaths.

"CDIT will work with the relevant agencies to ensure that all necessary and appropriate enquiries are made as quickly as possible."



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| The Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow is Scotland's biggest hospital

Doctors have a duty to report Covid-linked deaths of patients in their care to the CDIT team.

The CDIT team is still at the stage of gathering information on the circumstances of the Covid-19 related deaths it has been asked to consider.

It is not clear when the Crown Office unit will move to the next phase of its work but the timeline of a planned public inquiry will likely be a factor.

The Scottish government has said a **public inquiry into the handling of the Covid pandemic in Scotland** will be established by the end of the year.

'Every death Covid brings is a tragedy'

Dr Scott Davidson, deputy medical director at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, said: "I want to offer my most sincere condolences to everyone who has lost a loved one during the pandemic. People continue to die from this dreadful virus and every death it brings is a tragedy. We will of course continue to support investigations into these deaths.

"As Scotland's largest health board area, just under a third of all Covid infections have been recorded within Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and as a result, our largest hospitals have, unfortunately, also seen the highest number of people to sadly die after being infected with Covid-19."

Dr Davidson pointed out the health board's high proportion of deprived areas which were more likely to suffer from Covid and were at higher risk of more

serious illness. He said it was also home to the largest black, Asian and minority ethnic population in Scotland, communities he said which also had increased risk of serious illness and death due to Covid.

A Scottish government spokesman said: "We mourn every death from Covid-19 and express our sympathy for all those who have lost loved ones, and for the distress and grief experienced by individuals and their families.

"Saving people's lives has been and continues to be the priority of the Scottish government throughout the pandemic and it would clearly be inappropriate to comment on an ongoing Crown Office investigation."

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