



NR

Head of Vital Statistics & Administrative Research and Support Branch

1st Floor
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
BELFAST BT9 5RP

Tel No:

I&S

Email:

NR

@nirsra.gov.uk

FROM: **Name Redacted**
Head of Vital Statistics Unit

DATE: **23 April 2020**

Copy Distribution List Below

TO: **Conor Murphy, MLA**
Robin Swann, MLA

PRE RELEASE ACCESS: Registration based NI Weekly Deaths Statistics

Issue: Pre-release access to key findings 'Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland Weekly Statistics, week ending 17th April 2020'.

Timing: Urgent. The statistics will be published tomorrow, Friday 24th, at 9.30am.

Presentational Issues: Last week's registration based statistics provided, for the first time, a breakdown of COVID-19 related deaths according to whether they occurred in hospital, in a care home/ hospice or other setting. This location analysis has been enhanced within the report to separate hospices from care homes. The figures and accompanying Statistical Press Notice will attract significant local media attention. The relevant officials in NISRA will handle any statistical queries that may arise.

Freedom of Information: This submission is fully disclosable.

Financial Implications: None.

Legislation Implications: None.

Statutory Equality Obligations: None.

Background

1. At 9.30 a.m. on Friday 24th April 2020, the provisional number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland for the week ending 17th April will be published on the NISRA website and will be accompanied by a Statistical Press Notice. This is the fourth weekly bulletin to report on COVID-19 related deaths and the coverage of the report continues to be developed in light of the ongoing pandemic.
2. There has been considerable ongoing media and public interest in relation to the location of deaths, due to the fact that daily data do not include all non-hospital, COVID-19 deaths. Last week's registration based statistics, for the first time, provided a breakdown of deaths according to whether they occurred in hospital, in a care home/ hospice or other setting. The current report further disaggregates care homes from hospices.

Explaining how Covid-19 deaths are being counted by the PHA and NISRA

3. The report also continues to clarify the key differences between NISRA's death registration statistics and those covered by the daily PHA surveillance bulletin and will acknowledge the change in responsibility of the reporting of the latter to the Department of Health from 19th April. Both sources play an important part in tracking the ongoing pandemic. The differences between the sources, in summary, are:
 - The daily figure from PHA counts 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. These figures may not capture all deaths that occur outside hospital. These data are important because they are available earlier, and therefore give a quicker daily indication of what is happening and are broadly comparable with the figures released daily in other parts of the UK. PHA reported 212 deaths associated with COVID-19 by 17th April 2020 (which includes revisions provided by the DoH up until 22nd April).
 - 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 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 be higher than the relevant daily figures - because the daily updates only include those who have tested positive for the virus. NISRA reported 276 COVID-19 related deaths having occurred by 17th April (and taking account of registrations up to and including 22nd April).
4. The NISRA Statistics Press Notice is attached at Annex A. Main points of interest outlined in the report include:

Key Points – Analyses based on date of registration

- The provisional number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 17th April 2020 (week 15) was 424; 11 fewer than in week 14 but 134 more than the 5-year average of 290. Over the last 3 weeks in total, 410 'excess deaths' (deaths above the average for the corresponding week in previous years) have been registered in Northern Ireland.

- Over two-fifths (42.2%) of all deaths in week 15 were classified as ‘respiratory’ (179). Please note that all COVID-19 related deaths have been included in this classification.
- There have been 5,245 deaths registered in the year-to-date, 30.3% of which (1,589) were classified as ‘respiratory’. The number and proportion of respiratory deaths is lower in the year-to-date than the 5 year average of 1,613 and 31.7%.
- One hundred and one deaths mentioning COVID-19 on the death certificate were registered in week 15, accounting for 23.8% of all deaths in that week and bringing the total number of COVID-19 related deaths registered in calendar year 2020 to 242.
- Males accounted for around half (49.0%) of all registered deaths in the calendar year 2020 to 17 April and slightly more than half (54.1%) of the 242 COVID-19 related deaths registered over the same period.
- The majority of all deaths registered in week 15 and the year-to-date were of persons aged 75 and above. This age group accounted for two-thirds of all deaths and almost 75% of COVID-19 related deaths in the year-to-date up to 17th April.

Key Points – Analyses based on Occurrences

Because of the rapidly changing situation, the bulletin also provides provisional, updated totals of **deaths occurring (based on date of death)** up to 17th April, taking account of the latest available death registrations up to and including 22nd April 2020. On this basis:

- 276 deaths mentioning COVID-19 on the death certificate have occurred in total up to 17th April (including those registered up to and including 22nd April.)
 - The comparative number of death notifications reported by the Public Health Agency (PHA) to 17th April¹ was 212.
 - Of the 276 deaths involving COVID-19 in 2020 year-to-date up to 17th April, 166 (60.1%) occurred in hospital, 93 (33.7%) occurred in care homes, three (1.1%) occurred in hospices and 14 (5.1%) occurred at residential addresses or another location. The proportion of all COVID-19 deaths occurring in care homes has therefore increased from 25.3%² by the end of week 14 to 33.7% in the year to date up to 17th April.
 - The 96 deaths in care homes and hospices involved 44 separate establishments.
 - In week 15, similar numbers of COVID-19 related deaths occurred in a community setting (56 in total) and a hospital setting (54).
5. Recipients are reminded that these are Official Statistics to which you have received pre-release access under the Pre-Release access to Official Statistics (NI) Order 2009. Recipients of pre-release statistics are cautioned:

¹ Responsibility for reporting these figures moved to the Department of Health on 19th April. Figures are based on deaths that occurred up to 17th April and include revisions up to 22nd April, to account for delayed notifications.

² Based on revised data since last week following additional death registrations.

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE: Official Statistics embargoed until 9.30am on 24th April 2020. For named Individuals only.

- to ensure that the statistics, or any information based on them, or any indication of the content is not made available to others;
- not to seek changes to release dates; and
- to make the statistician responsible for the statistics aware of any accidental release of the information to others immediately.

Wrongful release includes indications of the content, including descriptions such as "favourable" or "unfavourable". Please prevent inappropriate use by treating this information as restricted. Recipients should note that a list of those who receive privileged early access is publicly available on the NISRA website.

Recommendation: You are invited to note the key findings of the statistical report 'Deaths Registered in Northern Ireland Weekly Statistics, week ending 17th April 2020.'

Name Redacted



NR

cc: Eoin Rooney (Special Advisor, DoF)
Mark Ovens, (Special Advisor, DoH)
Sue Gray (Permanent Secretary DoF)
Richard Pengelly (Permanent Secretary, DoH)
Michael McBride (Chief Medical Officer)
Siobhan Carey (NISRA Chief Executive & Registrar General)
Mark McLaughlin (Head of Comms & Engagement, DoF)
David Gordon (Head of Communications, DoH)
Chris McNabb (Deputy Director Info Services, TEO)
NR (Head of Information & Analysis Directorate, DoH)
Stephen Wilson (PHA)
NR (DoF Press Office)
NR (DoH Press Office)
NR (Minister's Private Secretary, DoH)
NR (GRO)
NR (DoF Press Office)

NR

I&S

**STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE –
WEEKLY DEATH STATISTICS
(Week ending 17th April 2020)**



9:30am Friday 24th April 2020

COVID-19 related deaths: week ending 17th April

Latest figures published today by NISRA show that, of the 276 total deaths involving COVID-19 occurring up to 17th April 2020, 166 (60.1%) occurred in hospital, 93 (33.7%) occurred in care homes, 3 (1.1%) in hospices and 14 (5.1%) occurred at private addresses or other locations. The 96 deaths in care homes and hospices involved 44 separate establishments.

The comparative number of deaths reported daily by the Public Health Agency¹ to 17th April was 212. 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, filled out by medical professionals.

The provisional number of total deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 17th April 2020 (week 15) was 424, 11 fewer than in week 14 but 134 more than the 5-year average of 290. One hundred and one (23.8%) of these deaths mentioned COVID-19 on the death certificate, bringing the total number of COVID-19 related deaths registered in the calendar year 2020 to 242.

Over the last 3 weeks in total, 410 'excess deaths' (deaths above the average for the corresponding week in previous years) have been registered in Northern Ireland.

Males accounted for around half (49.0%) of all registered deaths in the calendar year 2020 to 17 April and slightly more than half (54.1%) of the 242 COVID-19 related deaths registered over the same period.

The majority of all deaths registered in week 15 and the year-to-date were of persons aged 75 and above. This age group accounted for two-thirds of all deaths and almost 75% of COVID-19 related deaths in the year-to-date up to 17th April.

There have been 5,245 deaths registered in the year-to-date, 30.3% of which (1,589) were classified as 'respiratory'. The number and proportion of respiratory deaths is lower in the year-to-date than the 5-year average of 1,613 (31.7%)

NISRA

April 2020

NOTES TO EDITORS

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 on 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 Public Health Agency's (PHA) Daily Surveillance bulletins¹ are as follows:

- The daily PHA total covers the number of deaths reported to it 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. The PHA figures may not capture all deaths that occur outside hospital. 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 UK. PHA reported 212 deaths associated with COVID-19 by 17th April 2020. [This figure includes revisions up until 22nd April]

- 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. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA

Customer Services at: Telephone: I&S E-mail: demography@nisra.gov.uk

Responsible Statistician: NR