



NR
Head of Vital Statistics & Administrative Research and Support Branch

1st Floor
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
BELFAST BT9 5RR
Tel No: **I&S**
Email: **NR**@nisra.gov.uk

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

DATE: 16 June 2020

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TO: Robin Swann, MLA

PRE RELEASE ACCESS: ANALYSIS OF COVID-19 RELATED DEATHS MARCH – MAY 2020

Issue: Pre-release access to 'COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland: March-May 2020'

Timing: Urgent. The statistics will be published tomorrow, Wednesday 17th, at 9.30am.

Presentational Issues: The report includes age-standardised mortality rates for COVID-19 related deaths by age, sex and different geographical areas as well as by deprivation quintiles. High level information on COVID-19 related deaths by occupation and by country of birth is also presented. The figures and accompanying Statistical Press Notice will attract significant media attention. The relevant officials in NISRA will handle any statistical queries that may arise.

Freedom of Information: This submission is fully disclosable.

Legislation Implications: None.

Recommendation: You are invited to note the key findings of the statistical report, a copy of which is attached for information.

Background

1. The new NISRA publication planned for release at 9.30am on 17th June, provides an analysis of COVID-19 deaths occurring in Northern Ireland to 31 May 2020, contextualised with data relating to non COVID-19 deaths over the period. The analysis includes age-standardised rates by age, sex, Local Government District and deprivation quintiles. Analysis is also presented by occupation as well as country of birth though this is limited to counts due to the small numbers involved in some categories.
2. The analysis is based on death registration information collected by the General Register Office and therefore includes all deaths occurring 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.
3. The NISRA Statistics Press Notice is attached at Annex A. Main points of interest outlined in the report include:

Key Points

- There were 764 deaths involving COVID-19 between 1 March and 31 May 2020, registered up to 10th June. Of all COVID-19 deaths occurring during this period, 49.6% were male (379) and 50.4% were female (385).
- Over 95% of COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland occurred in persons aged 60 years and over (94.2% of male COVID-19 related deaths and 97.7 % of female COVID-19 related deaths).
- Taking into account the age structure of the population in Northern Ireland, the age-standardised mortality rate (ASMR) relating to deaths involving COVID-19 was 48.2 per 100,000 persons. Males had a significantly higher rate of death linked to COVID-19; the ASMR for males was 60.4 deaths per 100,000 of the male population compared with 40.4 deaths per 100,000 females.
- Belfast Local Government District (LGD) had the highest COVID-19 related ASMR with 81.1 deaths per 100,000, followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD at 64.4 (per 100,000). Fermanagh and Omagh had the lowest COVID-19 related ASMR of 16.2 (per 100,000), followed by the neighbouring Derry and Strabane with an ASMR of 25.0 (per 100,000).
- Adjusting for the age structure of the population, COVID-19 related ASMRs were highest in the 20% most deprived areas at 60.5 deaths per 100,000 population.
- The highest COVID-19 related ASMR was found in urban areas (59.0 deaths per 100,000 population), and was significantly higher than ASMRs in areas categorised as mixed (37.7 deaths per 100,000 population) and rural (30.4 deaths per 100,000 population).
- Proportions of COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland by Country of birth are in line with proportions from the Northern Ireland Census in 2011; 89.9% of COVID-19 related deaths were of people born in Northern Ireland.

- Only 86 (11.3%) of the 764 COVID-19 related deaths occurred in persons of working age (aged 20-69), of which 35 (40.7%) were in the skilled trades, elementary occupations or process, plant and machine operative occupational groups.
4. 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:
- 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 'COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland: March-May 2020.

Name Redacted



I&S

cc: Richard Pengelly (Permanent Secretary, DoH)

NR

(DoH Press Office)

**STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE –
COVID-19 related deaths in
Northern Ireland: March-May 2020**



9:30am Wednesday 17th June 2020

Analysis of COVID-19 related deaths: March – May 2020

Latest figures published today by NISRA show that COVID-19 related deaths (764) accounted for 17.2% of all deaths in Northern Ireland from 1st March to 31st May 2020. For that period, the age-standardised mortality rate (ASMR) relating to deaths involving COVID-19 was 48.2 per 100,000 persons. ASMRs take the age structure of a standard population (the 2013 European Standard Population) into account, in order to be able to directly compare mortality rates for different categories, including males with females or regions within a country. In this report ASMRs provide a more representative picture of Covid-19 related mortality.

Males had a significantly higher rate of death linked to COVID-19: the ASMR for males was 60.4 deaths per 100,000 of the male population compared with 40.4 deaths per 100,000 females.

Belfast Local Government District (LGD) had the highest COVID-19 related ASMR with 81.1 deaths per 100,000, followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD at 64.4 (per 100,000). Fermanagh and Omagh had the lowest COVID-19 related ASMR of 16.2 (per 100,000), followed by the neighbouring Derry and Strabane with an ASMR of 25.0 (per 100,000).

Adjusting for differing age structures within the population, COVID-19 related ASMRs were highest for the 20% most deprived areas at 60.5 deaths per 100,000 population. This compares with an ASMR of 48.2 per 100,000 persons for Northern Ireland as a whole.

The highest COVID-19 related ASMR was found in urban areas (59.0 deaths per 100,000 population). This was significantly higher than ASMRs in areas categorised as mixed urban/rural (37.7 deaths per 100,000 population) and rural (30.4 deaths per 100,000 population).

Proportions of COVID-19 related deaths in Northern Ireland by Country of birth are in line with proportions from the Northern Ireland Census in 2011; 89.9% of COVID-19 related deaths were of people born in Northern Ireland.

Eighty six of the 764 (11.3%) COVID-19 related deaths were persons of working age (aged 20-69); of which 35 (40.7%) were in the skilled trades, elementary occupations or process, plant and machine operative occupational groups.

NISRA

June 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: I&S Out of office hours please contact the Duty Press Officer on I&S 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 537 deaths associated with COVID-19 by 5th June 2020 (including revisions up to 10th June).
 - 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. These occurrence based statistics (to end May 2020) take into account registrations up to 10th June 2020, to allow for delays in death registrations.
5. Mortality rates generally increase with age. A population with a greater proportion of older people is expected to have more deaths per population. To adjust for different age profiles in different populations (e.g. different regions or countries), statistical techniques are used to adjust or 'standardize' mortality rates among populations to be compared. **Age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs)** are presented per 100,000 people and are standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population.
6. The age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) presented are not comparable with those released by the ONS on Friday 12th June in their report 'Deaths involving COVID-19, UK: Deaths occurring from 1 March to 30 April 2020'. Rates used in the ONS release were adjusted to take into account the period observed, therefore effectively annualising the rates. This allowed the rates to be comparable with rates in other annual publications.

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE: Official Statistics embargoed until 9.30am on 17th June 2020. For named Individuals only.

7. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:

Telephone: E-mail: demography@nisra.gov.uk

Responsible Statistician: