

Statistical bulletin

# Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 8 December 2023

Provisional number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19), in the latest weeks.



Contact:  
Merilynn Pratt and Joe Panes  
health.data@ons.gov.uk  
+44 1329 444110

Release date:  
19 December 2023

Next release:  
4 January 2024

## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Deaths registered in England and Wales](#)
3. [Deaths data](#)
4. [Glossary](#)
5. [Measuring the data](#)
6. [Strengths and limitations](#)
7. [Related links](#)
8. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

# 1 . Main points

- In the week ending 8 December 2023 (Week 49), 11,318 deaths were registered in England and Wales; 180 of these deaths mentioned novel coronavirus (COVID-19), accounting for 1.6% of all deaths.
- This was a decrease in all deaths compared with the week ending 1 December 2023 (Week 48), when the number of all-cause deaths registered was 11,328; COVID-19 accounted for 177 of these deaths (1.6%).
- Of the 180 deaths involving COVID-19 in Week 49, 74.4% (134 deaths) had this recorded as the underlying cause of death, which was a higher proportion when compared with Week 48 (65.5%).
- The number of deaths was above the five-year average in private homes (10.5% above, 304 excess deaths) and other settings (9.7% above, 79 excess deaths), and below the five-year average in care homes (2.6% below, 63 fewer deaths) and hospitals (2.1% below, 104 fewer deaths).
- The number of deaths registered in the UK in the week ending 8 December 2023 (Week 49) was 12,896, which was 1.9% greater than the five-year average (240 excess deaths); of these deaths, 212 (1.6%) involved COVID-19.

For more information on different measures of excess death and our current work around excess mortality, please read our blog post, [How do we measure expected and excess deaths?](#)

The numbers of deaths shown for England and Wales separately do not add up exactly to the numbers for England and Wales together. This is because the latter figures include deaths of non-residents in addition to those of residents of the two countries.

## 2 . Deaths registered in England and Wales

In the week ending 8 December 2023 (Week 49), 11,318 deaths were registered in England and Wales. Of these, 10,600 were registered in England and 690 were registered in Wales (Table 1).

Table 1: Deaths registered in England and Wales, week ending 8 December (Week 49) 2023

| <b>Week 49 2023</b>  | <b>England and Wales<br/>(including non-residents)</b> | <b>England</b> | <b>Wales</b> |
|--|--|----------------|--------------|
| Total deaths (all causes)  | 11,318   | 10,600         | 690          |
| Total deaths above 5-year average  | 216  | 223            | -12          |
| Percentage change compared to 5-year average (2017 to 2019 and 2021, 2022) | 1.9%   | 2.1%           | -1.7%        |
| Deaths involving COVID-19  | 180  | 167            | 12           |
| Percentage of deaths involving COVID-19                                    | 1.6%   | 1.6%           | 1.7%         |
| Total deaths (Week 11 2020 to Week 49 2023)                                | 2,208,770  | 2,068,689      | 136,291      |
| Total involving COVID-19 (Week 11 2020 to Week 49 2023)                    | 210,849  | 198,144        | 12,340       |
| Total deaths above 5-year average (Week 11 2020 to Week 49 2023)           | 198,127  | 188,865        | 10,389       |

Source: Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

### Notes

1. Figures for "England and Wales" include non-residents. Therefore the sum of "England" and "Wales" which exclude non-residents will differ from "England and Wales".
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred. All figures are provisional.
3. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are available in Section 5: Measuring the data.
4. The number of deaths registered in a week is affected when bank holidays occur.
5. The five-year average for each year is as follows: 2017 to 2019, and 2021 to 2022 for comparisons with 2023; 2016 to 2019 and 2021 for comparisons with 2022; and 2015 to 2019 for comparisons with 2020 and 2021.

The number of deaths from all causes was above the five-year average in England and Wales in the week ending 8 December 2023 (Week 49). Figure 1 shows the number of deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) and the number of deaths not involving COVID-19.

### Figure 1: Total deaths from all causes were above the five-year average in Week 49 2023

Number of deaths registered by week, England and Wales, 28 December 2019 to 8 December 2023

## Notes:

1. Figures include deaths of non-residents.
2. Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.
3. All figures are provisional.
4. The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are available in [Section 5: Measuring the data](#).
5. The number of deaths registered in a week is affected when bank holidays occur.
6. The five-year average for each year is as follows: 2017 to 2019, and 2021 to 2022 for comparisons with 2023; 2016 to 2019 and 2021 for comparisons with 2022; and 2015 to 2019 for comparisons with 2020 and 2021.

## Download the data

# 3 . Deaths data

### [Deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional figures](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available. Includes the most up-to-date figures available for deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19).

### [Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19), by local authority, health board and place of death in the latest weeks for which data are available. The occurrence tabs in the 2021 edition of this dataset were updated for the last time on 25 October 2022.

### [Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England](#)

Dataset | Released 1 August 2023

Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority. Published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

### [Deaths registered weekly in Wales, provisional](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in Wales, by age and sex in the latest weeks for which data are available. Includes the most up-to-date figures available for deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19).

### [Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional](#)

Dataset | Released 19 December 2023

Provisional counts of the number of care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, by region, including deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19), in the latest weeks for which data are available.

Try the new way to filter and download these data:

- [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales by age and sex](#)
- [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales by region](#)
- [Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and place of death](#)

## 4 . Glossary

### Coronavirus deaths

Coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths are those deaths registered in England and Wales in the stated week where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate. A doctor can certify the involvement of COVID-19 based on symptoms and clinical findings; a positive test result is not required. Definitions of COVID-19 for deaths in Scotland and Northern Ireland are similar to England and Wales.

### Excess death

The term excess deaths in this statistical bulletin refers to the number of deaths above the five-year average. For 2020 and 2021, the average for 2015 to 2019 has been used. For 2022, the average is calculated from 2016 to 2019 and 2021 data. For 2023, the average is calculated from 2017 to 2019, 2021 and 2022 data. This provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected in a usual (non-coronavirus pandemic) year.

## 5 . Measuring the data

We publish timely, provisional counts of death registrations in our [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional dataset](#). These are presented:

- by sex
- by age group
- for regions (within England)
- for Wales as a whole

To allow time for registration and processing, figures are published 11 days after the week ends. We also provide provisional updated totals for death occurrences based on the latest available death registrations, up to 16 December 2023.

The five-year average shows us the expected number of deaths per week based on the most recent years and smooths random year-on-year fluctuations. We use the 2015 to 2019 five-year average as a usual non-coronavirus (COVID-19) period to compare with. The further we move away from this period, the less robust the measure is because of changes in population numbers, age and structure.

Deaths registered in 2023 are compared with the 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022 five-year average.

The number of registration days in a reference period can affect mortality statistics. Bank holidays can affect the number of registrations because registration offices are closed.

### Coronavirus

This weekly bulletin provides a breakdown of the number of deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes deaths where COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, including in combination with other health conditions.

If a death certificate mentions COVID-19, it will not always be the main cause of death but may be a contributory factor.

## Data coverage

The number of weeks in the year will affect how many days the data cover in the year. Leap years require a 53rd week to be added to the end of the calendar year. The last leap year was in 2020. It is more appropriate to compare 2020 figures with the average for Week 52 than with a single year from five years previously. Read more on the data coverage for our Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional bulletin in [Section 1 of our Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

Influenza and pneumonia have been included for comparison in our [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional dataset](#). These illnesses are a well-understood cause of death involving respiratory infection likely to have somewhat similar risk factors to COVID-19.

## Registration delays

This bulletin is based mainly on the date that deaths are registered, not the date of death. Deaths in England and Wales are normally registered within five days. There can be a longer delay, particularly if the death is referred to a coroner. Read more in our [Impact of registration delays on mortality statistics in England and Wales article](#).

We have developed a statistical model to estimate the number of deaths likely to have occurred in each week based on the previous pattern of registration delays, including the effects of bank holidays. Read more in our [Predicting total weekly death occurrences in England and Wales methodology](#). Results are shown in sheet 11 of our [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional dataset](#).

## Classification codes

From the week ending 26 February 2021 (Week 8), new International Classification of Diseases codes for COVID-19 issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) were used for deaths involving COVID-19. Read more in our [Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

For further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to mortality, and a glossary of terms, view our [User guide to mortality statistics methodology](#).

# 6 . Strengths and limitations

These weekly figures are for England and Wales only. They are from the formal death registration process and may include cases where the doctor completing the death certificate diagnosed possible cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), for example, based on relevant symptoms, but where no test was conducted. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures are different from the [daily surveillance figures on COVID-19 deaths published by the Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\) on GOV.UK](#), which are for the UK as a whole and its constituent countries.

On 1 February 2022, the UK Health Security Agency technical summary data series was revised to include deaths of positively tested individuals where the death occurred within 28 days, and deaths within 60 days of a positive test. Read more in the [UK Health Security Agency technical summary \(PDF, 443KB\)](#).

Some definitions of COVID-19 deaths differ between sources and settings. Read more in our [Coronavirus and mortality in England and Wales methodology](#).

## Quality

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Mortality statistics in England and Wales QMI](#).

## 7 . Related links

[Death registration summary statistics, England and Wales: 2022](#)

Article | Released 11 April 2023

Number of deaths registered by year, sex, area of usual residence and selected underlying cause of death.

[Excess deaths in England and Wales: March 2020 to December 2022](#)

Article | Released 9 March 2023

Number of excess deaths, including deaths due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and due to other causes.

Includes breakdowns by age, sex and geography.

[Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2021 \(refreshed populations\)](#)

Bulletin | Released 27 January 2023

Registered deaths by age, sex, selected underlying causes of death, leading causes of death. Death rates and registrations by residence area, single year of age.

## 8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 19 December 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 8 December 2023](#)