

Deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland

Week 1
(04 January 2021 to 10 January 2021)



Published on 13 January 2021

This statistical report includes provisional statistics on the number of deaths associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) and the total number of deaths registered in Scotland, for week 1 of 2021

Data for weeks 52, 53 and 1 are affected by the Christmas Period

There were fewer registrations than usual in weeks 52 and 53 due to public holidays. Week 52 contained one public holiday for 25 December, and week 53 contained two public holidays, 28 December and 1 January. As a result, death registrations were likely to be lower than the actual number of deaths that occurred in these weeks.

Registrations for week 1 may be higher than normal as registrars deal with backlogs from the previous weeks, although it should be noted that there was also a public holiday in this week (4 January).

Care should therefore be taken in interpreting weekly data around the turn of the year as it is affected by public holidays and won't give a reliable indication of the trend. Next week's report will include some analysis of deaths by date of occurrence and will give a clearer indication of the trend at the end of the year.

Key Findings

COVID deaths

- As at the 10th of January, there have been a total of 7,074 deaths registered in Scotland where the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was mentioned on the death certificate.
- Of the total number of deaths registered in week 1 (04 January to 10 January) of 2021, there were 384 where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate. This is an increase of 197 deaths on the previous week.
- Of deaths involving COVID-19 in the latest week:
 - 73% (279 deaths) were aged 75+, and 9% (36 deaths) were aged under 65.
 - 56% were male (214 deaths) and 44% female (170 deaths).
 - There were 110 deaths in Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board area, 77 in Lanarkshire and 50 in Lothian.
 - At council level, the highest number of deaths occurred in North Lanarkshire (53), Glasgow City (50) and City of Edinburgh (34).
 - The majority of deaths (65%) occurred in hospitals (251 deaths), with 113 deaths in care homes and 19 at home or in non-institutional settings.

All-cause deaths and excess deaths

Measuring excess deaths in 2021

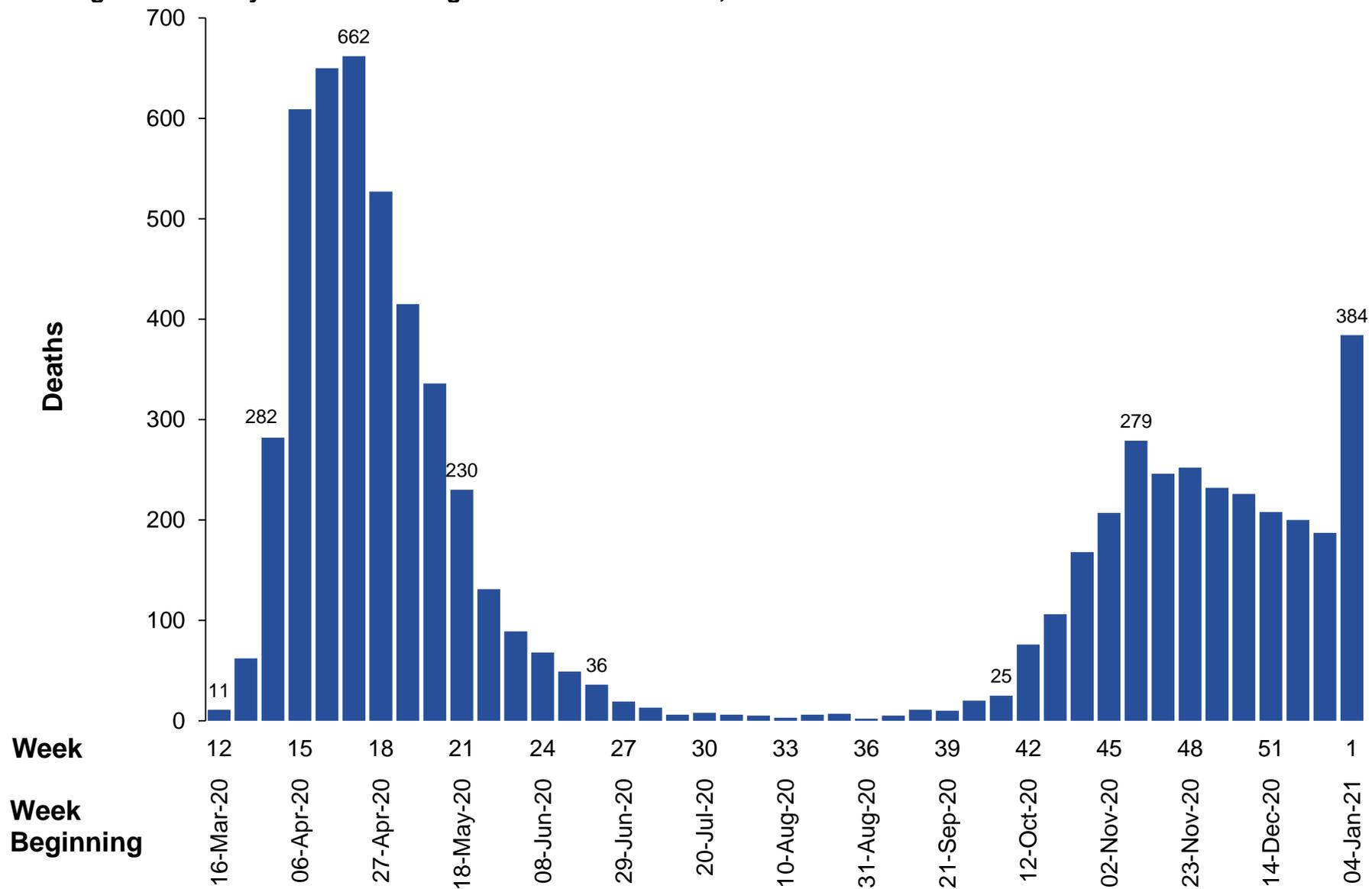
Excess deaths are calculated by comparing the current year to the five year average from previous years. This average is based on the actual number of death registrations recorded for each corresponding week in the previous five years. Moveable public holidays, when registration offices are closed, affect the number of registrations made in the current week and in the corresponding weeks in previous years.

Usually, the previous five years are used to compare against the most recent year to calculate excess deaths. In 2020, excess deaths were measured by comparing the 2020 figure against the average for 2015-2019. For 2021 we would generally calculate excess deaths by comparing the 2021 figure against the average for 2016-2020.

As excess deaths are a key measure of the effect of the pandemic, it is not appropriate to compare the 2021 figure against the 2016-2020 average as that average will be affected by the pandemic with higher deaths in Spring 2020. We have therefore decided to continue to use the 2015-2019 average to measure excess deaths in 2021.

- The provisional total number of deaths registered in Scotland in week 1 of 2021 (04 January to 10 January) was 1,704.
- The average number of deaths registered in the corresponding week over the five year period between 2015 and 2019 was 1,276, so there were 428 (34%) more deaths registered in week 1 of 2021 compared to the average.
- In week 1 there were 69 excess deaths in care homes compared to the average (22% above average), 195 excess deaths at home or in non-institutional settings (62% above average) and 169 excess deaths in hospitals compared to the average (26% above average).
- Across all settings, 76% of excess deaths in week 1 had an underlying cause of COVID-19, 19% were due to other causes, 14% due to cancer and 11% due to circulatory causes. Deaths from respiratory causes were below average for this time of year.

Figure 1: Weekly deaths involving COVID-19 in Scotland, week 12 2020 to week 1 2021



How do NRS compile these statistics?

- Weekly figures are based on the date of registration. In Scotland deaths must be registered within 8 days but in practice, the average time between death and registration is around 3 days.
- Figures are allocated to weeks based on the ISO8601 standard. Weeks begin on a Monday and end on a Sunday. Often weeks at the beginning and end of a year will overlap the preceding and following years (e.g. week 1 of 2020 began on Monday 30 December 2019) so the weekly figures may not sum to any annual totals which are subsequently produced.
- Deaths involving COVID-19 are defined as those where COVID-19 is mentioned on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributory cause. Cause of death is coded according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Conditions 10th Revision (ICD-10). The relevant codes included in this publication are U07.1 and U07.2.
- Figures include deaths where 'suspected' or 'probable' COVID-19 appears on the death certificate.
- Data are provisional and subject to change in future weekly publications. The data will be finalised in June 2021. Reasons why the data might be revised later include late registration data being received once the week's figure have been produced or more information being provided by a certifying doctor or The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) on the cause of death.
- Certain user enquiries for ad-hoc analysis related to COVID-19 deaths have been published on our [website](#).
- The weekly publication includes breakdowns by sex, age, health board, local authority and location of death. It also includes an analysis of excess deaths by location and broad cause of death. We also publish a comprehensive and detailed analysis of mortality on a monthly basis.
- NRS mortality data (COVID-19 and excess deaths) continue to be made available on a weekly basis through the [Scottish Government's COVID-19 dashboard](#)

Index of available analysis on registered deaths involving COVID-19

Breakdown	Frequency	When Added	Latest Period Covered	Date Last updated
Age group	Weekly	8 th April 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Sex	Weekly	8 th April 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Location	Weekly	15 th April 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Health Board	Weekly	8 th April 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Local Authority	Weekly	22 nd April 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Excess deaths by cause	Weekly	22 nd April 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Excess deaths by cause and location	Weekly	17 th June 2020	Week 1	13 th January 2021
Age-standardised mortality rates – Scotland	Monthly	13 th May 2020	November	16 th December 2020
Age-standardised mortality rates – sub-Scotland	Monthly	17 th June 2020	March – Nov combined	16 th December 2020
Leading causes of death	Monthly	13 th May 2020	November	16 th December 2020
Pre-existing conditions	Monthly	13 th May 2020	November	16 th December 2020
Deprivation	Monthly	13 th May 2020	March – Nov combined	16 th December 2020
Urban Rural	Monthly	13 th May 2020	March – Nov combined	16 th December 2020
Daily occurrences by location of death	Monthly	13 th May 2020	November	16 th December 2020
Occupation	Monthly	17 th June 2020	March – Nov combined	16 th December 2020
Intermediate Zone	Monthly	17 th June 2020	March – Nov combined	16 th December 2020
Ethnic Group	One-off	8 th July 2020	March to mid-June	11 th November 2020

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Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the Statistics section of our website. Scottish Census statistics are available on the Scotland’s Census website.

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Enquiries and suggestions

Please get in touch if you need any further information, or have any suggestions for improvement.

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