

The demography of COVID-19 deaths (<https://dc-covid.site.ined.fr/en/>)
Summary of metadata for Scotland
(Last revised 03/06/2022)

Development of data collection systems during the pandemic

In Scotland there are 2 sources of data for COVID-19 mortality: National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Public Health Scotland (PHS), whose data were published on the Scottish Government website until 08/04/2022. The NRS provides more comprehensive data, as PHS relies on the NRS figures but only keeps records of cases confirmed by a positive test. Until 09/02/2022, this test had to be a PCR but from 10/02/2022, cases detected by an antigen test (Lateral Flow Device) were included in the count. As of 11/04/2022, PHS data are no longer available on the government website. The publication of NRS data has remained fairly consistent during the pandemic.

Summary description of each source as of 21 April 2022

A.1. Data source 1

National Records of Scotland (NRS):

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

A.2. Coverage

2.1 COVID-19 definition

Confirmed and suspected COVID-19 deaths.

2.2 Place of death

All places.

2.3. Geographical coverage

Scotland.

2.4. Time coverage

From 08/04/2020 to 20/04/2022.

A.3. Data collection method

The figures reported include deaths for which COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributing cause.

A.4. Collected data

4.1. Age group: 0, 1-14, 15-44, 45-64, 65-74, 75-84, 85+

4.2. Sex: male and female, broken down by age group

4.3. Reference date type: date of registration for age and sex data in the Excel tab "NRS_Age&Sex" and for totals by day and place of death in the tabs "NRS_Place_of_death_WeekRegistr" and "NRS_SG_DailyTotal_DateRegistr"; date of death in the Excel tab "NRS_DailyTotal_DateOccurrence".

4.4. Place of death: care home, home, hospital, other institutions

A.5. Update frequency and data cut-off time

Publication on Wednesday of the previous week's data (from Monday to the previous Sunday).

B.1. Data source 2

Scottish Government (SG) and Public Health Scotland (PHS):

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-trends-in-daily-data/> (SG)

<https://www.opendata.nhs.scot/dataset/covid-19-in-scotland> (PHS)

B.2. Coverage

2.1 COVID-19 definition

Confirmed COVID-19 deaths (by PCR or antigen test).

2.2 Place of death

All places.

2.3. Geographical coverage

Scotland.

2.4. Time coverage

From 14/03/2020 to 22/04/2022.

B.3. Data collection method

The Scottish Government publishes data reported daily by PHS, which relies on NRS data to identify deaths of confirmed cases (i.e. with a positive test within 28 days of death).

B.4. Collected data

4.1. Age group: *Not applicable*

4.2. Sex: *Not applicable*

4.3. Reference date type: report date

4.4. Place of death: *Not applicable*

B.5. Update frequency and data cut-off time

The data is updated daily at 14:00.

ANNEX: Detailed metadata sheet for Scotland (Last revised 11/02/2022)

Data Source 1

National Records of Scotland (NRS). “Deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland”, weekly reports and data available at: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

Coverage

All deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, i.e. includes laboratory-confirmed, probable and suspected cases (cases where the doctor who certified the death noted that there was suspected or probable coronavirus infection involved in the death).

Data collection method

When a death occurs, a family member or a representative of the deceased must report the death by appointment with a registrar. This must be done within 8 days of the date of death. On average, there is a 3-day gap between the occurrence of a death and its registration.

The numbers reported include deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributory cause. The cause of death is coded according to the 10th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10); the numbers reported by the NRS for COVID-19 were deaths classified with the codes U07.1 and U07.2.

Deaths are allocated to areas based on the usual residence of the deceased. If the deceased was not a Scottish resident, the death is allocated to the area where the death occurred.

The time series coming from this data source and published in the excel sheet “NRS_DailyTotal_DateOccurrence” and “NRS_Place_of_death_DateOccurr”, include death counts occurred since the beginning of the pandemic and may account for retrospective corrections.

Data collected

Our data files provide the following information from the weekly updates published by the NRS:

- The weekly cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths, by age and sex, from the week of 16-22 March 2020 onwards. These data are by week of registration (see **Publication frequency and data cut off time**).
- The weekly cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths by place of death (care homes, hospitals, other institutions or at home/non-institutional residence), total (all ages and both sexes combined) by week of registration, from the week of 16-22 March 2020 onwards.
- The daily cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths by place of death (care homes, hospitals, other institutions or at home/non-institutional residence), total (all ages and both sexes combined) by date of occurrence, from 12 March 2020 onwards.
- The daily cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths by date of registration, total (all ages and both sexes combined), from 12 March 2020 onwards.
- The daily cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths by date of occurrence (all ages and both sexes combined), from 12 March 2020 onwards.

Further data by region, underlying cause of death, local health board and other variables are available in the documentation files downloadable from our website “The Demography of COVID-19 Deaths”. In addition to COVID-19 data, these files also provide data on deaths from all causes combined. This information can also be consulted in the archives of the NRS (see **Data Source 1**), including the section “Related statistics”¹, where further details on the age and sex distribution of deaths (COVID-19 or all deaths) by location are available.

¹ National Records of Scotland. “Related Statistics: Statistics relevant to COVID-19”, downloadable data files available at: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital->

Publication frequency and data cut off time

Weekly reports on COVID-19 with downloadable data files are published every Wednesday on the NRS website (see **Data Source 1**). The registration weeks covered by the NRS reports run from Monday to Sunday. For example, the first report, published on 8 April 2020, covers all deaths registered from Monday to Sunday of the previous week (30 March to 5 April 2020). At every update, the deaths registered during the preceding week are included in the NRS's reports and data files.

Due to the very low number of new COVID-19 deaths during the month of August 2020, the weekly reports published by the NRS were replaced by detailed monthly reports. The last weekly report was published on 12 August 2020. However, the weekly NRS updates by place of death continue to be published every Wednesday via the Scottish Government's COVID-19 dashboard: <https://data.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/index.html>

Weekly reports may be re-introduced by the NRS if changes in the spread or impact of COVID-19 in Scotland are observed.

Data Source 2

The Scottish Government. "Coronavirus (COVID-19): trends in daily data". Daily updates available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-trends-in-daily-data/>

Coverage

All those with a positive test for COVID-19 who died within 28 days of detection of the infection. Includes deaths in hospitals, care homes and the community. Until February 9 2022, data only include the deaths where COVID-19 is confirmed by a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test within 28 days. From 10 February 2022, data also include those deaths where COVID-19 is confirmed by a first Lateral Flow Device (LFD). Because the policy change to include LFD results occurred on 5 January 2022, this applies to deaths occurring from 6 January onwards.

Data collection method

The Scottish Government receives the information from the National Records of Scotland (NRS). The daily data include confirmed cases only (i.e. individuals with a positive COVID-19 test), who died within 28 days of detection of the infection. See **Data collection method** for **Data Source 1**.

From 2 April 2020, a new reporting procedure was put in place, reducing the delay in the reporting of COVID-19 deaths. See details here: <https://www.gov.scot/news/new-process-for-reporting-covid-19-deaths/>

Data collected

Our data files provide the following information from the weekly updates published by the Scottish Government:

- The daily cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths by date of registration, total (all ages and both sexes combined), from 14 March 2020 onwards.

Further data on COVID-19 cases including medical consultations, testing, hospitalizations, cases in care-homes, and other variables are available in the documentation files downloadable from our website "The Demography of COVID-19 Deaths" as well as from the Scottish Government website (see **Data Source 2**).

Publication frequency and data cut off time

Figures are updated daily at 14:00, based on the latest information received from the NRS (see **Data collection method**).

[events/general-publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-births-and-deaths/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland/related-statistics](https://www.gov.scot/publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-births-and-deaths/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland/related-statistics)