

Weekly Deaths in Northern Ireland

Death Registration Statistics including Covid-19 by Date of Death

Week ending 29th January 2021 (Week 4)

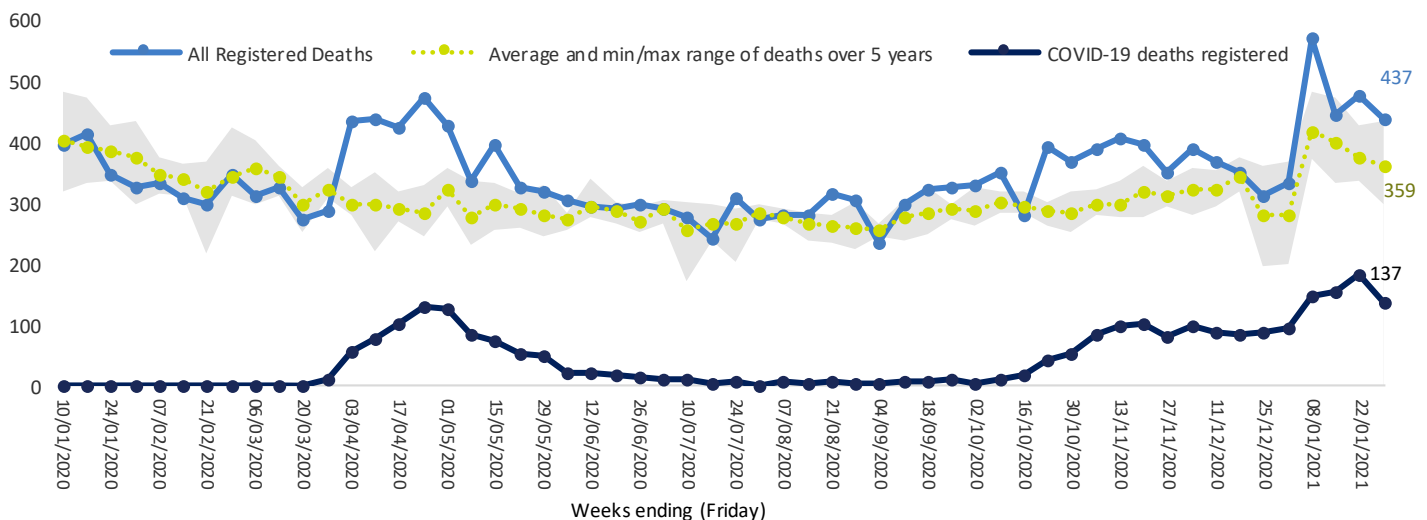
Contents

	Page
Section 1: Deaths by Date of Registration	
Key Points	2
Background	3
All deaths registered & Covid-19 deaths	4
All & Covid-19 deaths by sex	7
All & Covid-19 deaths by age-group	7
All & Covid-19 deaths by Local Government District	8
Section 2: Covid-19 Deaths by Date of Death	
Key Points	11
Daily & cumulative totals	10
Covid-19 deaths by place of death	12
Care home residents by place of Covid-19 deaths	13
Differences between NISRA and Department of Health Statistics	14
Links to relevant publications	16
List of tables	16
Contact details	16

Section 1: Deaths by Date of Registration

In week 4 of 2021, there were more deaths registered in Northern Ireland than there have typically been in the same week in recent years.

Figure 1: Weekly number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland



Note: The average over 5 years shown in the chart relate to 2015-2019 for all data points up to 1st January 2021, and to 2016-2020 thereafter

Key Points – Date of Registration

- The provisional number of total deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 29th January 2021 (week 4) was 437, 37 less than in week 3 of 2021 (474) and 78 more than the 5 year average (359) (Table 1).
- 137 deaths mentioning Covid-19 on the death certificate were registered in week 4 of 2021, accounting for 31.4% of all deaths in that week and bringing the total number of Covid-19 related deaths registered from the start of the pandemic to 2,448 by 29th January 2021.
- From the start of the pandemic (from the first Covid-19 related death being registered on 19th March 2020) to 29th January 2021, males and females accounted for similar proportions of all deaths registered (males: 49.8%, females: 50.2%) and Covid-19 related deaths registered (males: 50.2%; female 49.8%). (Figure 3).
- From 19th March 2020 (the start of the pandemic) to 29th January 2021, the 75 years and over age-group accounted for almost two-thirds (65.8%) of all deaths and over three-quarters (77.4%) of Covid-19 related deaths (Figure 4).
- Antrim & Newtownabbey had the highest proportion of Covid-19 related deaths as a proportion of the total deaths registered there over the period 19th March – 29th January 2021 (18.6%).

Background

Deaths occurring in Northern Ireland are registered on the Northern Ireland General Register Office's Registration System (NI ROS). Daily extracts of registration records from NIROS are processed by the NISRA Vital Statistics Unit. Provisional data on deaths registered in each week (ending on a Friday) are compiled at the end of the following week*.

Cause of death coding to the [ICD-10 classification](#) is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on NISRA's behalf on a quarterly basis. This means that quarterly statistics are the first output to report deaths according to underlying cause. These statistics are currently available up to [Quarter 3 2020](#). The statistics for Quarter 4 2020 will be published on 24th March 2021.

To meet user needs, NISRA publishes timely but provisional counts of death registrations in Northern Ireland in the weekly deaths provisional dataset. Weekly totals are presented alongside a 5-year weekly average as well as the lowest and highest number of deaths for the same week over the last five years. To allow time for registration and processing, these figures are published seven days after the week ends. The report continues to be supplemented with information on the number of Covid-19 deaths (where Covid-19 or suspected Covid-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, including in combination with other health conditions). Based on user feedback the inclusion of respiratory deaths has been removed in 2021 - these comparisons can be made through the quarterly Registrar General provisional statistics which report on causes of death by underlying cause.

Provisional Data

Data provided in this bulletin are provisional and subject to change. There may, therefore, be discrepancies with data previously published in light of reviews of individual cases which impact on recorded cause of death.

Impact of Covid-19 on 5-year average comparisons

Excess deaths are calculated by comparing the current year to the five-year average from previous years. This is based on the number of death registrations recorded for each corresponding week in the previous five years. Usually, the previous five-years are used to compare against the most recent year to assist understanding of excess deaths. In 2020, excess deaths were measured by comparing the 2020 figure against the average for 2015-2019. For 2021 the comparative years are 2016-2020. For users wishing to keep the comparator year constant in order to analyse the full effect of the pandemic, 2021 excess deaths compared to 2015-2019 averages are given in associated [spreadsheets](#).

Data over Public Holidays

The number of deaths registered in 2020 Weeks 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 28, 29, 35, 36, 51 and 52 and in Week 1 2021 were affected by the public holidays at St Patrick's Day, Easter, early and late May, July, August, Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays. Registrations for weeks following a bank holiday may be higher than normal as registrars deal with backlogs from the previous weeks. Care should therefore be taken in interpreting weekly data around the occurrence of bank holidays as it may not give a reliable indication of the trend.

Background Changes to the death certification and registration process during the Covid-19 pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of changes have been made to the usual process of certifying and registering a death which have been enabled by the Coronavirus Act 2020. More detail is available from the [Department of Health website](#). This includes guidance to medical practitioners on how to complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) in Covid-19 related cases. It also provides information on who can complete the MCCD, upon which these weekly statistics are based.

The process by which an informant registers a death has also been adapted. Usual practice is that the informant attends their local Registration Office to register a death, bringing the MCCD with them. During the pandemic, the MCCD can be sent to the General Register Office (GRO) electronically, directly from the hospital or General Practitioner certifying the death. Information required from the informant can be provided to GRO by telephone and no signature is required from the informant.

* Bank Holidays or system unavailability could affect the number of registrations made within certain weeks.

Latest death registration statistics

Table 1 shows that the provisional number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in the week ending 29th January 2021 (week 4) was 437; 37 less (-7.8%) than in week 3 of 2021 (474), and 78 more than the 5-year average for corresponding weeks in 2016-2020 (359).

Table 1: All Deaths registered¹ weekly in Northern Ireland, week 1 of 2021 – 29th January 2021^P

Registration week	Week ending (Friday)	2021 ^P	Average number of deaths registered in corresponding week of 2016 to 2020 average ^{2,3}	2016 – 2020 Range ²		'Excess Deaths' No. of deaths year to date above 2016-2020 5-year average ²
		Total number of deaths registered in week		Minimum number of deaths	Maximum number of deaths ³	
1	08/01/2021	568	417	371	481	151
2	15/01/2021	443	399	332	470	44
3	22/01/2021	474	375	335	426	99
4	29/01/2021	437	359	296	433	78
Year-to-date (week 1-4) 2021		1,922	1,551			371

Note: Data for previous years are available from the [Historical Weekly Deaths tables](#).

^P Weekly published data are provisional.

¹ These data are based on registration dates of deaths, not occurrences. The majority of deaths are registered within five days in Northern Ireland.

² The 5-year average is not a whole number so comparisons with 2021 week-on-week can vary by up to one death due to rounding.

³ In blue, where total weekly deaths have exceeded the five year weekly maximum.

Table 2 shows that the total number of death registrations mentioning Covid-19 on the death certificate in week 4 was 137, a decrease of 45 deaths from the previous week (182). Almost a third (32.1%) of all deaths registered in this week mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate. This means that since the beginning of the pandemic, 2,448 Covid-19 related deaths have been registered which equates to 15.5% of all deaths registered since 19th March 2020.

Table 2: Covid-19 deaths registered¹ weekly in Northern Ireland, week 1 of 2021 – 29th January 2021^P

Registration week	Week ending (Friday)	Total number of deaths registered in week	Covid-19 ² deaths registered in week	Proportion of deaths related to COVID (%)
1	08/01/2021	568	145	25.5
2	15/01/2021	443	153	34.5
3	22/01/2021	474	182	38.4
4	29/01/2021	437	137	31.4
Year-to-date (week 1-4) 2021		1,922	617	32.1
Total in 2020 (since beginning of Pandemic)⁴		15,784	2,448	15.5

Note: Data for previous years are available from the [Historical Weekly Deaths tables](#)

^P Weekly published data are provisional.

¹ These data are based on registrations of deaths, not occurrences. The majority of deaths are registered within five days in Northern Ireland.

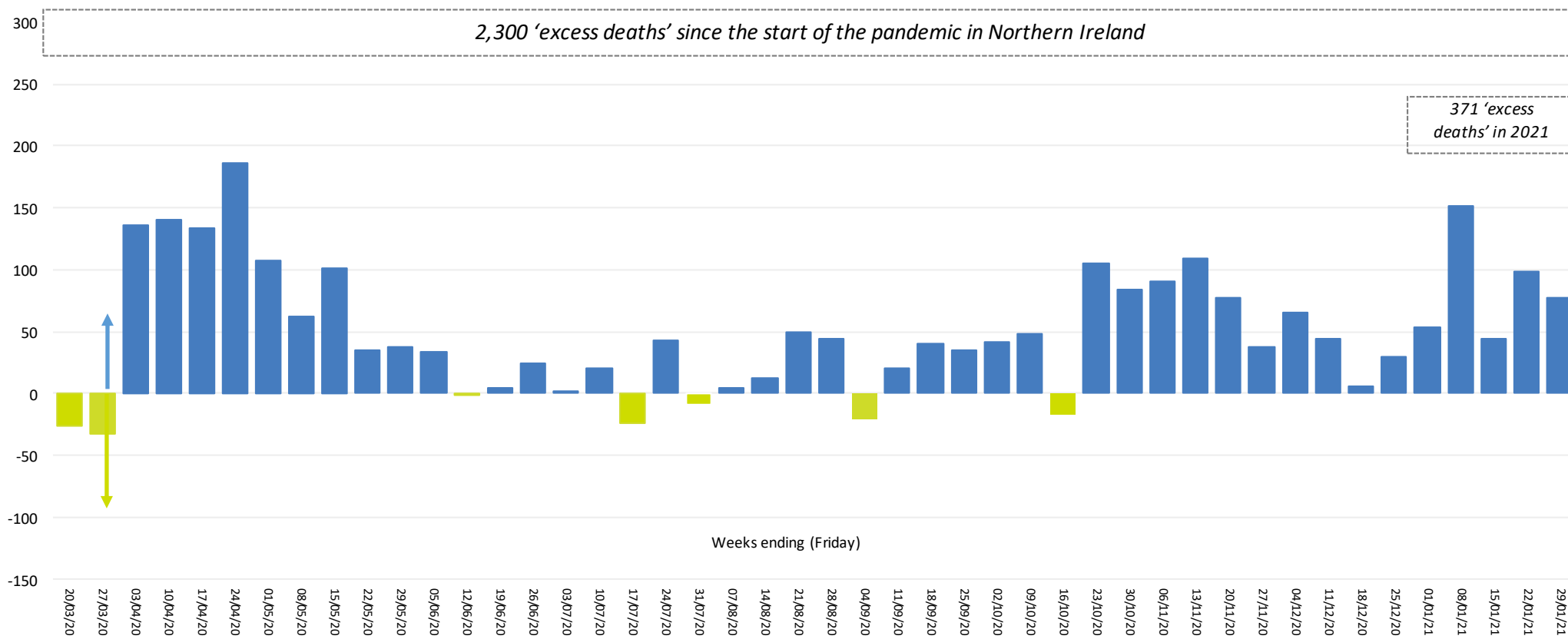
² Covid-19 deaths include any death where Coronavirus or Covid-19 (suspected or confirmed) was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate.

³ Figures may not sum due to rounding.

⁴ First registration of Covid-19 related death was 19th March 2020 (week 11)

The first four weeks of 2021 have shown 371 excess deaths compared with the 5 year average for corresponding weeks in 2016-2020. Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been 2,300 net excess deaths.

Figure 2: Weekly number of deaths registered above or below previous 5-year average* from the start of the pandemic in Northern Ireland

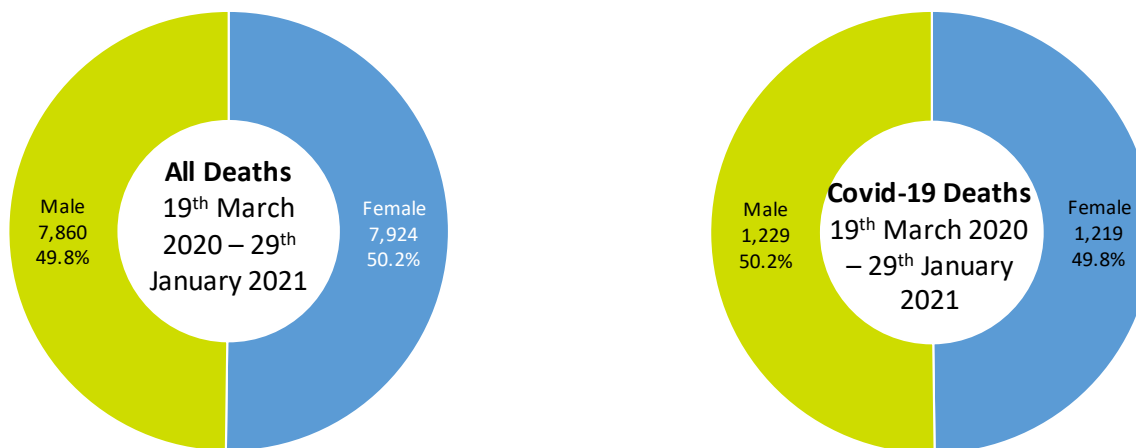


*Note: The 5 year average used in the chart relates to 2015-2019 for all data points up to 1st January 2021, and to 2016-2020 thereafter

Deaths registered by sex

Since the first Covid-19 related death was registered on 19th March 2020 to 29th January 2021, males and females accounted for a similar proportion of both all deaths registered (males: 49.8%, females: 50.2%) and of Covid-19 related deaths registered (males: 50.2%; female 49.8%). A weekly breakdown by sex is provided in the [accompanying spreadsheet](#).

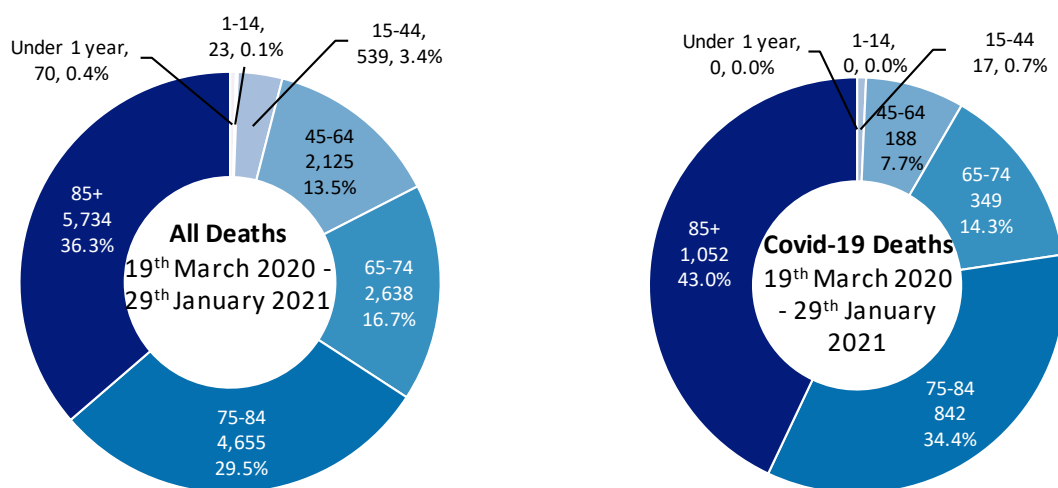
Figure 3: All deaths and Covid-19 deaths registered by sex: 19th March 2020 - 29th January 2021



Deaths registered by age-group

From the start of the pandemic to 29th January 2021, the 75 years and over age-group accounted for almost two-thirds (65.8%) of all deaths and over three-quarters (77.4%) of Covid-19 related deaths. A weekly breakdown for 2021 is provided in the [accompanying spreadsheet](#)

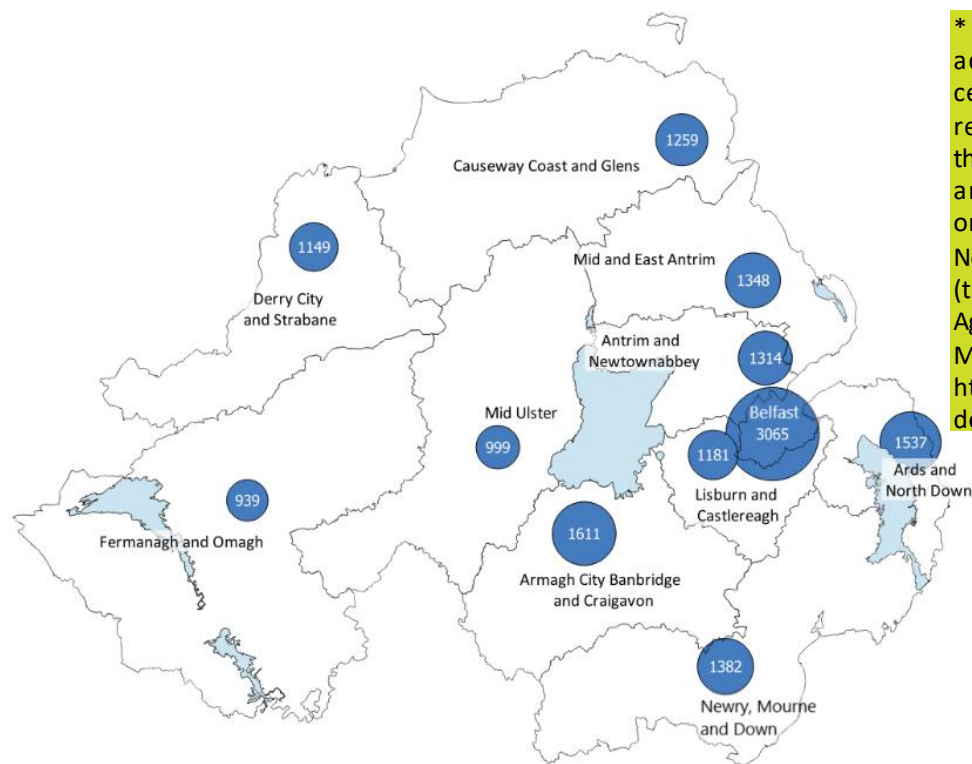
Figure 4: All deaths and Covid-19 deaths registered by age-group: 19th March 2020 - 29th January 2021



Deaths registered by Local Government District*

Those with an address* in Belfast Local Government District (LGD) accounted for one in five of all 15,784 deaths registered from the start of the pandemic to 29th January 2021 (3,065; 19.4%).

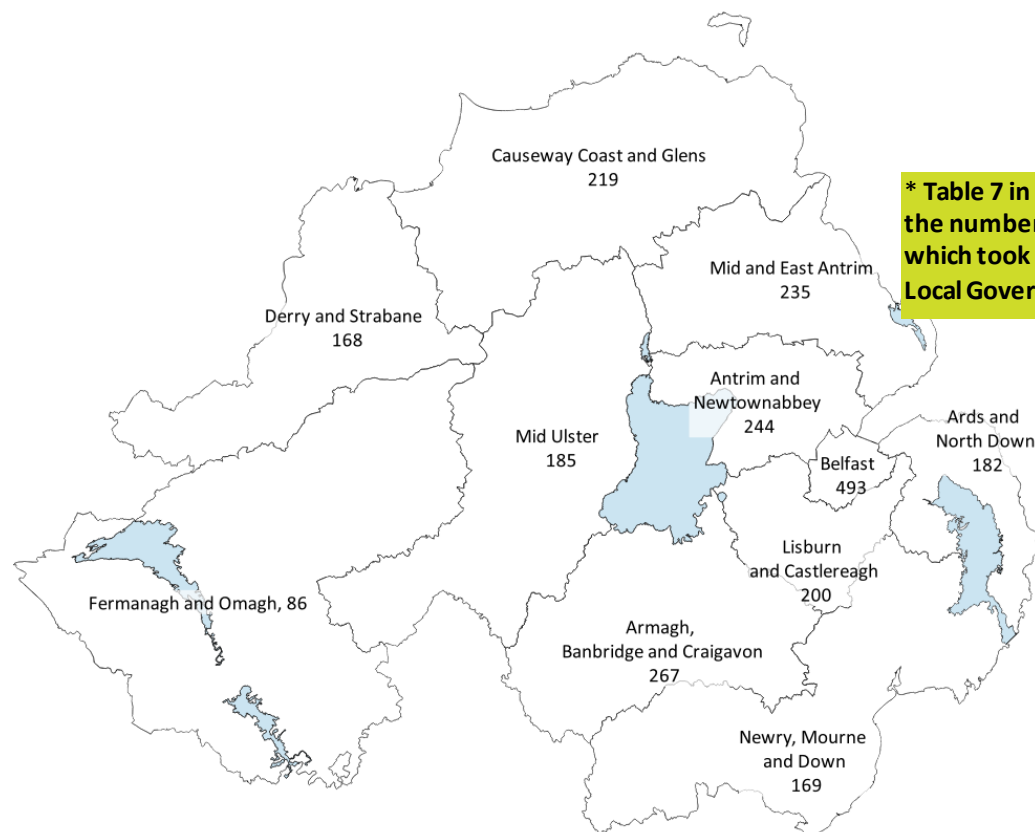
Figure 5: All deaths registered by LGD: 19th March 2020 – 29th January 2021



* The LGD data provided are based on the usual address of the deceased, recorded on the death certificate. Where the deceased was usually resident in NI and a home address was provided, the deceased's usual postcode has been mapped to an LGD area. If the usual address was not provided or the deceased was usually resident outside of Northern Ireland, the place of death address is used (this is approximately 0.4% of deaths per year). Age standardised mortality rates for the period March - August 2020 are available at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/monthly-deaths>.

For all Covid-19 related deaths since the start of the pandemic, Fermanagh and Omagh LGD had the fewest registered over the period 19th March – 29th January 2021 (86). This equates to 9.2% of all deaths registered in Fermanagh and Omagh over that period, the lowest proportion of all the LGDs. Antrim & Newtownabbey had the highest proportion of Covid-19 related deaths as a proportion of the total deaths registered there over the period 19th March – 29th January 2021 (18.6%).

Figure 6: Covid-19 deaths registered by LGD: 19th March 2020 – 29th January 2021



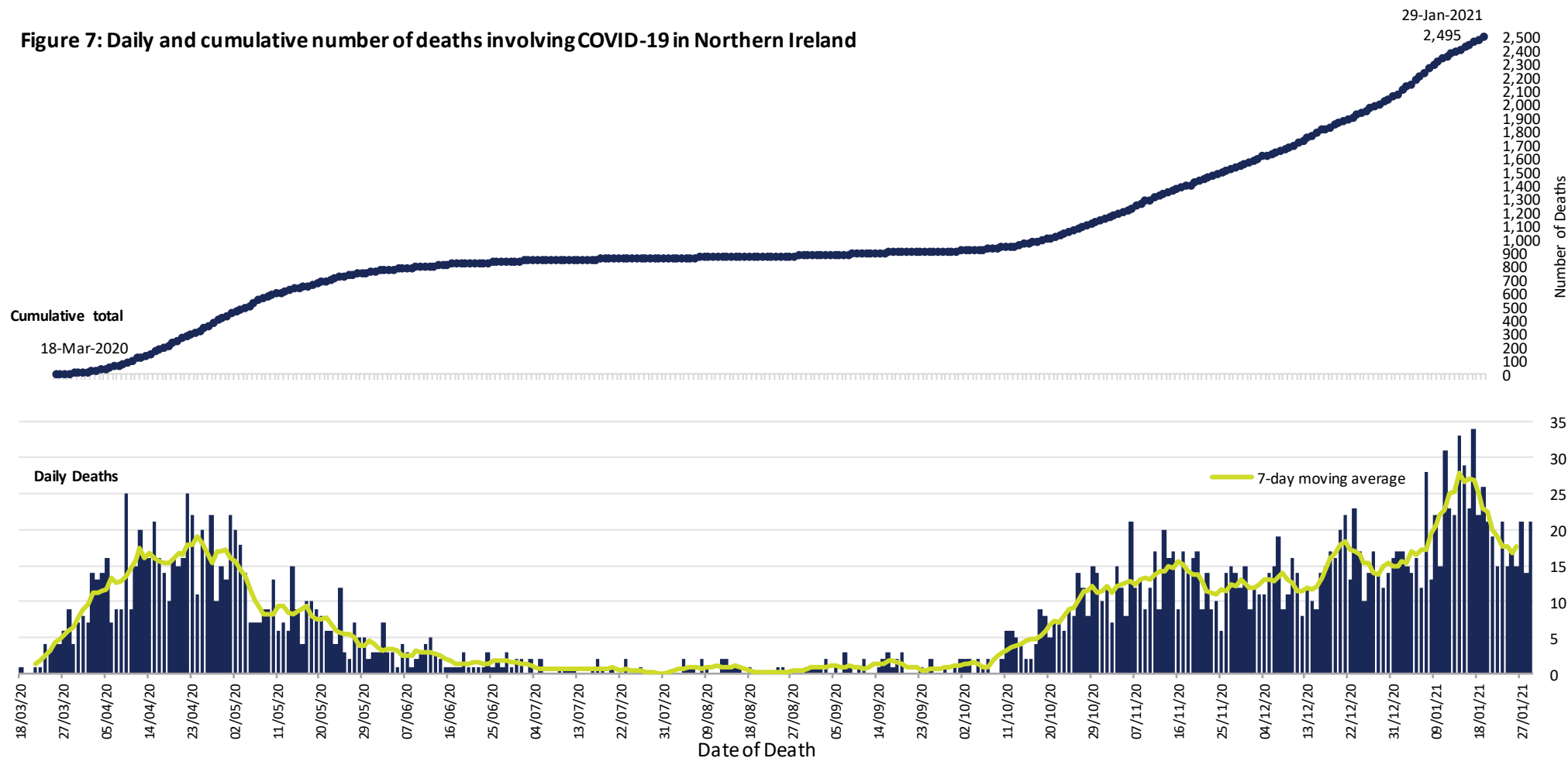
* Table 7 in the [accompanying spreadsheet](#) shows the numbers of weekly registered Covid-19 deaths which took place in care homes, disaggregated by Local Government District.

Section 2: Covid-19 Deaths by Date of Death

This section of the bulletin provides provisional, updated totals of Covid-19 **deaths occurring (based on the date of death)** from 18th March 2020 to 29th January 2021, taking account of the latest available death registrations up to and including 3rd February 2021.

Overall, 2,495 Covid-19 related deaths had occurred in Northern Ireland by 29th January, 124 of which occurred in the week ending 29th January. The 17th January saw the greatest number of Covid-19 related deaths occurring in any one day since the start of the pandemic (34). A simple 7 day moving average shows the trend in Covid-19 deaths by smoothing daily fluctuations.

Figure 7: Daily and cumulative number of deaths involving COVID-19 in Northern Ireland



Key Points –Covid-19 deaths based on date of death¹

- 2,495 deaths mentioning Covid-19 on the death certificate have occurred in total from 18th March 2020 to 29th January 2021 (including those registered up to and including 3rd February). The comparative number of deaths reported by the Department of Health (DoH) to 29th January² was 1,837 (see page 9 for definitions).
- 124 Covid-19 related deaths occurred in week ending 29th January. This is the second consecutive fall in the occurrence based series since the recent peak of 175 Covid-19 related deaths in the week ending 15th January.
- Of these 2,495 deaths involving Covid-19 1,591 (63.8%) occurred in hospital³, 712 (28.5%) occurred in care homes, 13 (0.5 %) occurred in hospices and 179 (7.2%) occurred at residential addresses or another location (Figure 8). (see Table 11 of [accompanying spread sheet](#))
- The 725 deaths in care homes and hospices involved 170 separate establishments.

¹The majority of deaths are registered within five days in NI; data based on date of death are subject to ongoing change.

²Responsibility for reporting daily death figures moved from the Public Health Agency to the Department of Health on 19th April. Figures based on deaths that occurred up to 29th January 2021 but including revisions to 3rd February 2021, to account for delayed notifications.

³To aid comparison, the most recent Registrar General Annual Report notes that in 2019, 47% of all deaths occurred in hospital and 19% in care/ nursing homes: [2019 Registrar General Annual Report](#)

Covid-19 deaths occurring by place of death

Figure 8: Cumulative number of Covid-19 related deaths occurring by Place of Death in Northern Ireland, 18th March 2020 up to 29th January 2021

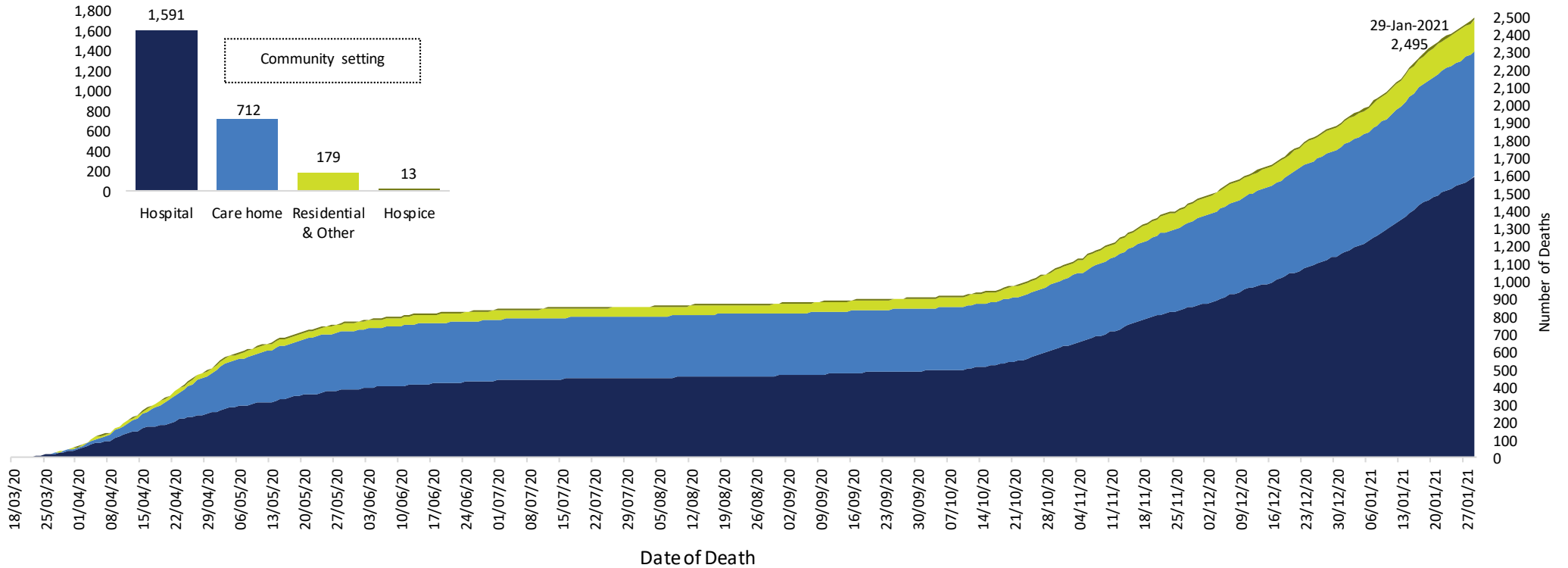


Table 3: Number of Covid-19 related deaths occurring each week, by Place of Death to 29th January 2021

Week ending	Hospital		Care Home ¹		Hospice		Residential & 'Other'		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
20/03/2020	1	100%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100%
27/03/2020	17	73.9%	4	17.4%	1	4.3%	1	4.3%	23	100%
03/04/2020	43	69.4%	14	22.6%	1	1.6%	4	6.5%	62	100%
10/04/2020	57	64.0%	25	28.1%	0	0.0%	7	7.9%	89	100%
17/04/2020	57	48.3%	53	44.9%	1	0.8%	7	5.9%	118	100%
24/04/2020	43	37.4%	66	57.4%	0	0.0%	6	5.2%	115	100%
01/05/2020	41	34.5%	72	60.5%	1	0.8%	5	4.2%	119	100%
08/05/2020	37	45.1%	39	47.6%	1	1.2%	5	6.1%	82	100%
15/05/2020	30	46.2%	33	50.8%	1	1.5%	1	1.5%	65	100%
22/05/2020	32	60.4%	15	28.3%	2	3.8%	4	7.5%	53	100%
29/05/2020	25	65.8%	11	28.9%	0	0.0%	2	5.3%	38	100%
05/06/2020	15	68.2%	5	22.7%	0	0.0%	2	9.1%	22	100%
12/06/2020	12	54.5%	5	22.7%	0	0.0%	5	22.7%	22	100%
19/06/2020	11	91.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	8.3%	12	100%
26/06/2020	8	80.0%	2	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	100%
03/07/2020	9	81.8%	2	18.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	100%
10/07/2020	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	100%
17/07/2020	5	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	100%
24/07/2020	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	100%
31/07/2020	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100%
07/08/2020	3	75.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	4	100%
14/08/2020	5	62.5%	2	25.0%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	8	100%
21/08/2020	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	100%
28/08/2020	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100%
04/09/2020	5	83.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	6	100%
11/09/2020	6	75.0%	1	12.5%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	8	100%
18/09/2020	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	100%
25/09/2020	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	100%
02/10/2020	6	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	100%
09/10/2020	5	71.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	7	100%
16/10/2020	24	88.9%	1	3.7%	0	0.0%	2	7.4%	27	100%
23/10/2020	34	72.3%	8	17.0%	0	0.0%	5	10.6%	47	100%
30/10/2020	60	75.0%	13	16.3%	1	1.3%	6	7.5%	80	100%
06/11/2020	58	68.2%	20	23.5%	0	0.0%	7	8.2%	85	100%
13/11/2020	56	60.9%	30	32.6%	0	0.0%	6	6.5%	92	100%
20/11/2020	72	67.9%	24	22.6%	0	0.0%	10	9.4%	106	100%
27/11/2020	43	55.8%	27	35.1%	0	0.0%	7	9.1%	77	100%
04/12/2020	48	57.1%	29	34.5%	0	0.0%	7	8.3%	84	100%
11/12/2020	71	72.4%	25	25.5%	0	0.0%	2	2.0%	98	100%
18/12/2020	55	64.7%	25	29.4%	1	1.2%	4	4.7%	85	100%
25/12/2020	77	63.6%	35	28.9%	0	0.0%	9	7.4%	121	100%
01/01/2021	76	73.1%	18	17.3%	0	0.0%	10	9.6%	104	100%
08/01/2021	89	77.4%	15	13.0%	2	1.7%	9	7.8%	115	100%
15/01/2021	127	72.6%	34	19.4%	1	0.6%	13	7.4%	175	100%
22/01/2021	114	71.3%	29	18.1%	0	0.0%	17	10.6%	160	100%
29/01/2021	92	74.2%	23	18.5%	0	0.0%	9	7.3%	124	100%
(18th March 2020-29th January 2021) Total	1,591	63.8%	712	28.5%	13	0.5%	179	7.2%	2,495	100%

¹Includes deaths in care homes only. Care home residents who have died in a different location will be counted elsewhere in this table.

Note: Statistics for the full year are available in the [accompanying spread sheet](#)

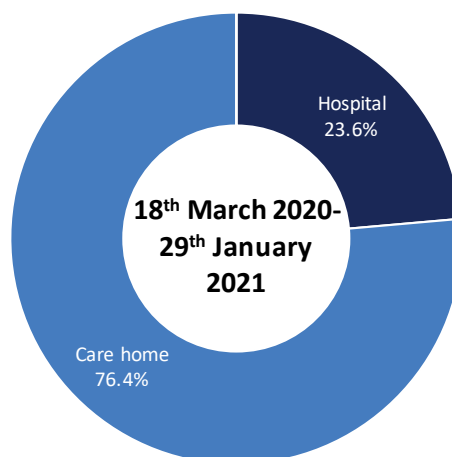
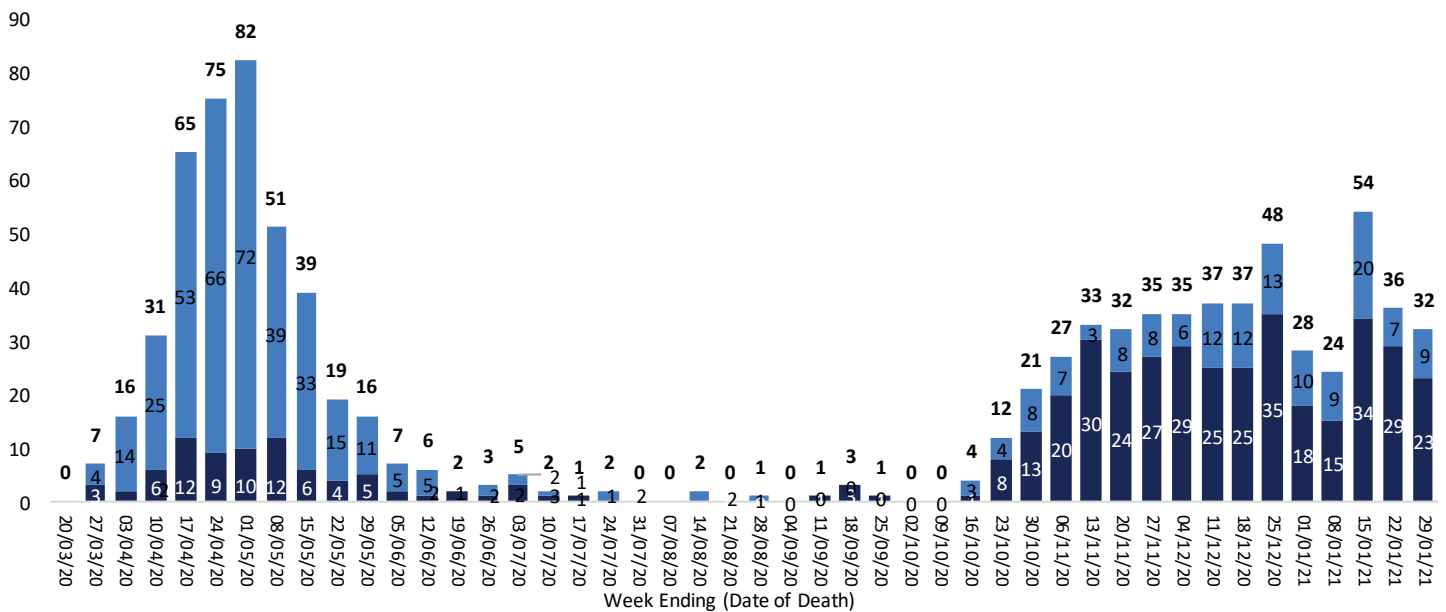
Covid-19 deaths of care home residents by place of death

This section refers to deaths of care home residents, where either (a) the death occurred in a care home, or (b) the death occurred elsewhere but the place of usual residence of the deceased was recorded as a care home. The statistics will not capture those cases where a care home resident died in hospital or another location and the usual address recorded on their death certificate is not a care home. In relation to part (b) of this definition, no assumptions can be made about where or when the deceased contracted Covid-19 (and all figures include probable or suspect cases).

Based on the definition above, there have been 932 deaths of care home residents involving Covid-19 from 18th March 2020 up to 29th January 2021, which is 37.4% of all COVID-19 related deaths. Of the 932 deaths, 76.4% (712) occurred in a care home, with the remaining 220 occurring in hospital (Figure 9).

Of the total deaths involving Covid-19 which occurred in hospital (1,591) (Table 3), 13.8% (220) were accounted for by care home residents. (Further information in Table 9 of [accompanying spreadsheet](#))

Figure 9: Care home residents: Weekly Covid-19 deaths occurring by place of death, from 18th March 2020 to 29th January 2021



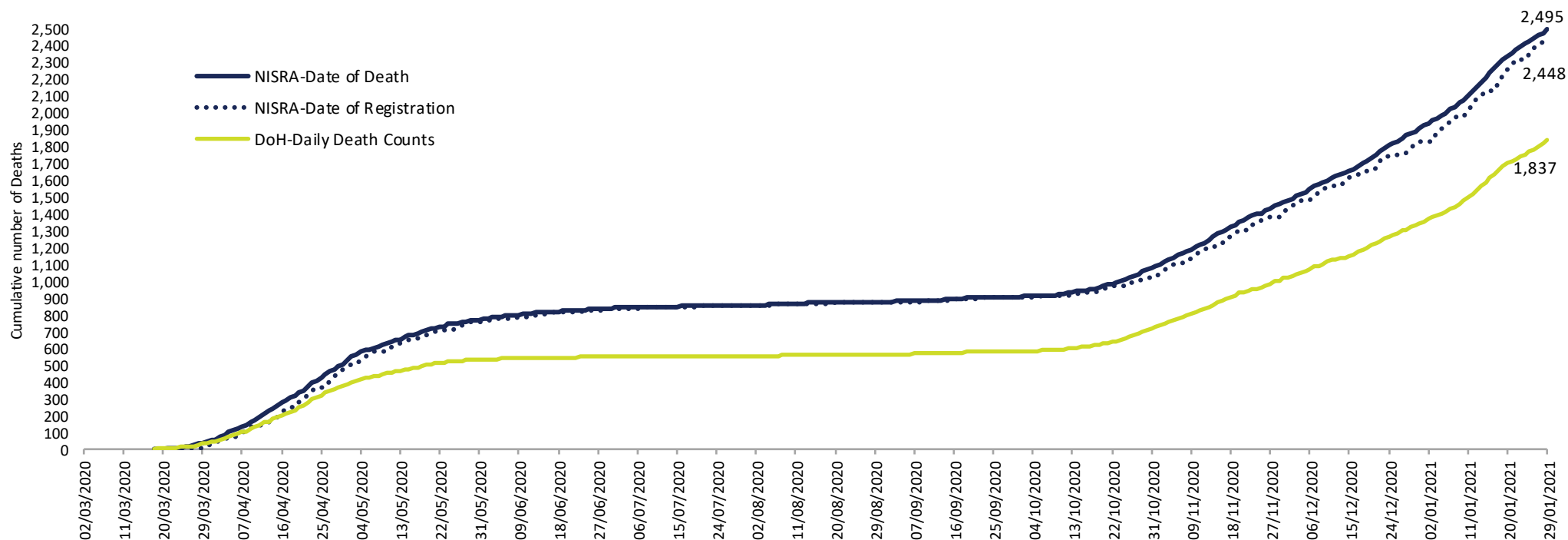
Differences between NISRA's death registration statistics and the Department of Health's daily statistics

- The [daily Northern Ireland Government updates](#) provided by the Department of Health (DoH) count the number of deaths reported by health 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 1,837 deaths associated with Covid-19 by 29th January 2021**. This figure includes revisions up to 3rd February to account for delayed notifications. Responsibility for reporting the daily updates moved from the Public Health Agency (PHA) to the DoH on 19th 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. The NISRA figures include all deaths that occur outside hospital and are comparable with weekly statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics and National Records Scotland. **NISRA figures published today show the total number of Covid-19 related deaths registered by 29th January 2021 was 2,448**. Deaths statistics based on date of registration will be subject to only minimal change.
- By analysing the registration based data using the **date the death occurred** (rather than date of registration with the General Register Office), the statistics show that **2,495 deaths associated with Covid-19 had occurred by 29th January 2021**. This figure is based on deaths registered up to 3rd February 2021 and is the most appropriate figure to use to understand additional deaths beyond those reported via the DoH daily bulletin. However it is also subject to ongoing change as not all deaths which occurred by 29th January 2021 will have been registered at the time of publishing these statistics.
- NISRA separately publishes the Registrar General Quarterly Report, provisional figures for which are available up to September 2020 and which include cause of death information. These show that the total number of deaths registered in calendar year to 30th September 2020, with an underlying cause of death of Covid-19 was 808. In comparison, the weekly death statistics, which count the number of deaths where Covid-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, reported that in the same period there had been 902 deaths registered involving Covid-19. This means that Covid-19 was the underlying, primary cause of death in 89.6 percent of all deaths which mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate. Release of the Q4 report is scheduled 24th March 2021.

Figure 10 below graphically demonstrates the cumulative number of deaths involving Covid-19 in Northern Ireland using different data sources up to 29th January 2021.

The latest NISRA figures show that, by 29th January 2021, 2,495 deaths had occurred involving Covid-19, based on registrations up to 3rd February 2021. DoH figures available for the same period show a total of 1,837 deaths.

Figure 10: Cumulative number of deaths involving COVID-19 in Northern Ireland using different data sources up to 29th January 2021¹



¹ Responsibility for reporting daily figures moved from the PHA to the Department of Health on 19th April. These figures are based on deaths that occurred up to 29th January 2021 and include revisions up to 3rd February 2021, to account for delayed notifications.

Links to relevant publications

[Deaths registered weekly in England & Wales](#)

[Weekly Data on Deaths Registered in Scotland](#)

[Vital statistics \(Central Statistics Office, Ireland\)](#)

[Northern Ireland Department of Health daily Covid-19 figures](#) and [daily dashboard](#)

[Number of coronavirus \(Covid-19\) cases and risk in the UK](#)

[Covid-19 Health Surveillance Monitor \(Ireland\)](#)

List of Tables

Data accompanying this bulletin are available from the [NISRA website](#) in Excel format. The spread sheet includes the following tables.

Table 1: Deaths registered each week in Northern Ireland, 2020

Table 2: Deaths registered each week in Northern Ireland, age by sex, 2020

Table 3: Deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by Local Government District (LGD), 2020

Table 4: Deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by place of death, 2020

Table 5: Covid-19 related deaths registered each week in Northern Ireland, age by sex, 2020

Table 6: Covid-19 related deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by Local Government District (LGD), 2020

Table 7: Covid-19 related deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by place of death, 2020

Table 8: Covid-19 related care home deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by Local Government District (LGD), 2020

Table 9: Covid-19 related deaths registered by date and place of death in Northern Ireland, 2020

Table 10: Covid-19 related death occurrences by week of death in Northern Ireland, 2020

Table 11: Covid-19 related death occurrences in Northern Ireland, by week of death and place of death, 2020

Table 12: Covid-19 related deaths of care home residents in Northern Ireland, by place of death

Table 13: Covid-19 related deaths: occurrences by date and place of death in Northern Ireland, 2020

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