

9.30am Friday 7 February 2025

Weekly death statistics extended to include Flu and pneumonia related deaths

Death statistics are published weekly by the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA).

Today's statistics for week ending 31 January 2025 will for the first time include a count of deaths related to flu and/or pneumonia. This will enable comparisons with weekly information published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) covering England and Wales.

Statistics on weekly deaths registered in Northern Ireland can be found on the NISRA website at: [weekly death registration in Northern Ireland](#). Data on flu/pneumonia related deaths can be found in table 1.

The statistics report on deaths where flu and/or pneumonia was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate. As a result, the counts will reflect deaths where flu or pneumonia has contributed to a death but was not necessarily the underlying cause of the death.

The figures show that 94 deaths related to flu and/or pneumonia were registered in the week ending 31 January 2025.

This brings the total so far in 2025 to 499 which is higher than the same period in 2024 when 424 deaths were registered. However, looking at the same period over a longer time series (2014 to 2024), the total of 499 flu/pneumonia related deaths is higher than 6 of the years, but lower than 5 of the years.

Looking at individual weeks in 2025, week 2 had the joint highest (with week 2 2023) number of flu and/or pneumonia related deaths registered in one week (138) since the last flu epidemic in winter 2017/18. Weekly totals have subsequently fallen to 94 in the latest week. There was a decline in the number of deaths related to flu and/or pneumonia registered in week 4 of 2025, this is linked to registration office closures due to Storm Éowyn.

There have been 790 flu/pneumonia related deaths since the start of winter 2024/25 (week 49 2024 to week 5 2025), higher than the 659 such deaths in the same period of 2023/24 but lower than the same period of 2022/23 (824).

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Deaths related to flu and/or pneumonia refer to any deaths where the terms flu, influenza or pneumonia (including variations in spelling) are mentioned anywhere on the death certificate. This is to identify the cases where the causes of death will, once coded using the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-10 framework, include any of the codes between 'J09' and 'J18'. As such conditions like aspiration pneumonia which corresponds to an ICD-10 code outside that range have been excluded from the total. See the definitions tab in the weekly deaths spreadsheet for more information.
2. This release includes the enhanced weekly deaths registered tables as well as a back series of data covering 4 separate series of weekly deaths for the years 2014 to 2024:
 - i. Deaths related to flu and/or pneumonia - i.e. appearance anywhere on the death certificate of any of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes between J09 and J18 up to quarter 2 2024; and Q3 and Q4 2024 based on relevant key words appearing on the medical certificate of cause of death.
 - ii. Deaths due to flu and/or pneumonia - i.e. where the underlying cause of death was any ICD-10 code from J09 to J18. (Such coded data is only available up to quarter 2 2024.)
 - iii. Deaths related to respiratory conditions – i.e. where any of the ICD-10 codes 'J00' to 'J99' appear in the list of causes of death either as underlying or contributory. This information is available up to Quarter 2 2024.
 - iv. Deaths due to respiratory conditions – i.e. where the underlying cause of death had an ICD-10 code between J00 and J99.
3. The data on flu/pneumonia and respiratory deaths (both 'related to' and 'due to') are comparable to the totals produced by ONS in their weekly release on death registrations: ([Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional - Office for National Statistics](#)).
4. The Public Health Agency (PHA) separately publish a weekly respiratory surveillance report ([Respiratory surveillance report | HSC Public Health Agency](#)) which includes a section on mortality surveillance. This information covers respiratory-associated deaths including those that are attributable to influenza and other respiratory infections or their complications, specifically - "bronchiolitis, bronchitis, influenza or pneumonia" using keywords recorded on the death certificate. This is a different coverage than the NISRA official statistics.
5. Deaths relating to flu and/or pneumonia have been reported based on the date the death was registered which may not have been the same week in which it occurred.
6. Historical data shows that the usual trend is for more flu/pneumonia related deaths to be registered during winter thus taking the season into account when making comparisons is an important factor. Pandemic years (2020 and 2021) may not, however, reflect the 'usual' trend as Covid-19 waves partially or completely took place outside of the winter period; Covid-19 was often accompanied with pneumonia in the list of causes of death.

7. The weekly number of death registrations can be impacted by office closures around public holidays and exceptional circumstances (for example extreme adverse weather conditions) so care should be taken when making comparisons.
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9. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:
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