

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – Winter Mortality Provisional Statistics 2022/23



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Winter Mortality Provisional Statistics 2022/23

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published 'Winter mortality' provisional statistics for 2022/23.

The report on Winter Mortality (WM) includes information on the provisional number of deaths that took place in Northern Ireland from December 2022 to March 2023, compared with the non-winter months (including the preceding August to November 2022 and the following April to July 2023).

There were 6,199 deaths in Northern Ireland in the winter of 2022/23 (December to March). Comparing this with the average for the two adjacent four-month non-winter periods, the seasonal increase in mortality in winter 2022/23 was an estimated 940. This was 740 more than the corresponding estimate of 200 for the previous winter (2021/22), however it was 80 less than the seasonal increase in mortality in winter 2020/21 (1,020).

It should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the previous 3 years' winter mortality estimates due to the unexpectedly high number of deaths in the non-winter months of 2020 and 2021 as well as increased Covid related deaths in winter 2020/21. This makes direct annual comparisons with the 2022/23 estimate difficult, the latter having had minimal impact from Covid-19 related deaths due to more stable numbers across the year. The five-year moving average of winter mortality was 785 in 2019/20 (based on the years 2017/18 to 2021/22) and 651 in 2020/21 (based on the years 2018/19 to 2022/23).

Winter mortality is usually higher in females compared with males, as was the case in winter 2022/23 with males accounting for 45.2 per cent of the additional winter deaths (i.e. the number that would be expected based on non-winter months) and females accounting for 54.8 per cent of winter mortality deaths.

Three quarters (75.5 per cent) of the additional winter deaths in 2022/23 were aged 75 or older. In contrast only 6.2 per cent of the additional winter deaths were under the age of 65.

Circulatory disease and respiratory disease accounted for more than half (approximately 500) of all additional winter deaths in 2022/23, at 26.4 per cent and 26.3 per cent of all additional winter deaths, respectively.

In Northern Ireland, deaths in the winter months were 17.8 per cent higher than in the adjacent non-winter months – this proportion is the WM Index (WMI). The Health & Social Care Trust with the highest WMI in 2022/23 was the Northern Trust, with 21.2 per cent more deaths having occurred in the winter months than

in the non-winter months. In comparison, the lowest WMI was in the South-Eastern Trust where 15.5 per cent more deaths occurred in the winter months, than in the non-winter months.

The highest regional WMI in 2022/23 was in the Causeway Coast and Glens Local Government District, where 27.3 per cent more deaths occurred in the winter months than in the non-winter months. Ards and North Down had the lowest WMI, with 14.7 per cent more deaths having occurred in the winter months, than in the non-winter months.

NISRA

December 2023

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Death Statistics in Northern Ireland are based on deaths which have been registered with the General Register Office (GRO). There are some situations where the registration of the death can be delayed, specifically where the death has been accidental, unexpected or suspicious, and must be referred to the Coroner. A death which is suspected to be suicide must therefore be referred to the Coroner and can only be registered after the Coroner has completed his/her investigation. The time taken to carry out this investigation can result in a delay in registration. Given the delay in registration of suicide deaths, these deaths may not appear in published statistics until subsequent years.
2. Winter Mortality, formerly known as Excess Winter Mortality (EWM), is a statistical measure of the increase in mortality during winter months (December to March) compared with non-winter months (preceding August to November and following April to July). The Winter Mortality index is calculated as the number of additional winter deaths (that is deaths above the number expected based on non-winter months) divided by the average non-winter deaths, and expressed as a percentage.
3. Further details on Winter Mortality in Northern Ireland statistics, including detailed methodology can be found at:
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/cause-death/winter-mortality>
4. Data in this report should not be confused with ‘excess deaths’, which is distinctly different from Winter Mortality, and reported separately. NISRA published Excess Mortality and Covid-19 Related Deaths in Northern Ireland March to December 2022 in March 2023. Estimates in that report are based on estimates of **Excess Mortality**, the difference between actual deaths in March 2020-December 2022 and the expected number of deaths in **this period** based on the average number of deaths observed in the **same period over the previous five years**. This measure is distinctly different from Winter Mortality, which is a measure of seasonality within a 12-month period. There are currently no plans for further updated to this report. It should be noted that the methodology for calculating ‘excess deaths’ has been under review by a cross-UK working group. The findings from the working group looking at excess deaths mortality and recommended new UK-wide methodology are planned for release in coming months.
5. Corresponding information for Winter Mortality for England and Wales is published by the [Office for National Statistics](#) and for Scotland by the [National Records of Scotland](#). Similar figures for the Republic of Ireland are available from the Central Statistics Office Ireland.
6. All media queries to Department of Finance Press Office at dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk or on Tel: 028 90816724. The Executive Information Service operates an out of hours service **For Media Enquiries Only** between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted on 028 9037 8110.
7. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:

Telephone: +44 (0)300 200 7836

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