



**Paper Title: Vital Events Statistics Update**

**Presented by: Julie Ramsay, Head of Vital Events statistics, NRS**

<b>Security marking</b>	Not sensitive
<b>Can this be shared wider than PAMS?</b>	yes
<b>Aims</b>	To update PAMS members of developments in Vital events statistics and seek feedback
<b>Key questions for PAMS members</b>	Does the vital events data available on the website fit your needs?
<b>What is required from PAMS members</b>	Comments/feedback on paper

## Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

### Vital Events Statistics Update

#### Weekly COVID-19 deaths

1. Since the start of the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK, we have produced a weekly report detailing the number of deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate. These weekly figures have played a key part in the Scottish Government's response to the pandemic.
2. We have also provided data on COVID-19 deaths on an ad-hoc basis to a wide range of customers, stakeholders and members of the general public. A lot of this work is now also available on the website.
3. In addition to the weekly report, we have produced more detailed analyses once a month to look at age standardised death rates from COVID-19 by SIMD, urban-rural and a few other breakdowns.

#### Mortality trends

4. Our work on interpreting the changing trend in mortality (and life expectancy) has increased considerably. We co-authored a paper with NHS colleagues looking at the factors that have contributed to the slow in life expectancy in Scotland since 2012-2014. The paper has recently been submitted to BMJ Open.
5. We have presented this work on several occasions at conferences and meetings around the country

#### Life Expectancy

6. Last year we published subnational life expectancy and healthy life expectancy estimates at the same time in December. We received positive feedback on the publication and will repeat it in December 2020.

#### Deaths of People experiencing homelessness

7. We published the estimated numbers of deaths of homeless people in February 2020 for the first time. We used a new method to estimate these figures and so these are currently experimental statistics as they have not yet been assessed against the rigorous standards which apply to National Statistics.
8. We have received positive feedback on these statistics from users and stakeholders and aim to publish the next update later this year.

**Babies' first names**

9. (last updated in March 2020) We have improved the interactive visualisation to allow comparison of multiple names and to compare the numbers of boys and girls with the same name.

**Delay in publication of statistics – Deaths by cause in 2019**

10. We have had to delay publishing statistics of the causes of the deaths that were registered in 2019, including the numbers of deaths due to (for example) drugs, alcohol and suicide.
11. They were originally scheduled for publication in June and July (like the corresponding statistics for the previous few years). However, by the end of April 2020, NRS had not received some of the information that it relies on to categorise many deaths as being due to (e.g.) drugs, alcohol and suicide. As a consequence, NRS has had to delay their publication.
12. Deaths from unknown causes are investigated by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). Sometimes these investigations require toxicology tests to be undertaken to determine the actual cause of death. At present, there are a number of toxicology tests outstanding, and consequent delays in finalising the causes of deaths.
13. Publications affected are:
  - Deaths from various causes, 2019
  - Vital Events Reference Tables, 2019 (only the section on causes of death)
  - Drug-related deaths in Scotland, 2019
  - Volatile Substance Abuse and Helium Deaths, 2019
14. Further information is available on the [NRS website](#)

NRS: Vital Events Statistics Branch  
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