

Deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland

Week 14
(30 March to 5 April 2020)

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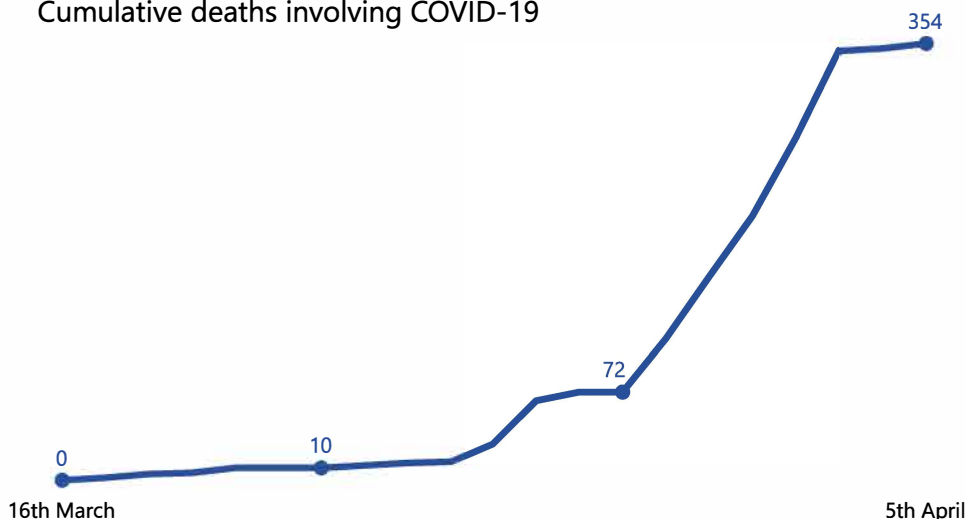


This statistical report details the provisional number of deaths associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) and the total number of deaths registered in Scotland, for weeks 1 to 14 of 2020

As of 5th April, 354 deaths had been registered which mentioned COVID-19

The first mention of COVID-19 in a death registration was in the week beginning 16th March 2020.

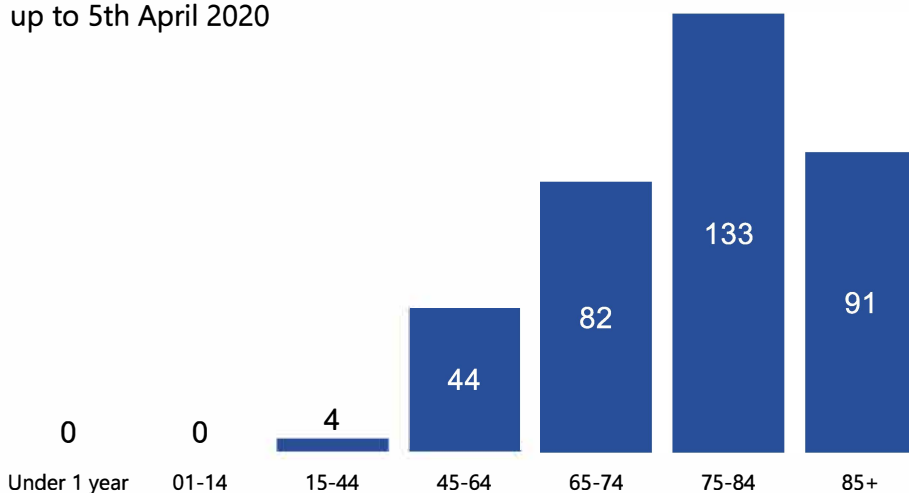
Cumulative deaths involving COVID-19



Number of deaths varies by age group

Age group 75-84 had most deaths, followed by 85+ and 65-74.

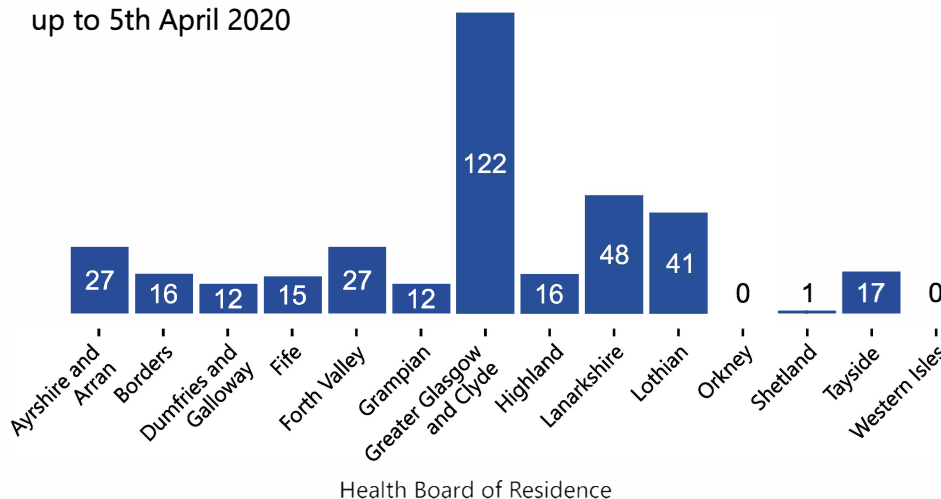
Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by age group, up to 5th April 2020



Deaths vary by area

Greater Glasgow and Clyde has had most deaths involving COVID-19 to date. These deaths account for 3.2% of all deaths in the health board. Orkney and Western Isles had no COVID-19 deaths registered by 5th April.

Number of deaths involving COVID-19 by Health Board, up to 5th April 2020



Key Findings

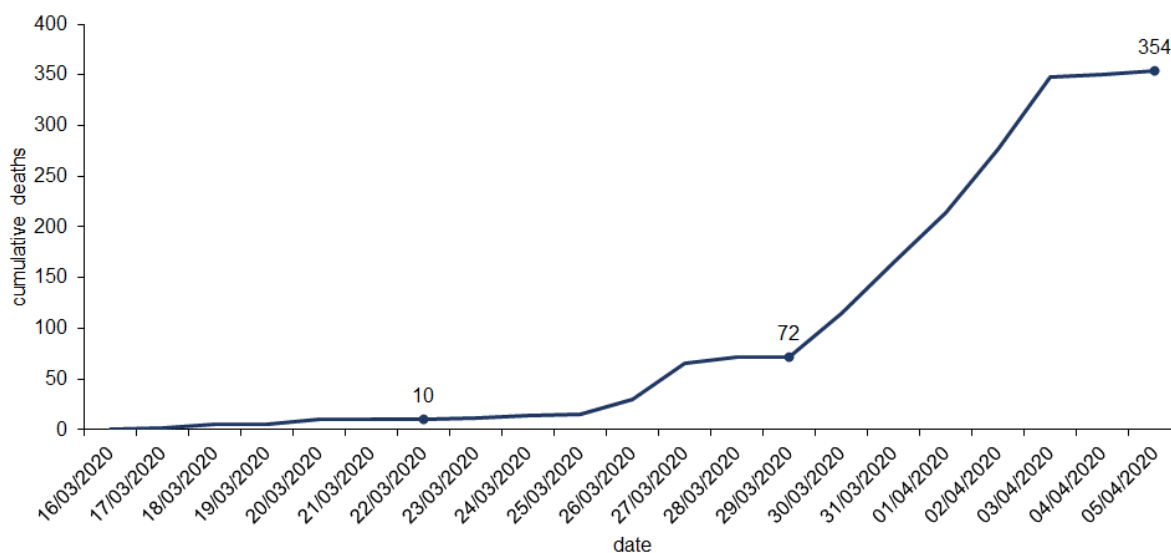
Deaths involving COVID-19

- As at 5th April, there have been a total of 354 deaths registered in Scotland where the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was mentioned on the death certificate. The first mention of COVID-19 in a registered death certificate was the week beginning 16th March 2020.
- Of the total number of deaths registered in week 14 (30 March – 5 April), there were 282 where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate (16.2% of the total) an increase of 220 from the previous week (23 – 29 March).
- Over 60% of all deaths involving COVID-19 were of people aged 75 or over.
- This number is different from the count of deaths published daily on the [gov.scot website](http://gov.scot), because the latter is based on deaths of those who have tested positive for COVID-19 whereas these figures include all deaths where COVID-19 (included suspected cases) was mentioned on the death certificate.

All Deaths

- The provisional total number of deaths registered in Scotland in week 14 of 2020 (30 March – 5 April) was 1,741. This is an increase of 662 from the number registered in the previous week.¹
- The average number of deaths registered in the corresponding week over the previous five years was 1,098. This means that the overall number of deaths in week 14 of 2020 (30 March – 5 April) was much higher than in previous years.

Figure 1: Cumulative number of deaths involving COVID-19 by date of registration, Scotland, 2020



¹ Registration offices were closed for a number of days during week 13 to put arrangements in place for remote registration of deaths. This will have artificially reduced the number of registrations for week 13 and increased those for week 14 while registrars worked to clear the backlog.

Why are the NRS number of deaths different from the Scottish Government daily updates?

Put simply - they are two different measures that each have a valuable role in helping to monitor the number of deaths in Scotland involving COVID-19.

Scottish Government daily updates

These are provided by Health Protection Scotland (HPS) and count:

- all people who have had a positive test for COVID-19 and died within 28 days.

These are important because they are available earlier, and give a quicker indication of what is happening day by day and are broadly comparable with the figures released daily for the UK by the Department for Health and Social Care.

NRS weekly death totals

The figures in this publication count:

- all deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate by the doctor who certified the death. This includes cases where the doctor noted that there was suspected or probable coronavirus infection involved in the death.

As a result these weekly totals are likely to be higher than the daily figures - because the daily updates only include those who tested positive for the virus.

Using the complete death certificate allows NRS to analyse a lot of information, such as location of death and what other health conditions contributed to the death. We will start publishing more detailed breakdowns of the figures as soon as possible.

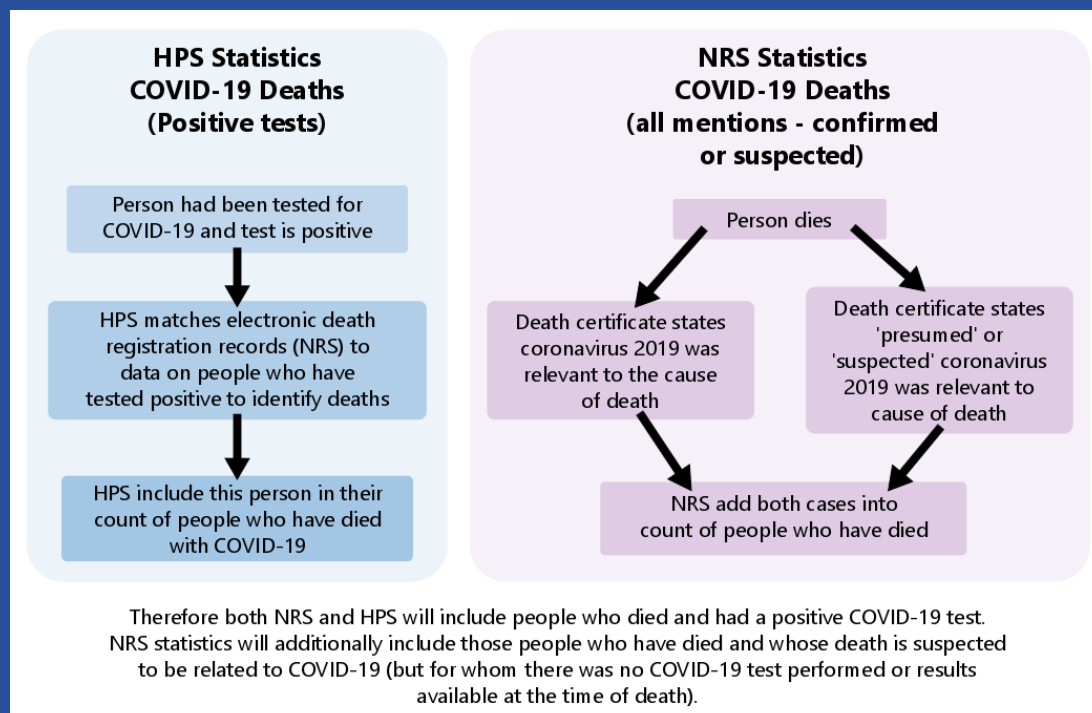
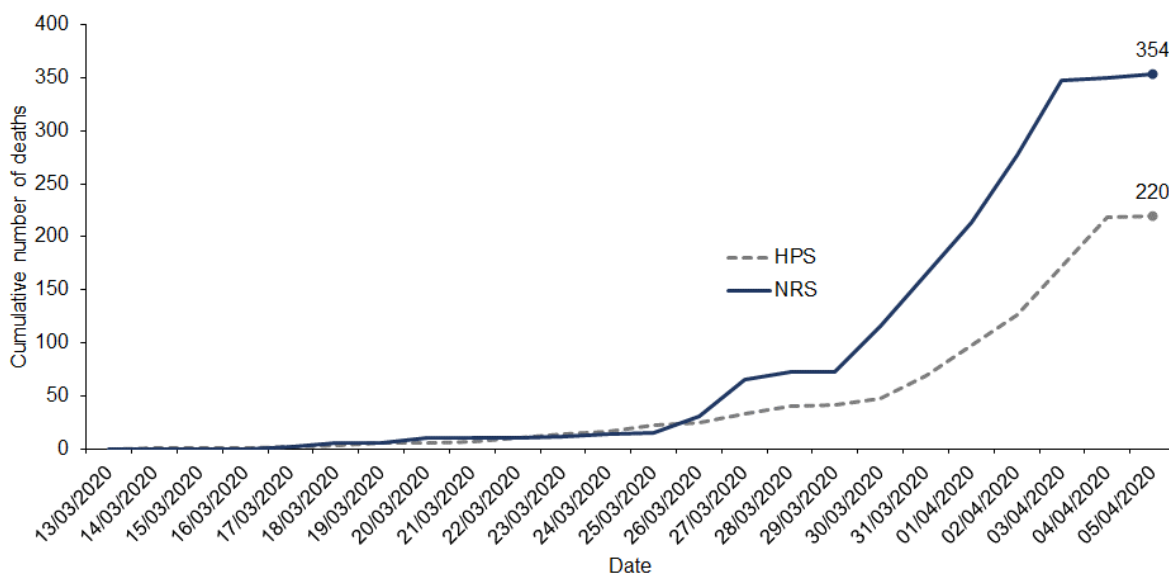


Figure 2 illustrates the differences between the two sets of figures. In the early stages, the figures were closely aligned but over time they have diverged with the NRS figure higher than the HPS figure. This is due to the inclusion of probable and suspected COVID deaths whereas the HPS figure only includes deaths of those who had tested positive for the virus.

It should be noted that the apparent flattening of these curves over weekends are caused by a limited number of death registrations taking place at weekends and are not an indication that the curve has reached a plateau. Figures recorded on weekends will be artificially low and the numbers are likely to rise steeply at the beginning of the week as registrars catch up with the backlog of death registrations.

Figure 2: Cumulative number of deaths involving COVID-19 in Scotland using different data sources



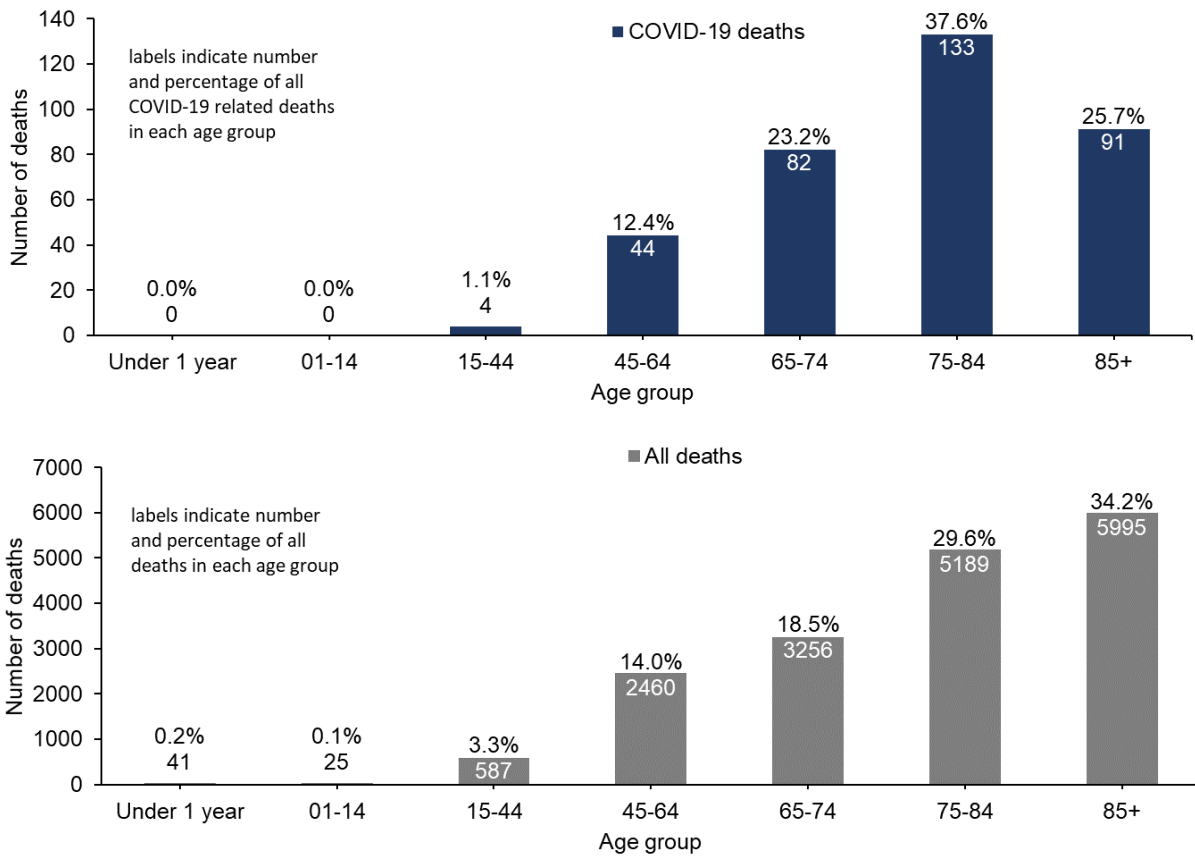
How are different age groups being impacted?

- Over 60% of all deaths involving COVID-19 were of people aged 75 or over.
- The age distribution of COVID-19 deaths is slightly younger than all deaths with the greatest proportion of deaths in people age 75-84 (37.6%) compared with age 85+ (34.2%) for all deaths.

What are the number of deaths broken down by sex?

- Of all deaths involving COVID-19, 55.6% were male (197) and 44.4% were female (157).

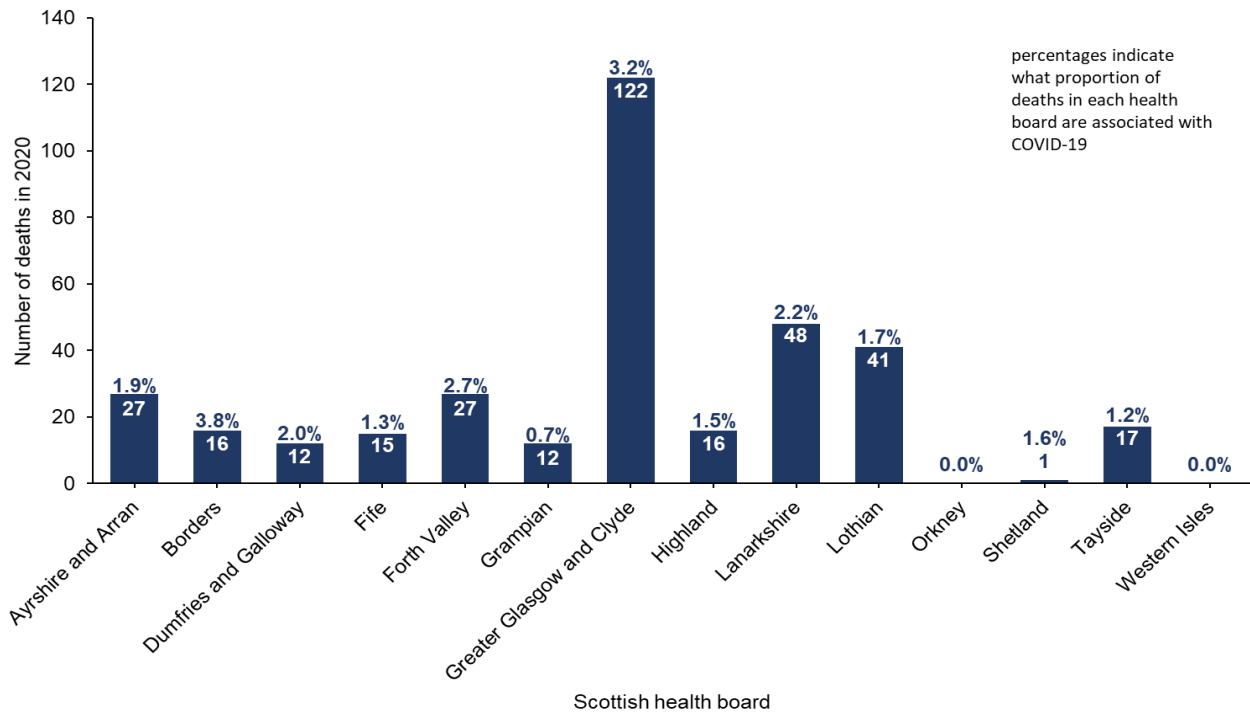
Figure 3: COVID-19 deaths and all deaths registered between weeks 1 and 14 (year to 5th April), 2020 by age group, Scotland



How do the number of deaths differ across Scotland?

- In week 14 (30 March – 5 April), the Health Board with the highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 was Greater Glasgow and Clyde with 106 deaths (also the highest number of COVID-19 deaths to date with 122).
- The Health Boards with the highest proportion of all deaths registered involving COVID-19 to date was Borders - 3.8% of total deaths.
- There were no deaths involving COVID-19 registered in two health board areas –Orkney and Western Isles.

Figure 4: Deaths registered between weeks 1 and 14 (year to 5 April), 2020 by Health Board of residence, Scotland



How do these weekly death figures compare with those produced by ONS (for England and Wales)?

The figures are produced using same definition as those published by the ONS for England and Wales, so are broadly comparable.

One minor difference is how the registration weeks are defined:

- Weeks used by ONS (for England and Wales) run from Saturday to Friday
- NRS weeks (for Scotland) run from Monday to Sunday (this is the [ISO8601](#) standard week).

In practice, this is likely to have very little impact on comparisons as there are currently very few registrations that take place on Saturdays and Sundays.

You can view the latest figures from ONS for England and Wales [here](#) and the latest figures from NISRA for Northern Ireland are available [here](#)

Figure 5: Deaths by week of registration, Scotland, 2020

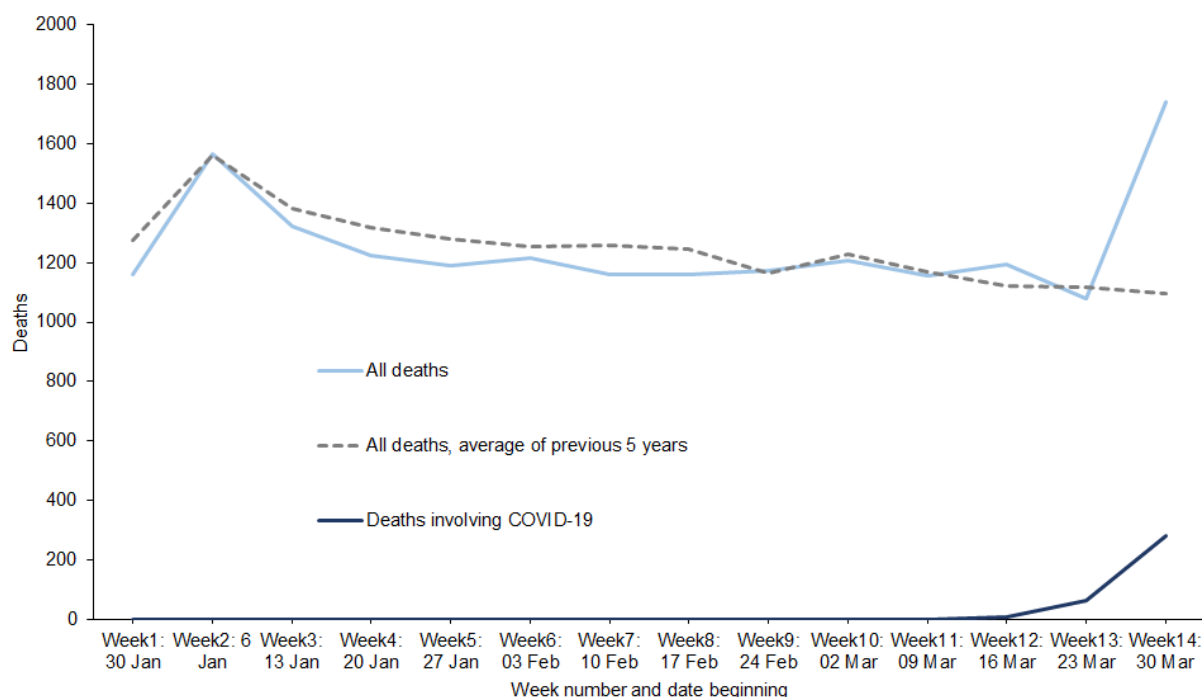


Figure 5 shows that in 2020 up to week 13, the number of weekly registered deaths in Scotland has been broadly in line with the five year average

In week 14 (30 March to 5 April), the number of registered deaths from all causes were 60% (643 deaths) higher than the five year average. During week 13, registration offices in Scotland were closed during this to begin enabling remote death registration during the coronavirus pandemic. This backlog from week 13 is likely to explain part (but not all) of the large increase in deaths registered in week 14. Combining weeks 13 and 14 (23 March to 5 April), the number of deaths registered was 27% above the five year average.

Things you should know about how these statistics are compiled

Figures are based on the date of registration. In Scotland deaths must be registered within 8 days but in practice, the average time between death and registration is around 3 days.

Figures are allocated to weeks based on the ISO8601 standard. Weeks begin on a Monday and end on a Sunday. Often weeks at the beginning and end of a year will overlap the preceding and following years (e.g. week 1 of 2020 began on Monday 30 December 2019) so the weekly figures may not sum to any annual totals which are subsequently produced.

Deaths involving COVID-19 are defined as those where COVID-19 is mentioned on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributory cause. Cause of death is coded according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Conditions 10th Revision (ICD-10). The relevant codes included in this publication are U07.1 and U07.2

Figures include deaths where 'suspected' or 'probable' COVID-19 appears on the death certificate.

Data are provisional and subject to change in future weekly publications. The data will be finalised in June 2021.

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Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

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If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our standards of service, please contact:

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