Infections and deaths

The percentage of people testing positive in England remains high, but decreased slightly

22 January 2021

An estimated 1 in 55 people tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the community population in England, during the week ending 16 January 2021, equating to 1,023,700 people, or 1.88% of the population.

This is a decrease from the week ending 2 January 2021 when 1,122,000 people (2.06%) were estimated to have COVID-19.

The percentage of people testing positive in Wales levelled off. An estimated 44,000 people, around 1 in 70 or 1.45% of the population, had the virus during the week ending 16 January 2021.

In Northern Ireland the percentage of people testing positive has increased over the previous two weeks. An estimated 29,400 people had COVID-19 in the week ending 16 January 2021, equating to 1 in 60 people or 1.60% of the population.

In Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive levelled off in the week ending 16 January 2021 at around 1 in 100 people, equating to an estimated 52,200 people or 0.99% of the population.

As there was no publication of the infection survey on 15 January 2021, there are no official estimates for the week ending 9 January 2021.

New variant

In England, the percentage of people with new variant compatible positives has decreased in London, the South East and East of England in the week ending 16 January 2021, while in other regions increases have generally levelled off.

In the week ending 16 January 2021, the percentage of people testing positive and compatible with the new variant decreased in London, the South East and East of England

Modelled percentage of cases that are compatible with the new variant (ORF1ab- and N-gene positive) and other variants based on nose and throat swabs, daily, by region since 6 December 2020, England

Embed code

Notes:

New variant compatible positives are defined as those that are positive on the N-gene and ORF1ab-gene, but not the S-gene, regardless of cycle threshold (Ct) value.

All results are provisional and subject to revision.

These statistics refer to infections reported in the community, by which we mean private households. These figures exclude infections reported in hospitals, care homes and/or other institutional settings.

Data should be treated with caution. There are small numbers of positives detected leading to considerable uncertainty surrounding these estimates. There are further uncertainties given that not all cases that are positive on the ORF1ab- and N-genes will be the new variant.

For tests compatible with the new UK variant, this analysis uses weeks commencing Monday, and the most recent week this week is 11 to 17 January 2021. We use these time periods to align with other standard infectious disease surveillance as used by WHO in the main Ct monitoring report.

Data download

Analysis | Data

More than a third of deaths involved COVID-19 in the week ending 8 January

19 January 2021

There were 6,057 deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England and Wales in the week ending 8 January 2021 – the highest weekly figure since the week ending 24 April 2020.

However, the sharp rise in COVID-19 deaths coincided with a similar increase in overall registrations, which may be partly driven by deaths in previous weeks whose registrations were delayed by Bank Holidays (Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day).

Even so, more than one in three deaths registered in the week ending 8 January involved COVID-19 (34.1% of 17,751), the highest percentage since the week ending 17 April 2020.

There were sharp increases in COVID-19 mortality across all English regions and Wales. Both London and the South East recorded more than 1,000 deaths involving COVID-19 for the first time since April.

Deaths were above average in all English regions and in Wales, amid sharp rises in COVID-19 mortality

Number of deaths in Wales and regions in England, registered between 3 January 2020 and 8 January 2021

Embed code

Notes:

Based on area of usual residence. Geographical boundaries are based on the most up-to-date information available at the time of publication.

Figures exclude deaths of non-residents.

Based on date a death was registered rather than occurred.

All figures for 2020 and 2021 are provisional.

The International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) definitions are as follows; coronavirus (COVID-19) (U07.1 and U07.2).

The number of deaths registered in 2020 (Weeks 19, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 52 and 53) and in Week 1 2021 were affected by Bank Holidays.

The Week 52 five-year average is used to compare against Week 53 deaths.

The five-year average has been provided for 2015 to 2019 (rather than 2016 to 2020) because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on deaths registered in 2020. The average for 2015 to 2019 provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected per week in a usual (non-pandemic) year.

Data download

In total, there have been 87,726 deaths involving COVID-19 registered in England and Wales since the start of the pandemic (up to 8 January 2021). Around 75% of these have occurred among people aged 75 years and over.

Our data are based on deaths registered in England and Wales and include all deaths where “COVID-19” was mentioned on the death certificates. Weekly figures are available by local authority and health board.