

New UK-wide methodology agreed to record COVID-19 deaths

- New methodology introduced following urgent review
- Deaths in people with COVID-19 that occurred within 28 days of testing positive will be published daily
- The approach, endorsed by the four UK Chief Medical Officers, will be used by all 4 UK nations

The 4 UK Chief Medical Officers have recommended that a single, consistent measure is adopted for [daily reporting of deaths](#) across the UK. The UK government and the devolved administrations have agreed to publish the number of deaths that occurred within 28 days of a positive lab-confirmed COVID test result on a daily basis.

This will provide accurate data on the immediate impact of recent epidemic activity. The methodology has been peer reviewed by independent academics to ensure that the best possible indicators are used, and that the methods are applied consistently across the nations of the UK.

PHE and the devolved administrations have worked closely with the UK Statistics Authority on these new measures and the new approach is in line with advice from the statistics regulator.

In their review, Public Health England considered epidemiological evidence to see how likely it was that COVID-19 was a contributory factor to a death at different points in time after a positive test.

Analysis of data in England found 96% of deaths occurred within 60 days or had COVID-19 on the death certificate. 88% of deaths occurred within 28 days.

As of Wednesday August 12, the number of all deaths in patients testing positive for COVID-19 in the UK within 28 days was 41,329.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at Public Health England, said:

The way we count deaths in people with COVID-19 in England was originally chosen to avoid underestimating deaths caused by the virus in the early stages of the pandemic.

Our analysis of the long-term impact of the infection now allows us to move to new methods, which will give us crucial information about both recent trends and overall mortality burden due to COVID-19.

In England, a new weekly set of figures will also be published, showing the number of deaths that occur within 60 days of a positive test. Deaths that

occur after 60 days will also be added to this figure if COVID-19 appears on the death certificate. This will provide an additional measure of the impact of the disease over time.

This follows concerns raised by academics from the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine about the original measure, which counted anyone who had ever tested positive as a COVID-associated death. They called for the introduction of a 21-day measure in order to accurately assess the impact of the virus on mortality rates.