NEWS

Covid-19: Deprived areas have the highest death rates in England and Wales

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The UK's Office for National Statistics has published new figures showing deaths involving covid-19 by local areas and deprivation. The data, which cover the period between 1 March and 17 April 2020, reveal several trends.

Around a fifth of overall deaths were covid-19 related

In this period there were 90 232 deaths in England and Wales (that were registered by 18 April). Some 20 283 (22%) of these deaths involved covid-19. When adjusting for size and age structure of the population, this translated as 36.2 deaths involving covid-19 per 100 000 people in England and Wales.

Deprived areas were worst affected

People living in more deprived areas have experienced covid-19 mortality rates more than double those in less deprived areas. The age standardised mortality rate of deaths involving covid-19 in the most deprived areas of England was 55.1 deaths per 100 000 compared with 25.3 deaths per 100 000 population in the least deprived areas. In Wales the figures were 44.6 deaths per 100 000 population in the most deprived areas, compared with 23.2 deaths per 100 000 population in the least deprived area.

London has had the highest proportion of covid-19 related deaths

London had the highest age standardised mortality rate of 85.7 deaths per 100 000 persons involving covid-19, which was almost double the next highest rate. The capital had 4950

covid-19 related deaths and 6972 non-covid-19 related deaths in this period. The highest rate was Newham (144.3 deaths per 100 000 population), followed by Brent (141.5 deaths per 100 000 population), and Hackney (127.4 deaths per 100 000 population).

The south west has seen the lowest proportion

The south west saw the lowest age standardised mortality rate of 16.4 deaths per 100 000 population. There were 1051 covid-19 related deaths and 7338 non-covid-19 related deaths in the south west during this period.

Large urban areas had higher death rates

Urban major conurbations had a significantly higher age standardised mortality rate (64 000 per 100 000 population) than any other rural urban classification.

Commenting on the figures David Finch, senior fellow at the think tank the Health Foundation, said that the reasons behind the trend were complex. "In the immediate term, it's vital that we increase our understanding of the relationship between deaths from the virus and the circumstances in which people live. As the government continues to develop its approach to dealing with the pandemic, it must ensure that support is in place where it's most needed. A longer term government strategy must ensure that unjust and avoidable differences in peoples' health do not become more entrenched in the aftermath of the crisis."