

## **COVID-19 Recovery Committee**

### **Excess Deaths: Statistical analysis**

#### **Background**

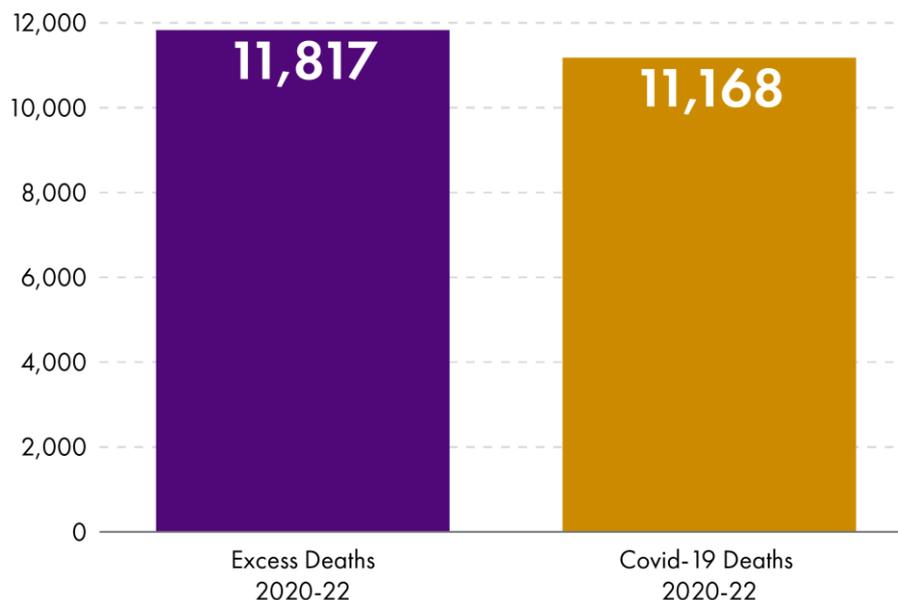
This note provides charts and analysis of available statistics relevant to the committee's excess deaths inquiry.

Charts are based on figures as at week 4 (week beginning 24 January 2022).

The charts cover the following areas:

- Excess Deaths compared to Covid-19 Deaths (2020-2022)
- Time series of Covid deaths and excess deaths during the pandemic
- Excess Deaths by cause (in all locations)
- Cancer deaths recorded at home or non-institutional settings compared to those within hospital settings
- Care home deaths during the pandemic
- Figures on presentations for cancer and waiting times

**Figure 1: Excess Deaths and Covid-19 Deaths (2020-2022)**



Source: National Records of Scotland

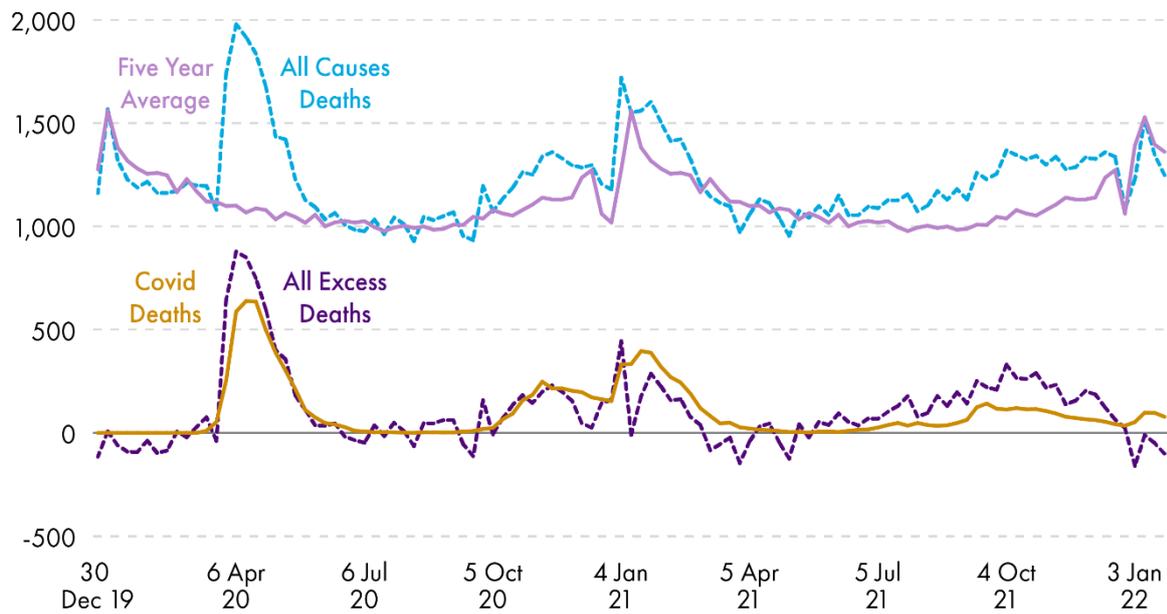
Excess deaths are the total number of deaths registered in a week minus the average number registered in the same week over the previous five years (excluding 2020). As such, this is a measure that looks to capture the extent to which the number of deaths in a given period are higher/lower than might be expected based on past trends.

Deaths involving COVID-19 are deaths where COVID-19 has been identified as being involved in the death by a doctor, either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributory cause of death.

Figure 1 (above) indicates that Covid-19 deaths account for the vast majority of all excess deaths between 2020 and 2022 (around 95%).

From the week ending 30 December 2019 to the week ending 30 January 2022, there were 11,817 excess deaths compared to 11,168 COVID-19 deaths. This accounting of excess deaths includes excess deaths from all causes

**Figure 2: Covid deaths and excess deaths during the pandemic**



Source: National Records of Scotland [2019 – 2020](#) and [2020 – 2022](#)

Figure 2 highlights the most substantial surges in Covid deaths and excess deaths occurred in the early months of the pandemic.

**Figure 3: Excess Deaths by cause (in all locations)**

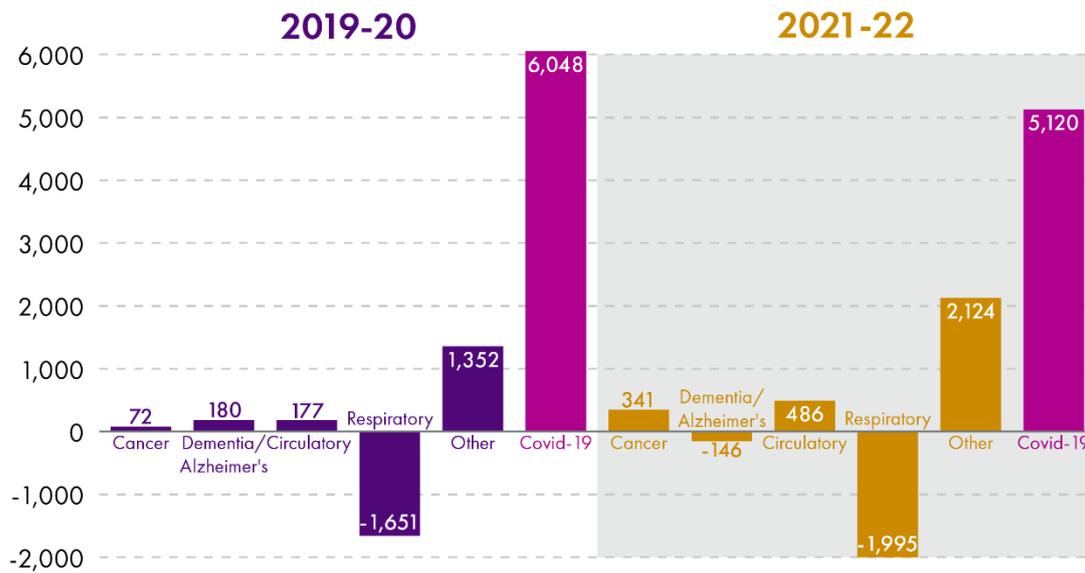


Figure 3 provides the figures for excess deaths by cause, (for all locations, whether in a care home, hospital at home and so forth).

For context, the number of Covid-19 deaths was 6,048 in 2019/20 and 5,120 in 2021 and the first 4 weeks of 2022.

**Figure 4: Cancer deaths recorded at home or non-institutional settings compared to those within hospital settings**

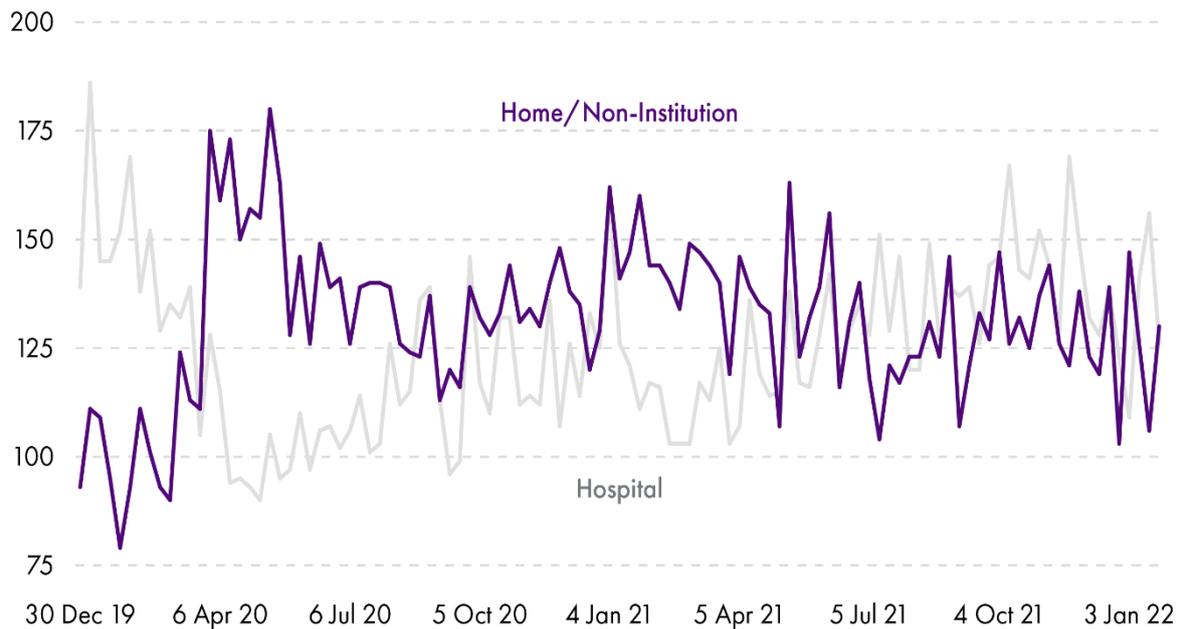


Figure 4 indicates that for example, the number of cancer deaths recorded at home or non-institutional settings in the early months of the pandemic, was substantially higher than in hospitals. These figures do not include deaths in care homes.

There has been a marked increase in deaths recorded at home or non-institutional settings since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 30 December 2019 to 28 December 2020, 5,079 recorded excess deaths occurred in the community. At the same time, we observed a deficit in the excess deaths in hospital settings to -1,080 against the 5-year average. Cancer deaths were the most pronounced, with 1,896 excess deaths recorded within the community. Cancer excess deaths in hospital settings had a deficit of -1,367 against the 5-year average during the same period.

## Figure 5: Care home deaths during the pandemic

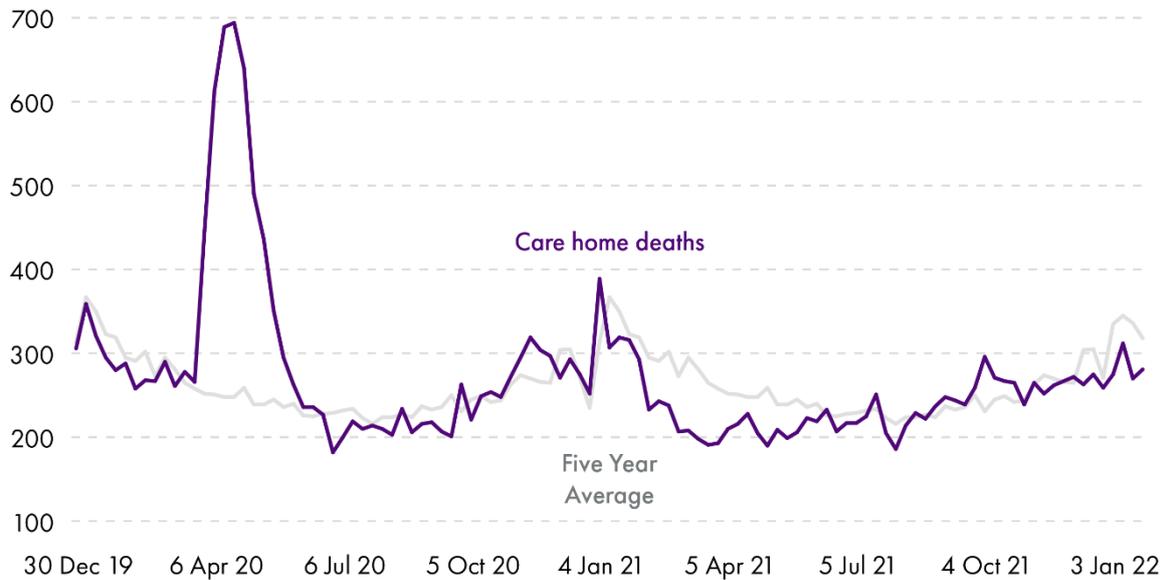


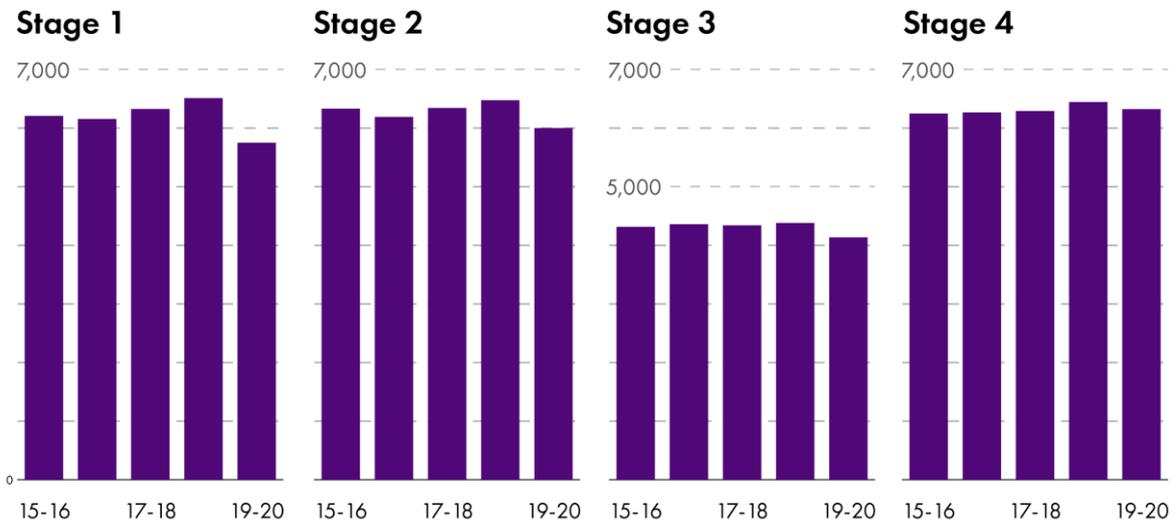
Figure 5 sets out the numbers of care home deaths during the pandemic, highlighting the substantial increase, particularly compared to the five-year average, in the early months of the pandemic.

Care home excess deaths were 2,164 higher than the 5-year average between December 2019 and December 2020.

## Figure 6: Weekly excess death registrations (in hospital) due to circulatory causes

This chart has been removed as a result of data inconsistencies in spreadsheets provided at week 4 (24 Jan 2022). Further analysis of most recent data (week 9) is required.

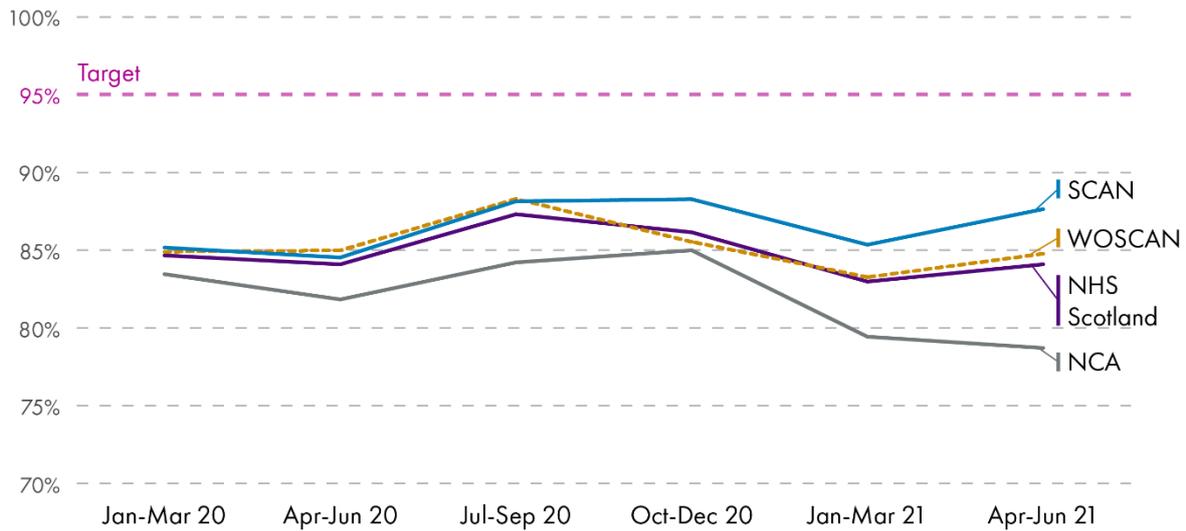
**Figure 7: Numbers presenting at different stages of cancer 2015/6 to 2019/20**



Source: National Records of Scotland

Figure 7 shows total numbers of people presenting at different stages of cancer. Figures cover a two-year period (so 2019-20 figures cover the period January 2019 to December 2020 and include the effect of the pandemic). The figures for 2019-2020 appear to indicate a drop off compared to the previous year, for stages 1 and 2 in particular.

**Figure 8: Percentage treated within 62 days of receipt of an urgent referral with suspicion of cancer to first cancer treatment by regional Cancer Network for all cancer types recorded**

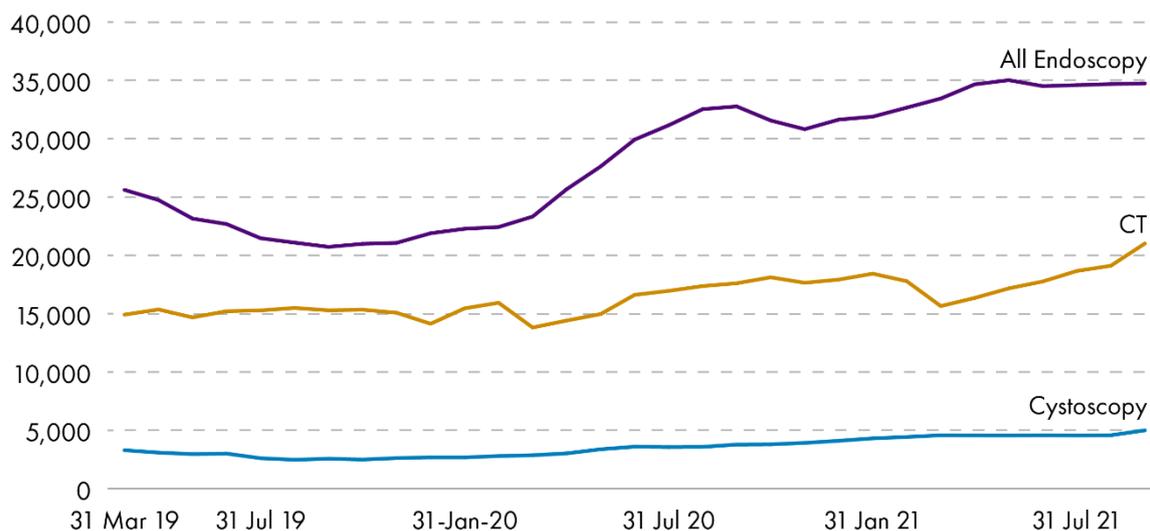


Source: PHS New Cancer Waiting Times: Data provided from NHS Boards and compiled by PHS Scotland.

- SCAN: South East Scotland Cancer Network
- WOSCAN: west of Scotland Cancer Network
- NCA: North Cancer Alliance

The 62-day standard states that 95% of eligible patients should wait a maximum of 62 days from 'urgent suspicion of cancer' referral to first cancer treatment. Between 1 April to 30 June 2021, there were 3,953 such eligible referrals. 84.1% of patients started treatment within the 62-day standard.

**Figure 9: Endoscopy / cystoscopy and CT scans: numbers on list**



Source: [PHS, Diagnostic Tests Monthly Management Information](#), Local Delivery Plans

As of September 2021, 34,740 patients were waiting for an endoscopy. Compared to September 2019, before the onset of the pandemic, that is an increase of 68%. Of these, 3,883 patients had been waiting more than a year.

When looking at cystoscopy waiting times precisely, there were 5,005 patients on the waiting list. At the same time, 21,015 patients were waiting for CT scans.

**John Kamoto, Fraser Murray, Andrew Aiton, Kathleen Robson, and Simon Wakefield: SPICe Research**

**16 March 2022**

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot)