



COVID-19 Recovery Committee

Excess Deaths: Statistical analysis

Background

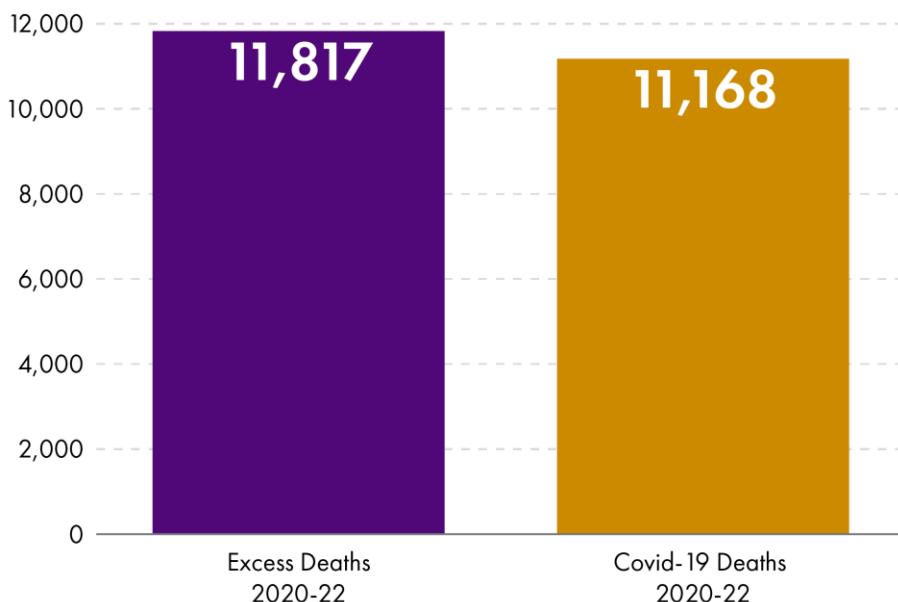
This note provides charts and analysis of available statistics relevant to the committee's excess deaths inquiry.

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

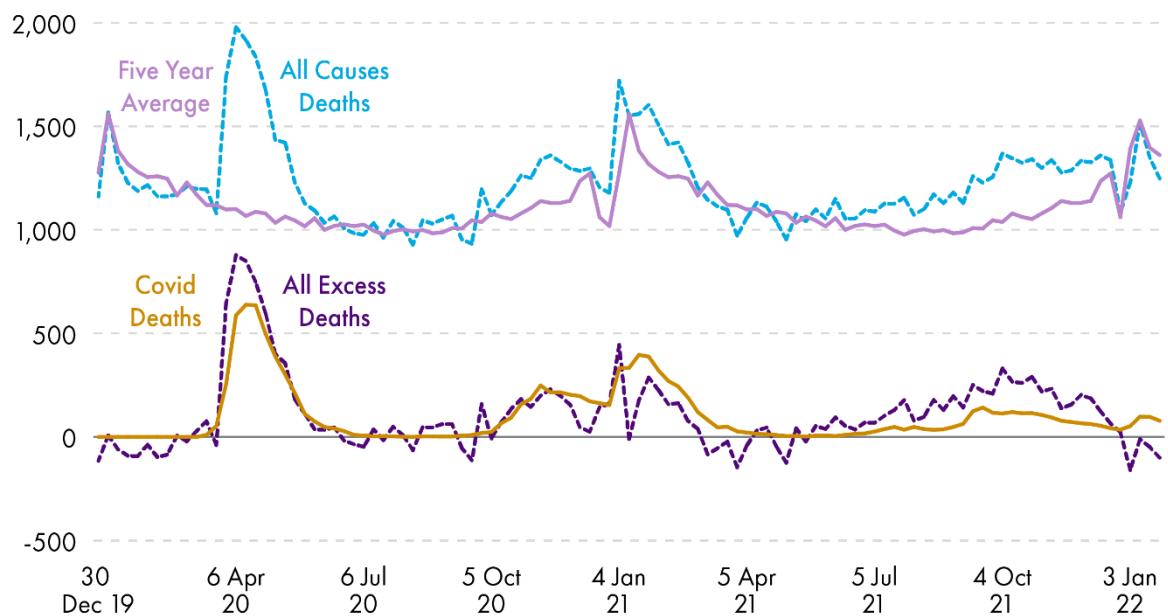
Excess deaths are the total number of deaths registered in a week minus the average number registered in the same week over the previous five years (excluding 2020). As such, this is a measure that looks to capture the extent to which the number of deaths in a given period are higher/lower than might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

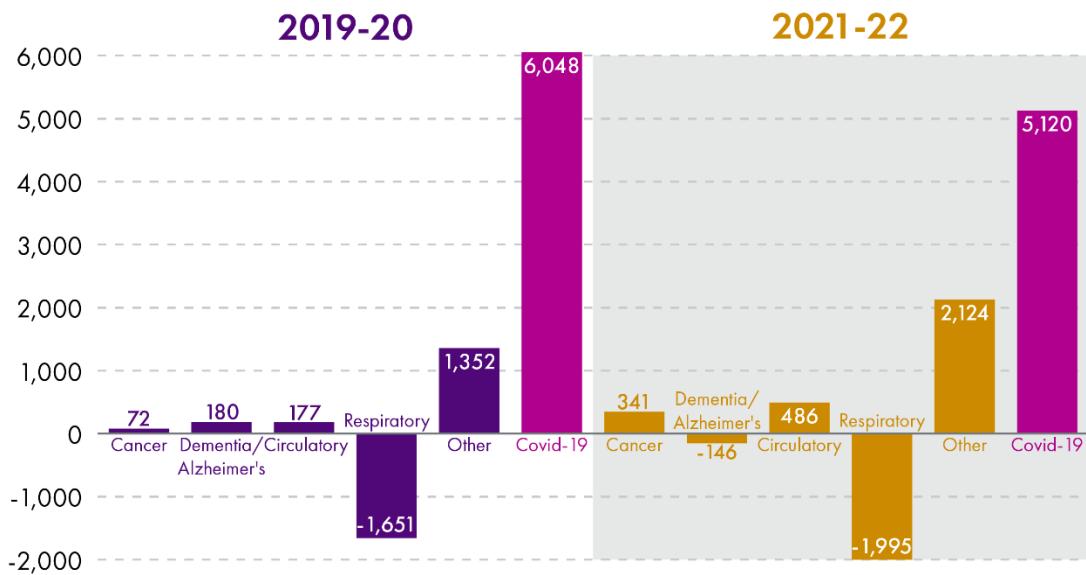


Figure 3 provides the figures for excess deaths by cause, (for all locations, whether in a care home, hospital at home and so forth).

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

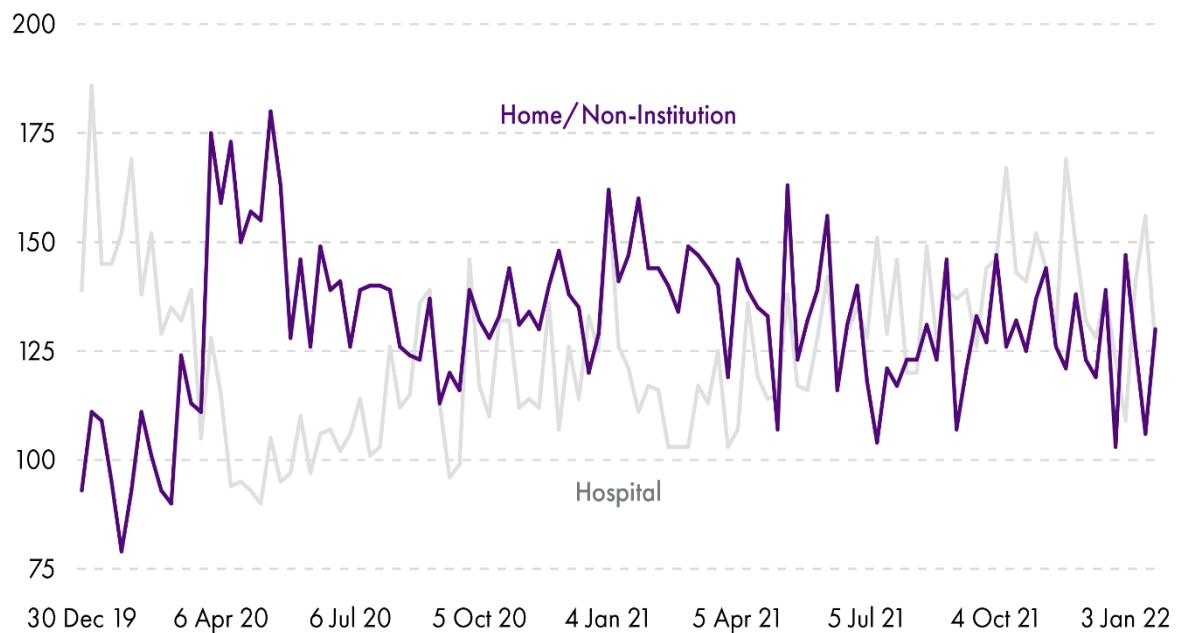


Figure 4 indicates that for example, the number of cancer deaths recorded at home or non-institutional settings in the early months of the pandemic, was substantially higher than in hospitals. These figures do not include deaths in care homes.

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

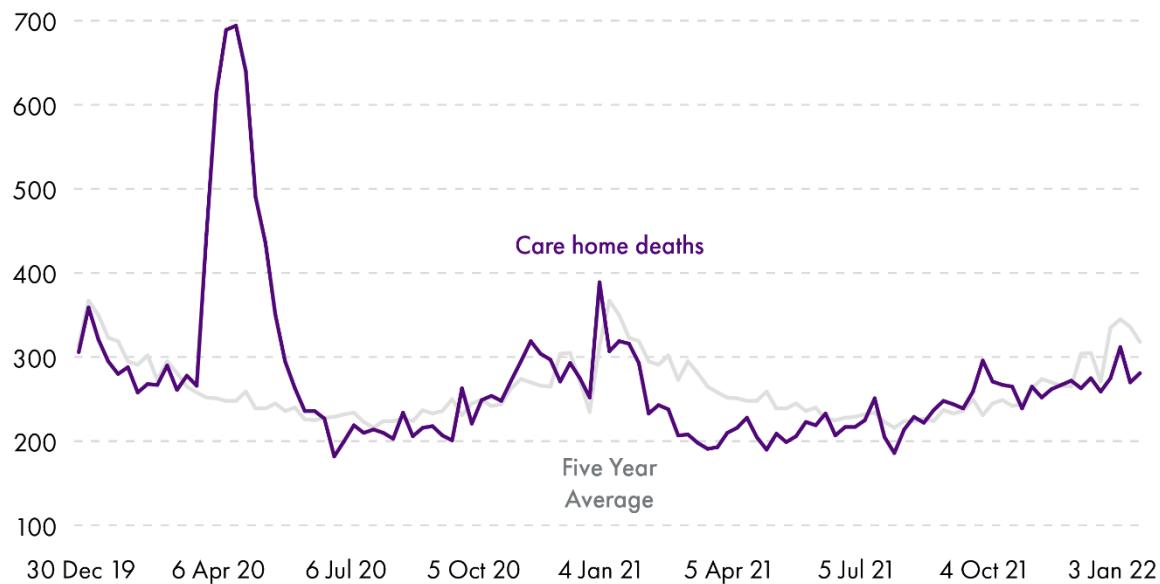


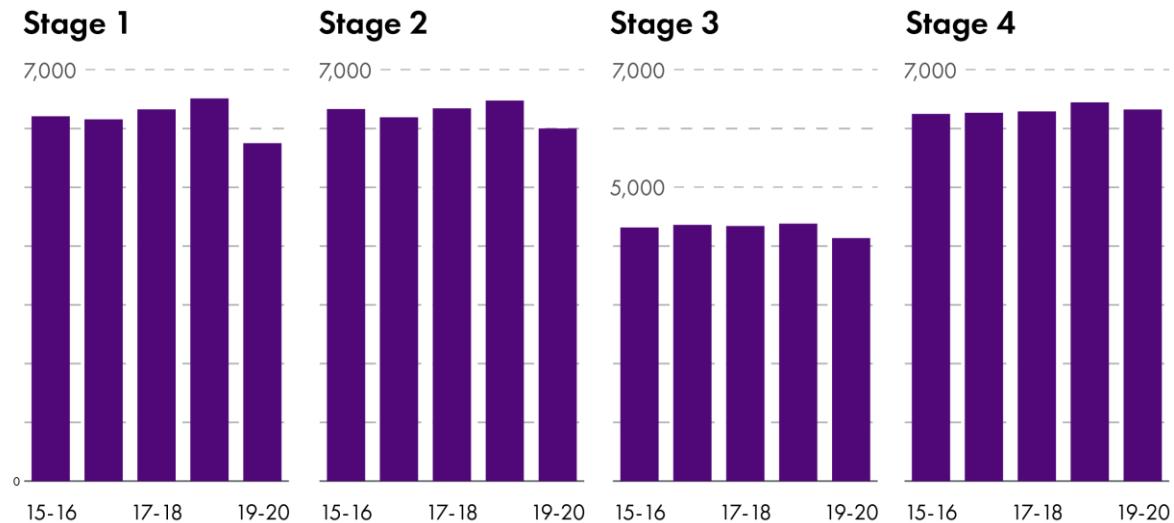
Figure 5 sets out the numbers of care home deaths during the pandemic, highlighting the substantial increase, particularly compared to the five-year average, in the early months of the pandemic.

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.

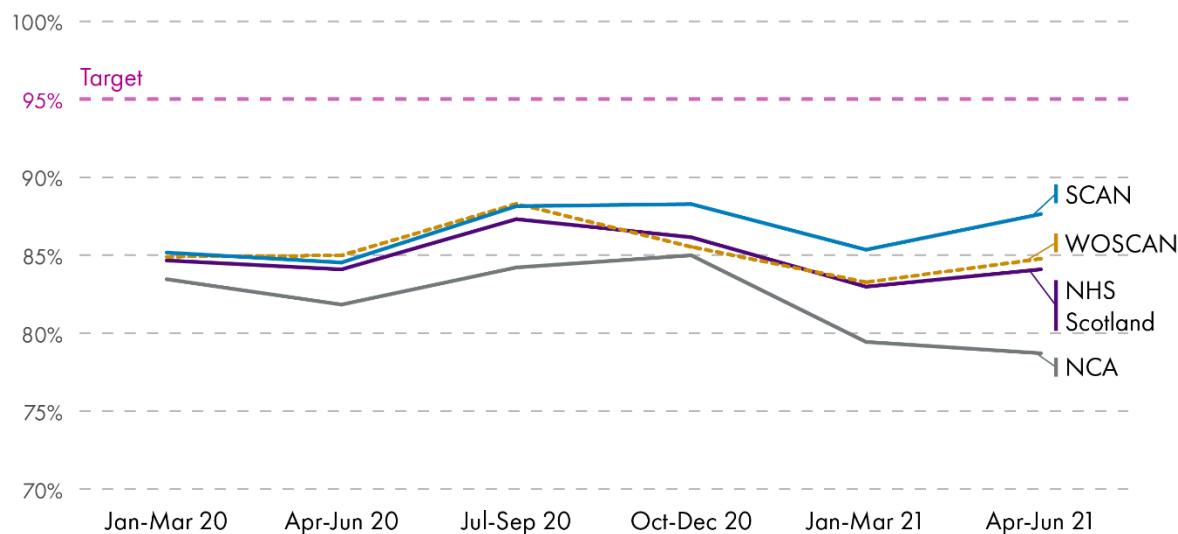
**Figure 7: Numbers presenting at different stages of cancer
2015/6 to 2019/20**



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

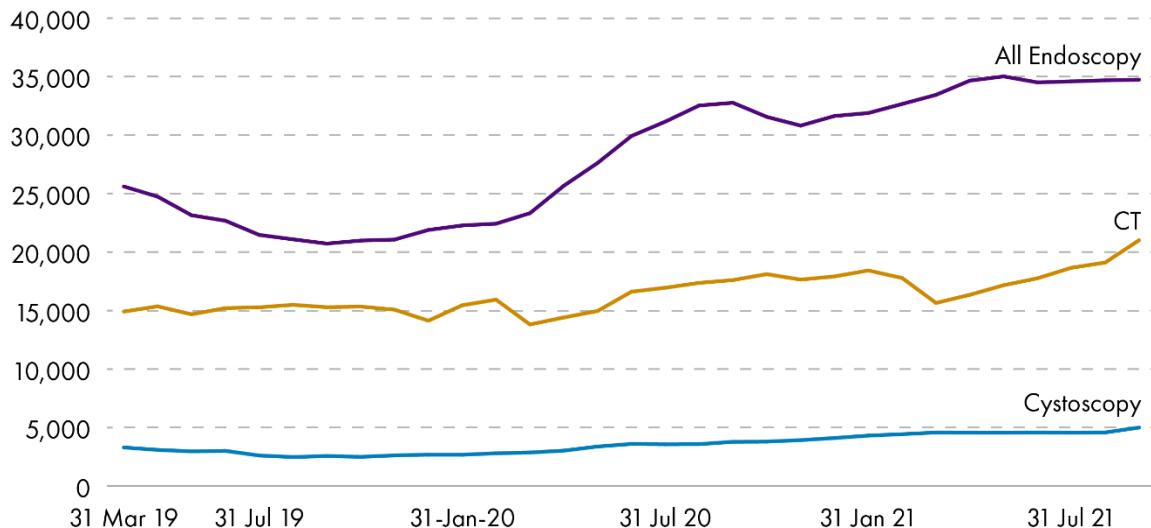


Source: PHS New Cancer Waiting Times: Data provided from NHS Boards and compiled by PHS Scotland.

- 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.

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