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**Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician**

Esther McVey MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

20 July 2022

Dear Ms McVey,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what steps are being taken to investigate the higher than expected rate of deaths of 12.2 per cent above the five-year average **(38654)**.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes statistics on deaths registered in England and Wales. Mortality statistics are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration.

The term 'excess deaths' refers to the number of deaths above the five-year average. The average for 2015 to 2019 has been used for deaths registered in 2020, and for deaths registered in 2021 as this provides a comparison of the number of deaths expected in a usual (non-pandemic) year. For deaths registered in 2022, the five-year average comprises the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021. This moves our five-year average along by a year, ensuring it accounts for the changing population structure but does not include the exceptionally high number of deaths seen in 2020. For more information, please see our related blog<sup>1</sup>.

As well as releasing the *Deaths Registered Weekly in England and Wales*<sup>2</sup> statistical bulletin, we publish *Monthly Mortality Analysis*<sup>3</sup>. This release looks at deaths in more detail, for example, what causes are above the five-year average and are contributing to the excess. We also publish reports on excess mortality specifically, the last release provided analysis up to December 2021<sup>4</sup>. We will be updating this over the coming months to include analysis of the current period of excess mortality.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Sir Ian Diamond**

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<sup>1</sup> [Understanding excess deaths during a pandemic | National Statistical \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessdeaths)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deaths-registered-weekly-in-england-and-wales-provisional/previousReleases](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deaths-registered-weekly-in-england-and-wales-provisional/previous-releases)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/monthly-mortality-analysis-england-and-wales/previousReleases](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/monthly-mortality-analysis-england-and-wales/previous-releases)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessdeaths-in-england-and-wales/march-2020-to-december-2021](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/excessdeaths-in-england-and-wales-march-2020-to-december-2021)