

Trends in Excess Deaths and Covid-19 Vaccines

This note summarises the main statistics and facts on trends in excess deaths and Covid-19 vaccines following the Adjournment Debate on Friday 20 October.

1. Excess deaths are the difference between the actual registered number of deaths and the expected deaths based on data for previous years.
2. It is true to say that amongst people who have died in the last three years, there are some people who have received a covid vaccination. However, figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that by August 2022, 93.6% of the population had received at least one dose of the vaccine. When almost the entire population is vaccinated, it is inevitable that a high proportion of deaths, whatever the cause, are amongst those who have been vaccinated. This is not the same as saying that vaccination is the cause of those deaths.
3. There is no evidence linking excess deaths to the COVID-19 vaccine. England's mortality rate in 2022 was significantly lower than it had been in 2020, before the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Analysis from the ONS, published in August this year, shows that people who have had a COVID-19 vaccine have a lower mortality rate than those who haven't been vaccinated¹.
4. The Government is taking steps to help reduce excess deaths, including those which involve COVID-19. Vaccines remain the first line of defence and antivirals and other treatments provide a necessary additional defence by protecting patients who become infected with COVID-19, particularly those who for whom the vaccine may be less effective such as the immunosuppressed.
5. The Government is taking further action on cardiovascular disease by including cardiovascular diseases, as well as diabetes and strokes, in our Major Conditions Strategy, which will focus on conditions that contribute most to death and disability across the population².
6. The Government is also working with NHS England to expand the role of community pharmacy by investing up to £645 million over two years to expand services, including blood pressure checks, increasing access and convenience for millions of people³.

¹ [Deaths involving COVID-19 by vaccination status, England - Office for National Statistics](#)

² [Major conditions strategy: case for change and our strategic framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework: 2019 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme

7. Due to the safety of modern vaccinations, instances where injury resulting from a vaccine is serious enough to qualify for a payment from the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS) are rare.
8. The latest data shows that as of 6 Oct 2023, 7574 claims have been made through the VDPS related to COVID-19 vaccinations. Of these, 3593 claims have been processed, with 149 claims having received a VDPS payment. In comparison, over 43 million people aged 12 and above in England have had at least 1 vaccine dose as of 15 October 2023⁴. As part of this, over 149.3 million COVID-19 vaccinations were delivered in England from December 2020 to July 2023⁵. A further 7.5 million⁶ have then been delivered so far as part of the Autumn 2023 vaccination programme⁷.
9. Since NHS Business Service Authority (NHSBSA) took on the running of the scheme in November 2021, the number of staff has been increased 20-fold to improve the speed of processing and allow a better customer experience with dedicated caseworkers.
10. Medical assessments for claims can only commence once NHSBSA receives full medical records from a claimant's GP, medical providers, local authorities, and other relevant healthcare providers. Work is ongoing to improve the return rate of medical records from healthcare providers through comms work with NHS institutions and using Subject Access Requests as needed to allow medical assessments can be carried out.

Covid Vaccine Safety

11. Safe and effective vaccines have underpinned The Government's strategy for living with COVID-19 and have saved tens of thousands of lives, whilst also significantly reducing the pressure on the NHS. Each candidate COVID-19 vaccine is assessed by teams of scientists and clinicians on a case-by-case basis and is only authorised once it has met robust standards of effectiveness, safety and quality set by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).
12. The MHRA has also implemented a proactive vaccine safety surveillance strategy for monitoring the continued safety of all UK-approved COVID-19 vaccines. This

⁴ [Weekly Influenza and COVID19 report data w42 report-1.ods \(live.com\)](#)

⁵ [Vaccinations in England | Coronavirus in the UK \(data.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶ [Statistics » Vaccinations: COVID-19 \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

⁷ The statistics on the number of people vaccinated and the number of vaccines delivered are based on data collected by the UK Health Security Agency as the Office for National Statistics only provide an estimate for the proportion of people vaccinated and not the total number of people vaccinated. The ONS and UKHSA statistics should not be directly compared.

monitoring system works quickly and effectively. In April 2021 the health system quickly responded to reports from the MHRA of extremely rare cases of concurrent thrombosis and thrombocytopenia following vaccination with the first dose of AstraZeneca. As a result, the JCVI advised that adults under 30 without underlying health issues should be offered an alternative vaccine to AstraZeneca if available. This was later extended in May 2021 to adults under 40 without underlying health issues.

13. In June 2021, following reports of a link between mRNA based COVID-19 vaccines and myocarditis the Commission on Human Medicines conducted a thorough independent review which found that the incidence of this side effect was found to be very rare - between 1 and 2 cases per 100,000 people who had been vaccinated. This figure is significantly less than the incidence of these events in the general population which have been estimated to be up to 22 cases per 100,000, and significantly less than the rates observed following COVID-19 infection, for which there are a range of estimates up to 150 cases per 100,000⁸.
14. We have also launched a COVID-19 Inquiry to examine the UK's preparedness and response to the pandemic and learn lessons for the future. Throughout the pandemic the Government acted to save lives and livelihoods, prevent the NHS being overwhelmed and deliver a world-leading vaccine rollout, which protected millions of lives across the nation. The Government is committed to supporting the Inquiry. The Inquiry also plans to add a Module on Vaccines and Therapeutics (Module 4).

⁸ [COVID-19 vaccines: updates for July 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-vaccines-updates-for-july-2021)