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Dear Ed,

Thank you for your letter in response to our recent publication and tweet on Deaths involving COVID-19 by vaccination status . Our respective team discussions on this matter have been open and constructive and I appreciate the recognition of my team's commitment to addressing concerns and continual improvement.

As you note in your letter, we have subsequently published a blog which provides more explanation on how the data should be interpreted and used. In this blog we are clear that due to various factors the age-adjusted risk of deaths involving COVID-19 changes over time.
We emphasise that it is not a measure of vaccine effectiveness. We have also included a short explanation in table 4 showing age breakdowns
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsbyvaccinationstatusengland.

It is always our intention that the caveats and limitations are clear to all users of our statistics and accept in this case our presentation lacked the effective presentation we strive for across the breadth of our materials. We are conscious of our additional responsibility to actively discourage any use of our statistics where it is used in isolation without context. We will actively work with media, partners and other with the next release to clearly set out the context for the headline figures.

ONS is committed to addressing the issues raised in your letter and as a result our second publication of deaths by vaccination status to be published later this month, and associated tweets will reflect this commitment.

We will make it clear in our next publication headline and statistician's comment that Age Standardised Mortality Rates vary over time, this is not a measure of vaccine effectiveness. Additionally, we will provide more explanation of the results in the publication and further breakdowns of the 10-59 age band.

ONS welcomes feedback on the statistics and analysis it publishes. We will continue to engage with users to ensure our statistics evolve and improve to meet user's needs.

Yours sincerely

Emma Rourke