

APPENDIX B

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Two papers linking 30,000 excess deaths in 2015 to cuts in health and social care, by Lucinda Hiam, Danny Dorling, Dominic Harrison and Martin McKee were published in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine in February 2017:

- *“Why has mortality in England and Wales been increasing? An iterative demographic analysis”*
- *“What caused the spike in mortality in England and Wales in January 2015?”*

In summary the research reported:

- Markedly higher death rate in 2015, principally in January
 - o 5.6% more deaths than in 2014
 - o 24.2% more deaths in January than 2104
- Potential causes reviewed:
 - o Data artefact
 - o Environmental shock eg severe weather
 - o Epidemic disease eg flu
 - o Failure of health and social care system
- No evidence that data, weather or flu accounted for pattern
- Failure of health and social care could not be discounted, and several factors supported this possibility:
 - o Increased 111 calls
 - o Ambulance call-out time below target
 - o A&E waiting times increased
 - o Diagnostics waiting times increased
 - o Cancelled operations increased
 - o Delayed transfers of care increased
 - o Staff absences rose
- Impact on life expectancy attributable principally to deaths in over 85s
 - o Dementia made greatest contribution in for both sexes
 - o Pneumonia also significant
 - o Influenza deaths likely to be from pneumonia
- This event may be a sentinel event for future system failures rather than a one off.