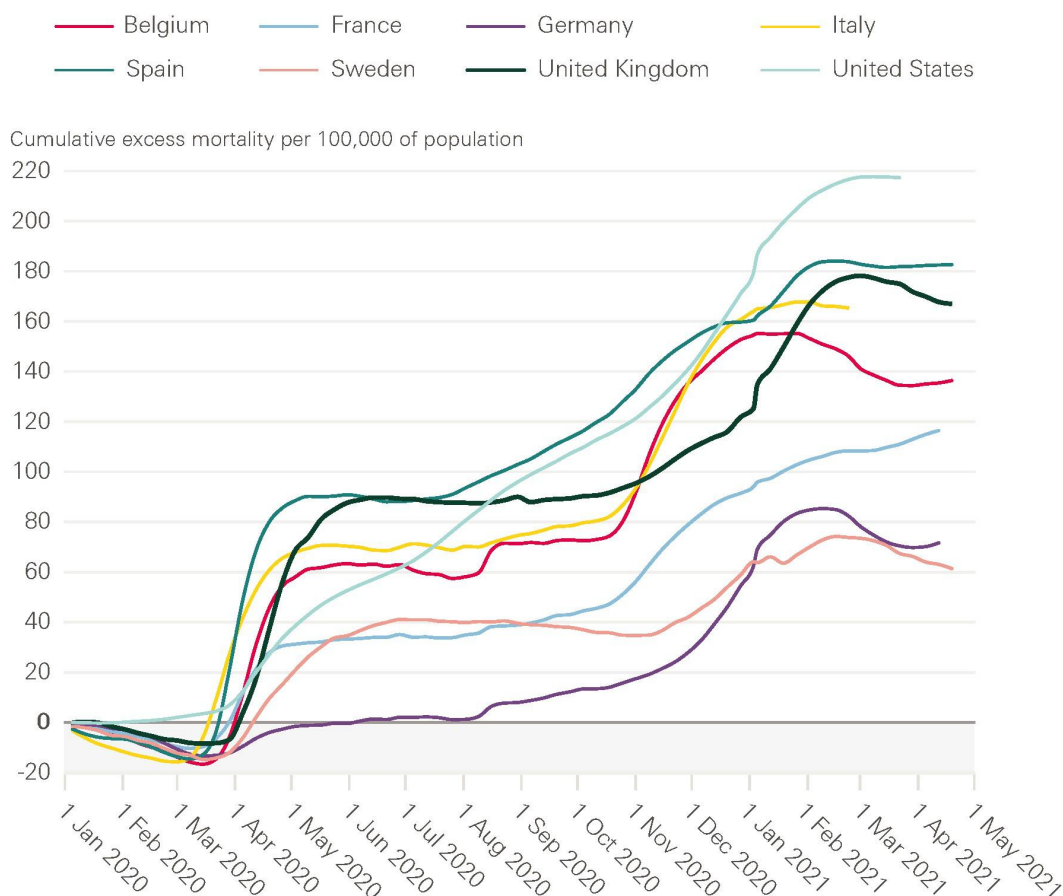


## Explaining the differences in COVID-19 outcomes internationally

The single biggest factor in the extent to which COVID-19 spread in the UK compared with other countries is the timing of lockdowns and stringency of restrictions. Higher levels of regional and international travel, increasing burden of disease and worsening social conditions also played a role. Once the virus had spread the extent to which different groups were affected within the UK reflected variations in underlying health and socioeconomic factors that increased risk of exposure and worse outcomes.

**Figure 3: Cumulative excess mortality for select countries, January 2020 to May 2021**



Source: Health Foundation analysis of Our World in Data excess mortality data, population data via OECD Stat for 2018.

### *Timing of lockdowns and travel*

Differences in policy interventions were more important than socioeconomic variations<sup>9</sup> in explaining the varying death rates among OECD countries. One study points to timing of lockdowns<sup>10</sup> accounting for around 40% of the international variation in deaths – highlighting the importance of policy responses in suppressing the spread of the virus.