



More than one hundred thousand people have now died in Great Britain as a result of the global pandemic. That number continues to grow. One hundred thousand grieving families. One hundred thousand empty chairs at the dinner table.

The last year has been one of grief, loss and hardship. It has also been a year that brought stories of resilience, a growing sense of community and hope.

To try and comprehend the enormity of what we are living through, Sky News has created one of the most comprehensive timelines to date of the COVID crisis in the UK.

It runs to almost 130 detailed pages and gathers together hundreds of statistics and front-line stories, charting the virus as it swept through our hospitals, our care homes and our lives.

It was a working document put together by our journalists and used by our teams as they researched stories for a special series of programmes broadcast on Sky News on 9th, 10th and 11th February 2021 called **COVID Crisis: Learning the Lessons**. We are publishing it here so everyone can use it; whether you're interested in seeing our work behind the scenes, or whether you are involved in your own analysis of the UK's response to the pandemic.

Where links are to Sky News stories, the timeline represents contemporaneous news reporting. For example, the first British death from COVID that we knew of at the time was on 28th February 2020. We now know an earlier COVID-related death happened on 30th January 2020.

Every effort has been made to avoid typos and omissions; however, some may have inevitably crept into such a long document.

Compiled by David Mercer, Nick Stylianou, Ganesh Rao, Jack Taylor and Jamie Robertson.

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Key

SAGE (dark green)

→ Summary of meeting

Business/economic/travel measure (dark red)

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8th December 2019

- *A patient in the Chinese city of Wuhan seeks medical help for pneumonia-like symptoms.*

31st December 2019

- *Health authorities in Wuhan report a string of pneumonia-like cases in the city.*

1st January 2020

- *The World Health Organisation requests information from Chinese authorities on the reported cluster of atypical pneumonia cases in Wuhan.*
- *The seafood market - Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market - identified as a suspected centre of the outbreak is closed.*

3rd January

- *Chinese officials provide information to WHO on the cluster of cases of 'viral pneumonia of unknown cause' identified in Wuhan.*

8th January

- *The cluster of mysterious pneumonia cases in Wuhan is identified as a new coronavirus.*

9th January

- *First death from a new coronavirus reported in Wuhan after a 61-year-old man dies. The death was first reported on 11 January.*

12th January

- *WHO says "there is no clear evidence that the virus passes easily from person to person."*

13th January

- *Thailand reports its first case, a 61-year-old Chinese woman who had flown in from Wuhan.*

16th January

- *Japan reports its first case, a man in his 30s who had travelled to Wuhan.*

20th January

- *South Korea confirms its first case.*

20th January

- *A study from London's Imperial College suggests there could be more than 1,723 cases of the new virus in Wuhan alone - after health officials in the city confirm a total of 62 cases.*

21st January

- *The US, Hong Kong and Taiwan confirm their first cases.*

22nd January - "CONTAIN"

- Public Health England and the Department of Health revise the risk to the UK from "very low" to "low" but insist the UK is "well prepared".
- *UK enters "Contain" strategy according to the Coronavirus Action Plan (published on 3rd March): detect early cases, follow up close contacts, and prevent the disease taking hold in this country for as long as is reasonably possible. Ends on 12th March.*

SAGE 1

- ***There is evidence of person-to-person transmission.*** It is unknown whether transmission is sustainable
- There is no evidence yet on whether individuals are infectious prior to showing symptoms
- ***NERVTAG does not advise port of entry screening, irrespective of the current limited understanding of the epidemiology*** (based on high false positives and false negatives)
- There are no practical preventative actions that HMG might undertake ahead of Chinese New Year (25 Jan)
- SAGE is unable to say at this stage whether it might be required to reconvene

23rd January

- First lockdown introduced in Wuhan, a city of 11 million people, as residents confined to their homes and transport networks shut. (Broadcast report here)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to Wuhan.
- *Singapore confirms its first case.*
- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps tells Sky News a "separate area" is being set up at Heathrow, as airports around the world step up screening of travellers arriving from affected regions at the centre of the coronavirus outbreak.
- China's stock markets suffer biggest single-day loss in months - CSI300 fell by 3.1%.

24th January

- The first cases of coronavirus in Europe are confirmed as France declares three infections
- *Nepal, Vietnam and Malaysia confirm their first cases.*
- UK business growth hits 16-month high, according to IHS Markit index
- First COBRA meeting on COVID-19- Boris Johnson does not attend
- Government tries to track down 2,000 passengers recently arrived in the UK from Wuhan for testing.

25th January

- *Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel to China's Hubei Province.*
- *Australia and Canada confirm their first cases*
- A doctor in Hubei is the first medical professional who treated coronavirus patients to die with the virus.

27th January

- *Germany, Sri Lanka and Cambodia confirm their first cases.*
- *Retail sector in the UK was already in decline, with nearly 10,000 jobs lost in January*
- *FTSE reacts as coronavirus fears intensify.*

28th January

- *Foreign and Commonwealth Office updates its travel advisory, advising against all but essential travel to the rest of mainland China.*
- *Travellers returning to UK from Wuhan made to quarantine for 14 days*
- *Starbucks shuts half of its stores in China; it had 4,000 outlets in January in China*

SAGE 2

- **On testing...** Specific test should be ready by the end of week, with capacity to run 400 to 500 tests per day. Currently it would not be useful to test asymptomatic individuals as a negative test result could not be interpreted with certainty
- **On symptoms...** varied, from mild coughing to fever and pneumonia. Uncertainty regarding clinical symptoms for individuals with mild illness. **There is limited evidence of asymptomatic transmission, but early indications imply some is occurring**
- **Reasonable worst-case scenario** - similar to an influenza pandemic where no vaccine or specific treatment is available. The RWCS for the UK should be based on a reproductive number of 2.5 (middle of current estimates) and should assume that some of those who have returned from China are infectious

29th January

- *British Airways suspends all flights to and from mainland China with immediate effect, due to the ongoing coronavirus threat.*
- *Finland and the UAE confirm their first cases.*

30th January

- *The coronavirus outbreak is declared a global public health emergency by the World Health Organisation, with cases in 18 countries outside China and 171 deaths worldwide.*
- *The UK's first coronavirus death is thought to have occurred when 84-year-old Peter Attwood, from Chatham in Kent, died in hospital. His death is only confirmed to be COVID-19 related by a coroner months later.*
- *German scientists find evidence of asymptomatic transmission.*
- *India and the Philippines confirm their first cases, while the US reports the first person-to-person transmission in the country.*

31st January

- *First two cases in the UK are confirmed - including a University of York student*
- *Russia and Italy also confirm their first cases*
- *Britons evacuated from Wuhan arrive at a hospital in the Wirral where they will spend 14 days in quarantine*

- [UK joins EU member states and commission officials to discuss “the cluster of pneumonia cases associated with novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China”. Four countries indicate a potential need for personal protective equipment \(PPE\) “in case of an expanding situation in the EU”. They do not include the UK.](#)

2nd February

- [First coronavirus death reported outside China - a 44-year-old man from the Philippines.](#)
- [Construction of a new hospital in Wuhan is completed in eight days.](#)
- [Government issues handwashing advice.](#)

3rd February

SAGE 3

- SAGE estimates that if the UK reduces imported infections by 50%, this would maybe delay the onset of any epidemic in the UK by about 5 days; 75% would maybe buy 10 additional days; 90% maybe buys 15 additional days; 95%+ maybe buys a month
 - **Only a month of additional preparation time for the NHS would be meaningful.** It would also be meaningful if the outbreak were pushed out of usual winter respiratory season
 - **To prevent imported infections along these lines would require draconian and coordinated measures,** because direct flights from China
 - Not the only route for infected individuals to enter the UK
 - The scale of the epidemic in China could be in the region of 200,000 to 300,000 cases (On Feb 3, more than 19,000 cases had been confirmed globally, with 13,522 cases in Hubei)
 - An extra month for the NHS and wider HMG to prepare for a WN-CoV epidemic - and to reduce the pressures arising from seasonal influenza - would offer a significant advantage
- [Government announces £20 million to fund vaccines for coronavirus and other infectious diseases.](#)

4th February

- [Belgium reports first coronavirus case](#)

SAGE 4

- The outbreak is likely to peak in Wuhan/Hubei in the next 3 to 5 weeks
- SAGE was updated on latest case numbers and fatalities: there was agreement that figures for China likely a significant underestimate. Case ascertainment in China appears to be low: potentially 1 in 15 being identified (possibly 1 in 20). Case ascertainment outside China potentially 1 in 4.
- There will be a lag before it peaks in China (potentially a month), then further lags before it peaks elsewhere in the world. **The epidemic in Wuhan could last for 5 to 6 months in total**
- SAGE agreed that based on current evidence, **domestic measures such as shutting down public transport or restricting public gatherings would probably be ineffective in creating any meaningful delay in spread of WN-CoV**
- The effect of shutting schools to limit spread of WN-CoV is currently unknown, given ignorance about the impact of WN-CoV among children.

- It is possible that school closures in reaction to further cases of WN-CoV in the UK would be less effective than in previous epidemics, when children were more susceptible to the disease, and infectivity periods were shorter.
 - SAGE heard that NERVTAG advises that **there is limited to no evidence of the benefits of the general public wearing facemasks as a preventative measure.**
 - Facemasks and other personal protective equipment in the community is only advised for health and social care workers visiting individuals who may be infectious
 - There is some evidence that wearing of face masks by symptomatic individuals may reduce transmission to other people, and therefore NERVTAG also recommends that symptomatic people should be encouraged to wear a surgical face mask, providing that it can be tolerated
 - **Duration of illness: median of 15 to 18 days**, but great uncertainty around this. Longest time so far appears to be 41 days
 - Asymptomatic transmission cannot be ruled out and transmission from mildly symptomatic individuals is likely.
 - Almost nothing is known about WN-CoV in children – though it is significant that there have been no reports of illness among children.
 - The UK, to date, has not swab tested returnees. **Although the UK is building regional diagnostic capability within weeks, overall capacity is limited.** Capacity cannot be substantially increased during this winter influenza season
 - Facemasks and other personal protective equipment in the community is only advised for health and social care workers visiting individuals who may be infectious.
- The Diamond Princess cruise ship is quarantined in Japan as a passenger tests positive after disembarking in Hong Kong on 25 January. Dozens of Britons are on board.
 - The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) announces a funding call for a share of £20 million for 'rapid response' research into tackling coronavirus.
 - The Oxford vaccine team gets over £2 million from this call, announced 24th March.
 - The bid by Oxford is in partnership with Pall Biotech, Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies, Cobra Biologics, Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, the Vaccines Manufacturing Innovation Centre (VMIC) and Oxford Biomedica.
 - The UK BioIndustry Association (BIA) states that the intention of this group was to develop a rapid scale up of such a vaccine to a 1m dose scale by summer 2020.

6th February

- Third person in the UK tests positive for coronavirus after contracting the virus in Singapore
- EU countries share observations on the state of supplies of PPE in a meeting of officials from member states and the World Health Organization. An official from the UK attends the meeting in Luxembourg.

SAGE 5

- (More countries added to list where people could have contract coronavirus) - SAGE now advises that individuals in the UK who have travelled from Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau and are showing possible symptoms of WN-CoV should also be included in the case definition
- There is a close correlation between countries reporting higher numbers of cases and air travel volumes from Wuhan to those countries

7th February

- [WHO announces 'severe global disruption' in supply of PPE](#)
- [A new novel coronavirus diagnostic test is rolled out across the UK. Increase from one laboratory in London to 12 will accelerate the UK's testing capacity.](#)
- [The Jenner Institute at the University of Oxford agrees a contract with Advent Srl, in Italy to produce the first batch of the novel coronavirus vaccine for clinical testing.](#)

8th February

- **DHSC Death Data** (2nd February - 8th February): 9 COVID-19 Deaths reported.

9th February

- [Five British people test positive at a ski resort in the French Alps](#)

10th February

- [Number of coronavirus cases in UK doubles from four to eight - as several cases are linked to a man thought to be a "superspreader"](#)
- [UK Government declares coronavirus an 'imminent threat to public health' and introduces legal powers to restrict freedoms of people at risk of spreading the virus.](#)

11th February

- [Ninth case confirmed in UK](#)
- [Global death toll reaches 1,000](#)
- [The World Health Organisation says the official name of the disease caused by the new coronavirus is COVID-19](#)
- [A British man believed to be a "superspreader" of coronavirus after contracting it in Singapore is named as businessman Steve Walsh](#)
- [Steve Oldfield, Chief Commercial Officer in the Department of Health and Social Care tells NHS staff: "The NHS and wider health system are extremely well prepared for these types of outbreaks and follow tried and tested procedures of the highest standards to protect staff, patients and the public".](#)

SAGE 6

- **an epidemic in the UK could be expected to peak around 2 to 3 months following the establishment of widespread transmission**, but there is low confidence around this. It is predicted to have a lower peak but broader duration than a pan flu outbreak
- The UK has 8 confirmed cases, all of whom acquired the virus overseas.
- It is not possible for the UK to accelerate diagnostic capability to include Covid-19 alongside regular flu testing in time for the onset of winter flu season 2020-21 to have a lower peak but broader duration than a pan flu outbreak
- PHE to ensure there are plans in place to collect the maximum amount of information from returning UK travellers who are testing positive for Covid-19, including daily swabbing and collection of blood samples

- UK modellers are in agreement that the epidemic is close to peaking in Wuhan – potentially in the next 1 to 3 weeks, around 2.5 months after it began in early December 2020. The peak in the rest of China could be around 1 to 2 months behind Wuhan, but uncertain
- Outside China, case numbers correlate with air travel volumes from China, suggesting limited ongoing transmission has yet to be detected outside China
- It is expected that all parts of the UK would be impacted at about the same time, with only small delays between regions

12th February

- “Superspreader” Steve Walsh, who was linked to 11 cases of coronavirus in the UK, says he is “happy to be home” after being discharged from hospital

13th February

- JCB, the digger maker, becomes the first big UK manufacturer to cut production and working hours for 4,000 employees as it’s hit by slowing demand in China.
- Spain’s first death from COVID-19 is confirmed

SAGE 7

- SAGE concluded that **neither travel restrictions within the UK nor prevention of mass gatherings would be effective in limiting transmission**
- There is no current evidence to suggest prevention of mass gatherings is effective in limiting transmission. Public actions in the absence of a mass gathering could have comparable impacts (e.g. watching a football match in a pub instead of a stadium as likely to spread the disease)
- School closures can potentially delay a) the first wave of an epidemic or b) the peak of an epidemic – but would require closures lasting weeks, and evidence suggests they would not alter total numbers affected
- Public behaviour where there is perceived risk of a forthcoming epidemic: available evidence suggests scepticism and general inaction dominate (certainly until the first confirmed domestic fatality)
- At this stage, public messaging should stress the importance of personal responsibility and responsibility to others, in order to drive positive public behaviour
- **Panic - i.e. entirely irrational behaviour - is extremely rare...**the key factor in determining public behaviour is whether there is trust in the institution(s) seeking to assure that there aren't resource shortages

14th February

- Government advises anyone who has travelled through China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand to self-isolate ‘as you would with the flu’ if they develop COVID-19 symptoms. It is not mandatory.

15th February

- First death reported in Europe - a Chinese tourist in France

16th February

- Mark Kleinman reveals that City regulators worry about whether companies will have their financial results audited due to pandemic restrictions, in the first signs that work from home guidance will have impact on City

18th February

- Jaguar Land Rover warns of UK production hit as it runs out of parts due to supply chain problems in China over coronavirus

SAGE 8

- There is **some evidence that case incidence is decreasing in China**. However, this does not rule out a resurgence once restrictions on internal movement are lifted
- Indications from international partners suggests that children with Covid-19 are displaying milder symptoms, but this does not preclude them from being carriers of the disease
- **Currently PHE can cope with five new cases a week** (requiring isolation of 800 contacts). Modelling suggests this capacity could be increased to 50 new cases a week (8,000 contact isolations) but this assumption needs to be stress tested with PHE operational colleagues
- When there is sustained transmission in the UK, contact tracing will no longer be useful
- It is essential that the UK agrees principles for clinical trials and treatment should an outbreak occur on the UK, learning lessons from previous epidemics such as Ebola in West Africa and severe flu in the UK

19th February

- *Iran reports its first two cases*

20th FebruarySAGE 9

- There is evidence of local transmission unlinked to individuals who have travelled from China in Japan, Republic of Korea and Iran
- There is **evidence from China and Hong Kong that social distancing measures have had some impact** in limiting the outbreak
- SAGE discussed a PHE paper on monitoring and contact tracing, the purpose of which is detection and containment to delay spread of Covid-19
- **Any decision to discontinue contact tracing will generate a public reaction – which requires consideration with input from behavioural scientists**
- It is **possible that school closures could have a modest impact** on delaying the peak of an epidemic, but timing of intervention will be key and this will require the ability to detect and monitor any outbreak with good surveillance
- **SPI-B to consider** the likely public response to interventions to limit the spread of the disease, and the impact of public response on the effectiveness of such interventions. SPI-B also to consider **what conditions could lead to civil disturbance (released in document for SAGE 10 25th February)**
- *Global death toll passes 2,000*

21st February

- UK factory output rises despite coronavirus outbreak hampering supply chains.
- Sir Richard Branson downplays coronavirus threat to new cruise line Virgin Voyages. Note that this cruise line has still not launched (as of 10 Dec 2020).

23rd February

- Thirteen cases confirmed in UK after four Diamond Princess passengers flown to Britain test positive.

24th February

- A meeting of officials - to which the UK is invited - hears an update from the European commission on the joint procurement of PPE. Commission officials call on countries to confirm "their exact needs latest today ... to move forward with next steps". No representative from the UK attends the meeting.

25th February

- Government guidance is published which states: "It remains very unlikely that people receiving care in a care home or the community will become infected." The guidance was later withdrawn on 13 March.
- Government guidance states that travellers returning from Hubei, Iran, and certain regions of South Korea should self-isolate on reaching home or their destination, even if they have no symptoms.

SAGE 10

- SAGE advises that surveillance measures, which commenced this week, will provide actionable data to inform HMG efforts to contain and mitigate spread of Covid-19
- The risk of public disorder in the UK – defined to include opportunistic crime, community tension and rioting – is assessed to be very low in response to an epidemic. Pro-social behaviour and altruism are more likely public responses
- PHE continues to focus on contact tracing if cases are confirmed. PHE is sourcing commercial solutions for point of care testing in hospitals as a priority
- SAGE discussed a paper modelling four non-pharmaceutical interventions: university and school closures, home isolation, household quarantine and social distancing, including use of interventions in combination (**first mention of home isolation**)
- Evidence from social distancing and school closures implemented in Hong Kong, Wuhan and Singapore indicates that these measures can reduce the Covid-19 reproduction number to approximately 1 (a 50-60% reduction).
- Extremely mild symptoms should be enough to trigger home isolation if this intervention is to be adopted. This would need to be clearly communicated to the public
- Public uptake is significantly impacted by whether government is seen to be acting competently and whether people believe that the intervention would work
- Advice to businesses to begin preparing for measures such as homeworking and social distancing would give owners time to plan and demonstrate that the UK has a strategy and is adhering to it (**first mention of working from home**)

SPI-B return on risk of public disorder

- SPI-B defined public disorder to include actions from opportunistic crime, community tension and rioting.
- **Agreed that large scale rioting is unlikely.** It is rarely seen in these circumstances. Acts of altruism will predominate, and HMG could readily promote and guide these.
- Where public disorder occurs, it is usually triggered by perceptions about the Government's response, rather than the nature of the epidemic per se.
- There was agreement that the key factors that are likely to increase public disorder are similar across all identified scenarios:
 - ◆ Staff absences in police forces
 - ◆ Pressures on healthcare facilities
 - ◆ Perceptions that there is limited resource e.g. limited face masks or hand sanitiser
 - ◆ Perceptions of inadequate government response to contain the outbreak
- Agreed that the police would face specific issues in the outbreak:
 - ◆ If there are low numbers of police due to workplace absences, there could be a perception that the police have become disempowered. This might exacerbate a minor issue eg. lead to a rise in opportunistic crime.
 - ◆ Specific scenarios where police actions are experienced as excessive and which prevent the public from accessing services they believe they have a right to access (eg. food and healthcare) may lead to increased tensions.
- Recommendations to the Government to limit the risk of public disorder:
 - ◆ Provide clear and transparent reasons for different strategies.
 - ◆ Set out clear expectations on how the response will develop
 - ◆ Promote a sense of collectivism.

27th February

- First case confirmed in Northern Ireland
- An outbreak occurs at a Nike conference in Edinburgh from which at least 25 people linked to the event are thought to have contracted the virus
- Rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and considerations during severe shortages Interim guidance released. This advice and guidance are re-updated and published on multiple occasions. (19/03/20, 06/04/2020).

SAGE 11

- SAGE reviewed Covid-19 planning assumptions and advised that, **in the reasonable worst case scenario, 80% of the UK population may become infected, with an overall 1% fatality rate in those infected.** Only a proportion of those infected will experience symptoms
- This fatality rate represents a reduction in the number of excess deaths relative to previous planning assumptions (in which a case fatality rate of 2-3% was based purely on identified cases rather than all infected individuals)
- On the risk posed by national and international travel associated with large events (e.g. sports), SAGE advised that the additional numbers travelling are not significant relative to overall numbers, but that this question should be further investigated.
- On large events, SAGE noted that alternative/replacement behaviours (e.g. going to the pub instead of a stadium) would pose comparable risk

- DfT to produce numbers indicating numbers travelling to major sporting events, compared to overall numbers travelling, including from abroad

28th February

- First British death from the disease is confirmed by the Japanese Health Ministry: a man quarantined on the Diamond Princess cruise ship.
- First person to contract coronavirus in the UK is confirmed - a man from Surrey
- First case confirmed in Wales after patient is infected in Italy.
- Outgoing Bank of England Governor Mark Carney says Britain should prepare itself for an economic growth downgrade as outbreak deepens around the world.
- British Airways and EasyJet first announce scaling back of flights to Europe (Italy).
- Boris Johnson offers condolences after the first British national dies. Says "best single piece of advice we can give" is "wash your hands for 20 seconds or more".
- The EU launches its first joint procurement of £1.2m worth of gloves and gowns/overalls. The UK is not one of the 20 member states involved.

29th February

- Ireland confirms its first case with the patient having recently travelled from Italy

2nd March

- PM chairs a COBRA meeting as UK cases rise to 36
- First case confirmed in Scotland after the person recently travelled to Italy

3rd March

- In a Downing Street news conference, Boris Johnson unveils government's Coronavirus Action Plan
 - Up to a fifth of the workforce may be off sick during the peak of a coronavirus epidemic in the UK, the government says in its latest plans.
 - Police may need to focus on only the most serious crimes and maintaining public order if the virus spreads. The military could also provide support to emergency services if needed.
 - Sir Patrick Vallance tells the news conference "restricting travel makes no difference"
 - Prof Chris Whitty says: "Even for the highest risk group, the great majority of people will survive this"
 - Boris Johnson says he was shaking hands with "everybody" at a hospital where patients were being treated for coronavirus
 - On the same day the SPI-B group of behavioural scientists were calling for an end to hugging and handshakes (link to document here)
- The World Health Organization warns that severe and mounting disruption to the global supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) – caused by rising demand, panic buying, hoarding and misuse – is putting lives at risk from the new coronavirus and other infectious diseases.

SAGE 12

- **Social distancing for over-65s is likely to have a significant effect on overall deaths** and peak demand for critical care beds, but will not significantly reduce overall transmission. This would be most effective for those living independently; it will be a challenge to implement this measure within communal settings such as care homes
- **There is currently no evidence that cancelling large events would be effective.** There is likely to be geographical variation in the timing of localised peaks of the epidemic
- SAGE noted the importance of assessing the wider health implications of these interventions, e.g. the effect of self-isolation on mental health
- Unintended consequences should be considered – including potential alternative behaviours (e.g. people congregating elsewhere when events are cancelled)

4th March

- The Prime Minister announces sick pay from day one for all those with suspected coronavirus.
- UK Government introduces new public information campaign on handwashing and other methods to “protect yourself and your community” from the spread of COVID-19.
- NHS England announces national major incident (‘Incident Level 4’) in a letter to hospitals.

5th March

- First coronavirus death is announced in the UK; the victim is a woman in her 70s
- Cases exceed 100 (115 positive tests).
- Chris Whitty tells MPs that the UK has now moved to the second stage of dealing with COVID-19 – from “containment” to the “delay” phase
- CBI calls on Government to extend sick pay rights (extend to all workers, remove pay requirements)

SAGE 13

- There is epidemiological and modelling data to support implementation – within 1-2 weeks – of individual home isolation (symptomatic individuals to stay at home for 14 days) and whole family isolation (fellow household members of symptomatic individuals to stay at home for 14 days after last family member becomes unwell) to delay Covid-19 spread, modify the epidemic peak and reduce mortality rates.
- There is **scientific data to support** implementation – roughly 2 weeks later – of **social isolation (cocooning) for those over 65 or with underlying medical conditions** to delay spread, modify the epidemic peak and reduce mortality rates.
- SAGE agreed there is **no evidence to suggest that banning very large gatherings would reduce transmission.** Preventing all social interaction in public spaces, including restaurants and bars, **would have an effect, but would be very difficult to implement.**
- SAGE agreed that school closures would have smaller effects on the epidemic curve than other options

6th March

- Boris Johnson warns of a “substantial period of disruption as he pledges an extra £46m in the fight against coronavirus.
- The Prime Minister announces a new £46 million package that includes funding for work on a coronavirus vaccine.

9th March

- [In a Downing Street press conference, Boris Johnson says the "best thing we can do is wash our hands for 20 seconds with soap and water."](#)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to Italy due to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country and the nationwide lockdown.
- *Italy announces a national lockdown.*

10th March

- [Health minister Nadine Dorries is the first MP to test positive for coronavirus](#)
- [Reported that a sixth person dies with coronavirus in UK as cases reach 382 \(This refers to data released from 5th - 10th March\)](#)
- Cheltenham Festival starts, with about 150,000 people attending over four days.
- [Sky News reports that social care staff 'had to buy their own gloves'.](#)

SAGE 14

- SAGE agreed that social distancing measures for the elderly should apply to those aged 70 +. Modelling using 65 + and 70+ deliver comparable results, but there is a large drop off in efficacy if the measures are confined to 80+.
- SAGE advised that these social distancing interventions should consider 2 distinct groups: a) those aged 70+ who are generally well and b) vulnerable groups of all ages (including those aged 70+).
- Limited evidence suggests that children can be at risk of Covid-19 and will mostly experience mild illness, though they probably transmit the virus.
- SAGE will revisit its advice on the risks posed by different kinds of social gatherings /meetings and the impacts of restricting them on the epidemic curve at its next meeting
- Based on surveillance, including cases in intensive care units (for whom there is no travel history accounting for infection), **the UK likely has thousands of cases – as many as 5,000 to 10,000 – which are geographically spread nationally**
- **The UK is considered to be 4-5 weeks behind Italy but on a similar curve** (6-8 weeks behind if interventions are applied)
- Plans for how PHE can move from 1,000 serology tests to 10,000 tests per week
- **The main symptoms are fever and/or cough. Public messaging on symptoms will be issued later this week** and reviewed at SAGE on 12 March.
- SAGE endorsed NERVTAG's advice that individual case isolation should last for 7 days from onset of symptoms. Individuals should self-isolate on more than one occasion if they have relevant symptoms (but SAGE recognised that compliance rates may drop the more this happens, hence the need to trigger this at the right time
- For pregnant women infected with COVID-19, there is some evidence of premature delivery. There is no evidence of vertical transmission (mothers passing COVID-19 to unborn children). It does not appear that COVID-19 poses more of a risk to pregnant women than other infections, but the risk of premature delivery means that they should be considered in plans for vulnerable groups are developed
- **Modelling suggests the UK is 10-14 weeks from the epidemic peak** if no mitigations are introduced.

- SAGE noted that public gatherings pose a relatively low but not zero public risk. People are more likely to be infected by people they know, not strangers. But it acknowledged the importance of advice in this area and agreed to review it and to look at different types of gatherings/meetings
- **SAGE advisory groups** (SPI-M, SPI-B, NERVTAG) **to reconsider for the next SAGE meeting (12 March) advice on public gatherings**, including risk to individuals and the impact of restricting gatherings on the epidemic curve. This should include the relative risk of different types and sizes of public gatherings (e.g. football matches, religious gatherings, restaurants/bars).

11th March

- The World Health Organisation declares the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic.
- More than 50,000 football fans watch Liverpool play Atletico Madrid at Anfield in the Champions League.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak presents the budget, which includes £30bn in measures to protect the economy from coronavirus.
 - Includes £30 million for rapid COVID-19 research.
- Bank of England acts for the first time by cutting its base interest rate to 0.25% from 0.75%.

12th March - "DELAY"

- The UK enters the "Delay" phase according to the Coronavirus Action Plan (published on 3rd March): 'slow the spread in this country, if it does take hold, lowering the peak impact and pushing it away from the winter season'. Ends on 16th March.
- The UK's chief medical officers raise the risk to the UK from moderate to high.
- In a Downing Street press conference, Boris Johnson warns "many more families will lose ones before their time" and as many as 10,000 people may be infected.
 - If we delay the peak, even by a couple of weeks, then our NHS will be in a stronger state as the weather improves.
 - Anyone with a new continuous cough or a high temperature is told to self-isolate for seven days.
 - Schools are asked to cancel trips abroad, and people over 70 and those with pre-existing medical conditions are advised to avoid cruises.
 - Acknowledges future isolation for entire households but doesn't implement now.
 - States that the scientific advice on cancelling events will have little impact on the spread but there is also the issue on the burden of events on public services.
 - Scientific advice is that closing school could "do more harm than good". This again may change as the virus develops.
- Public Health England stops performing contact tracing, as widespread infections overwhelm capacity.
- The rules published on 25 February for travellers returning from certain countries are withdrawn; they should now follow the same guidance as other households.
- Ten deaths in total and 590 cases confirmed - but Sir Patrick Vallance says the actual number of people infected in the UK could be between 5,000 and 10,000.
- The FTSE 100 has had its worst day of trading in more than three decades, falling by more than 10%.
- Jennifer Haller becomes the first person to receive a dose of a candidate COVID-19 vaccine in the first human trial, for the Moderna mRNA-1273 vaccine.

13th March

- [First coronavirus death in Scotland.](#)
- [Sir Patrick Vallance tells Sky News that millions of Britons will need to contract coronavirus in order to control the impact of the disease which is likely to return "year on year". He says: "About 60% is the sort of figure you need to get herd immunity."](#)
- [Government withdraws guidance published on 25th February stating it was "very unlikely" people receiving care in care homes or the community would be infected.](#)
- [New guidance issued about what to do in the event of a coronavirus outbreak at a care home or other supported living. Withdrawn on 13th May.](#)
- [A group of leading medical device development companies from Cambridge is asked by the UK Government to assist in the rapid development and manufacture of ventilators to meet increased hospital requirements, caused by COVID-19.](#)

SAGE 15

- Owing to a 5-7 day lag in data provision for modelling, **SAGE now believes there are more cases in the UK than SAGE previously expected at this point**, and we may therefore be further ahead on the epidemic curve, but the UK remains on broadly the same epidemic trajectory and time to peak.
- The science suggests that **household isolation and social distancing of the elderly and vulnerable should be implemented soon**, provided they can be done well and equitably. Individuals who may want to distance themselves should be advised how to do so.
- SAGE is considering further social distancing interventions – that may best be applied intermittently, nationally or regionally, and potentially more than once – to reduce demand below NHS capacity to respond.
- There is some evidence from Japan (not peer reviewed) that certain individuals spread the virus to multiple others, while other individuals are responsible for minimal spread.
- It is clear that household quarantining would lead to increased risk of others within the household becoming infected, as described in the modelling.
- Household isolation lasts for 14 days, with certain individuals having to isolate for longer if they have symptoms (as per the case isolation policy).
- **SAGE was unanimous that measures seeking to completely suppress spread of Covid-19 will cause a second peak.** SAGE advises that it is a near certainty that countries such as China, where heavy suppression is underway, will experience a second peak once measures are relaxed.
- **Community testing is ending today** – which will increase the pace of testing (and delivery of results) for intensive care units, hospital admissions, targeted contact tracing for suspected clusters of cases and healthcare workers. This includes faster confirmation of negative results.
- The current limiting factor on serology is availability of samples. This needs to be resolved as soon as possible, and SAGE suggested several measures.
- ACTION: PHE to urgently determine how it will ramp up to take 1,000 blood samples a week, taking advice from SAGE participants.

14th March

- [The US extends its European coronavirus travel ban to include the UK from 16 March.](#)
- [UK retailers release a joint letter asking customers not to panic buy products after some supermarkets sell out of items such as pasta, hand gel and toilet paper.](#)
- [The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to Spain.](#)

15th March

- Health Secretary Matt Hancock says that every UK resident over the age of 70 will be told "within the coming weeks" to self-isolate for "a very long time" to shield them from coronavirus.

16th March - "MITIGATE"

- First Downing Street news conference is held (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- UK enters "Mitigate" phase according to the Coronavirus Action Plan (published on 3rd March): 'provide the best care possible for people who become ill, support hospitals to maintain essential services and ensure ongoing support for people ill in the community to minimise the overall impact of the disease on society, public services and on the economy'. Ends with lockdown ending.
- The World Health Organisation urges all countries to "test, test, test".
- Boris Johnson tells public to avoid pubs, clubs, restaurants and theatres and to only make essential journeys in the "national fightback" against coronavirus.
 - Entire families - or households of more than one person - are being told to stay isolated together for 14 days if one of them displays either of those symptoms.
 - People should start working from home "where they possibly can".
 - The government will no longer be allowing emergency workers to support mass gatherings.
 - "Unnecessary" visits to friends and relatives in care homes should cease
 - Cases reach 1,543 with 55 deaths in total recorded.
 - Prof Whitty said people should realise "they are in for the long haul".
 - Elderly and vulnerable people are advised to begin shielding for 12 weeks from 21st March.
- Scientists at Imperial College London project that if the UK does nothing and lets the virus rip through the population 81% of people would be infected and 510,000 would die from coronavirus by August. A mitigation strategy - to slow the spread - is better, but would still result in about 250,000 deaths and completely overwhelm intensive care in the NHS.
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to the US.
- £3.2million emergency support package announced to help rough sleepers into accommodation.
- Government calls on businesses to support the supply of ventilators and ventilator components for COVID-19.

SAGE 16

- ➔ On the basis of accumulating data, including on NHS critical care capacity, the advice from SAGE has changed regarding the speed of implementation of additional interventions.
- ➔ SAGE advises that there is clear evidence to support additional social distancing measures be introduced as soon as possible.

These additional measures will need to be accompanied by a significant increase in testing and the availability of near real-time data flows to understand their impacts.
- ➔ SAGE will further review at its next meeting whether, in the light of new data, school closures may also be required to prevent NHS capacity being exceeded.
- ➔ London has the greatest proportion of the UK outbreak.
- ➔ It is possible that there are 5,000-10,000 new cases per day in the UK.

- UK cases may be doubling in number every 5-6 days.
- It is expected to take two to three weeks before the impacts of measures are observed.
- **SAGE cannot be certain that the measures being considered by HMG will be sufficient to push demand for critical care below NHS capacity** but they may get very close under the RWC scenario.
- DHSC to compile numbers – to be updated daily – of cases regionally, set against local NHS ventilator and ICU capacity.
- **SAGE highlighted the critical importance of scaling up antibody serology and diagnostic testing to managing the epidemic. A solution is urgently required, with a plan for implementation.**
- PHE explained how testing is being scaled up over the coming weeks to 10,000 per day – focused on intensive care units, hospital admissions and key workers.

17th March

- Downing Street News Conference 2 (Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak and Patrick Vallance).
- France enters lockdown.
- NHS England sends a letter to trusts advising hospitals on 17 March to urgently discharge all inpatients who were medically fit to leave.
- There was no requirement to test everyone who was discharged from hospital to see if they were infected.
- Sir Patrick Vallance says keeping the number of UK deaths below 20,000 would be a "good result" from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle restricts non-essential access to the parliamentary estate from today.
- Chancellor reveals £330bn will be made available in loan guarantees for businesses affected by the virus.
- The Foreign & Commonwealth Office advises against all non-essential international travel, initially for a period of 30 days.
- Cinema chains Odeon, Cineworld, Vue and Picturehouse announce they will be closing all their UK outlets.
- Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) says government should move to wartime levels of spending.
- Amanda Pritchard, NHS COO, tells the House of Commons Health Select Committee, in respect to PPE, "we are currently assured by colleagues that we have the adequate supply we need", while Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive NHS, says "the Department of Health and Social Care procurement team has sufficient for the PPE that we are going to need over the coming weeks, but there is a distributional issue around the country and we are going to need more of it."
- The EU launches two more rounds of joint procurement for masks and goggles and ventilators. The UK is not one of the 25 member states involved.

18th March

- Downing Street News Conference 3 (Boris Johnson, Jenny Harries and Patrick Vallance).
- All schools are to shut from the afternoon of Friday 20 March, except for those looking after the children of key workers and vulnerable children. No exams will take place this academic year, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson confirms.

- UK death total exceeds 100.
- Pound sterling falls below \$1.18 - lowest level since 1985.
- New evictions banned to help renters during crisis.
- CBI calls for government to support salaries (the CBI cites Danish government as an example which covers 75% of salary of those employees furloughed).
- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issues a specification for ventilators for the Ventilator Challenge.
- The Cabinet Office issued information and guidance on public procurement regulations and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SAGE 17

- SAGE considers that the UK is 2 to 4 weeks behind Italy in terms of the epidemic curve. The consensus is that growth of the UK epidemic is tracking at the same rate as in other countries.
- SAGE advises that available evidence now **supports implementing school closures on a national level as soon as practicable** to prevent NHS intensive care capacity being exceeded.
- Transport measures such as restricting public transport, taxis and private hire facilities would have minimal impact on reducing transmission in London.
- Testing capacity has reached 6,084 daily, with a goal to reach 25,000 tests as soon as possible.
- Modelling suggests that, without mitigation, London could reach COVID-19 related intensive care capacity by early April.
- The evidence indicates that school closures, combined with other measures, could help to bring the R0 number below 1, although there is uncertainty.

19th March

- Downing Street News Conference 4 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- First COVID-19 death in Northern Ireland.
- Boris Johnson says the UK "can turn the tide" against coronavirus in the next 12 weeks.
- Bank of England cuts interest rates again, from 0.25% to just 0.1% - the lowest rate in the Bank's 325-year history, and increases quantitative easing to £645bn from £435bn.
- MoD announces the COVID Support Force - up to 20,000 service personnel will be put on standby to help combat the coronavirus.
- UK government no longer deems COVID-19 to be a "high consequence infectious disease".
- Introduction of the Coronavirus Bill in the House of Commons.
- The UK belatedly takes up an invitation to join the joint procurement agreement steering committee, which makes decisions on mass purchases. The UK does not join a procurement for laboratory supplies that is put out to tender on the same day.

Sky coverage:

- ☆ Special report from Bergamo: Inside the Red Zone

20th March

- Downing Street News Conference 5 (Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak and Jenny Harries).
- Furlough Scheme announced: 80% of wages for employees not working, up to £2,500 a month, as part of "unprecedented" measures to protect people's jobs.
- Boris Johnson orders all cafes, pubs and restaurants to close from the evening of 20 March, except for take-away food, to tackle coronavirus.
- All the UK's nightclubs, theatres, cinemas, gyms and leisure centres are told to close "as soon as they reasonably can".
- All schools close except for those looking after the children of key workers and vulnerable children.

21st March

- Downing Street News Conference 6 (George Eustice, Helen Dickinson and Stephen Powis).
- NHS boss Stephen Powis says people panic buying should be ashamed of themselves after reports health workers were struggling to buy essentials.
- Shielding for vulnerable people begins.

22nd March

- Downing Street News Conference 7 (Boris Johnson, Robert Jenrick and Jenny Harries).
- Boris Johnson says further measures will be considered in the next 24 hours to prevent the spread of COVID-19 if people fail to stay two metres apart.
- NHS staff urge PM to provide more protective equipment as two consultants receive critical care.
- More than 6,000 NHS frontline staff write to Boris Johnson to say they feel like "cannon fodder" in the battle against COVID-19.

23rd March - LOCKDOWN

- Boris Johnson gives address to the nation to announce national lockdown
 - The PM warns people to stay at home or face a fine and says all shops apart from food stores and chemists must close immediately, meeting friends will be banned - and just one form of exercise a day will be allowed. The COVID-19 lockdown, which will be in force for at least three weeks, eventually lasts until 10 May when Boris Johnson says he is taking "the first careful steps" in easing it, with anyone who cannot work from home "actively encouraged" to go to work from tomorrow. By 4th July most strict measurements have been removed.
- Jury trials halted in England and Wales.
- The House of Commons hears new rules of limited capacity and social distancing from The Speaker.
- The first round of government COVID-19 research funding - totalling £10.5 million - is awarded.
- The health secretary, Matt Hancock, admits there have been "challenges" with the supply of PPE after complaints by doctors and nurses around the country. He drafts in the army to help with distribution.

- [Army to distribute masks and protective suits to frontline NHS staff.](#)
- [Hospital trusts will be getting equipment such as masks, safety glasses, gloves, aprons and protective suits "around the clock".](#)

SAGE 18

- UK case accumulation to date suggests a **higher reproduction number than previously anticipated.**
- Data suggests that **London is 1-2 weeks ahead of the rest of the UK** on the epidemic curve.
- **Increased community testing and surveillance will be invaluable** to measure the effects of the interventions taken (SAGE doc on 13 March said community testing ended).
- Social distancing behaviours have been adopted by many but there is uncertainty whether they are being observed at the level required to bring the epidemic within NHS capacity.
- Key areas for further improvement include reducing contact with friends and family outside the household, and contact in shops and other areas.
- ONS survey... indicates significant behaviour changes in the UK... higher compliance rates are reported among older groups.
- **Compliance levels vary throughout the country**; higher levels of compliance are being observed in London.
- Consumer spending has increased since measures were introduced, including major increases in food and drug spending.
- Footfall in London transport hubs has reduced by 80-90% over the weekend.
- Number of cases arriving from other countries are estimated to be insignificant in comparison with domestic cases, comprising approximately 0.5%.
- **NHS testing capacity in the UK is currently at around 5,000 a day**, to be increased to 15,000 a day by mid-April... Aim to increase capacity to 110,000 a day by mid-April.
- Healthcare workers must be screened repeatedly and should take priority.
- There is a worldwide shortage of key reagents, platforms and equipment.
- The science suggests that a proportion of the estimated fatalities from COVID-19 would be among those expected to die within a year.

24th March

- [Downing Street News Conference 8](#) (Matt Hancock, Jenny Harries and Stephen Powis).
 - [The health secretary announces plans for a 250,000-strong volunteer force to help the NHS deal with the UK's coronavirus outbreak.](#)
- [All of the UK's mobile networks send out a government message to their customers with details of the new shutdown measures.](#)
- [Matt Hancock also reveals that a new hospital, with capacity for 4,000 people, will open at London's ExCel Centre next week.](#)
- [First indication of 'Biggest recession in modern history' within monthly economic data.](#)
- [The House of Commons agrees to a temporary order to allow select committees to meet virtually. \(This is then continually extended\).](#)

- [No 10 says it has not joined EU procurement schemes as the UK is not in the EU and is "making our own efforts". The government later U-turns to say it failed to receive an email inviting it to be part of the initiative.](#)
- [Two married doctors - Meenal Viz and Nishant Joshi, who are also expecting a baby - launch legal action against the government's advice over personal protective equipment \(PPE\).](#)
- [Oxford University announces the successful bid by the vaccine team led by Professor Sarah Gilbert, getting £2.2 million for vaccine development and trials. Dr Sandy Douglas successfully gets £0.4 million for research into vaccine manufacturing capabilities.](#)

25th March

- [Downing Street News Conference 9 \(Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance\).](#)
- [Prince Charles tests positive for COVID-19.](#)
- [Parliament shuts down for a month.](#)
- [Police will be given the power to use "reasonable force" to enforce the lockdown regulations.](#)
- [First NHS surgeon dies with coronavirus.](#)

26th March

- [Downing Street News Conference 10 \(Rishi Sunak and Jenny Harries\).](#)
- [The number of coronavirus deaths in the UK jumps by more than 100 in a day for the first time.](#)
- [Chancellor announces some self-employed workers will be paid 80% of profits, up to £2,500 a month.](#)
- [Clap For Carers launches.](#)
- [Sarah Pickup, deputy chief executive of Local Government Association, warns the Health Select Committee that "access to PPE is insufficient in the care sector" and that patients discharged from hospital risked infecting others at their care home \(TIMESTAMP 12:11:00\) \(BMJ article\).](#)
- [Universities and colleges have donated thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) to NHS hospitals to ease shortages of safety equipment for doctors and nurses.](#)
- [Prime Minister Boris Johnson calls ventilator manufacturers and suppliers about 'rapidly scaling up ventilator production' for patients with COVID-19.](#)
- [UK government invests £210 in the global fund to support vaccine development.](#)

SAGE 19 - first via Zoom

- ➔ SAGE needs to understand nosocomial transmission and how to limit it.
- ➔ Data suggests a 3.3 day doubling time in hospitals.
- ➔ **Significantly fewer children are attending school than anticipated.**
- ➔ ONS data points to very high proportions of people in the UK changing their behaviour. **Social interaction is greatly reduced**, as is football on public transport, at parks and beaches.
- ➔ The median time between onset of symptoms and hospitalisation is four days.
- ➔ There is some evidence of vertical transmission from mothers to newborn babies.
- ➔ There is **no hard data on loss of taste or smell being a COVID-19 symptom** - though it is a symptom of other respiratory viruses.
- ➔ SAGE advises that there are currently conflicting data concerning potential treatments, such as chloroquine.

- Assuming good compliance, **the epidemic peak in the UK can be expected in April** - around 2 weeks after all interventions came into effect.
- **SAGE re-emphasised the importance of urgently ramping up testing with appropriate quality.**
- The NHSX data hub will cover the whole of the UK, but is currently focused primarily on England.

27th March

- Downing Street News Conference 11 (Michael Gove, Simon Stevens and Jenny Harries).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Health Secretary Matt Hancock both test positive for COVID-19.
- Chief Medical Adviser Chris Whitty and Labour's shadow education secretary Angela Rayner also confirm they have been suffering symptoms and are self-isolating.
- Dominic Cummings is pictured running out of Downing Street - his wife is thought to be ill with COVID-19.
- A lack of access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and staff testing in care homes poses a major risk of covid-19 being spread, sector leaders warn. Care homes have been identified as one of the biggest potential risks for virus spreading, owing to the number of elderly residents with underlying health conditions.

28th March

- Downing Street News Conference 12 (Alok Sharma and Stephen Powis).
- A 108-year-old woman dies after contracting coronavirus, the oldest known person to die with the virus in the UK.
- The UK now has 10,900 mechanical invasive ventilators available to the NHS, as well as 4,300 non-invasive devices.

29th March

- Downing Street News Conference 13 (Robert Jenrick and Jenny Harries).
- Boris Johnson, who is self-isolating, raises the prospect of stricter lockdown measures in a letter to be sent to every household in the UK, warning things will "get worse before they get better".
- Dr Jenny Harries, England's deputy chief medical officer, suggests it could be six months before life can return to "normal", because social distancing measures will have to be reduced "gradually".
- The first NHS nurse dies with COVID-19.
- A group of British manufacturers will begin producing medical ventilators for the NHS this week, under the twin codenames Project Oyster and Project Penguin, after the government ordered 10,000 of the devices to treat coronavirus patients.
- Ventilator Challenge UK, a consortium of 14 firms including Airbus and Rolls-Royce, is expected to say that it has secured a formal order for two types of machine.

SAGE 20

- Vast majority of admissions to ICU and high dependency units are aged between mid-40s and 70. There are fewer admissions among the over 70s.

- *ICU care may not reflect the burden of disease, as now many patients are being cared for in other settings.*
- *NHS reported that critical care bed occupancy is not yet reaching saturation levels, London included.*
- *There is evidence that severity varies by sex (men are affected more severely), but there is no evidence that transmission varies by sex.*

30th March

- Downing Street News Conference 14 (Dominic Raab, Patrick Vallance and Yvonne Doyle).
- Downing Street confirms Dominic Cummings, the PM's chief adviser, is self-isolating after experiencing coronavirus symptoms.
- A 13-year-old boy who contracted coronavirus dies alone in hospital. Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab had no underlying health conditions.
- Sir Patrick Vallance says people staying at home to stop coronavirus spreading faster across the UK are "making a difference".
- The UK commits £75m to help Britons stranded abroad by chartering rescue flights when there are no other routes available.
- Medics claim to be 'hiding' COVID-19 protective equipment 'out of sheer desperation'. Some workers are said to be going off sick because they fear the provisions are inadequate.
- Professor Neil Ferguson breaks lockdown for the first time, allowing Antonia Staats to visit him at home.

31st March

- Downing Street News Conference 15 (Michael Gove, Stephen Powis and Jenny Harries).
- Durham Constabulary "made aware of reports" of Dominic Cummings's presence in the area.

SAGE 21

- *NHS reported that critical care bed occupancy has not yet reached saturation levels, with around 1,000 beds in London, but that surge capacity was being used, with large teaching hospitals under most pressure.*
- *Data on deaths in the community are now available, as well as hospital deaths... this added 40 extra deaths to the week ending 20 March.*
- ***R is estimated to be around 0.6, with an upper bound of 0.9.***
- Boris Johnson is facing growing pressure to get more personal protective equipment (PPE) to health workers after it was claimed some nurses were treating coronavirus patients "without any protection at all".
- The British Medical Association (BMA) warned many hospitals and GP practices are facing "life-threatening shortages" of PPE, with one NHS procurement chief tweeting "God help us all".
- The first devices from the Government's ventilator challenge will roll off the production line this weekend, ahead of delivery to the NHS.

1st April

- Downing Street News Conference 16 (Alok Sharma and Yvonne Doyle).
- Coronavirus deaths in UK pass 2,000.

- More than 3,500 NHS frontline staff in England and Wales have been tested for the virus but Michael Gove says a shortage of chemicals needed for the tests meant the NHS - which employs 1.2m in England - could not screen all workers.
- [DHSC sends a letter to health & care sector with an update on PPE provision.](#)
- [The Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle urges MPs to continue Commons scrutiny despite virtual debates and hearings.](#)

2nd April

- [Downing Street News Conference 17](#) (Matt Hancock, Stephen Powis and John Newton).
- [Matt Hancock returns after self-isolation to give the Downing Street briefing and sets a target of carrying out 100,000 tests a day by the end of the month.](#)
- [The government writes off historical debts totalling £13.4bn of over 100 hospital trusts.](#)
- Second clap for carers.
- [DHSC sends care homes a letter saying that care homes need to continue to make their full capacity available to support the national effort - in return there is a guarantee of PPE provision.](#)
- [Resolution Foundation reports that claims for Universal Credit over the past fortnight were five times higher than equivalent peak volumes during the 2008 financial crisis.](#)
- [An NHS doctor tells Sky News that his GP surgery has been forced to appeal to its own patients for personal protective equipment \(PPE\). Amar Ahmed claims the resources given to Wilmslow Health Centre in Cheshire by the government were "not appropriate" for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.](#)

SAGE 22

- ➔ A national testing strategy requires overall target volumes for understanding infection rates among a) hospital patients b) NHS staff c) age-stratified population survey participants and d) communities.
- ➔ SAGE agreed that it is unlikely before **week 13th April** it can start to advise whether the interventions in place are having enough of an effect. **SAGE does not currently recommend that changes be made at that point.**
- ➔ There is a danger that **lifting measures too early could cause a second wave** of exponential epidemic growth - requiring measures to be imposed.
- ➔ **Adult critical care bed capacity continues to be available**, including in London
- ➔ No update on R or doubling time since SAGE 21.
- ➔ CO-CIN data suggests that **obesity, lung disease, heart disease and neurological disease are important risk markers for COVID-19.**
- ➔ **Testing** - PHE is exploring the quality of commercially available tests in measuring both exposure and immunity.
- ➔ The **UK is at least 4-6 weeks away from implementing reliable antibody testing for healthcare workers.**
- ➔ SAGE advised that serology testing should be rolled out to NHS laboratories rapidly once assessed - and noted the importance of PHE guidance to NHS on delivery testing.
- ➔ SAGE agreed that a feasible and successful, long-term strategy...is linked to the UK's overall strategy for managing the epidemic, and will be important for lifting interventions.
- ➔ **Wider community detection will require large volumes of testing** and SAGE would like to review the proposal and numbers required.

→ ***The quality of testing and interpretation and communication of results is critical.***

There is a risk of individuals receiving incorrect test results or misinterpreting them, leading to unsafe behaviours by workers or unsafe demands being made of workers by employers.

3rd April

- Downing Street News Conference 18 (Matt Hancock, Jonathan Van-Tam and Ruth May).
- NHS Nightingale Hospital London, the first temporary hospital to treat coronavirus patients, opens at the ExCel centre in east London.
- Matt Hancock demands the public stay inside despite the sunny weekend.

4th April

- Downing Street News Conference 19 (Michael Gove and Stephen Powis).
- Sir Keir Starmer is elected leader of the Labour Party.
- Five-year-old dies with coronavirus as deaths jump by 708.
- The 13-year-old boy who died alone in hospital after contracting coronavirus is buried without his family at his funeral.

5th April

- Downing Street News Conference 20 (Matt Hancock and Jenny Harries).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson taken to hospital as a precautionary measure.
- The Queen makes a rare broadcast to thank people for following the government's social distancing rules, pay tribute to key workers, and says the UK "will succeed" in its fight against coronavirus but may have "more still to endure".
- Matt Hancock says the government is on track to meet its goal of ventilator capacity for 18,000 patients, however he admits that may not be in place before the expected peak of the virus.
- Dominic Cummings reportedly seen by a witness in his family's garden in Durham
- Belly Mujinga, a train ticket collector, dies with coronavirus after she was allegedly spat at by a man claiming to have the virus.

6th April

- Downing Street News Conference 21 (Dominic Raab, Chris Whitty and Angela McLean).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson is moved to intensive care at St Thomas' Hospital.
- Coronavirus deaths in the UK exceed 5,000.
- Scotland's chief medical officer resigns after breaking lockdown.
- First two deaths of care workers in England reported: Carol Jamabo and an unnamed care worker, both employed in the North West.

7th April

- Downing Street News Conference 22 (Dominic Raab, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).

SAGE 23

- ➔ Agreed that a better understanding of types of transmission (hospitals, between children, in the environment etc) would be valuable.
- ➔ **Obesity is identified as a significant risk factor** for both admission to hospital and severity of disease.
- ➔ NERVTAG concluded that increased use of masks would have minimal effect, in terms of preventing the uninfected general population from being infected, based on a review of the available evidence.
- ➔ Evidence on the impact of children on spread is unclear. SAGE agreed that although children typically have less severe cases than adults, schools are an efficient way of connecting households, meaning that closing schools may have a significant effect.
- ➔ Agreed the proposed NHS app could be a useful supplement to other measures.
- The government announces 881 COVID deaths in the UK but in fact a record 1,445 people died with coronavirus. This only emerges in June when deaths in care homes and private homes are added.
- Dominic Raab says the PM is a "fighter" and he's "confident that he will pull through".
- Chris Whitty says "there's a lot to learn from Germany's testing"
- China reports no new coronavirus deaths in the last 24 hours.

8th April

- Downing Street News Conference 23 (Rishi Sunak, Angela McLean and Stephen Powis).
- Three nurses are forced to wear bin bags because of PPE shortage test positive for coronavirus.
- Frontline workers are pictured wearing clinical waste bags on heads and feet at Northwick Park Hospital in Harrow last month.
- Professor Neil Ferguson breaks lockdown for a second time, allowing Antonia Staats to visit him at home.

9th April

- Downing Street News Conference 24 (Dominic Raab, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- Boris Johnson is moved out of intensive care but remains in hospital.
- Dominic Raab says the UK is "starting to see the impact" of the restrictions but it is "too early" to lift them.
- Third clap for carers.
- UK economy grew 0.1% overall in the three months to February.

SAGE 24

- ➔ **The epidemic may be reaching its peak** but it could remain at plateau for some time. There is no expectation for bed occupancy to decrease over the next two weeks.
- ➔ SAGE advises that there is **no evidence globally pointing to high levels of population immunity** gained at this stage in the pandemic.
- ➔ **ICU numbers appear to be flattening** and new admissions to hospitals stabilising

- Calls to NHS 111 and 999 - possible indicators of community cases - appear to have peaked and be on the decline.
- NERVTAG to produce papers on a) infection duration of COVID-19 and b) use of facemasks (taking into account the potential of pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic transmission).
- **WHO has concluded there is currently no conclusive evidence that facemasks are beneficial for community use.**
- NERVTAG advised there is still **insufficient data to reach any conclusion about whether loss of taste and smell should be added** to the case definition of COVID-19.
- The chief veterinary officer has advised that the risk of transmission from cats to humans is low.
- **Testing strategy - overall responsibility for this strategy lies with CMO.** It needs to be linked to the overall exit strategy.
- NHS estimates that **patient testing requires around 8,000 tests per day** and NHS staff testing requires a maximum of 6,000 to 7,000 tests per day.
- Any consideration of mass testing should consider impacts, if any, on clinical management - including whether testing can anticipate future demand on the NHS - and on enabling people to return to work.
- Data is emerging internationally on antibody response. SAGE advises caution over interpreting the presence of antibodies as evidence of presence of neutralising antibodies. **It is not known whether antibodies confer resistance against disease and against carriage of virus.**
- **No rapid home tests are yet sufficiently reliable, including for potential "immunity passports" in future**, but they may be useful for seroprevalence studies.

10th April

- Downing Street News Conference 25 (Matt Hancock, Jonathan Van-Tam and Ruth May).
- A record 980 coronavirus deaths in UK hospitals is announced, taking the total to 8,958.
- Matt Hancock says a "Herculean effort" is being made to ensure daily deliveries of personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers.
- England's deputy chief medical officer Jenny Harries says being too ill to look after a small child was an "exceptional circumstance" to the lockdown rules and she pointed to accessing family support, among other options.
- Hancock calls on workers to "treat PPE as the precious resource it is" following weeks of criticism, leading to claims that he is blaming medics for shortages.

11th April

- Downing Street News Conference 26 (Priti Patel, Stephen Powis and Martin Hewitt).
- Occupancy of critical care beds in England peaks at around 58% of capacity.
- Hancock confirms 19 deaths among healthcare workers from coronavirus, a day after it was claimed in the daily Downing Street press conference that it would be inappropriate to provide such information. Priti Patel, the home secretary, offers what critics call a non-apology, saying she is "sorry if people feel there has been a failure to supply sufficient PPE".

12th April

- Downing Street News Conference 27 (Matt Hancock and Yvonne Doyle).

- Boris Johnson is discharged from hospital.
- He makes a public address, in which he thanks the NHS for his recovery.
- Number of coronavirus deaths in hospitals passes 10,000.
- Dominic Cummings makes a trip to Barnard Castle.
- A 28-year-old pregnant nurse dies after contracting coronavirus - but her baby is delivered successfully.

13th April

- Downing Street News Conference 28 (Dominic Raab, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- The government says it might change its advice to the public on wearing face masks outdoors. Sir Patrick Vallance says the government has seen "more persuasive" data suggesting masks can stop a person passing the virus to someone else, rather than preventing them from catching it.
- Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers, says gaps remain in PPE supply and calls for the government to publicly acknowledge the problem and the reason for it. Dominic Raab, deputising for the prime minister, admits to supply problems, saying there is "a competitive market out there", but declines to apologise.

14th April

- Downing Street News Conference 29 (Rishi Sunak, Stephen Powis and Yvonne Doyle).
- Dominic Raab says the government does not expect to relax or lift the coronavirus lockdown on 16 April.
- Professor Chris Whitty says he would like to see testing increased at care homes. He says 13.5% of care homes have been affected so far, with outbreaks reported in 92 of them in the last 24 hours.
- Dominic Cummings is photographed in Downing Street.
- Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) says coronavirus lockdown to deliver large (but hopefully temporary) shock to the economy and public finances.

SAGE 25

- ➔ **The number of deaths is plateauing**, with transmission in the community highly likely to be declining.
- ➔ Nosocomial transmission accounts for an increasing proportion of cases.
- ➔ Relatively small changes to social distancing measures could push R back above 1 in the community.
- ➔ **Risk of outdoor transmission is significantly lower than indoors.**
- ➔ There is a decline in hospital admissions newly confirmed with COVID-19, which may have peaked, though detailed analysis to support this is not available.
- ➔ **Transmission in the community has slowed and it is highly likely that R in the community is less than 1.**
- ➔ **There is significant transmission in hospitals.** This may have been masking the decline in cases in the community. It is not known whether R is higher or lower than 1 in hospitals.
- ➔ **Care homes also remain a concern.... SAGE advises that increased testing in these settings, supported by modelling, is important.**
- ➔ CO-CIN data show that obesity is an independent risk factor.

- **Evidence does not currently support use of face masks to protect the wearer in the general population.**
- There is mechanistic evidence for efficacy of face masks in reducing transmission when used by someone who is infected with (a source of) the virus. Direct trial evidence does not support effectiveness in practice in other diseases. The fundamental difference with COVID-19 is the shedding of virus during asymptomatic and presymptomatic infection.
- **Overall, the evidence that masks could prevent spread is weak, but probably marginally in favour of a small effect.**
- Circumstances where there may be benefits included enclosed environments with poor ventilation, and around vulnerable people.
- Relaxing restrictions on the use of outdoor spaces to permit a greater range of activities, while maintaining social distancing from those outside the household, would be very likely to have no more than a negligible direct impact on transmission but have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.
- An additional document produced for this SAGE meeting estimates that up to 20% of coronavirus patients may have been infected in hospitals.

15th April

- Downing Street News Conference 30 (Matt Hancock, Angela McLean and Chris Whitty).
- Matt Hancock says there will be new procedures so that "wherever possible" close relatives will be given the "chance to say goodbye" to loved ones dying with COVID-19. He says he wept at reports about 13-year-old Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab dying alone.
- After initially saying a negative result was not required before discharging patients from hospitals to care homes, the government say all patients will be tested.
- The Adult Social Care Action Plan published, saying "as a result of COVID-19 the latest PPE guidance recommends facemasks for the adult social care sector in certain circumstances".
- Around 25,000 patients were discharged into care homes in England between mid-March and mid-April to free up hospital beds. Sky reports more than 4,000 elderly people were discharged from hospitals into care homes without taking a test between 19th March and April 15th. (Full Fact explainer).

16th April

- Downing Street News Conference 31 (Dominic Raab, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- National lockdown measures are extended for three weeks until at least 7 May, as cases in the UK cases passes 100,000.
- War veteran Tom Moore completes 100 laps of his garden, raising more than £25m for NHS charities.
- Resolution Foundation reports:
 - ◆ New applicants for Universal Credit reached almost 1.2 million in the past three weeks, an almost 600% increase on the level of claims a year previously.
 - ◆ Property sales have fallen by 70% since the beginning of March.
 - ◆ Surveys suggest: 52% of businesses are planning to furlough staff. One fifth of firms intend to furlough their entire workforce, with a further 17% planning to furlough more than three-quarters. More than one-third of the private sector labour force could be off work by the end of April.

◆ *Visits to retail (excluding groceries and pharmacies) and leisure activity sites have fallen by 82%.*

- *Nightingale Hospital in Birmingham opens.*
- *[Penlon's Prima ES02 ventilator model is now authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency \(MHRA\) for use in hospitals.](#)*
- *Fourth clap for carers.*
- *[House of Commons Commission endorses plans for the introduction of hybrid proceedings \(virtual and in person\).](#)*

SAGE 26

- *SAGE agreed on the importance of getting an accurate estimate of R and community prevalence over the next few weeks to inform decisions on lifting or modifying social distancing measures. SAGE advised that sufficient testing capacity needs to be reserved for repeated large-scale community testing.*
- ***SAGE will produce revised advice on masks in the week commencing 20 April.***
- ***Hospital numbers are plateauing, with numbers of new admissions falling... daily death numbers are not increasing.***
- *There is some regional variation in compliance with distancing measures - with London having the highest compliance and the South West of England and Wales the lowest.*
- *There appears to be a relationship between compliance levels and epidemic growth.*
- ***PHE confirmed it was unable to deliver a community testing programme.*** *SAGE agreed that if PHE is unable to undertake the programme then this should be undertaken within a repeated ONS-led household survey programme.*
- *SAGE also discussed testing for contact testing. Even in scenarios featuring low incidence of infection, contact tracing would require testing capacity running into the hundreds of thousands per day (and commensurate quarantining of people).*
- ***Investigation is also underway to understand why relatively more BAME healthcare workers are dying.***
- *PHE has identified a signal - from weak evidence - of South Asian communities disproportionately testing positive and experiencing severe symptoms, but not dying.*
- *Whole-household testing could be the best way to understand infectivity of children*
- *SAGE advised that any release of school closures need to be predicated on the clear understanding that children are not a homogenous group and feature a range of educational, psychological and potentially, if facing more serious symptoms, clinical needs.*
- *The Nosocomial Working Group has identified marked variation among hospital trusts on implementation of infection prevention control.*

17th April

- *[Downing Street News Conference 32](#) (Alok Sharma, Yvonne Doyle and Patrick Vallance).*
- *[490 care home residents die with coronavirus - making it the deadliest day for care home deaths.](#)*
- *[Chancellor extends the furlough scheme until the end of June.](#)*
- *[Matt Hancock says coronavirus testing will be rolled out to people working in public services such as police, fire and prison staff.](#)*
- *[The Government launches the vaccine taskforce to accelerate the search for a coronavirus vaccine in the UK, led by Sir Patrick Vallance and Jonathan Van Tam.](#)*

- Business Secretary Alok Sharma states that if the Oxford vaccine is successful, AstraZeneca will work to make up to 30 million doses available by September for the UK, as part of an agreement to deliver 100 million doses in total. (This target is then missed).
- A&E doctor and Labour MP Rosena Allin-Khan says: "Lack of PPE will result in more avoidable deaths"

18th April

- Downing Street News Conference 33 (Robert Jenrick and Stephen Powis).
- Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick says 84 tonnes of PPE - including 400,000 gowns - will be arriving from Turkey the following day.
- Care England says as many as 7,500 people may have died after contracting coronavirus in care homes.

19th April

- Downing Street News Conference 34 (Gavin Williamson, Jenny Harries and Patrick Vallance).
- Delivery of 84 tonnes of PPE for NHS delayed.
- Education Secretary Gavin Williamson says he can't give a date when English schools will reopen, four weeks after they were shut.
- 596 coronavirus deaths in UK hospitals confirmed - the smallest increase in nearly two weeks.
- A plane loaded with 68 tonnes of disposable gloves, masks and visors arrives at Heathrow and is already on its way to the frontline from China.
- Sarah Pugh, chief executive of the Heart of Kent Hospice, says the coronavirus crisis means she has to "beg, borrow and steal" to source enough protective equipment for her staff as she called on the government for help.

20th April

- Downing Street News Conference 35 (Rishi Sunak, Yvonne Doyle and Angela McLean).
- UK's furlough scheme opens - with claims for 67,000 workers in first 30 minutes
- Resolution Foundation report:
 - ◆ As many as 3.1 million (46%) employees in the lowest-paying hospitality and retail sectors could be furloughed, with an additional 800,000 workers in this sector becoming unemployed.
 - ◆ In contrast, only 4% of those working in the highest-paid sector, finance and insurance, are likely to be furloughed.
- NHS Blood and Transplant asks some people who recovered from COVID-19 to donate blood so they can potentially assess the plasma in trials.

21st April

- Downing Street News Conference 36 (Matt Hancock, Jonathan Van-Tam and John Newton).
- Deaths in England and Wales nearly double above what would be expected, hitting a 20-year high with 18,500 deaths in the week up to 10 April, the ONS says
- Matt Hancock says clinical trials of a coronavirus vaccine will begin on people from 23 April.

- [It emerges the UK only formally asked Turkey for PPE shipment help on Sunday - after telling Britons it was on its way.](#)
- [Pulse Survey finds that 74% of GPs fear for their health/life due to PPE shortages and one in four have seen a COVID-19 patient without PPE.](#)
- [Parliament reconvenes after the Easter recess with MPs approving a new hybrid attendance arrangement with some MPs in the House of Commons chamber and some attending via video link. Summary of first virtual week.](#)

SAGE 27

- SAGE advises that, **on balance, there is enough evidence to support recommendation of community use of cloth face masks**, for short periods in enclosed spaces where distancing is not possible.
- Hospital numbers are plateauing, with numbers of new admissions falling. NHS remains well within bed capacity.
- **There is no indication that R is greater than 1 across any region**, but there still could be more localised outbreaks.
- **There is a clear signal that obesity is a risk factor.**
- **Anosmia (loss or changed sense of smell) is a common symptom.**
- The evidence on effectiveness of masks for source control (i.e. stopping infectious people - pre-symptomatic/asymptomatic - from infecting others) is weak. Evidence for protecting the mask wearer from becoming infected is also weak. The unusual situation for COVID is the relatively high infectiousness before symptoms appear.
- Overall the evidence that exists is marginally positive for the use of masks.
- Public transport and some shops (if crowded) are examples of such settings.
- By contrast, SAGE does not think there is good evidence for use for long periods where people regularly mix with the same people.
- It is not known how long the antibody response lasts.

22nd April

- [Downing Street News Conference 37](#) (Dominic Raab, Chris Whitty and Nick Carter).
- [Prof Chris Whitty, during the Downing Street News Conference, says the UK will have to live with some disruptive social measures for at least the rest of the year \(From 37:00 - 45:00\).](#)
- First hybrid virtual PMQs held.
- [First MP to ask a virtual question - Marco Longhi \(WO\).](#)
- [First MP to ask a virtual question of the Prime Minister - Ian Blackford \(PMQS\).](#)
- [First MP to miss their question due to poor connection - David Mundell \(PMQs\).](#)
- [Matt Hancock tells parliament "we are at the peak of the outbreak".](#)
- [NIHR and UKRI launch funding call for research on COVID-19 and ethnicity.](#)
- [Plane carrying protective equipment for health workers finally arrives from Turkey.](#)

23rd April

- [Downing Street News Conference 38](#) (Matt Hancock, Patrick Vallance and John Newton).
- [The first human trials of a coronavirus vaccine in Europe begin in Oxford.](#)
- [Matt Hancock says essential workers and their households will be able to book coronavirus tests online from today.](#)

- The Health Secretary announces that the government are testing the new NHS contact tracing app.
- HMRC reveals that 3.2m workers have been furloughed in the UK by 430,000 businesses at a total cost of £3.75bn.
- CBI demands the government needs to accelerate the distribution of loan. Offer loan options to small businesses with 100% government backing (prior to this, loans were only offered to medium/large businesses, with only 80% backing from Government and 20% from banks - which did not work).
- Fifth clap for carers.

Sky coverage

- ☆ The story of Oxford's coronavirus vaccine that could save Britain.

SAGE 28

- Steady reduction in hospital admissions.... Hospital deaths recorded by date of death are showing a declining trend despite daily fluctuations in the data.
- **A small but significant proportion of deaths relate to deaths in care homes, rather than in hospitals.**
- **The NHS is asking trusts to start testing every patient admitted to hospital from Monday (April 27) onwards, rather than only testing symptomatic patients.**
- **SAGE agreed the importance of understanding total testing capacity and what level of incidence it could cope with, as well as how far the epidemic needs to wane before the system can feasibly track and trace.**
- **SAGE agreed that further discussions are needed to determine a testing strategy to reduce spread in care homes and advised that a suitable leader for this work is required.**
- **CMO and NHS to provide viral testing volumes needed for hospital entrants and patients returning to social care setting by COP 23 April as part of an overall paper on testing numbers.**
- Studies have shown that people who think they've already contracted COVID-19 are less likely to adhere to social distancing.
- There is some evidence that poorer people are engaging in more social contacts outside the home (as are people who have previously self-diagnosed for COVID-19 and now possibly feel immune).
- Work is underway to engage with international biotech and vaccine companies; and to develop UK vaccine manufacturing capacity in the short and longer term.
- **Repurposed medicines are unlikely to deliver a game-changing breakthrough for treating the virus - LATER PROVEN WRONG.**

24th April

- Downing Street News Conference 39 (Grant Shapps and Jenny Harries).

25th April

- Downing Street News Conference 40 (Priti Patel, Stephen Powis and Lynne Owens).
- The number of people dying in hospitals with coronavirus passes 20,000, the Department of Health says.
- The NHS urges people to seek urgent care during medical emergencies after visits to A&E fell by nearly 50% over a month.
- Coronavirus test slots for key workers booked out within an hour.

26th April

- Downing Street News Conference 41 (George Eustice and Stephen Powis).
- GPs are sent an "urgent alert" about an increasing number of children becoming severely ill with coronavirus-like symptoms. Professor Stephen Powis, national medical director of NHS England, says the issue is being looked into as a "matter of urgency".

27th April

- Downing Street News Conference 42 (Matt Hancock, Chris Whitty and Stephen Powis).
- The first news conference with questions from the public, Lynn from Skipton is the first member of the public to ask a question. She asks whether being able to see grandchildren will be one of the first things to be allowed when the lockdown is eased. Chris Whitty says it will depend on each individual's circumstances, in terms of their age and health conditions.
- Boris Johnson, speaking outside No 10 for the first time since recovering from COVID-19, says the UK is "beginning to turn the tide" in the fight against the coronavirus but this is not the time to relax the nationwide lockdown.
- Sky's Alex Crawford reports from Warrington hospital on the hospital's innovative ways of treating coronavirus patients.
- Matt Hancock says families of frontline NHS and social care staff who die from coronavirus will each receive a £60,000 payment.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces a new coronavirus crisis aid scheme, offering small businesses up to £50,000 in loans that will be 100% guaranteed by the government. This is the "Bounce Back Loans" scheme.

28th April

- Downing Street News Conference 43 (Matt Hancock, Angela McLean and John Newton).
- Deaths in care homes reach highest level in nearly 30 years, ONS says.
- The Scottish government recommends that people wear masks made of cloth if they are in an enclosed space to protect against coronavirus.
- Matt Hancock says the UK government's position on masks has not changed and that there is "weak science" supporting the advice.
- Update published on the 'ventilator challenge'. Government ends support for 4 and continues support for 11.

- The health secretary says he is "worried" about a rare but serious new syndrome in children possibly linked to COVID-19.
- BA announces it is cutting 12,000 jobs - it's the largest single day job loss announcement made, according to Sky News job loss tracker.
- Minute's silence held at 11am for key workers who have died with COVID-19.

SAGE 29

- SAGE agreed priority studies including work on potential Kawasaki-like syndrome in children.
- The '2m rule' remains appropriate, though closer contacts of a short duration are likely to pose a very low risk.
- SAGE welcomed and endorsed plans to increase transparency, including releasing names of consenting participants.
- Ian Boyd suggested ways SAGE might operate more effectively, in his role as an independent challenge function.
- Latest numbers indicate a continued reduction in hospital admissions and bed numbers.
- Excess all-cause mortality was agreed to be the most useful comparison between countries.
- Possible Kawasaki-like syndrome in children was noted, with a probable link to COVID-19. SAGE agreed efforts to understand this should be coordinated.
- SAGE reiterated the importance of cohort studies of COVID-19 survivors to understanding longer-term effects.
- SAGE views the urgent establishment of monitoring and surveillance as a key requirement for managing COVID-19.
- As the number of cases in the UK decreases, the potential proportion of imported cases may increase... determining a tolerable level of risk from imported cases requires consideration of a number of non-science factors and is a policy question.

29th April

- Downing Street News Conference 44 (Dominic Raab, Yvonne Doyle and Jonathan Van-Tam).
- Latest coronavirus death figures include care homes for the first time. They show more than 26,000 people have died with coronavirus in the UK, making it the second worst-hit country in Europe.
- Gavin Williamson says that the reopening of schools will take place in a "phased manner".

30th April

- Downing Street News Conference 45 (Boris Johnson, Patrick Vallance and Chris Whitty).
- Boris Johnson declares the UK is "past the peak and on the downward slope" of the coronavirus outbreak.
- The PM says face coverings will be "useful" when lockdown restrictions are eased to "give people confidence they can go back to work".
- BMJ reports that over 32% of doctors report shortages in scrubs, 28% in full-face visors, 21% in disposable gloves. Of the doctors that did not speak out on issues, 30% did not believe any action would be taken to solve issues.
- Potential suppliers of personal protective equipment to the NHS have written an open letter to the government pleading to know if ministers want their assistance or not during the coronavirus pandemic.

- CBI calls on both UK and Irish government to get their act together due to divergence in COVID-19 related restrictions on the island.
- Sixth Clap for Carers.
- Treasury cuts VAT to reduce PPE costs from 1 May 2020 until 31 July 2020. The UK government blamed EU law on VAT on PPE, but European Commission removed this VAT on 3rd April as part of its COVID-19 response.

SAGE 30

- SAGE advises on the need for more comprehensive availability and deployment of the seasonal flu vaccine this coming winter.
- SAGE subgroups will meet on 1 May to provide advice on testing and on options for opening schools.
- Hospital admissions are declining consistently across the country.
- There is no evidence that compliance with social distancing is declining in terms of contacts.
- There remains significant transmission in care homes, but numbers are plateauing.
- A substantial surveillance system is needed to reduce transmission.
- A recent NHS study suggests a positive test rate among asymptomatic healthcare workers of 5-6%.
- Understanding the causes of transmission in care homes is more challenging, where the key limiting factors are availability of metadata and material to sequence.
- SAGE agreed that the single most important metric for understanding the overall impact of pandemic is all-cause mortality, age-standardised, since it accommodates changing definitions of the disease over time and indirect deaths, and it better enables valid international comparisons.
- Vaccines...there are around 200 candidate vaccines worldwide - of which around 70 or so are credible and fewer than a dozen might be considered front runner.
- SAGE noted the risk of focusing too heavily on the spike protein in developing a viable vaccine, and the value of exploring other protein targets and alternative approaches such as small interfering RNAs and neutralising antibodies.
- SAGE advised that, in addition to the importance of developing a vaccine for COVID-19, a clear UK plan is required for the seasonal flu vaccine for winter 2020-21, including consideration of whether to vaccinate the entire population.
- Testing and contact tracing....SAGE agreed that a sub-group of participants would hold a dedicated meeting on 1 May to seek to finalise advice. At the meeting, the sub-group will discuss/review the following: a) Does SAFE agree we would ideally want to isolate contacts of an index case and identify more than 80% of those contacts within 24 hours? What would be the implications of a delay to 48 or 72 hours?
- Children and schools... SAGE noted that evidence concerning the role of children in transmission and their susceptibility to infection remains inconclusive. Data suggests that children who are infected have similar viral loads to adults.
- There is uncertainty about whether younger children may be less susceptible than older children and it is possible a differential policy between primary and secondary school might be supportable. This should be explored.

1st May

- Downing Street News Conference 46 (Matt Hancock, Stephen Powis and John Newton).

- [Matt Hancock claims the government's target of providing 100,000 tests a day by the end of April has been met.](#)

SAGE 31 - 11.15am

- Indirect effects of reopening schools are likely to have a greater impact on transmission than schools themselves (e.g. work-related reopening, behaviour changes).
- SAGE advises that effective measures should be in place to monitor the effects of any change in schools, and to respond to cases within schools.
- There is no evidence to suggest that children transmit the virus any more than adults. There is some evidence that they transmit less.
- **SAGE advises that serology testing be carried out at the start of the reopening of schools, and repeated throughout to monitor change in infections.**
- SAGE advises plans are put in place when cases are reported, including reactive closure of schools and classes.

SAGE 32 - later than 12.15pm

- SAGE modelling suggests delay beyond 48-72 hours before isolation of a contact through track and trace will lead to significant impact on R.
- SAGE advises contacts should self-isolate as soon as they are notified via track and trace but says contacts can be released from isolation if the index case tests negative.
- SAGE considers it essential that testing capability is reached before autumn/winter flu seasons.
- Expresses concerns that home swabbing tests "might produce significant false negatives".
- SAGE acknowledges non-compliance if the same person is asked to self-isolate repeatedly, **and if they are financially impacted.**
- Optimal time to test is unclear (gap in time between time from infection to test).
- Systematic testing of contacts is not recommended at present but should be reviewed when evidence is available.
- SAGE cites lack of information on modes of transmission in the UK (hospitals and community) and urges for controlled study.

2nd May

- [Downing Street News Conference 47](#) (Robert Jenrick and Jenny Harries).
- [The government pledges to spend £76m to support vulnerable people who are "trapped in a nightmare" at home during the coronavirus lockdown.](#)

3rd May

- [Downing Street News Conference 48](#) (Michael Gove and Stephen Powis).
- [Boris Johnson reveals contingency plans were made for the event of his death while he was in intensive care.](#)
- [A survey suggests almost half of doctors have sourced their own PPE or relied on donations, while almost a third of doctors said they had not reported the shortages because they did not think anything would be done.](#)

4th May

- Downing Street News Conference 49 (Matt Hancock, Jonathan Van-Tam and John Newton).
- Businesses are still waiting to be told whether personal protective equipment (PPE) will be required for employees who are unable to maintain a two-metre distance when they return to the workplace.

5th May

- Downing Street News Conference 50 (Dominic Raab and Angela McLean).
- The UK now has the highest number of coronavirus-related deaths in Europe, after reporting more fatalities than Italy. The Department of Health announces a rise of 693 to 29,427, surpassing Italy's latest official figure of 29,315.
- Professor Neil Ferguson resigns as a scientific advisor to the government after twice being visited by his girlfriend and breaking lockdown guidance.
- Sir Patrick Vallance says it would have been "beneficial" to have ramped up COVID-19 testing quicker.
- Trials of the NHS contact-tracing app start on the Isle of Wight.
- NHS Nightingale Hospital North East near Sunderland is officially opened.
- Virgin Atlantic cuts 3,000 jobs and cancels base at Gatwick.
- CBI says SME manufacturing output fell at the quickest pace in over a decade in the quarter to April.

SAGE 33

- ➔ The overall reproduction number, R , is in the range 0.5-0.9.
- ➔ SAGE advises that, based on current data, focus should be maintained on reducing transmission in health and care settings. Urgent action should be taken in establishments where relevant measures are not already in place, in line with previous advice (such as avoiding movement of patients or staff between establishments, separating people as far is practical, and testing extensively).
- ➔ **SAGE advises that the timing of any changes to NPIs (non-pharmaceutical interventions) should be determined based on incidence levels and other relevant data and not on predetermined dates** (LATER IGNORED BY GOVT WITH SECOND LOCKDOWN)
- ➔ For workers with a high number of contacts, changes to work arrangements may be needed (e.g. half shifts, week on/week off). SAGE recommends against reopening of personal care service businesses as one of the earlier changes to measures.
- ➔ The overall epidemic can be considered as three separate, but interacting epidemics; in the community; in hospitals; and in care homes.
- ➔ Preliminary swabbing results indicate that a significant proportion of infections are associated with healthcare workers in both COVID and non-COVID areas.
- ➔ PHE to confirm the data on different types of transmissions in hospitals by 7 May (healthcare worker to patient, patient to patient, healthcare worker to health care worker).
- ➔ As things currently stand, phase 4 of the modelled options is highly likely to push R above 1 (with high confidence). This phase involves more extensive relaxing of measures.
- ➔ The idea of 'bubbles' has many merits and should be explored further. There are both positive and negative behavioural aspects to be considered. Experience from other countries should be drawn upon (FIRST MENTION OF BUBBLES).

6th May

- [Downing Street News Conference 51](#) (Robert Jenrick, Yvonne Doyle and Nikki Kanani).
- [Boris Johnson, at his first PMQs since returning to work, says he "bitterly regrets" the crisis in care homes and is "working very hard" to tackle it. He also pledges to reach a target of 200,000 daily UK coronavirus tests by the end of May.](#)
- [First online ballot for Select Committee Chair posts in the House of Commons.](#)
- [The UK's four Chief Medical Officers write to all NHS trusts to say that more patients need to be enrolled into clinical trials on COVID-19.](#)
- [Coronavirus deaths in UK pass 30,000.](#)

7th May

- [Downing Street News Conference 52](#) (Dominic Raab and Ian Diamond).
- [Shipment of PPE from Turkey is said to be unusable.](#)
- [Bank of England warns that the economy is on course to shrink by 14% in 2020, biggest annual slump since 1706.](#)
- [Baroness Dido Harding is appointed to lead Test and Trace.](#)
- Seventh clap for carers takes place.

SAGE 34

- ➔ SAGE reiterated its advisor that there should be extensive testing of healthcare workers including asymptomatic workers.
- ➔ **SAGE noted the important contribution made by Neil Ferguson over the course of the response and agreed the importance of continuing to draw upon the work of the Imperial College London team (FERGUSON HAD QUIT AFTER BREAKING LOCKDOWN RULES).**
- ➔ SAGE re-emphasised its own focus should always be on providing clear scientific advice to the government and the principles behind that advice.
- ➔ **A better mechanism for filtering commissions and requests for SAGE's advice is needed to ensure that participants of SAGE are only required to respond urgently to requests when those matters specifically relate to an urgent science question. This will help the resilience of participants of SAGE who will continue to work under intense pressure on the COVID-19 response for many more months. Commissions should be coordinated by the SAGE Secretariat.**
- ➔ **The need for pastoral support to be available to participants was noted. Ian Boyd is an independent participant whose role includes providing this type of support.**
- ➔ **Preliminary results of a study indicate that the COVID-19 virus decays rapidly when exposed to artificial sunlight - paper to come next week. (AFTER TRUMP SUGGESTED USING UV LIGHT <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-trump-under-fire-for-suggesting-disinfectant-as-covid-19-treatment-11977958>).**
- ➔ SAGE noted some rare symptoms or complications which are emerging including cerebrovascular events, renal disease, and systemic endothelial and organ dysfunction.
- ➔ **SAGE also noted the existence of longer-term health sequelae (such as persistence of extreme tiredness and shortness of breath for several months) and the importance of monitoring these impacts through longer-term cohort studies (FIRST MENTION OF LONG COVID).**

- *The concept of 'bubbles' has potential benefits, such as supporting mental wellbeing or allowing childcare to be shared between households. However there are also risks, particularly if bubbles were to be introduced alongside other changes or if there is poor adherence.*
- *It is not expected that protest or social disorder will automatically follow from an easing of restrictions. Nor is it expected that any resistance to new measures will emerge.*

8th May

- Downing Street News Conference 53 (George Eustice and Stephen Powis).
- Six-week-old baby dies with coronavirus, believed to be the youngest victim at the time.
- Wales extends lockdown for a further three weeks.
- PPE shipment flown in from Turkey fails UK safety standards.
- The consignment, which was flown into the UK by the RAF last month, has been impounded by inspectors, who say it is faulty.
- 150 devices, made up of the Vivo65 and the Nippy4+ ventilators from Breas Medical, arrives from Sweden.

9th May

- Downing Street News Conference 54 (Grant Shapps and Jonathan Van-Tam).

10th May

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey** (27th April - 10th May)
 - ❑ *Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 148,000.*
 - ❑ *Estimated daily infections in England is 11,900.*
- The UK government updates its coronavirus message from "stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives" to "stay alert, control the virus, save lives" - the slogan is criticised by the devolved leaders.
- A new five-stage coronavirus warning system is unveiled - with the alert levels ranging from green (level one) to red (level five). The PM says the UK is currently at level four and "in a position to begin to move in steps to level three".
- In a recorded TV message, Boris Johnson says now "is not the time" to end the lockdown altogether but he is taking "the first careful steps" in easing it - with people in England allowed to spend more leisure time outside from 13 May.
 - *The PM says anyone who cannot work from home - such as those in construction and manufacturing - should be "actively encouraged" to go to work from tomorrow.*
 - *He says "step two" - no sooner than 1 June - would include reopening some shops and the return of primary school pupils, beginning with reception, Year 1 and Year 6; and that secondary pupils facing exams next year would get some time in school before the summer holiday. "Step three" - at the earliest by July - would begin the reopening of the hospitality industry and other public places.*
 - *Mr Johnson also says "it will soon be the time" to impose quarantine on people coming into the UK by air.*

- [*Sky News learns that some social care providers are 'about 24 hours away' from running out of PPE. Although the health secretary said the social care sector is a priority, bosses say they are dangerously short of equipment.*](#)

11th May

- [*Downing Street News Conference 55 \(Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance\).*](#)
- [*Public advised to wear face coverings in the PM's 50-page plan for lifting lockdown.*](#)
 - [*It is titled "Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy."*](#)
- [*Teaching union criticises what it calls the PM's "reckless" plan that some children could start returning to schools from 1 June.*](#)
- [*Chairman of the UK Statistics Authority writes to Matt Hancock seeking clarity on the targets for the number of tests, and the reporting of the number carried out each day.*](#)
- [*Downing Street says travellers coming to the UK from France will not have to be quarantined after the two countries agreed a reciprocal arrangement.*](#)
- [*DHSC announces more than 45,000 residents tested by Health Protection Teams and 140,000 test kits sent to 4,387 care homes. There are around 411,000 residents in care homes in England.*](#)
- [*Government announces COVID-19 alert level system.*](#)

12th May

- [*Downing Street News Conference 56 \(Alok Sharma, Stephen Powis and Sarah Albon\).*](#)
- [*The ONS reveals deaths in care homes made up 40.4% of the overall number of coronavirus fatalities across England and Wales in the week to 1 May.*](#)
- [*Chancellor Rishi Sunak extends the furlough scheme until October but says the government will start to ask companies to "start sharing" the cost from August*](#)
- [*Resolution Foundation reports the government is paying 80% of the wages for 6.3 million jobs.*](#)
- [*Remote voting implemented in the House of Commons. First general debate to be voted on virtually was 'This House has considered COVID-19' \(Ayes 363/Noes 248\).*](#)

SAGE 35

- ➔ *The credible range for R nationally is now 0.7-1.0 and while it is very likely to be less than 1 it could be close to it. It is almost certain to be lower than this in the community (outside hospitals and care homes) where it could be as low as 0.5-0.6.*
- ➔ *There is a limit to the precision and timeliness with which R can be estimated. There should be an increasing reliance on incidence data for decision making as the quality of those data improve.*
- ➔ ***There is evidence that sunlight rapidly reduces viral stability as well as increased temperature and humidity.... There is evidence that sunlight rapidly reduces viral stability (to a half-life of a few minutes) based on laboratory simulations (high confidence).***
- ➔ ***Workforce management and behaviours are key factors in transmission in care homes and hospitals. In particular, operating modes and staff availability present a barrier to reducing transmission in care homes.***
- ➔ ***SAGE reiterated the importance of extensive and rapid testing focused on those at highest risk of becoming infected and transmitting the virus to others including health and social workers.***

- **SAGE remains of the view that a monitoring and test, traced & isolate system needs to be put in place.**
- Mutations of the spike protein do not provide cause for immediate concern, but further work is needed to better understand variants of the virus and their biological effects.
- Extensive testing of both residents and staff is crucial both in care homes which have reported cases and those which have not.
- Preventing cases coming into homes should be a key aim, with avoiding transmission within homes also important.... SAGE reiterated the need to minimise, and ideally avoid completely, staff moving between homes.
- **Infection prevention and control procedures are important and should draw upon expertise from healthcare.... There are other settings where similar issues may arise, such as domiciliary care, hostels and university hall of residence.**
- Data indicates that the number of nosocomial cases is plateauing. The focus of the next phase of work is on reducing transmission between healthcare workers.

Sky coverage:

- ☆ Special report: The killer in our care homes

13th May

- Downing Street News Conference 57 (Robert Jenrick and Jenny Harries).
- ONS says the economy shrank by 2% in Q1, with March alone showing contraction of 5.8%.
- Chancellor warns the UK faces a "significant recession".
- Employees will not be advised to wear masks or face coverings when at work under government guidelines on how businesses can become "COVID-secure".
- First legislative proceedings subject to remote voting: Agriculture Bill (Report Stage).

14th May

- Downing Street News Conference 58 (Grant Shapps and Jonathan Van-Tam).
- NHS England say a quarter of people who died with coronavirus in hospitals in England had diabetes.
- Eighth clap for carers.
- Nigel Edwards (Chief Executive, Nuffield Trust), Dr Jennifer Dixon (Chief Executive, The Health Foundation) Richard Murray (Chief Executive, The King's Fund) each tell the Health and Social Care Select Committee that PPE was still not being provided to adequate levels.
- Chris Hopson (Chief Executive, NHS Providers) explains to the Health and Social Care Select Committee that "If everything [PPE] had arrived that had been ordered, and if everything had arrived on time and to quality, we would not have the problems that we have", adding that there has not been a "sufficiently reliable and consistent flow" of PPE for NHS staff.
 - "One of the consistent issues that is raised with our Trust Chief Executives is that some of the different types of mask do not fit particular types of face." Particular issue amongst BAME staff.
 - Nigel Edwards says, "We are way behind where we need to be" in terms of testing NHS Staff. Chris Hopson (Chief Executive, NHS Providers) states that regular testing of NHS staff is "something we know we need to do" and an "obvious next step".

SAGE 36

- **SAGE advised that social bubbles have the potential to create significant unwanted effects and advised against their introduction in the short term, when other distancing measures have only just been lifted, or in conjunction with release of other measures.**
- **SAGE advised that further release of distancing measures should not be contemplated until effective outbreak surveillance test and trace systems are up and running ([LATER REPORTED HERE](#)).**
- Latest ONS data show overall prevalence is driven in part by healthcare workers.
- Estimate of R remains between 0.7 and 1.
- **SAGE advised strong caution concerning the introduction of social bubbling...** it cannot be regarded as a universal good; for some people bubbling is impossible, too complicated or there may be no other household for them to link to. Any bubbling will increase infection risk. If introduced bubbling should only happen when it is safe to do so from an epidemiological perspective and on a very modest basis initially.
- Currently incidence is too high and R close to 1. Active contact tracing should be a precondition of introducing bubbling.
- Modelling of risk to date assumed schools remain closed and that R is 0.8 or lower. Risk would be amplified if schools are open and if workplaces are busier.
- SAGE concluded that bubbling may be appropriate in limited circumstances.
- Between 10% and 25% of individuals may be truly asymptomatic (low confidence) and many more may have few symptoms. It is possible that asymptomatic individuals are less infectious, but this cannot currently be quantified.

15th May

- Downing Street News Conference 59 (Matt Hancock, Jenny Harries and Nikki Kanani).
- It is announced that the R number has increased slightly from between 0.5 and 0.9 to between 0.7 and 1.0 - it is based on data from three weeks previously, so the effect of easing the lockdown measures is unknown.
- The British Medical Association backs calls for the government to reconsider sending children back to school in England on 1 June, saying schools should not reopen in England until the case numbers are "much lower".

16th May

- Downing Street News Conference 60 (Gavin Williamson and Jenny Harries).
- The children's commissioner says the government and teaching unions must "stop squabbling" and agree a plan to get children back to school in "a safe, phased return".
- Piers Corbyn, the brother of former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, is among several protesters arrested at a demonstration over the coronavirus lockdown in London.
- Education Secretary Gavin Williamson says the plan to allow very young school children to restart at the start of June and others to start later was based on the "best scientific advice" and put children at the heart of their decision.

17th May

- Downing Street News Conference 61 (Alok Sharma and Stephen Powis).
- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey** (4th May - 17th May)
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 137,000.
 - ❑ (26th April - 17th May): Estimated daily infections in England is 8,700.
- UK records another 170 coronavirus deaths - the lowest number since the day after lockdown was introduced.
- Business Secretary Alok Sharma says plans are in place to roll out a COVID-19 vaccine to 30 million people by September if trials are successful (this was missed)
- Licensing agreement signed between Oxford and AstraZeneca for the developed vaccine. Additional funding announced for vaccine research at Oxford and Imperial.
- Government announces up to £93 million to speed up construction of the UK Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (due to open Summer 2021 instead of 2022). £38m is also pledged to establish a rapid deployment facility in the summer (this is the Wockhardt factory in Wrexham).

SAGE 37

- ➔ Current modelling indicates that an effective test, trace and isolate systems will be necessary (but not sufficient on its own) to allow further substantive adjustments to distancing measures without pushing the R above 1.
- ➔ SAGE noted the continued importance of measures such as hand hygiene, particularly as other measures are adjusted, and the role of supporting systems and infrastructure (e.g. hand sanitising points) in enabling and prompting individual behaviours. The importance of integration of measures (e.g. hand hygiene and face coverings) in some settings noted.
- ➔ Reasonable Worst-Case Scenario
Four groups have modelled the scenarios.... Three of the models give rather similar absolute numbers of deaths each week, whilst the fourth has numbers more than twice as large.

18th May

- Downing Street News Conference 62 (Dominic Raab and Jonathan Van-Tam).
- Loss of smell and loss of taste is added to the UK's list of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Matt Hancock says anybody aged five and over who has coronavirus symptoms is now eligible for a test to see if they have the disease.
- The health secretary says more than 21,000 people have been recruited for the "track and trace" coronavirus programme to help ease England out of lockdown.
- Jury trials resume at a handful of courts in England and Wales.

19th May

- Downing Street News Conference 63 (George Eustice and Angela McLean).
- Chancellor warns of a "severe recession the likes of which we haven't seen" as the number of people claiming unemployment benefit soared to 2.1 million in April.
- Environment Secretary George Eustice admits some hospital patients with coronavirus may have been transferred into care homes, seeding it into communities.

- Professor Martin Green, chief executive of Care England which represents care homes, tells MPs that from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic care homes were a second thought despite housing the "most vulnerable people".
- Vic Rayner (Executive Director, National Care Forum) tells the Health and Social Care Select Committee that it is "absolutely critical" that all social care workers (including agency staff or those directly employed by care homes) are regularly tested for coronavirus and that results are received in a timely fashion.
- Captain Tom Moore to be knighted by the Queen after raising £33 million for the NHS.
- Treasury launches new CLBILS loans (Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme) enabling larger firms to access up to £200m in loans (raised from £50m previously available). It will also ban companies from paying shareholder dividends while borrowing from the taxpayer.
- Resolution Foundation report:
 - One-third of 18-24 year old employees (excluding students) have lost jobs or been furloughed, compared to one in six prime-age adults.
 - Two-thirds of 18-24 year olds who have been furloughed are happy about the outcome.
 - Seven in ten 25-39 year olds in work are currently working from home at least some of the time.
- ONS Labour Market released statistics:
 - 1.6% (476,000) drop in the number of paid employees in April compared to March.
 - In April total vacancies were less than half the level in March (350,000, down from 750,000).
 - 2.1 people claiming unemployment-related benefits, increased by 850,000 in early April compared to March.

20th May

- Downing Street News Conference 64 (Oliver Dowden and Stephen Powis).
- Justice Secretary Robert Buckland tells Sky News the government prioritised the NHS over social care early on in the coronavirus outbreak.
- Boris Johnson says a "world beating" track and trace system will be in place from 1 June.
- Rolls-Royce announces plans to cut 9,000 jobs.
- Google and Apple launch their coronavirus contact-tracing system on smartphones around the world.
- The government says families and dependants of migrant NHS support staff who die after contracting coronavirus will be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

21st May

- Downing Street News Conference 65 (Matt Hancock, Chris Whitty and John Newton).
- The NHS Confederation warns that time is running out to finalise a test, track and trace strategy to avoid a possible second surge in coronavirus cases.
- Matt Hancock says the government has signed contracts to supply 10 million antibody tests, with the rollout starting with health care workers, patients and care home residents from next week.
- Ninth clap for carers.

- AstraZeneca announces it has agreements to supply 400 million doses of Oxford vaccine. On the same day, it discloses more than \$1bn US BARDA investment to support development and production of the vaccine including 30,000 Phase-3 trial.
- The UK government will spend up to £454m on a coronavirus 'Ventilator Challenge' programme that has only delivered some 2,000 ventilators to date.

SAGE 38

- ➔ Public adherence to social distancing will likely be diminished by the government signalling future intent to release measures.
- ➔ Test and trace system will become overwhelmed if launched during a time of high prevalence of Covid-19. Return to R of 1.7 estimated if so.
- ➔ SAGE advises that the lower the number of infections at the point of restrictions being removed, the better it would be in terms of managing epidemic. Also warns against multiple large simultaneous changes to restrictions.
- ➔ Schools reopening have the potential to recreate significant transmission networks. Young age of students and teachers presents a lower level of risk in general.
- ➔ School and non-essential retail opening would require significant effort to reduce transmission.
- ➔ **SAGE says, in a report published on this day, 59,000 people could die with COVID-19 over summer in 'reasonable worst case scenario (there were 6,476 deaths between 18 May and 6 September).**

22nd May

- Downing Street News Conference 66 (Priti Patel, Patrick Vallance and Paul Lincoln).
- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-1.0.
- The government unveils new quarantine rules for travellers to the UK that will require them to self-isolate for 14 days.
- SAGE publishes the advice it gave to the government on reopening schools, saying an effective track, trace and isolate strategy is needed and suggesting some form of testing in school takes place.
- The founder of Clap for Carers says the next one will be the last after the event had become, in her words, "politicised".
- ONS says the government borrowed a record £62.1bn in April 2020 (£51.1bn higher than 2019).
- Mortgage payment holidays extended by three months.
- Clear decrease in confidence in England over Government's ability to handle the pandemic, according to UCL COVID-19 Social Study. There had already been a gradual decrease in public adherence to COVID guidelines before the publicity about Cummings' actions on 22 May, but the difference in this decline between England and the devolved nations grew over the next three weeks.
- Oxford University begin recruiting for the second and third stages in human trials of the COVID-19 vaccine.

23rd May

- Downing Street News Conference 67 (Grant Shapps and Jenny Harries).
- The Mirror and Guardian report that police spoke to Dominic Cummings about breaching the government's lockdown rules after he was seen in Durham, 264 miles from his London home, despite having had symptoms of coronavirus in March.
- Number 10 says Dominic Cummings has the "full support" of Boris Johnson after it emerged the prime minister's top aide travelled 260 miles from London to Durham during the lockdown.
- French government says any UK passengers arriving in France from 8 June onwards will be forced to self-isolate for 14 days.

24th May

- Downing Street News Conference 68 (Boris Johnson and Stephen Powis).
- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (11th May - 24th May)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 133,000.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 7,700.
- It is reported that Dominic Cummings made a second trip to Durham in April.
- Boris Johnson gives a Downing Street briefing backing Mr Cummings, saying his top aide "followed the instincts of every father and every parent".

25th May

- Downing Street News Conference 69 (Boris Johnson and Stephen Powis).
- Dominic Cummings says "I don't regret what I did" as he gives a detailed explanation of his actions during lockdown at a news conference in the Downing Street Rose Garden.

26th May

- Downing Street News Conference 70 (Matt Hancock and John Newton).
- Some NHS patients with severe coronavirus symptoms will be treated with drug remdesivir after trials proved it led to a quicker recovery. Matt Hancock hails the development as the "biggest step forward in the treatment of coronavirus since the crisis began".
- Northern Ireland's health minister says no COVID-19 deaths have been reported - the first time since 18 March.

27th May

- Downing Street News Conference 71 (Matt Hancock and Dido Harding).
- Boris Johnson rules out an inquiry into Dominic Cummings, say he doubts it would be 'very good use of official time'.
- Figures show the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for furloughed workers in the UK now covers 8.4 million people.

28th May

- Downing Street News Conference 72 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).

- Test and trace programme launches with 25,000 contact tracers amid reports of 'crashes'.
- Boris Johnson stops Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance answering questions on Dominic Cummings.
- The PM announces groups of six people from different households will be able to meet outside in England from Monday.
 - He also confirms primary schools and nurseries are permitted to reopen at the start of next week, with year 10 and 12 pupils getting "some face to face contact time" from 15 June.
- Durham Police say Dominic Cummings may have committed "a minor breach" of lockdown rules but will face no further action.
- Tenth and final clap for carers.

SAGE 39

- ➔ SAGE warns the R rate is 0.7-0.9, close to 1 in places and there is little room to manoeuvre before a test and trace system is in place. Can't yet assess the effect of easing restrictions to lockdown.
- ➔ Advised identification of high risk institutions (prisons, homeless shelters etc) and proactive transmission reduction plans should be in place, not reactive.
- ➔ Agreed urgency in identifying high contact professions with a greater risk of infections.
- ➔ Public trust needed to be built on alert levels. SAGE noted the importance of keeping messaging on alert level setters separate from policy makers.
- ➔ Important to link for the public alert levels and NPIs (non-pharmaceutical interventions) nationally and locally, suggested through various levels of trusted voices (local leaders, NGOs).

29th May

- Downing Street News Conference 73 (Rishi Sunak and Stephen Powis).
- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will end at the end of October
- SAGE minutes are released to the public for the first time.

30th May

- Downing Street News Conference 74 (Oliver Dowden and Jonathan Van-Tam).
- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (17th May - 30th May)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 53,000.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 5,600.
- Three scientists advising the government on coronavirus warn the easing of lockdown measures from Monday may be happening too early and could lead to a rise in infections.
- Deputy chief medical officer Professor Jonathan Van-Tam says Britain is facing a "very dangerous moment" with the easing of lockdown restrictions.
- The Department for Health says the UK can now test more than 200,000 people for coronavirus per day, a day earlier than the original target of 31 May.

31st May

- Downing Street News Conference 75 (Robert Jenrick, Jenny Harries and Louise Casey).
- NHS Providers Survey (21st - 31st May) states that 53% of NHS Trust respondents said "PPE remains a concern."

1st June

- Downing Street News Conference 76 (Matt Hancock and John Newton).
- Matt Hancock claims the UK is winning the battle against coronavirus".
- Some parents choose to keep their children at home as many classrooms re-open in England.
- Groups of six are allowed to meet outdoors in England.
- Most vulnerable "shielded" people can now leave their home.
- Millions of sub-standard face masks have been seized at Heathrow since the outbreak.
- Trading standards officials vow to "protect consumers" amid a surge in firms attempting to import unsafe items into the UK.

2nd June

- Downing Street News Conference 77 (Matt Hancock and John Newton).
- ONS Figures show the number of COVID deaths to be at their lowest since March.
- MPs vote to end the practice of voting from home.
- Water companies urge people to conserve water during lockdown due to record dry spring and more people spending time at home.
- The UK government announces a scale back in daily Downing Street briefings to weekdays only, citing low viewing figures.

3rd June

- Downing Street News Conference 78 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (28th May - 3rd June)
 - ❑ 8,087 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 73.4% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 55,045 contacts given, 91.1% reached (50,144).
 - ❑ 84.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 64.5% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Business Secretary Alok Sharma is tested for COVID-19 and self-isolates at home after looking visibly ill during a House of Commons debate. He later tests negative.
- Home Secretary Priti Patel confirms plans to introduce a 14-day quarantine for new arrivals into the UK.

4th June

- Downing Street News Conference 79 (Grant Shapps and Peter Hendy).

SAGE 40

- ➔ **Increased risk to BAME groups from Covid-19 identified and SAGE requests investigation and mitigation by policy makers.**
- ➔ SAGE highlights the importance of cluster tracking, importance of environmental factors and backwards contracting tracing to the test and trace (TTI) program.
- ➔ **Advises at least 2m social distancing, given significant reduction in risk compared to shorter distances.** 1m carries 2-10 times the risk of 2m, but uncertainty remains.
- ➔ Warns that it is unknown and unlikely to be a true sterilising immunity from either a vaccine or human immunity. Protection may exist from the disease but not necessarily from infection. Uncertainties of the implication of antibody test results means the clinical use of serological testing (blood) is some way off. Immunity passports the same.
- House of Commons agrees to a temporary order to allow MPs restricted by the coronavirus to participate virtually in Questions, Urgent Questions and Statements. In effect from 8th June to 7th July. This is then continually renewed into 2021.

5th June

- Downing Street News Conference 80 (Matt Hancock).
- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9.
- CPS is asked to review evidence of rail worker Belly Mujinga from COVID-19 after 'spitting attack'.
- The UK government's ban on tenant evictions in England and Wales is extended by two months to 23 August.

Sky coverage:

- ☆ Shutdown: The virus that changed the world.

6th June

- Anti-racism demonstrations are held in cities across the UK; thousands reported to attend.
- Robert Jenrick announces that places of worship will be allowed to open for individual prayer on 15 June.
- WHO changes tack and recommends face masks where social distancing is not possible.

7th June

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (25th May - 7th June)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 33,000.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 4,500.
- No new deaths recorded for Scotland or Northern Ireland over the most recent 24 hour period: it is the first time Scotland has recorded no new deaths since lockdown began in March.
- Thousands of protesters take part in a second day of anti-racism demonstrations in cities across the UK.

8th June

- Downing Street News Conference 81 (Matt Hancock and John Pearson).
- Rules requiring travellers arriving into the UK to quarantine for 14 days come into force.
- Number of recorded deaths rises by 55 to 40,597, the lowest daily number since lockdown was introduced on 23 March.
- BP announces plans to shed 10,000 jobs amid a global drop in demand for oil.
- COG-UK releases a study that tracks the importation of COVID-19 over February and March. Due to inbound international travel the group detected 1,356 independently introduced transmission lineages. Approximately 34% of transmission lineages came from Spain, 29% from France, 14% from Italy and 23% from other countries.

Sky coverage:

☆ Special report: Coronavirus: The Home Front

9th June

- Downing Street News Conference 82 (Alok Sharma and Sarah Albon).
- Business Secretary Alok Sharma confirms that all non-essential retailers in England can reopen from 15th June. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces zoos and safari parks will also reopen then.
- Treasury figures show that 8.9 million workers are now covered by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, with it having cost £19.6 billion to date.
- Doctors seek legal challenge over PPE provision as they warn lessons must be learned.
- The chair of the Doctors' Association says there has been an "inadequate supply" of PPE for health professionals.

10th June

- Downing Street News Conference 83 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (4th June - 10th June)**
 - ❑ 5,917 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 77.8% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 46,585 contacts given, 90.7% reached (42,234).
 - ❑ 86% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 67.3% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- OECD says the UK will see the "worst" economic contraction among developed countries.
- Professor Neil Ferguson says that half of the lives lost to COVID-19 could have been saved if lockdown measures had been introduced a week earlier.

11th June

- Downing Street News Conference 84 (Matt Hancock and Dido Harding).

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- ➔ Short term downward trends in forecasts of all indicators modelled such as hospital admissions and deaths, across all geographies.
 - ➔ Estimates of R values on a regional level currently reliable but would become less accurate as cases declined. SAGE recommends publishing regional growth rates alongside R values.
 - ➔ Advice to isolate for 7 days after mild symptoms, or 7 days after symptoms have ended for severe cases, remains sound. (but wouldn't catch 100% of infectious individuals)
 - ➔ SAGE agreed to support greater sharing of health data across groups and the building of better infrastructure.
 - ➔ Percentage of asymptomatic cases remains uncertain, estimated anywhere from 30-80%
 - ➔ Public toilets identified as an infection risk due to urine/faecal matter, aerosol presence, shared surfaces and queuing.
- ONS figures indicate those under the age of 30 have been hardest hit by a fall in income during COVID-19 outbreak.
 - British Gas owner (Centrica plc) announces they intend cut 5,000 jobs in major restructuring plan.

12th June

- Downing Street News Conference 85 (Grant Shapps, Stephen Powis and Peter Hendy).
- From the 15th June face coverings will be mandatory on public transport.
 - The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9.
 - ONS says the UK economy nosedived by a quarter during lockdown (period covering March, April and May). April alone saw a decline of 20.4% - e biggest collapse ever seen.
 - ONS figures indicate deprived areas have been hit twice as hard by the COVID-19 epidemic when compared to more affluent areas.
 - Between the period 2nd March to 12th June, 12,294 people died in care homes due to COVID-19.

13th June

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (31st May - 13th June):**
- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 33,000.
 - ❑ (26th April - 10th May): Estimated daily infections in England is 3,800.
- 'Support Bubbles' can now be formed by households of one adult with another household of any size.

14th June

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson orders an "urgent" review of the two-metre rule amid calls for it to be scrapped.

15th June

- Downing Street News Conference 86 (Dominic Raab).
- AstraZeneca says agreement has been reached to supply Europe with the COVID-19 Vaccine.
- Non-essential shops reopen in England.
- Imperial College London to begin human trials of COVID-19 vaccine after tests on animals indicate an effective immune response.
- Wearing a face covering becomes mandatory on public transport in England.
 - Operators will be able to prevent passengers who refuse to follow the rules from travelling and police will be able to issue fines of £100.

16th June

- Downing Street News Conference 87 (Boris Johnson, Peter Horby and Patrick Vallance).
- ONS says 612,000 UK workers have lost their jobs during lockdown.
- Low-dose steroid treatment dexamethasone is heralded as a major breakthrough after it was found to cut the number of deaths.
- Report from the National Foundation for Educational Research suggests that 90% of teachers say their pupils are doing less than would be the usual case for the time of year. Headteachers say a third of pupils are not engaging with the work set for them by their teachers.
- Dr Katherine Henderson (President, Royal College of Emergency Medicine) tells the Health and Social Care Selection Committee that some types of PPE had caused problems for staff productivity across emergency services. Dr Henderson said: "The productivity of everything drops in this situation. Putting on and taking off PPE takes time. It adds time to every single encounter."
 - She also quotes a Royal College of Emergency Medicine survey that states 97% if respondents find it more difficult to communicate wearing PPE.
 - Dr Henderson also states: "We cannot build confidence for patients coming into hospitals if we cannot be sure that we can protect everybody. We must make sure [through regular testing] that staff are not carrying the virus, because asymptomatic spread is a worry, and staff-on-staff infection is a worry."

17th June

- Downing Street News Conference 88 (Oliver Dowden).
- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (11th June - 17th June)**
 - ❑ 6,920 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 76% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 31,913 contacts given, 82.4%, reached (26,299).
 - ❑ 81.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 60.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock is pictured slapping a colleague on the back in the House of Commons, apparently forgetting social distancing measures.

18th June

- Downing Street News Conference 89 (Matt Hancock and Dido Harding).

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- ➔ **SAGE agreed the double testing of travellers could enable quarantining times of less than 14 days.**
- ➔ **Importance raised of understanding risk to marginalised groups such as migrant workers and the need to be prepared for outbreaks in areas of high deprivation. Issue taken up with the Cabinet Office.**
- ➔ Praised results from dexamethasone drug RECOVERY trial (benefits found for critically ill patients with COVID)
- ➔ Super-spreading environments discussed. Internal places that are crowded and loud, requiring people to speak loudly. Agreed understanding of these clusters as important to backwards contact trace.
- ➔ During the winter the virus will survive longer on surfaces due to decreased daylight, temperature and humidity. Will lead to greater outdoor transmission.
- ➔ Low risk of infection from treated wastewater, or fresh or marine bodies of water. Risk may increase slightly after heavy rainfall.
- Bank of England prints £100bn more to expand quantitative easing. Total since March is £300bn now. That's on top of the £445bn since the financial crisis.
- Matt Hancock announces, at the Downing Street Press Conference that AstraZeneca and Oxford University have reached a deal to begin manufacturing of a potential vaccine, even though it has yet to receive clinical approval.
- Matt Hancock announces that the NHS Test and Trace app developed by the NHS digital arm will now be dropped, but some features will be incorporated into a new design with the technology giants.
- ONS data for two weeks up to 10 June indicate that of the 14,000 names passed to NHS Test and Trace, 10,200 have been contacted.
- A 13-month-old baby dies with COVID-19, the youngest known person to die with the virus in the UK.

19th June - COVID ALERT LEVEL LOWERED FROM 4 TO 3

- Downing Street News Conference 90 (Gavin Williamson)
- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9 and the growth rate range is -4% to -2%.
- ONS says total UK government debt goes above 100% of GDP for the first time in nearly six decades.
- Coronavirus alert level is lowered from 4 to 3 after steady fall in cases.
- Figures from the Treasury show that UK debt stands at £1.95trn, and is larger than the economy for the first time in 50 years following a record amount of borrowing in May.

21st June

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (8th June - 21st June):**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 51,000 and ratio 1 in 1,100.
- No new COVID-19 deaths are recorded for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

22nd June

- Downing Street News Conference 91 (Matt Hancock and Jenny Harries).
- A new coronavirus saliva test is trialled in the UK.
- The UK records its lowest number of new coronavirus cases since the beginning of lockdown with 958 people having tested positive for the virus, the first time the figure has dropped below 1,000.
- The energy regulator Ofgem gives energy companies permission to follow up unpaid bills, but warns them not to be aggressive in their pursuit of unpaid debts.

23rd June

- Downing Street News Conference 92 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).

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- ➔ *SAGE warns releasing a significant number of restrictions at once presents the risk of increased transmission and that the impacts will need to be monitored. Takes a month or more for the impact of removing measures.*
- ➔ *The reintroduction of measures will have to be considered at local level to combat outbreaks.*
- ➔ *Without immunity from vaccination, contact tracing and COVID-secure measures are unlikely to be sufficiently effective to allow a return to 'pre-COVID' normality without increasing infections rate.*
- ➔ *May be a need to change measures at the end of summer in order to be able to keep R below 1 whilst proceeding with schools reopening.*
- ➔ *Still a large number of people without a basic understanding of the symptoms, recommends guidance to engage communities.*
- One metre plus (1m+) announced by Boris Johnson to come into effect on 4th July, as well as restaurant and pubs reopening on the same date.
- PM's announcement speech of lockdown changes:
 - 1m+ replaces 2m rules.
 - Publishing guidance on office layouts to aid distancing.
 - From **4th July**:
 - Two households of any size can meet in any setting inside or out.
 - Pubs and restaurants can reopen with table service.
 - Hairdressers and nail salons can reopen.
 - Outdoor leisure activities can reopen e.g. outdoor gyms and playgrounds, cinemas, museums, galleries, theme parks and arcades.
 - Provided that no more than two households stay together, people will be free to stay overnight in self-contained accommodation, including hotels and bed & breakfasts, as well as campsites as long as shared facilities are kept clean.
 - As well as libraries, social clubs and community centres.
 - Places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services, including weddings with a maximum of 30 people.
 - Recreation and sport will be allowed, but indoor facilities, including changing rooms and courts, will remain closed and people should only play close contact team sports with members of their household.
 - Courts, probation services, police stations and other public services will increasingly resume face-to-face proceedings.

24th June

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (18th May - 24th June)
 - ❑ 6,128 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 79.7% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 24,254 contacts given, 73.8% reached (17,902).
 - ❑ 81.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 44% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- The UK Government commits £105m to keep homeless off the streets after lockdown.
- The UK government publishes new advice for businesses on how to safely reopen their premises on 4 July.
- Matt Hancock announces the Government's plans for testing NHS staff, under certain circumstances, to the House of Commons.

25th June

- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9 and the growth rate range is -4% to -2%.

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- ➔ Forecasts continue to project a downward trend in all indicators modelled, including ICU bed occupancy and number of deaths. Growth rate estimated between -2 to -4%.
- ➔ Noted that some of the devolved administrations will soon reach a level of incidence for which R cannot be reliably estimated.
- ➔ SAGE agrees to define 'cluster', 'outbreak' and 'epidemic' clearly, currently used to define the size of an outbreak but differences are not clearly defined.
- CBI urges the Government to accelerate efforts to protect jobs and livelihoods before the second wave begins
- Group of senior health academics express their concern that COVID-19 antibody tests for NHS and care staff are being rolled out without "adequate assessment".
- As the UK experiences a heatwave, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council declares a major incident after as many as 500,000 people travel to the Dorset coast.
- The UK Government announces plans to relax rules for England and Wales allowing pubs and restaurants to utilise outdoor spaces.

26th June

- Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (car manufacturing business lobby) says UK car production plunged 95% in worst May since 1946.
- Intu Properties, owner of many of the UK's largest shopping centres, goes into administration because of the financial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson warns the UK could be set back if people continue to ignore social distancing rules, after people pictured on south coast beaches.
- NHS hospitals are using algorithms to help clear the post-COVID backlog of treatment, there are warnings that the number of people waiting for treatment could reach 10 million by Christmas.

27th June

☐ **ONS Infection Survey (14th May - 27th June):**

- ☐ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 25,000 and ratio 1 in 2,200.
- ☐ (14th June - 27th June): Estimated daily infections in England is 3,500. ONS changed the estimate method so previous estimates are not comparable with subsequent.

29th June

- Local lockdown announced in Leicester, with the closure of non-essential retailers from the following day, and the closure of schools from 2 July.
- Northern Ireland adopts one metre minimum social distance (one metre plus).

30th June

- Leicester begins at least two weeks of re-tightened lockdown restrictions.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces £5 billion capital investment post COVID-19 to aid recovery.
- ONS data indicates the number of deaths in the week up to 19 June fell below the five year average for the first time since March.
- Resolution Foundation estimates that the actual number of people on furlough fell to 6.8 million by 30th June.
- Professor Steve Powis (National Medical Director, NHSE/I) tells the Health and Social Care Select Committee that "it is absolutely the case that the supply lines are more secure now and the distribution network [...] is in a much more secure and robust place".
- Chris Hopson tells the Health and Social Care Committee that "Trusts felt that two months ago there was a commitment that we would get to regular staff testing as quickly as possible, but two months later we still do not have a clear plan for doing that".
- NHS Providers in a survey to NHS Trusts shows that only 7% of respondents said that their Trust will be able to return to "meeting the needs of all patients and services users that require services immediately".

1st July

☐ **NHS Test and Trace Data (25th June - 1st July)**

- ☐ 4,345 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ☐ 79.6% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ☐ 15,417 contacts given, 71.9% reached (11,078).
- ☐ 83.2% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ☐ 45.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Imperial College London REACT Survey (1st May - 1st July, published 11th July) reports that 69% of individuals taking part who tested positive reported that they were symptom-free/asymptomatic on the day of the test or previous seven days.
- SSP (the company that owns Upper Crust, food and cafes in railway stations and airports) blames lockdown for 5,000 UK redundancies.

2nd July

- Downing Street News Conference 93 (Gavin Williamson and Jenny Harries).

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- ➔ ***SAGE presents evidence that individuals who are both antibody positive and PCR positive are much less likely to be infectious. Argues this may offer a way forward for releasing individuals from self-isolation or quarantine.***
- ➔ SAGE endorses NERVTAG/EMG paper on importance of hand hygiene to combat Covid-19.
- ➔ ***Noted the evolving social conditions and potential for public unrest. Need to review the latest evidence of risks from mass gatherings and protests. Noted that there was no increase in incidence recorded following mass protests in the US.***
- ➔ Nosocomial transmission (hospital transmission) is decreasing in terms of numbers and proportion of cases.
- ➔ Routine genomic sequencing (determining DNA sequences) has the reported potential to detect or reduce clusters of infections where it is not possible by other means. Paper from COG UK.
- Casual Dining Group, the owner of Café Rouge and Bella Italia, goes into administration with the loss of 1,900 of the 6,000 staff employed by the outlets.
- Airbus announces the loss of 1,700 jobs.
- ONS data show 6.3% of blood samples have antibodies.

3rd July

- Downing Street News Conference 94 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9 and the growth rate range is -6% to -0%.
- The UK government passes The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020 through parliament, giving police powers to enforce lockdown restrictions in Leicester from 4th July, as lockdown eases elsewhere in the country. (LEGISLATION HERE).
- The UK government announces a list of 59 countries that will be quarantine free in a travel corridor from 10 July.

4th July - SUPER SATURDAY

- Sky live thread from 4th July. Dubbed "Super Saturday" as pubs and restaurants reopen.
- Pubs and restaurants reopen in all of England except Leicester.
- One metre plus rule comes into effect in England.
- Ed Davey writes to Kent Police to investigate Nigel Farage after he is pictured in the US attending a Trump rally.
- Stanley Johnson defends trip to Greece that critics say breaks the restrictions.
- Minute of silence is held to remember those who died of COVID-19 and landmarks a lit blue to mark the 72nd anniversary of the NHS.

5th July

❑ **ONS Infection Survey (22nd June - 5th July)**

- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 14,000 and ratio 1 in 3,900.
- ❑ (22nd June - 5th July): Estimated daily infections in England is 1,700.
- Government offers a £1.57bn lifeline for the arts sector without allowing live shows to resume.
- National round of applause to mark 72nd anniversary of the NHS.

6th July

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson says "too many care homes didn't follow procedures".
- Government announces a £111 million scheme to help firms in England provide an extra 30,000 trainee places. £21 million provided for a similar scheme in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- BBC's Panorama reports that scientific research has suggested the COVID-19 outbreak could result in several thousand extra cancer deaths, estimates between 7,000 and 35,000.
- No deaths reported in Wales for the most recent 24-hour period.

7th July

- ONS data indicate only 22% of people testing positive for COVID-1 had symptoms on the day they were tested.

8th July

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (2nd July - 8th July)**

- ❑ 3,571 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ❑ 79.9% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ❑ 14,110 contacts given, 71.6% reached (10,105)
- ❑ 82.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ❑ 49.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Imperial College London REACT Survey (19th June - 8th July, published 6th August) reports that 81% of individuals taking part who tested positive reported that they were symptom-free/asymptomatic on the day of the test or previous seven days.
- Rishi Sunak announces Eat Out to Help Out scheme: a cut in VAT on food, accommodation and attractions worth £30bn.
- The Treasury also announced an eight-month temporary cut in stamp duty tax on properties below £500,000.
- "Kickstart Scheme" announced. Government pays wages of 16-24-year-olds for a year.
- The government allocated more than £15bn to buy personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline NHS staff as part of an extra £50bn given to public services to help them cope with the coronavirus pandemic. Treasury documents have revealed.
- Batches of surgical face masks delivered to care homes and GPs during the coronavirus pandemic have been recalled because they are faulty, Sky News has learnt.

- The masks, which are out of date by as much as seven years but were deemed safe to use, have been withdrawn after faults were reported with the straps and nose protection which hold them in place.

9th July

- Downing Street News Conference 95 (Oliver Dowden)

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- ➔ **SAGE agreed that full preparation for winter is an urgent priority**, simple and clear messaging during autumn is important to prepare the public. Too early to predict the severity of winter due to unpredictability of weather and events.
 - ➔ Due to falling numbers of cases, SPI-M doesn't have confidence that regional R estimates are sufficiently robust to inform decisions.
 - ➔ Further and Higher Education should be advised and prepared well in advance from autumn terms starting.
 - ➔ Regarding opening schools, **SAGE advises that there is a low risk to children's health from Covid-19 and significant harms from schools being closed.** Reopening requires sufficient headroom in terms of overall infection rates, and clear communication with parents and staff.
 - ➔ Evidence states that school outbreaks are considered as extension of community outbreaks.
- Boots announces cutting of 4,000 jobs and John Lewis closes eight stores.
 - ONS releases numbers that estimate one in 3,900 have the virus, down from one in 2,200 in the previous week.

10th July

- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9 and the growth rate range is -5% to -2%.
- During 'People's PMQs', Boris Johnson states: "It's very important that people should be going back to work if they can now... I think we should now say, well, 'go back to work if you can". The prime minister also backs further face mask use.
- Wearing of face coverings becomes mandatory in shops in Scotland.
- National Police Chiefs' Council show that no fines were issued in England and Wales for breach of quarantine during the first two weeks after their introduction.
- Travel corridors launched with quarantine-free movement to an initial list of 73 countries.

11th July

- Outdoor swimming pools and water parks reopen.

12th July**☐ ONS Infection Survey (6th July - 12th July):**

- ☐ ONS changed to a different modelling for estimates, so from 12th July figures aren't comparable with previous.
 - ☐ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 23,600 and ratio 1 in 2,300.
 - ☐ (6th July - 12th July): Estimated daily infections in England is 1,700.
- Primark announced it will not take advantage of the Jobs Retention Bonus announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak. The company would've been entitled to £30 million.

13th July

- Reopening of nail bars, salons, tanning booths, spas, massage parlours, tattoo parlours and skin piercing services.

14th July

- A report commissioned by the UK's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, produces estimates for potential COVID-19 deaths in a deadly second wave scenario over the coming winter. The report forecasts a figure of between 24,500 and 251,000 hospital deaths.
- The UK government announces that the wearing of face coverings will become compulsory in shops and supermarkets in England from 24 July. Those who fail to do so will face a fine of up to £100.
- Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that UK economic recovery was at 1.8% in May 2020 when compared to the previous month, a smaller amount than was expected.

15th July**☐ NHS Test and Trace Data (9th July - 15th July)**

- ☐ 3,886 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ☐ 81.4% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ☐ 17,306 contacts given, 78.6% reached (13,598).
 - ☐ 83.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ☐ 55.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Boris Johnson confirms an independent inquiry will be held into the handling of the pandemic, but says it would not be right to devote "huge amounts of official time" to an inquiry while the pandemic is ongoing.
 - A temporary cut in VAT worth £4bn comes into force until 12 January 2021 as a means of helping the food and hospitality industries.

16th July

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- *Co-infection risk of influenza over winter. Likely to be a logistical challenge around cohorting patients and PPE usage.*
- *SAGE reiterated the importance of optimising the flu vaccination programme this year (2020) for at-risk groups.*
- *Singing and wind instrument playing are discussed to have potential in terms of transmission.*
- *Age-related variation in advice appears hard to achieve due to vulnerable people falling outside of age ranges. SAGE recommends to continue considering vulnerability segmentation and SPI-M/Public Health Wales investigate the possibilities of geographic segmentation.*
- The National Cyber Security Centre accuses Russian spies of targeting organisations developing COVID-19 vaccines in the United Kingdom, United States and Canada in order to steal information relating to their work.
- Figures released by the UK government show the number of workers on UK payrolls fell by 649,000 from March to June, but unemployment did not increase as much as feared because many companies took advantage of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- Speaking to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, the UK's Chief Medical Officer Sir Patrick Vallance says that SAGE urged the government to lockdown a week earlier and admitted the coronavirus outcome has "not been good".
 - He also says the government was urged to impose full lockdown measures around a week earlier than they were introduced in March. He tells a Commons committee that the advice was given "on the 18th of March or the 16th of March".
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that the Leicester local lockdown is to be extended.

17th July

- *Downing Street News Conference 96 (Boris Johnson and Dido Harding).*
- *The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9 and the growth rate range is -5% to -1%.*
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces a further easing of lockdown restrictions for England, with plans for a "significant return to normality" by Christmas.
- Johnson announces an extra £3bn for the NHS in England to help prepare for a possible second wave of COVID-19 over the coming winter.
- Johnson announces a pilot scheme for a return to spectator sports, with a view to a full return by 1 October.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock calls for a review of the way COVID-19 deaths are recorded in England after Public Health England confirms it records deaths as COVID related even if the death occurs several months after someone has tested positive for the virus.

18th July

- Local authorities in England get new powers to close shops and outdoor public spaces, and to cancel events in order to control COVID-19.

19th July

❑ **ONS Infection Survey (13th July - 19th July):**

- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 27,700 and ratio 1 in 2,000.
- ❑ (13th July - 19th July): Estimated daily infections in England is 2,800. (ONS changed method so previous estimates are not comparable to subsequent).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he does not believe it will be necessary to impose a second nationwide lockdown in the event of a spike in COVID-19 cases, comparing the option to a "nuclear deterrent".
- Robert Buckland, Secretary of State for Justice, announces the creation of ten temporary courts in England and Wales to deal with the backlog of legal cases.

20th July

- The government admits its contact tracing programme is unlawful, breaching data protection laws since it launched in May.
- UK signs deals for 90 million doses of promising vaccines being developed jointly by the pharmaceutical companies BioNTech and Pfizer, and by Valneva. Boris Johnson says he is not "100% confident" a vaccine will be available in 2020.
- Preliminary results of clinical trials of a drug developed by Synairgen shows promising signs.
- University of Oxford vaccine trial shows that it appears to be safe and induces immune response.

21st July

- Public sector workers (doctors, police, teachers etc.) are set for inflation-busting pay rises.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces that 900,000 public sector workers, including doctors and teachers, will get an above-inflation pay rise of 3.1%, in acknowledgement of the important role that they have played during the pandemic.
- Health experts tell the House of Commons Health Committee that even with a vaccine the UK is likely to be living with COVID-19 for many years.
- Professor Sir Paul Nurse (Chief Executive and Director of the Francis Crick Institute) tells the Health and Social Care Select Committee that research conducted by the Francis Crick Institute and others during March and April 2020 showed that, at the height of the pandemic, 40% of healthcare workers were infected and asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19.
 - Part of evidence used in Select Committee's report on the NHS and coronavirus.
- Professor Chris Whitty (Chief Medical Officer) tells the Health and Social Care Select Committee that from the start of the pandemic, the Government had been "starting from a standing start" as capacity for testing had not been sufficiently built up.
 - "Initially, we did not have the capacity. Even now, we would be at the margins of capacity were we to do routine testing for all healthcare staff on a more than very occasional basis, but it is improving. The capacity constraints are being eased."
 - "If there is a surge in winter, which is a really serious concern looking forward—where I spend most of my thinking time—and is what I am really worried about, we certainly will need asymptomatic testing among healthcare staff."

22nd July

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (16th July - 22nd July)**
 - ❑ 4,194 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 83% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 19,638 contacts given, 76.2% reached (14,973).
 - ❑ 81.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 54.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Home Office reveal backlog of 400,000 passport applications has accumulated due to disruption due caused by COVID-19.
- ONS report concludes that a majority of children have struggled with learning at home during the lockdown.

23rd JulySAGE 48

- **Significant and growing proportion of the epidemic is now among South Asian populations.** Group makes up only 8% of the whole population. The epidemic amongst white populations continues to decline.
- **EMG paper on airborne transmission: Limitations of face shields/visors in preventing transmission and importance of good ventilation.**
- Culturally appropriate and relevant communication that promotes health and protective behaviours could reduce the risk of Covid-19 in BAME communities.
- SAGE advises that segmentation by age is not without considerable risk and is unlikely to be successful.
- SAGE notes the risk that lessons from Leicester and PHE data on other outbreaks could be misinterpreted and lead to increased stigma. Argues for better contextualised public messaging.
- A report published by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee criticises the UK government for its "astonishing" failure to plan for the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Government announces an additional £100m to help produce any successful COVID-19 vaccine at scale.

24th July

- The R number range for the UK is 0.7-0.9 and the growth rate range is -4% to -1%.
- In an interview with BBC Political Editor Laura Kuenssberg, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says the UK government did not understand the nature of coronavirus at the beginning of the pandemic. Says there are "open questions" about whether lockdown was implemented too late.
- Face coverings (face masks) become compulsory in shops and most other enclosed public spaces in England.

25th July

- Public Health England warns that being obese and overweight puts people at greater risk of severe illness or death as a result of COVID-19.
- Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Spain, and concerns for a second wave, the UK Government confirms travellers returning to England from Spain will be required to quarantine for 14 days from 26th July.

26th July

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey** (20th July - 26th July)
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 35,700 and ratio 1 in 1,500.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 4,200.
- Spain is removed from the list of travel corridors.

27th July

- The first confirmed case of an animal infection with SARS-CoV-2 in the UK is reported, having been detected in a pet cat.
- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces plans to travel home early from a family holiday in Spain due to quarantine rules.

28th July

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson defends government's decision to impose quarantine restrictions on people arriving from Spain. Johnson wants that there are signs of European second wave.
- Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia and St Vincent and the Grenadines are added to the list of travel corridors.

29th July

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (23rd July - 29th July)
 - ❑ 4,633 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 81% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 19,190 contacts given, 72.1% reached (13,837).
 - ❑ 81.1% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 53.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.

30th JulySAGE 49

- ➔ **SAGE states that R is likely to be above 1 across England due to relying on lagged data.** Current estimates at 0.8-1.0 with a daily growth rate of -1% to -4%.
- ➔ **SAFE advised that during local lockdowns or restrictions, similar, probably more substantial, support packages as with national NPIs will be required to facilitate adherence.**

- SAGE argues that there will be a more positive response to interventions from the public if the reasons behind them are fully explained and understood. There should be an emphasis on care rather than punishment.
- Recommended that the proportion of confirmed cases which can and cannot be linked to known clusters should be monitored. This is an important indicator of transmission and the effectiveness of test and trace.
- Changes to state aid rules as a result of UK Government and industry lobbying mean that more small businesses can now benefit from loans of up to £5 million. Businesses that were previously already deemed to be in decline were unable to access these loans due to the state aid rules.
- Period for which someone self-isolates after testing positive or showing symptoms is extended from seven (7) to ten (10). Boris Johnson warns the UK is "it isn't all over" as he wants of the danger of a resurgence.
- Luxembourg removed from list of travel corridors, after data shows a significant change in confirmed cases.
- Restrictions are placed on Greater Manchester, and parts of East Lancashire and Yorkshire prohibiting separate households from meeting indoors following an "increasing rate of transmission". The restrictions take effect from midnight.
- Northern Ireland's contact tracing app StopCOVID NI is launched.
- Office for National Statistics figures indicate England had the highest number of excess deaths in Europe between the end of February and mid-June, and had the second highest peak of deaths behind Spain.

31st July

- Downing Street News Conference 97 (Boris Johnson and Chris Whitty).
- The R number range for the UK is 0.8-0.9 and the growth rate range is -1% to -4%.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson postpones some lockdown easing measures scheduled to begin in England on 1 August for two weeks amid concerns about rising COVID-19 cases. [From 8 August the wearing of face coverings in more indoor settings, such as cinemas and places of worship will become mandatory.](#)
- Northern Ireland pauses its shielding programme.
- Resolution Foundation states 4.8 million people now on furlough.

1st August

- The shielding programme is paused for England and Scotland, but will continue for the areas where extra precautions have been introduced.
- MOT testing is reintroduced from today.
- Changes to the furlough scheme come into effect, with firms who have furloughed workers required to contribute to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- Resolution Foundation challenge the government statement that over 9 million people are furloughed:
 - The cumulative take-up of the scheme since its launch is in excess of nine million, the actual number now is undoubtedly much lower.

2nd August

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (27th July - 2nd August)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 28,300 and ratio 1 in 1,900. Wales is 1,417 and ratio 1 in 2,200.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 3,700.
- A major incident is declared in Greater Manchester after rises in coronavirus infection rates.

3rd August

- Eat Out to Help Out scheme begins.

5th August

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (30th July - 5th August)**
 - ❑ 4,973 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 80.6% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 21,408 contacts given, 74.8% reached (16,011).
 - ❑ 80.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 51.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- A report by the Home Affairs committee concludes that the spread of COVID-19 could have been slowed by an earlier implementation of quarantine restrictions on people arriving in the UK.

6th AugustSAGE 50

- ➔ **SAGE requests more analysis on shielding to understand all causes of mortality and shielding's health and social impacts. Shielding will be considered again once this is complete. Special measures for 'protectors' will also be reviewed.**
- ➔ Correct incentives and support needs to be put in places to encourage people to get tested.
- ➔ SAGE endorse analysis showing a statistically significant increased mortality risk associated with HIV. Noted that HIV could be associated with atypical Covid-19 presentations, recommended papers should be published for medical professions to consider action.
- ➔ Data shows incidence is static or may be increasing, meaning R may be above 1 in England. Transmission within households remains high. **A significant proportion are in hard-to-reach communities.**
- ➔ SAGE agreed that good adherence to local measures to control outbreaks will require more and clearer public messaging.
- ➔ SAGE argue that strong measures introduced early for short periods are likely to be more effective in reducing transmission than less stringent measures implemented for longer.
- ➔ Recommends more guidance for carers of vulnerable people on how to protect themselves.

- The Bank of England predicts that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be less severe than previously thought, but the economy will take much longer than anticipated to recover.
- 50 million face masks bought by the UK government ditched over safety concerns
- One of the lawyers suing says it is "a real cause for alarm", but the government says "due diligence" is always taken.
- Matt Hancock replies to the Health and Social Care Select Committee's concerns over testing for NHS staff by stating: "It is critical that we continue to scale up our testing programme. As the Prime Minister announced on 17 July, we will further increase our testing capacity to at least half a million antigen tests a day by the end of October."

7th August

- The R number range for the UK is 0.8-1.0 and the growth rate range is 0% to -5%.

8th August

- 750,000 coronavirus test kits manufactured by Randox are recalled due to safety concerns.
- Use of face coverings is extended to more indoor venues in England and Scotland.
- Andorra, Belgium and The Bahamas removed from the list of travel corridors.

9th August

- **ONS Infection Survey (3rd August - 9th August):**
 - Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 28,300 1 in 1,900, Wales is 1,500 1 in 2,000.
 - (3rd August - 9th August): Estimated daily infections in England is 3,800.
- The daily figure of confirmed new COVID-19 infections exceeds 1,000 for the first time since June, rising by 1,062 to 310,825. It is unclear whether the rise is due to greater volume of testing.

10th August

- DHSC overhauls test and trace, cutting staff by 6,000 in the next two weeks with the remaining teams redeployed to local contact tracing groups.

11th August

- Office for National Statistics figures reveal that the number of people in work fell by 220,000 between April and June, the largest drop in employment in a decade.
- The Scottish Government announces upgrades for thousands of Higher results that were marked down to take account of teachers' assessments.

12th August

- **NHS Test and Trace Data (6th August - 12th August)**
 - 4,803 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.

- ❑ 79.4% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 17,410 contacts given, 72.3% reached (12,588).
 - ❑ 79.1% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 48.2% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- The government changes the way it counts how many people in England have died from COVID-19 amid concerns that the previous system was "misleading". England comes into line with the rest of the UK and imposes a 28-day cut off period for counting COVID-19 related deaths. The number of deaths of patients testing positive for COVID-19 in the UK is revised down from 46,706 to 41,329.
 - The Department for Education announces that students' GCSE and A Level results will be no lower than the results of their mock exams, with the introduction of a "triple lock" system whereby the highest grade is awarded from a choice of mock exams, teachers' assessment or exams taken during the autumn term.
 - Figures show the UK economy shrunk by 20.4% between April and June when compared to the first quarter of the year, making it the largest slump on record and pushing the country into recession for the first time in eleven years.

13th August

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (7th August - 13th August):**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 24,600 and ratio 1 in 2,200. Wales is 1,300 and ratio 1 in 2,400.
 - ❑ (7th August - 13th August): Estimated daily infections in England is 2,400.

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- Likely that incidence is static or increasing slowly. R may be above 1 in England.
- SAGE agreed that more analysis is needed on compliance rates of people self-isolating with confirmed Covid-19 in the UK.
- **Relative contribution to transmission from droplets and aerosols is still unknown.**
- SAGE publishes findings on droplets from SWI consensus singing and speaking research:
 - ◆ Total mass of droplets generated from singing is of a similar order of magnitude to speaking for the same duration of time.
 - ◆ However, singing produces 2-3 times more aerosol mass than speaking at a similar volume.
 - ◆ Singing loudly increases aerosol production 20-fold.
 - ◆ Individuals produce a much greater mass of droplets than others
- A-level results day as grades are published for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. School leaders call for review after 36% of results in England are lower than teachers predicted, while 3% are two grades lower.
- France, the Netherlands, Monaco, Malta, Turks and Caicos, and Aruba are added to the quarantine list, requiring travellers arriving in the UK from these countries to quarantine for 14 days as of 4.00am on 15 August.

14th August

- *The R number range for the UK is 0.8-1.0 and the growth rate range is -4% to -1%.*
- *The UK Government signs a deal for 90 million doses of potential vaccines being developed by Belgian company Janssen Pharmaceutical and US company Novavax.*
- *Extra ferries laid on between France and England as thousands of holidaymakers race to return to the UK from France before quarantine restrictions begin.*

17th August

- *Following A-level controversy over A-level grades, it is confirmed that both A-level and GCSE results in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be based on teachers' assessments.*
- *As many as three million self-employed people whose trade has been affected by the pandemic become eligible for a second government grant worth £6,570.*
- *Study from the Institute of Fiscal Studies says that the education gap between wealthy and poor children has widened because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and quotes a headteacher who says it could take up to two years to get children back to their correct level of education.*
- *France, the Netherlands, Monaco, Malta, Turks and Caicos Island and Aruba are removed from the travel corridor list.*

18th August

- *Education Secretary Gavin Williamson says he is "incredibly sorry" for distress caused to students over their grades.*
- *Marks & Spencer to cut 7,000 jobs after 'material shift' in trading - it is the second biggest single day loss of jobs in 2020 (after British Airways cut).*

19th August

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (13th August - 19th August)
 - ❑ 7,941 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 76.4% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 25,946 contacts given, 77.2% reached (20,027).
 - ❑ 81.6% of non-complex contacts within 24 hours.
 - ❑ 47.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- *Pearson Education delays the release of half a million BTEC qualifications, due on 20th, in order to regrade them.*

20th August

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (14th August - 20th August):**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 28,200 and ratio 1 in 1,900, Wales is 1,100 and ratio 1 in 2,800.
 - ❑ (14th August - 20th August): Estimated daily infections in England is 2,200.

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- Discussed testing strategies. Testing could enable early release from self-isolation, effectively reducing 14-day self-isolation period.
 - Risk noted to limiting face-to-face attendance at higher education settings and long term impacts of distance learning to social deprived groups. Reopening will carry a pressure on R and create new transmission networks.
 - **SAGE noted risks in the timing of reopening large events and venues**, particularly when incidence rates are increasing across Europe, and in some parts of North England, which could send conflicting messages.
 - Alcohol use at venues enhances transmission risk possible from hugging and cheering/singing. **Importance of improved ventilation at venues highlighted.**
 - SAGE argued that pilots to reopen event venues should evaluate transmission risk and adherence to behaviours which reduce transmission.
 - Noted increase in infection rates in Birmingham, predominantly amongst the South Asian population. Significant and growing proportion in much of England remains in British and Asian Pakistani heritage and British and Asian Indian population.
- GCSE results day sees record-breaking results as teachers hand out more top grades.

21st August

- The R number range for the UK is 0.9-1.1 and the growth rate range is -3% to +1%.
- OBR says public sector net debt hits £2 trillion for the first time. This is total Government debt.

22nd August

- Sir Mark Walpole, SAGE member, suggests COVID-19 will be present "forever in some form or another", and not eliminated by vaccine as in cases of diseases such as smallpox.
- Croatia, Trinidad and Tobago and Austria are removed from the travel corridor list.

23rd August

- Dr Chris Whitty says that children are more likely to be harmed by not returning to school in September than by contracting COVID-19.

25th August

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (19th August - 25th August):**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 27,100 and ratio 1 in 2,000, Wales is 1,400 and ratio 1 in 2,200.
 - ❑ (19th August - 25th August): Estimated daily infections in England is 2,000.

- Scientists at the University of Nottingham have identified a 75-year-old woman from Nottinghamshire who they believe to be the first person to catch COVID-19 through transmission within the UK; she tested positive on 21 February.

26th August

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (20th August - 26th August)**
 - ❑ 7,683 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 83.7% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 31,970 contacts given, 70% reached (22,372).
 - ❑ 79.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 48.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson blames a “mutant algorithm” for the exam grades chaos, then sacks education chief.
- Restaurant chains, including Prezzo, Harvester and Pizza Pilgrims, announce plans to extend the Eat Out to Help Out scheme into September due to its success.

27th August

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- **Effective test and trace can have a significant effect on R and this should remain a priority.**
- SAGE argues that the effectiveness of mass testing will depend on several factors:
 - ◆ Frequency of testing
 - ◆ Ability of a test to identify true positives and negatives
 - ◆ Speed of results
 - ◆ Adherence to isolation
- Testing should not be considered in isolation but as part of this entire system.
- Mass testing is most likely to be successful in reducing R if used in well-defined higher risk populations or settings e.g. care homes, where it is more feasible to detect and prevent large outbreaks early, where compliance can be measured, and in groups with higher rates of infection and transmission than the general public.
- Speed and coverage of NHS Test and Trace needs to be optimised to identify and isolate quickly a high proportion of symptomatic cases, and it will be important to ensure that a general mass testing project does not have a negative impact on this approach.
- The number of new daily COVID cases rises by 1,522, the highest number since mid-June.
- The results of the delayed Liberal Democrat leadership election sees Sir Ed Davey elected.

28th August

- The R number range for the UK is 0.9-1.1 and the growth rate range is -2% to +1% per day.
- The UK Government announces the launch of another drive to encourage people to return to their workplaces, starting in the first week of September.

29th August

- First football match with spectators takes place in Brighton, with 2,500 people allowed in to watch a pre-season friendly between Chelsea and Brighton.
- Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Jamaica are removed from the travel corridor list.

30th August

- University and College Union (UCU) urges universities in the UK to delay face-to-face lectures until Christmas, amid fears students could spark a second wave.

31st August

- Eat Out to Help Out ends. Over 100 million meals were eaten under the scheme, at a cost to the government of about £522 million.

1st SeptemberSAGE 54

- **Higher and Further Education Reopening in Autumn**
- Students highly connected in their communities pose a greater risk of transmission, exacerbated by younger adults being more likely to be asymptomatic or having a milder illness.
- Risk on the student population transmission spilling over into local communities and drive breakouts. One off mass testing in a university may not provide substantial benefits due to repeated introductions (driving home and coming back).
- **SAGE noted that risks of larger outbreaks spilling over from HE institutions are more likely to occur towards the end of the academic term, coinciding with the Christmas and New Year period when students go home.**
- Consideration should be given to allow students to isolate in separate dedicated university accommodation, particularly for students who cannot otherwise self-isolate effectively.
- **Recommended improving ventilation to FE/HE venues and use of face covering in certain settings. Face coverings will have the greatest benefits for where people are in close proximity.**
- Majority of schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland reopen for the autumn term.
- Workers on low incomes required to self-isolate in parts of England where COVID rates are high, and who cannot work from home, become entitled to a new payment scheme to top up their existing Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit claims for the duration of isolation.
- Marcus Rashford forms a taskforce of some of the UK's leading food brands aimed at reducing child poverty.
- House of Commons returns after summer recess.

2nd September

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (27th August - 2nd September)
 - ❑ 8,908 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 84.3% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 33,251 contacts given, 70% reached (23,281).
 - ❑ 82.1% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 55.1% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Rishi Sunak launches a £2bn scheme to help young people start a career amid the chaos caused by the coronavirus crisis - the "Kickstart Scheme".

3rd September

SAGE 55

- UK R rate is 0.9-1.1.
- SAGE endorsed papers on managing transmission associated with Higher and Further Education and reiterated the spillover risk for local communities.
- Noted evidence of low adherence to isolation.
- Evidence from serology (blood test) studies suggest a small proportion (around 6%) of the UK population has antibodies to Covid-19.
- Unknown how long these responses last, some evidence of antibody levels waning. T cell reactivity may be more widespread in the population than antibodies. Not enough evidence to show whether disease is more or less severe in cases of reinfection.
- Still documented uncertainties on implications of antibody test results, requiring further work on serological testing. Immunity passports are not currently advisable for similar reasons.
- Current levels of immunity in the population are expected to have the greatest effect on R if R is close to 1. Should be considered for future policies.
- SAGE noted an increasing proportion of positive tests occurring in younger people, particularly in the 20-29 age group, but also 10-19 and 30-39 year olds.
- Dido Harding, chief of Test and Trace, apologises for UK laboratories struggling to keep up with demand for COVID tests.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces £500 million of funding for trials of a 20-minutes COVID-19 test.

4th September

- The R number range for the UK is 0.9-1.1 and the growth rate range is -1% to +2%.
- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps acknowledges, on BBC Breakfast, that rules regarding quarantine in the UK are "confusing" after Scotland and Wales impose quarantine on travellers from Portugal.
- Boris Johnson rules out introducing COVID-19 tests at airports after suggesting they could be used to shorten the length of time people are required to quarantine, saying they give a "false sense of security".

5th September

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (30th August - 5th September):**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 39,700 and ratio 1 in 1,400, Wales is 1,200 and ratio 1 in 2,600.
 - ❑ (30th August - 5th September): Estimated daily infections in England is 3,200.
- Scientists warn that the main test used to detect COVID-19 may be wrongly producing a positive result because of fragments of dead material from previous infections.
- The UK government writes a letter to the heads of government departments urging them to get civil servants back to their office desks as soon as possible.
- Three MPs and the Good Law Project have launched legal action against the government over what they allege is a "persistent and unlawful" failure to disclose details of huge sums of money spent on contracts for personal protective equipment. The government has approved £15bn for procuring PPE since the start of the pandemic. The action has been filed by the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas, Labour's Debbie Abrahams and Lib Dem Layla Moran.

6th September

- A further 2,988 COVID-19 cases were reported in 24 hours in the UK, the highest number since 22nd May.

7th September

- Imperial College London REACT Survey (1st May - 7th September, published 13th September) found that 72% of swab positive individuals were asymptomatic at the time of the swab or in the week prior.
- Grants Shapps announces an "Islands Policy" within travel corridors, allowing the government to add or remove specific islands from the travel corridor list.
 - Crete, Lesvos, Mykonos, Santorini, Serifos, Tinos and Zakynthos removed from the exemption list. However mainland Greece and other Greek islands remain.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock warns younger people, in an interview with BBC Radio 1 Newsbeat, they risk causing a second wave, after a third of COVID-19 cases from the preceding week are among 20-29 year olds.

8th September

- Health Secretary Matt Hancock tells the House of Commons the "sharp rise" in COVID-19 cases is "concerning". Jonathan Van-Tam says the jump in cases is a "great concern".

9th September

- Downing Street News Conference 98 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (3rd September - 9th September)**
 - ❑ 15,526 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 84.9% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 68,829 contacts given, 76.7% reached (52,690).
 - ❑ 82.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.

- ❑ 57.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- *Trials for a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University are paused after a participant in the UK suffers an adverse reaction.*
- *New rules regarding social gathering from September 14th (rule of six) outlined by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a government press conference.*
- *Resolution Foundation report:*
 - *Those in their early 20s are most likely to have been furloughed on the Job Retention Scheme, with a fifth of all employees on JRS under the age of 25.*
 - *Over 1 million people in their early 30s, those most likely to be working parents with young children, benefitted from a temporary boost to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit.*
 - *Older workers most likely to receive support via the Self Employment Income Support Scheme, most likely to be among those aged 50 to 55. Around 680,000 workers aged 45-54 made a claim, with payments totalling £2 billion. 600,000 claims across all workers aged 35 and under, totalling £1.6 billion.*

10th September

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- ➔ *UK in the same situation as in February, rapidly increased incidence with concentration amongst those with the most contacts, most notably younger people. It is almost certain that R is greater than 1 across large parts of England.*
- ➔ *SAGE endorses a paper on the Reuse of PPE and considers the behavioural aspect of PPE reuse.*
- ➔ *SAGE argues that it is highly likely an early and comprehensive response will be needed, in addition to those already announced. Would mean that measures have more effect as set earlier and may be needed for a shorter duration.*
- ➔ *SAGE states it is critical, as winter approaches, to prepare for increase in numbers of cases, hospitalisations and deaths.*
- ➔ *Data on impact of schools and universities reopening yet to be seen but expected to increase R .*
- ➔ *High levels of transmission in HMOs and large households. Socially deprived households at risk due to housing and occupation risks. Mitigations can reduce transmission (hand washing etc) but longer term considerations such as improving housing quality and reducing overcrowding needed backed by SAGE.*
- ➔ *Prioritising rapid testing of symptomatic people is likely to have a greater impact on identifying positive cases and reducing transmission than frequent testing of asymptomatic people in an outbreak area. Any Population Case Detection (PCD) programme should not come at the expense of test, trace and isolate systems.*
- ➔ *Estimate of 28% of infections as asymptomatic but with very wide confidence intervals. Asymptomatic infection may be more likely in younger people (moderate confidence).*

❑ ***ONS Infection Survey (4th September - 10th September):***

- ❑ *Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 59,800 and ratio 1 in 900, Wales is 1,500 and ratio 1 in 2,000.*
- ❑ *(4th September - 10th September): Estimated daily infections in England is 6,000.*

- Leaked documents from SAGE suggest that Operation Moonshot could lead to 41% of the UK population having to self-isolate needlessly within six months due to the generation of false positives.
- Britons told to travel as far as 500 miles for COVID-19 tests as the system struggles to cope.

11th September

- The R number range for the UK is 1.0-1.2 and the growth rate range is -1% to +3%.

12th September

- AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine project is resumed after it was deemed safe to continue.
- Portugal (apart from the Azores and Madeira), Hungary, French Polynesia and Reunion removed from the travel corridor list. Sweden added to the list of travel corridors.

14th September

- Rule of six comes into effect.
- Kit Malthouse, Minister for Crime and Policing, suggests people should report neighbours for any breach of the "rule of six".
- Keir Starmer is self-isolating after a member of his household "showed possible symptoms of the coronavirus".
- Sir Patrick Vallance says, to the BBC, that he was rebuked by officials for favouring a lockdown early on in the pandemic.

15th September

- Unemployment figures show that UK unemployment rose to 4.1% in the three months to July, up from 3.9% in the previous quarter.

16th September

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (10th September - 16th September)**
 - ❑ 21,268 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 82% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 86,849 contacts given, 77.2% reached (67,047).
 - ❑ 83% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 54.1% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson says a second national lockdown would have "disastrous" financial consequences for the UK.
- The UK's inflation rate fell to 0.2% in August, from 1% in July. Fall due to cheaper restaurant meals through Eat Out to Help Out.

17th SeptemberSAGE 57

- **SAGE states R for the UK is 1.1 to 1.4 and that Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) on a local and national scale are needed to bring R back below 1. Hospital admissions double every 7-9 days.**
- Medium term projections indicate rapid increase in hospital admissions and in a scenario of no interventions, this would have potential to overwhelm the NHS.
- 'Circuit-breaker' approach for two weeks in a model, restrictions similar to in May, could delay the epidemic by approximately four weeks. Adherence continues to be an issue, suggests greater communication and removal of disincentives.
- **REACT data indicates that only 10% of confirmed cases have a known history of exposure to another case. Suggests transmission through unrecognised contacts or asymptomatic contacts.**
- SAGE continues to support the use of face coverings, especially at less than 2m distancing, and where they are required for long periods of time the tolerability needs to be considered.
- Rates of isolation from people with symptoms are likely very low (moderate confidence). SAGE argues for a package of financial and non-financial support to address disincentives to isolation and quarantine.
- Evidence suggests constitutional symptoms may have a greater prominence in children (low confidence) and in those over 85, delirium, shortness of breath, fever, headache, and cough are the most common (moderate confidence). SAGE suggests increasing the public awareness of the symptoms would have a bigger impact than changing specific case definitions.
- Baroness Dido Harding, chief of NHA Test and Trace, tells a committee of MPs that demand for COVID-19 testing is "significantly outstripping the capacity we have" but is "very confident" daily testing capacity can be raised to 500,000 by the end of October.
- ONS reports 62% of workers travelled to work during the previous week.

18th September

- The R number range for the UK is 1.1-1.4 and the growth rate range is +2% to +7%.
- Nearly a million workers used flexible furlough in July.
- Reports Boris Johnson is considering national restrictions on social lives to curb second spike.
- North East enters tighter restrictions, households banned from meeting.

19th September

- **ONS Infection Survey (13th September - 19th September)**
 - Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 103,600 and ratio 1 in 500, Wales is 10,800 and ratio 1 in 300.
 - Estimated daily infections in England is 9,600.
- The UK Government announced a maximum fine of £10,000 for people in England who refuse to self-isolate.

20th September

- [First known sample of the new coronavirus \(B.1.1.7\) variant is collected in Kent, according to COVID-19 Genomics Consortium UK \(CoG-UK\) on 20th December.](#)

21st September - CORONAVIRUS ALERT LEVEL UPGRADED TO 4SAGE 58

- SAGE endorses paper 'Summary of the effectiveness and harms of different non-pharmaceutical interventions'.
- Doubling time for new infections could be as short as 7 days nationally. **SAGE argues a package of interventions will be needed from this shortlist:**
 - ◆ Circuit breaker
 - ◆ Advice to work from home
 - ◆ Banning all contact within the home with member of other households (except support bubbles)
 - ◆ Closure of all bars, restaurants, cafes, indoor gyms and personal services (hairdressers etc)
 - ◆ All university and college teaching to be online unless face-to-face teaching is essential.
- All interventions considered have associated costs in terms of health and well-being and many will affect the poorest members of society to a greater extent.
- **The faster the interventions considered, and the more stringent they are, the faster the reduction in incidence and prevalence, the greater the reduction in COVID-related deaths (high confidence). A more effective response now may reduce the length of time for which some measures are required.**
- [Second known sample of the new coronavirus \(B.1.1.7\) variant is collected in Greater London, according to COVID-19 Genomics Consortium UK \(CoG-UK\) on 20th December.](#)
- [At a Downing Street data briefing, Dr Patrick Vallance, says that there could be as many as 50,000 COVID cases per day by mid-October if no further action is taken. Link to statement.](#)
- [UK coronavirus alert level is upgraded to level 4.](#)
- [Anneliese Dodds, Shadow Chancellor, accuses the government of misspending billions of pounds in response to the pandemic.](#)
- [Sir Graham Brady tells the BBC that ministers have "got a habit of ruling by decree" and warns that parliament must therefore approve any further COVID-19 restrictions.](#)
- [FTSE 100 share index falls by more than 3% amid fresh concerns of COVID-19 cases will affect the economy.](#)

22nd September

- [Prime Minister Boris Johnson tells the House of Commons the UK has reached 'a perilous turning point' as he announces new restrictions for England that could last up to six months.](#)
- [Televised address to the nation, Johnson calls for people to exercise resolve and discipline to combat the virus.](#)
 - Early closing for pubs, bars; table service only; closing businesses that are not COVID-secure; expanding the use of face coverings, and new fines for those that fail to comply.

- Whitbread (owner of Premier Inn, Brewers Fayre, etc) announces 6,000 jobs will be cut - this is the 3rd biggest one day job loss announcement.

23rd September

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (17th September - 23rd September)**

- ❑ 29,037 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 75.4% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 94,369 contacts given, 73% reached (68,865).
 - ❑ 81.1% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 52.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- The UK Government scraps plans for an Autumn budget because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - House of Commons agrees a motion to resume sittings in Westminster Hall from 5th October.

24th September

- Downing Street News Conference 99 (Rishi Sunak).

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- ➔ **Unless current NPIs reduce R back below 1 soon, it is possible the infection incidence and hospital admissions will over time exceed scenario planning levels. Earlier the additional measures are introduced, the more effective they will be.**
- ➔ SAGE advises on circuit breaker measures.
- ➔ Interplay of social, economic, biological and pre-pandemic health risks combine to cause ethnic inequality in COVID-19. SAGE states an urgent need for both social science and clinical research to better understand risk factors for BAME groups.
- ➔ **There is no evidence of an effect from Vitamin D to date.**
- ➔ SAGE notes overrepresentation of BAME groups in health and social care and key public sector professions, combined with greater probability of more crowded housing leads to greater exposure. SAGE argues for targeted messaging to different ethnic groups.
- ➔ Increase in cases at care homes. There is growing evidence of the negative mental health and wellbeing impacts of isolation on care home residents and their families. Policy makers will need to balance these against the transmission risk from visits.

❑ **ONS Infection Survey (18th September - 24th September)**

- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 116,600 and ratio 1 in 470, Wales is 6,400 and ratio 1 in 500.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 8,400.
- NHS Coronavirus App launched in England & Wales.
 - Regulations come into force at 5am that restricts restaurants, bars, public houses etc from providing services past 10pm.
 - Rishi Sunak announces the Job Support Scheme as a replacement to the furlough scheme.
 - The UK records a further 6,634 cases, the largest daily increase since mass testing began.

- 40 backbench MPs reported to have backed the Brady Amendment, which would require the UK government to seek a parliamentary vote for any further lockdown restrictions.

25th September

- The R number range for the UK is 1.2-1.5 and the growth rate range is +4% to +8%.
- The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine trial begins in the UK with 10,000 people taking part.

26th September

- A glitch in the NHS COVID-19 app leaves users unable to input the results of a negative test if the test was not booked through the app.
- Thousands gather in Trafalgar Square for an anti-COVID restriction protest but the demonstration is closed down by police due to a lack of social distancing.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledges £500m to a global vaccine sharing scheme.
- Denmark, Slovakia, Iceland and Curacao is removed from the travel corridor list.

27th September

- The Labour Party urges the government to pause the return of university students as thousands self-isolate due to COVID-19 outbreaks.

28th September

- The maximum number who can attend weddings and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions is reduced from 30 to 15.
- Increased fines for those who fail to self-isolate following a positive test, up to £10,000.
- National Police Chiefs Council confirms officers are being told not to install the NHS COVID-19 contact-tracing app to their work smartphones (BBC). Police federation and NPCC encouraged police to use the app.
- 'Brady amendment' put forward on the Coronavirus Act 2020 in Parliament, asking for a vote on future restrictions. (It was never voted on but Matt Hancock announced the change on 30th September).
- SNP MP Margaret Ferrier takes a train to London and speaks in the House of Commons.
 - **26th September:** Started experiencing mild symptoms of COVID and took a test in the afternoon.
 - **28th:** Ms Ferrier said she was "feeling much better" so took a train to London. That evening, she gave a four-minute speech in the House of Commons during a debate on coronavirus. She received a positive result from the test but it is not clear whether this was before or after her parliamentary address.
 - **29th:** Ms Ferrier said she boarded a train in the morning without seeking advice but began isolating when she arrived in Glasgow.

29th September

- The UK records 7,143 new COVID cases with 71 COVID related deaths, the highest since 1 July.
- Greggs says it is consulting unions and staff about potential job cuts after the furlough scheme ends as part of cost cutting measures.

30th September

- Downing Street News Conference 100 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
 - ❑ The PM states the UK is at a “critical moment” and the rising number of deaths/cases shows “why our plan is so essential”.
- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (24th September - 30th September)**
 - ❑ 34,494 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 75.5% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 105,646 contacts given, 69.7% reached (73,664).
 - ❑ 67.0% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 41.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows that UK gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 19.8% in the second quarter.
- Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, rebukes the government for treating parliament with “contempt” by introducing new COVID measures without debate.
- Matt Hancock announces to parliament that “wherever possible” the government will put forward votes in parliament for significant national measures with effect in the whole of England or UK-wide.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnsons, at PMQs, defends use of local lockdowns.

1st OctoberSAGE 60

- ➔ ***Unless current NPIs (restrictions) reduce R back below 1, currently UK at 1.3 to 1.6, it is likely that infection incidence and hospital admissions will exceed scenario planning levels in the next two weeks.***
- ➔ Ventilation is an important mitigation measure against far-field (2m+) aerosol transmission. Priority should be given to improving ventilation of space which are likely to have a higher transmission rate, such as multiple multi-occupant spaces.
- ➔ Far-field aerosol transmission depends on the interaction of multiple factors including the viral emission rate, the ventilation rate, the number of occupants, the duration of exposure and the temperature and humidity. Elevated CO2 levels in indoor air can indicate poor ventilation but CO2 is not a good indicator for monitoring transmission risk.
- ➔ ***There is no evidence that the current viral variants are more or less virulent than previous circulated strains. This may change in the next phase of the epidemic as the use of vaccines or treatments may exert selective pressures on the virus.***

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (25th September - 1st October)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 224,400 and ratio 1 in 240, Wales is 6,100 and ratio 1 in 500.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 17,200.
- Imperial College London study suggests spread of the virus may be slowing. The study suggests the R number has fallen since measures such as the rule of six were introduced.

- Stanley Johnson issues an apology after being pictured in a shop without a face covering.
- Former Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn apologises after holding a dinner party attended by more than six people.
- SNP MP Margaret Ferrier has the whip suspended and apologises after it emerged she travelled by train from her constituency to Westminster while experiencing COVID symptoms. (SKY TIMELINE OF EVENTS LINKED).

2nd October

- The R number range for the UK is 1.3-1.6 and the growth rate range is +5% to +9%.
- Sunak launches the 'Job Retention Bonus' which will give employers £1,000 for bringing back previously furloughed staff in January 2021. Estimated to cost the government £9bn.
- Metropolitan Police launches an investigation into the actions of SNP MP Margaret Ferrier.
- The Department of Health says it is fixing a glitch with the NHS COVID-19 app whereby people receive messages that disappear, but warns it could take some time to fix the error.

3rd October

- Number of new daily cases exceeds 10,000 with 12,872 cases confirmed but the government attributes the high number to a technical issue that means previously unreported cases from the previous week are added to the daily total.
- Turkey, Poland, Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba removed from the travel corridor list.
- Up to a £10,000 fixed penalty is introduced for passengers who breach self-isolation following return from non-exemption countries or regions.

4th October

- Further 22,961 COVID-19 cases are confirmed, totalling 502,978. This figure includes 15,841 cases confirmed between 25th September and 1st October that were not included previously due to a technical error, thus making day's total artificially high for both England and the UK.
- 2020 London Marathon held in a closed loop circuit.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces the British Army will be called up to help distribute the coronavirus vaccine.

5th October

- PHE confirms all those involved in delayed reporting of Daily COVID-19 cases have been contacted, but that the delay has meant that their close contacts have not. An investigation launched into the error.
- At Conservative Party Conference, Rishi Sunak says he will "always balance the books".
- Westminster Hall sittings resume in the House of Commons.
- Cineworld temporarily closes its UK and US operations as Boris Johnson urges people to go to cinemas. Odeon also announces reduced opening hours.
- Kate Bingham, head of UK's vaccine taskforce, reveals that less than half the country's population could be vaccinated against coronavirus and people under 18 are not expected to be vaccinated.

6th October

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson, addressing the Conservative Party Conference, says COVID-19 has to be a catalyst for change.
- Hospital admissions in England rise by 25% in a single day.

7th October

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (1st October - 7th October)**

- ❑ 86,211 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ❑ 80.5% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ❑ 219,876 contacts given, 63.2% reached (138,995).
- ❑ 60.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ❑ 38.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- NHS COVID-19 and cancer tests from Roche delayed as they sit in warehouse due to 'logistic failure'.
- Pub chain Greene King announces the loss of 800 jobs, citing tighter lockdown restrictions as the reason.
- Scotland announces restrictions to reduce the spread of coronavirus: 9th October to 25th October.
 - Pubs and restaurants can only open 6am-6pm.
- Government launched a task force on COVID-19 testing at airports to revive travel.
- Kent hospital receives damning report over PPE, hygiene and social distancing failings.
 - Inspectors found staff wearing PPE incorrectly, not using hand gel, and not adhering to social distancing rules.

8th October

❑ **ONS Infection Survey (2nd October - 8th October)**

- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 336,500 and ratio 1 in 160, Wales is 7,900 and ratio 1 in 390.
- ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 27,900.

SAGE 61

- ***In England the number of infections and hospital admission is exceeding Reasonable Worst Case Scenario planning. Projections also indicate the number of deaths is highly likely to exceed RWC planning.***
- Lower incidence and prevalence in London compared to the rest of the UK cities. Could include some level of immunity (lower than 20%), different behaviours as London was hit hard in the first wave, less tourism or different levels of deprivation than other cities.
- ***SAGE states that a package of NPIs needs to be adopted to reverse the exponential rise in cases.***
- There are recorded risks and negative mental health impacts associated with full shielding which should be considered by policy makers.
- SAGE reiterated the importance of consistent government strategy, clear public engagement and communication, and transparency, for increasing adherence.

- ONS figures indicated three times more deaths from COVID-19 than from flu and pneumonia in England and Wales between January and August 2020.
- The National Trust announces the loss of 1,300 jobs due to COVID-19.
- University of Edinburgh study suggests that imposing strict lockdowns and school closures may lead to a greater number of COVID-deaths in the long term. Study argues that herd immunity reduces severity of the second wave and that lockdowns only work as a short term measure if a vaccine is found quickly.

9th October

- The R number range for the UK is 1.2-1.5 and the growth rate range is +4% to +9% per day.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces an expansion of the Job Support Scheme that will see the Treasury pay two thirds of the wages of employees whose firms are forced to close because of COVID-19.
- Enhanced Central Belt restriction measures come into force in Scotland.
- UK Economy grew by 2.1% in August 2020, something aided by the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, but figures are below expectation.
- ONS reports cases have 'increased rapidly', estimating 1 in 240 people in England had the virus during the week to 1st October.
- Resolution Foundation estimates that if all hospitality businesses in local authorities that currently have some form of additional restriction are asked to close that could see as many as 440,000 hospitality employees using the furlough in early November.

10th October

- The delayed 2020 Birthday Honours are published, frontline workers and volunteers honoured.
- British Medical Association published a list of recommendations to reduce infection rates. Includes compulsory wearing of face coverings in all work settings unless alone.
- Greek islands of Lesbos, Santorini, Serifos, Tinos and Zakynthos added to travel corridor list.

11th October

- Leading UK scientist Professor Peter Horby says, on BBC Andrew Marr Show, a second national lockdown is a possibility.
- SNP MP Margaret Ferrier states that her decision to travel on public transport while experiencing COVID-19 symptoms was a 'blip' and that the virus can make people 'act out of character'.
- Scientists at University of Exeter begin trials of the BCG vaccine, developed in 1921, to see if it is effective against COVID-19.

12th October - THREE TIERS ANNOUNCEMENT

- Downing Street News Conference 101 (Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak and Chris Whitty).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveils the new three-tier system of restrictions for England, to come into force 14th October. Liverpool is then the only area put into the highest tier 3.

13th October

- Kate Bingham, Head of the Vaccine Taskforce, warns that first vaccines are 'unlikely to end pandemic'.
- Labour Leader Keir Starmer urges the government to impose a 'circuit breaker'.
- UK unemployment has risen to its highest level since 2017, an increase of 4.5% in the three months up to August 2020.
- Sky News reports SAGE 58 (September 21st) that recommended a circuit breaker lockdown to ministers.

14th October - THREE TIERS START

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (8th October - 14th October)
 - ❑ 96,521 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 82.2% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 254,375 contacts given, 60.1% reached (152,964).
 - ❑ 62.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 31.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Three tier system of restrictions comes into effect in England.
- BMJ reports a sudden irreversible hearing loss from a number of COVID-19 cases.
- A study finds that three-quarters of medics in urgent and acute care believe hospitals are not prepared to cope over the next six months.

15th OctoberSAGE 62

- ➔ **In England the number of infections and hospital admissions is exceeding the RWCS planning.** Daily deaths are in line with RWCS and almost certain to exceed in the next two weeks. R for the UK is 1.3 to 1.5, 43,000 to 74,000 new infections per day. (LATER REPORTED WHEN SAGE DOC IS PUBLISHED ON 30 Oct) <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-england-has-breached-reasonable-worst-case-scenario-for-cases-and-hospital-admissions-sage-warns-12118997>
- ➔ Segmenting the population by age is not without considerable risk, operationally difficult and unlikely to be successful in reducing mortality and morbidity.
- ➔ Evidence suggests that pre-school and primary school aged children are not currently playing a driving role in transmission of SARS-CoV-2.
- ➔ In educational settings it appears that there is limited transmission from children of primary school age (low confidence). **High levels of infection in children of secondary school age in the ONS study requires further investigation.**
- ➔ A very high number of tests should be used per day to detect changes in transmission in a low prevalence area and a low amount in a high prevalence area. Increasing the supply of tests in some areas therefore may not be beneficial and could lead to delays.
- ➔ Closing the hospitality sector at 10pm does not yet appear to have had a significant effect on reducing the mean number of contacts that participants have outside of home, work or school.

- House of Commons announces plans to stop selling alcohol in its bars and restaurants amid tighter COVID restrictions for London.
- Metropolitan Police says it will take no further action against MP Margaret Ferrier for her breach of COVID-19 rules.
- Greater Manchester leaders reject the government's plans to impose Tier 3 restrictions onto the area in a meeting with Downing Street. Cases in Manchester are at 437.0 per 100,000 (5th October - 11th).

16th October

- Downing Street News Conference 102 (Boris Johnson, Patrick Vallance and Susan Hopkins).
- The R number range for the UK is 1.3-1.5 and the growth rate range is +4% to +7%.
- **ONS Infection Survey (10th October - 16th October)**
 - Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 433,300 and ratio 1 in 130. Wales is 16,700 and ratio 1 in 180. Scotland is 37,400 and ratio 1 in 140.
 - Estimated daily infections in England is 35,200.
- £500m scheme announced to restart film and TV production in the UK. Government says the sector employs 180,000 people and contributes £12bn to GDP. More importantly it removed insurance requirements for studios in case of COVID-19 infections on set.
- ONS estimates 27,900 new COVID-19 cases a day in England, 60% increase on previous week, R number rises to between 1.3 and 1.5.
- Wales introduces a travel ban on people from COVID hotspots in other parts of the UK beginning at 6pm.
- The UK Government announces that Lancashire will move into Tier three restrictions on the 17th.
- Northern Ireland national restrictions begin.
- UCL study reveals that up to 17% of the UK population could refuse to be immunised by a COVID-19 vaccination.
- Government publish a response to consultation on changes to the Human Medicines Regulations to support the rollout of COVID-19 and flu vaccines.
 - Regulations allow for the temporary authorisation of unlicensed products in the events of a 'public health threat'.
 - Consultation led to the government modifying this regulation to specifically include COVID-19 vaccinations.

17th October

- Lancashire enters Tier 3 restrictions.
- London, Essex, Cumbria and York added to Tier 2.

18th October

- Sir Jeremy Farrar, SAGE member, warns Christmas will be tough this year but 'more than one vaccine' will be available early in 2021.

- Liverpool gets an extra £30 million in Tier-3 support, as Andy Burnham negotiates for more financial support for Manchester.
- Italy, San Marino and Vatican City State removed from the travel corridor list. Greek island of Crete added.

19th October

- Yasmin Qureshi, MP for Bolton South East, is admitted to hospital with pneumonia after testing positive for COVID-19.
- ONS publish data that indicates almost 1,000 additional non-COVID deaths at home were recorded every week between March and September 2020.
- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces plans for a "test and release" system, designed to release people from quarantine if they get a negative test. The plan has yet to come into force. Tests are to be paid for by passengers arriving in the UK at an as-yet unknown cost.
- Andy Burnham tells Sky News that "health is about more than controlling the virus" as negotiations with Downing Street for more financial support for Manchester if they enter Tier 3 continues. Reports that Manchester's hospitals will reach capacity by Friday 23rd. Talks on whether Manchester should enter Tier 3 end that day with no agreement.

20th October

- Downing Street News Conference 103 (Boris Johnson, Jonathan Van-Tam and Stephen Powis).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces Tier Three restriction will be in place in Manchester from Friday 23rd October. Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham receives the news on live TV, after talks over an extra financial support package with Downing Street ended without agreement.
- The UK becomes the first country to back studies that would deliberately infect volunteers with COVID-19. Human challenge trials would see 90 volunteers infected with the virus after being given potential trial vaccines.
- Passengers flying from Heathrow to Italy and Hong Kong are able to get a £80 coronavirus test at the airport, with results in just one hour.
- 241 COVID related deaths are recorded, highest daily for several months.

21st October

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (15th October - 21st October)**
 - ❑ 120,444 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 83.7% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 287,271 contacts given, 60.7% reached (174,401).
 - ❑ 64.5% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 28.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Oxford University and AstraZeneca vaccine trial continues after investigation into the death of a volunteer in Brazil.
- A further 26,688 COVID cases are recorded, the highest daily figure so far.
- Gaby Appleton appointed as boss of NHS Test and Trace, succeeding Simon Thompson. Third boss in 6 months.

22nd October

- Downing Street News Conference 104 (Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak and Patrick Vallance).

SAGE 63

- ➔ Limited evidence that growth rate has fallen. R for the UK is estimated at 1.2 to 1.4.
- ➔ **Even if significant interventions sufficient to bring R below 1 were imposed immediately, the number of deaths would continue to rise for at least two weeks (high confidence).**
- ➔ **Mental health factors may impact people's ability to adhere.** SAGE recommends more positive approaches to sustaining adherence are needed that focus on enabling the public to engage with infection control behaviours (LATER REPORTED HERE WHEN SAGE PAPER IS PUBLISHED ON 6 NOV)
- ➔ Super-spreading events may play an important part in transmission. Highest rates of transmission are associated with poorly ventilated and crowded indoor settings with increased likelihood of aerosol emission.
- ➔ Limited data to suggest that contacts increase in the winter months due to people spending more time inside (low confidence). SAGE again highlights the issue of co-infection with influenza over winter.
- ➔ Universities have reported a large increase in cases, followed by a rapid decline. Unclear if from change in incidence, availability of testing or uptake in testing from students.
- ➔ Nosocomial transmission may not play the same role in a second wave as the first. There has been a significant amount of work in hospitals to improve infection prevent and control (IPC) measures.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak unveils increased support for jobs and workers affected by COVID restrictions. Three new measures announced and changes to the Job Support Scheme.

23rd October

- The R number range for the UK is 1.2-1.4 and the growth rate range is +3% to +6%.
- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (17th October - 23rd October)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 568,100 and ratio 1 in 100. Wales is 26,100 and ratio 1 in 120. Scotland is 47,300 and ratio 1 in 110. Northern Ireland is 24,300 and ratio 1 in 80.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 51,900.
- Greater Manchester enter Tier 3 restrictions.
- ONS estimates there to be 35,200 daily COVID cases in England, an increase of 25% on the previous week, with the highest number in northern England.
- Wales introduces a circuit breaker from 23rd October to 8th November.
- Scotland announced 'levels' approach to restrictions, introduced on 2nd November.

24th October

- £75 million given to iconic arts venues and culture organisations through the Culture Recovery Fund (Globe Theatre, Birmingham Hippodrome, the Old Vic Theatre and National Ballet among 35 to receive help).
- South Yorkshire enters Tier 3.

25th October

- Reports that 14 day quarantine for those in contact with someone that has tested positive will be reduced. (Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis to Sky's Sophy Ridge).
- The Canary Islands, Mykonos, the Maldives and Denmark are added to the list of travel corridor countries. Liechtenstein removed.

26th October

- Boots announces it will make available a COVID test that can give a result in 12 minutes and costs £120. Made by LumiraDx.
- Coventry, Slough, Stoke-on-Trent added to Tier 2 restrictions.
- Oxford University vaccine reports a strong immune response among elderly.

27th October

- Study by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI suggests COVID-19 antibodies may last a matter of months, numbers indicate the number of people with antibodies has fallen by 26.5% over three months.
- Warrington added to Tier 3 restrictions.
- UK records record 367 COVID deaths, highest number in a single day since May.

28th October

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (22nd October - 28th October)
 - ❑ 139,780 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 84.6% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 329,556 contacts given, 60.3% reached (198,806).
 - ❑ 75.3% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 40.7% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.

29th OctoberSAGE 64

- **Whilst mitigations are applied in hospitals and care homes, these are less likely to be effective when prevalence is high.** Keeping community infections low is the most effective way of preventing spread in these settings. Attention also needs to be paid to infection control in these settings.

- The **winter festive season presents a significant transmission risk** due to potential indoor gatherings of people in larger groups from multiple households for prolonged periods, often with poor ventilation. These types of gatherings have many of the features associated with superspreader events and will often involve multiple generations.
- To reduce the inevitable risk from social mixing during the festive period, a substantial reduction in prevalence is required ahead of any changes to behaviours or interventions. Measures to achieve this would need to be put in place as soon as possible.
- Imperial College London study says that existing measures to control the virus aren't working.
- NHS contract tracing app to stop sending 'false alarms' after update.
- Estimates that 33,000 Britons have had their cancer treatments postponed due to COVID-19. Up to 50,000 have cancer but have not been diagnosed because of pandemic.
- Researchers model the spread of a novel SARS-CoV-2 variant across Europe in summer showing the impact the lifting of travel restrictions and holidays may have had.

30th October

- The R number range for the UK is 1.1-1.3 and the growth rate range is +2% to +4%.
- 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme drove new COVID-19 infections up by between 8 and 17%, new research finds.
- Nottinghamshire added to Tier 3.

31st October ANNOUNCEMENT OF SECOND NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

- Downing Street News Conference 105 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (25th October - 31st October)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 618,700 and ratio 1 in 90. Wales is 27,100 and ratio 1 in 110. Northern Ireland is 24,900 and ratio 1 in 75.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 45,700.
- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey ANTIBODIES (November)**
 - ❑ In England, an estimated 6.9% of people would have tested positive for antibodies against COVID-19 on a blood test in November, suggesting they had the infection in the past.
 - ❑ Variation across England. London estimated 10.8% and South West 3.1%.
 - ❑ In Wales an estimated 4.1%, Northern Ireland 2.1% and Scotland 7.1%.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces a second lockdown for England to come into effect on 5th November and to last four weeks.
- Furlough scheme, scheduled to end on 31st October, is extended until December following the announcement of the England-wide lockdown.
- ONS figures show that GDP rose by 0.4% during October 2020, but was 7.9% below February 2020 levels.
- The UK reaches over 1,000,000 COVID-19 cases.

1st November

- Mortgage payment holidays for people impacted by the COVID crisis are extended, having been scheduled to expire on 31 October.
- Cyprus and Lithuania are removed from the list of travel corridors.

2nd November

- Boris Johnson says self-employed workers will be able to claim government support worth 80% of trading profits as England prepares to enter a new lockdown.
- UK study of 100 people who have tested positive for COVID-19 shows they still have T cells six months after infection.
- Nigel Farage applies to change the Brexit Party name to Reform UK and says it will fight the government's 'woeful' response to COVID-19 and its lockdown strategy.
- Oxford University-based Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine suggests slides estimating the number of COVID deaths in the Downing Street press conference on 31 October are based on models from at least three weeks before.
- Derbyshire, Staffordshire, East Midlands, Luton, Lincolnshire, Oxford, Telford & Wrekin added to Tier 2.
- Levels of restrictions come into force in Scotland.

3rd November

- The entire population of Liverpool will be offered regular tests under a pilot scheme using the armed forces.

4th November

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (29th October - 4th November)
 - ❑ 141,804 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 86.2% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 315,484 contacts given, 60.5% reached (190,993).
 - ❑ 75.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 46.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.

SAGE 65

- **Opening and closing of schools will have an impact.**
- **Children and younger people (<18 years) are much less susceptible to severe clinical disease than adults** (high confidence). There is some evidence from contact tracing studies that pre-school and primary aged children are less susceptible to infection than adults (low-medium confidence) however the evidence is more mixed for secondary aged children.
- **Significant educational, developmental and mental health harms from schools being closed**, particularly for younger children, and vulnerable children where learning at home is likely to reinforce inequalities (see SAGE 46 & 62).
- ONS analysis suggests that **children aged 12-16 played a significantly higher role in introducing infection into households** (medium confidence). The **difference is less marked for younger children** (medium confidence). The relative **rate of external exposure** (i.e. bringing infection into the household) for **children aged 2-16 was found to be higher than for adults. For those aged 12-16 there was a marked increase in the period after schools opened.**

- MPs vote 516-39 to support the four-week lockdown restrictions for England that come into force from the following day, with 34 Conservatives MPs among those to vote against the measures, while a further 19 abstain from voting.
- Hospitals receive a letter from NHS England announcing return to the highest level of emergency preparedness – Incident Level 4, for the first time since 4th March.

5th November - SECOND NATIONAL LOCKDOWN STARTS

- Downing Street News Conference 106 (Boris Johnson and Simon Stevens).
- First day of four week national lockdown for England.

SAGE 66

- ➔ Lockdown: there is consensus that the epidemic continues to grow in England. If well-adhered to, the lockdown measures starting in England on 5th November are likely to reduce R to less than 1 though it will take two to three weeks to be able to assess the impact.
- ➔ There is evidence that the introduction of the local COVID alert levels (tiering) has helped reduce contacts, though the effect is modest. Initial analysis shows a **greater effect from tier 3 interventions than from tiers 1 or 2.**
- ➔ **Care homes:** need to balance the recognised benefits to care home residents in terms of health and wellbeing from visits with the risk of introduction of infection. **Evidence shows that isolation has a strongly negative impact on the quality of life for residents.**
- ➔ **Ventilation encouraged indoors during festive period.**
- ➔ Document produced for SAGE 66 warns that returning to a tiered system of coronavirus restrictions will cause infections to rise to the levels which prompted England to enter its second lockdown.
- Bank of England unleashes another round of quantitative easing worth £150bn. Total QE now at £895bn (£450bn of this since March. Remainder since 2008 financial crisis).
- Rishi Sunak extends furlough scheme until the end of March 2021.
- IPSOS poll shows that in October 79% of the UK population would get a COVID-19 vaccine if it became available, down from 85% in August.
- Research Professional News reports that the UK missed the September target for 30 million doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid vaccine.

6th November

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (31st October - 6th November)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 654,000 and ratio 1 in 85. Wales is 35,300 and ratio 1 in 85. Scotland is 39,700 and ratio 1 in 135. Northern Ireland is 17,800 and ratio 1 in 105.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 47,700.
- The R number range for the UK is 1.1-1.3 and the growth rate range is +2% to +4%.
- ONS reports COVID infection rate in England and Wales appears to be slowing down.
- Mutant strain of COVID-19 found in Denmark's mink population.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson admits data wrong during 31 October 2020 Downing Street briefing after graph predicting 1,500 daily COVID deaths by 8 December is revised down to 1,010 but "underlying analysis" of threat to NHS is correct. (VIDEO from 2:00).

7th November

- Queen Elizabeth II wears a face mask in public for the first time, during a visit to Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
- Latest round of Culture Recovery Fund money is awarded. £14 million to 162 heritage organisations, including St Paul's Cathedral, which is given £2.1 million.
- Germany and Sweden removed from the travel corridor list. The national lockdown restrictions also mean it is no longer permitted to travel for holidays, with those in breach of the rules facing penalties from £200 to £6,400.
- Travel ban implemented to protect public health following Denmark COVID-19 mink outbreak.

8th November

- Scaled back Remembrance Sunday services take place, including Whitehall which is closed to the public.
- Wales firebreak circuit breaker ends.

9th November

- Downing Street News Conference 107 (Boris Johnson, Jonathan Van-Tam and Joe Fossey).
- Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine found to be 90% effective in 'great day for science and humanity'.

10th November

- ONS reports COVID-related deaths have exceeded 1,000 for the first time since June.
- Matt Hancock announces NHS vaccine roll out plans and Sir John Bell (Oxford University) tells MPs there is a 70-80% chance of the UK returning to normality by Easter 2021.
- Rebel Tory MPs that voted against 2nd lockdown launch anti-lockdown campaign group 'The Covid Recovery Group'.
- Ofsted report that children hardest hit by COVID-19 nursery and school closures are regressing in basic skills like using a knife and fork.

11th November

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (5th November - 11th November)**
 - ❑ 156,853 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 86.5% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 314,888 contacts given, 60.8% reached (191,327).
 - ❑ 77.7% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided
 - ❑ 45.3% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- The number of people who have died with coronavirus in the UK passes 50,000, government figures show. A further 595 deaths are announced, bringing the country's total to 50,365.
- Mass testing and 'student travel corridor' of December 3rd-9th announced for students to get home for Christmas.

12th November

- Downing Street News Conference 108 (Alok Sharma and Stephen Powis).

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- ➔ **Human to mink transmission:** There is a need for greater surveillance of animal populations and research into how SARS-CoV-2 mutations could affect humans. The risk is highest in intensively reared animals susceptible to SARS-CoV-2.
- ➔ **Tiers:** important to consider a range of restrictions that are more stringent than those in the current baseline package of measures in tier 3 for potential use in some areas where tier 3 measures are not able to reduce prevalence
- ➔ Evidence shows that the earlier and more rapidly interventions are put in place, and the more stringent they are, the faster the reduction in incidence and prevalence, and the less likelihood for the need for further national measures. **Test and trace systems also work best at low levels of prevalence.**
- ➔ **Wales "firebreak":** initial findings suggest some waning of effectiveness and a return to growth within 3-4 weeks of the interventions being brought in. This may be due to several reasons including **"pandemic fatigue"** in the population, **confusion** where there are competing messages or where the rules are too complex, or **uncertainty** around how long measures will last.
- ➔ **Self-isolation:** A shorter isolation period might be preferable if it results in more people coming forward for testing and/or improves adherence to self-isolation, as well as perceived and actual negative consequences.
- ONS says the UK economy grew by a record 15.5% in the third quarter but remains 8.2% smaller than before the pandemic.
- BioNTech (vaccine producer) founder tells Sky News that the UK can expect to return to normal life by the middle of 2021.
- NIHR and UKRI launch a new funding call for research into the effects of 'long COVID'.
- BBC reports emails that the Health and Safety Executive was pressured by UK government to declare PPE suits bought in April as safe despite them not having been properly tested.
- Travel ban on Denmark is extended by 14 days.

13th November

- The R number range for the UK is 1.0-1.2 and the growth rate range is +1% to +3%.
- Government scientific advisors warn children more likely to be infected in second wave.

14th November

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (8th November - 14th November)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 664,700 and ratio 1 in 80. Wales is 18,400 and ratio 1 in 165. Scotland is 33,800 and ratio 1 in 155. Northern Ireland is 13,600 and ratio 1 in 135.
 - ❑ Estimated daily infections in England is 38,900.
- The Labour Party urges the government to introduce emergency legislation to curb anti-vaccine content online.
- Greggs announces loss of 820 jobs due to Covid-19 slump in business.

- All of Greece apart from Corfu, Crete, Rhodes, Zakynthos and Kos removed from the list of travel corridors. UAE, Qatar, Turks and Caicos Island, Laos, Iceland, Cambodia, Chile, and Bahrain added to the list of travel corridors.

15th November

- The Prime Minister reported to be self-isolating.
- Professor John Edmunds, SAGE member, calls for a long term strategy to balance epidemic and economy.

16th November

- Downing Street News Conference 109 (Matt Hancock, Susan Hopkins and Jonathan Van-Tam).

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- ➔ ***On duration of isolation and impact of testing for contacts.***
- ➔ *Modelling indicates that an effective way of reducing transmission is to speed up the tracing of contacts, whatever the duration of consequent quarantine or testing (high confidence).*
- ➔ *Shorter period of quarantine (currently 14 days) might be more effective in reducing transmission if it results in more people coming forward for testing/improves adherence to quarantine. **Modelling suggests a 7 or 10 day quarantine with a rapid antigen or PCR test on the final day may prevent a comparable amount of onwards transmission.***
- ➔ ***Overall SAGE is supportive of piloting regular testing to avoid quarantine and assesses that this could provide a similar effect to the current 14 day isolation system.***
- Prime Minister, six Conservative MPs and two political aides in self-isolation after coming into contact with Lee Anderson MP, who later tested positive.
- UK secures deal for 5m doses of Moderna vaccine that is announced to have 94.5% effective.
- Technical glitch in NHS Covid-19 app prevents number of iPhone users from being to launch it.

17th November

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson tested negative for Covid-19 after going into self-isolation.
- Police stop issuing Covid-19 "super fines" in England and Wales.
- Spanish businessman paid \$28 million in 'lucrative' PPE deal.
- Cardiff University find mouthwash can destroy Covid-19 under lab conditions within 30 seconds.

18th November

- ❑ ***NHS Test and Trace Data (12th November - 18th November)***
 - ❑ *156,573 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.*
 - ❑ *86.5% were reached and asked to provide contacts.*
 - ❑ *348,674 contacts given, 60.5% reached (211,116).*
 - ❑ *76.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided*
 - ❑ *43.5% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.*

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson participates in PMQs virtually.
- SAGE produces 'notes on festive period' saying the relaxation of coronavirus restrictions over Christmas will increase infections 'potentially by a large amount'.
- Hospitality bosses demand the Government force landlords to waive at least half the rent owed during operators' enforced closure.
- Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine announced as 95% effective and submitted for authorisation 'within days'.
- The National Audit Office found PPE suppliers with political connections were 10 times more likely to be awarded contracts during the COVID crisis.

19th November

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- Evidence shows that the earlier and more rapidly interventions are put in place, and the more stringent they are, the faster the observed reduction in incidence and prevalence.
- **Within one month of natural infection, a high proportion of people will develop immunity** which is likely to be protective against disease caused by reinfection (high confidence). This protection is likely to persist for at least three months (moderate confidence). The level of protection against subclinical reinfection (as opposed to disease) and transmission is uncertain (LATER REPORTED HERE)
- Targeted, more frequent testing of people who are at higher risk of being infected (such as key workers, health and social care workers, and people in high prevalence areas) is likely to have a larger impact than less frequent testing of the whole population.
- **Mass testing alone will not reduce transmission.**
- Relaxation of interventions over the festive period presents a significant risk of increased transmission and increased prevalence, potentially by a large amount (high confidence). Parallels can be drawn (though the scale is different) between the return of students in autumn and people from different households mixing intensively over the festive season (LATER REPORTED HERE WHEN SAGE PAPER IS PUBLISHED ON 27 NOV)
- **Reinfection** upon re-exposure to SARS-CoV-2 does occur but seems rare. Most reported reinfections are mild, but some are severe.
- **With an effective vaccine, a high proportion of people develop immunity which is protective against disease 28 days after the first dose.** The duration of protection is yet unknown. The level of protection against subclinical reinfection is uncertain.

SAGE paper 'Autumn Nations Intervention Report'

- The epidemic shrunk in every local area subject to national restrictions in Northern Ireland and most authorities subject to Tier 3 interventions in England.
- All other interventions were followed by a more mixed picture. The general trend is for a reduction in growth rates, some local epidemics continued growing in weeks following intervention.
- Clear that the early benefits of interventions do not always endure.
- Through the autumn in England waited until after prevalence has increased to impose measures just about able to slow or stop epidemic growth. The outcome was high prevalence in many places and the need for four weeks of national restrictions. **For the future a more logical procedure might be to introduce measures** (such as Tier 2) that can be hoped to retard the growth everywhere and maintain low prevalence. As soon as rising prevalence is

detected, measures should escalate to interventions that are associated with negative growth rates (such as Tier 3).

- Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine reported to show strong immune response in those in their 60s and 70s.
- The UK government announces £300 million of emergency funding for sports impacted by the absence of spectators.
- Fashion retailers Peacocks and Jaeger go into administration after their owners. Edinburgh Woollen Mill Group fail to find a buyer.

20th November

- Downing Street News Conference 110 (Matt Hancock, Stephen Powis and Jonathan Van-Tam).
- The R number range for the UK is 1.0-1.1 and the growth rate range is 0% to +2% per day.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces COVID-19 vaccination centres are to be established throughout the UK in preparation for vaccine rollout.
- ONS data shows that the number of infections in England has "levelled off".
- Northern Ireland extends national restrictions for two weeks.

21st November

- **ONS Infection Survey (15th November - 21st November)**
 - Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 633,000 and ratio 1 in 85. Wales is 16,400 and ratio 1 in 185. Scotland is 45,700 and ratio 1 in 115. Northern Ireland is 12,700 and ratio 1 in 145.
- Downing Street confirms plans for tougher three tier system for when lockdown ends.
- Israel, Jerusalem, Namibia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, the Northern Mariana Islands and the US Virgin Islands added to the list of travel corridors for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

23rd November

- Downing Street News Conference 111 (Boris Johnson, Andrew Pollard and Chris Whitty).
- Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine trial indicates to be 70% effective but scientists believe that figure can rise by 90% by tweaking dosage.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces 'tougher' post-lockdown tier system.
- Sky reports that Hull has the most infections (568.6 per 100,000).

24th November

- The leaders of the UK's four nations agree on plans for Christmas that will allow three households to meet up indoors and outdoors for five days from 23-27 December.
- Three-household bubbles and travel restrictions lifted under Christmas rules.
- Imperial REACT Survey for 13th to 24th November shows coronavirus infections are declining in England. 1 in 100 people infected, or 0.96% of the population, roughly a 30% drop in the number of infections compared to previous finding, where more than 1 in 80 or 1.3% of people had the virus as of 2nd November.

25th November

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (19th November - 25th November)
 - ❑ 116,328 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 86.7% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 247,361 contacts given, 72.7% reached (179,835).
 - ❑ 88.4% of non-complex contacts within 24 hours of details provided
 - ❑ 61.3% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Eat Out to Help Out costs £849m, more than the £500m originally planned for GOV.UK.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak outlines the Spending Review for how much will be spent on public services, and warns that the "economic emergency" caused by COVID has only just begun. The Review comes as the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that unemployment will reach 7.5% because of the crisis. The UK economy is also predicted to shrink by 11.3%, the biggest decline in 300 years, while debt is forecast to be at its highest outside wartime.
- 696 COVID deaths announced, highest daily figure since 5th May 2020.
- The UK spent an extra £10bn on PPE at inflated prices at the start of the pandemic because it had an "inadequate" stockpile, a report has found.
- Reserves of personal protective equipment for frontline workers were intended for a flu-style pandemic and did not include some items necessary to protect against COVID-19, meaning ministers had to scramble to buy up stocks as prices ballooned, the National Audit Office (NAO) report said.
- A "continuing logjam" of the supply of PPE to the UK's hospitals has been called a "national scandal" amid reports a storage mountain of the safety items is costing the taxpayer £1m a day.
- Masks, aprons and gloves destined for the NHS to help protect staff from COVID-19 have been sitting in thousands of containers at the Port of Felixstowe in Suffolk.

26th November

- Downing Street News Conference 112 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
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- ➔ *R for both the UK and England is 0.9 to 1.0, while the daily growth rate for new infections is -2 to +1% in England and -2 to 0% for the UK.*
 - ➔ *CO-CIN analysis shows a reduction in hospital mortality rates for patients with COVID-19 in the UK over the course of the first wave. Factors for reduction may include: case-mix of patients; reduction in caseload allowing a higher staff to patient ratio; changes to hospital practice (particularly non-invasive ventilation) and drug trials.*
 - ➔ *The average risk of transmission correlates with the closeness of social interactions: the average per-contact risk is lowest for community exposures, intermediate for social and extended family contacts, and highest in the household.*
 - ➔ *Avoiding social contacts for a period greater than the typical SARS-CoV-2 incubation period (which is around 5 days) before meeting older or vulnerable people at Christmas will reduce the risk to them. A longer period (e.g. a week or more) would reduce the risk further.*
 - ➔ *Repeated rounds of testing for population case detection would have more impact than a single round. The benefit of later rounds is smaller than for the first round, particularly if the same people are more likely to come forward for testing in each round.*

- *If used appropriately, lateral flow testing may reduce the risk associated with certain activities but will not eliminate it. It should not be seen as a way on its own of enabling high-risk activities to resume but could reduce the risk of open activities.*
- England's new tier system is announced. Most of the country will be in tier 2, with large parts of the midlands, north east and north west in tier 3.
 - Questions raised over the efficiency of the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, since a preliminary report combined results from two trials which used different doses.
 - National Audit Office announces an investigation into government procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - By 31 July 2020, over 8,600 contracts related to government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic had been awarded, with a value of £18.0 billion. New contracts accounted for 94% of the contracts awarded by number, with extensions and amendments to existing contracts accounting for the remainder. Contracts ranged in value from less than £100 to £410 million. By **31 July 2020**, more than £14.6 billion had been spent on these contracts.
 - Procurement activity related to the pandemic built up steadily in March and April, peaking in May when 2,518 contracts were awarded, representing 29% of all the contracts awarded up to **31 July 2020**.
 - The Cabinet Office awarded a £3.2 million contract through a framework agreement to Deloitte to support the cross-government PPE team's procurement of PPE on **21 July 2020**, with the contract effective from **14 March 2020**.
 - **On 5 June 2020**, the Cabinet Office awarded a retrospective contract for a maximum £840,000 to Public First to cover work already carried out from **3 March 2020** onwards and to cover the value of potential future work. Public First invoiced for £550,000 in total for work covered by the contract. We found a lack of documentation recording the process for choosing the supplier, the justification for using emergency procurement, or any considerations around potential conflicts of interest.
 - The Cabinet Office awarded a contract to Topham Guerin with an initial maximum value of £1.5 million for publicity campaign coordination services on **7 May 2020**, with the contract effective from **17 March 2020**. This contract was a direct award and we did not find evidence of documented requirements prior to the work beginning.
 - Of the 1,644 contracts awarded across government up to the end of July 2020 with a contract value above £25,000 (excluding contracts for PPE awarded through existing frameworks), 55% have not had their details published on Contracts Finder by **10 November 2020** and 25% were published within the 90-day target. Of these contracts that were new direct awards (1,301), 4% were published within 30 days of awarding the contract and 19% within 90 days.

27th November

- *The R number range for the UK is 0.9-1.0 and the growth rate range is -2% to 0%.*
- Retail group Arcadia is reported to be on the brink of collapse, threatening 13,00 jobs. Group stated that COVID had "a material impact on trading across our business." Goes into administration three days later.
- The UK government formally ask the MHRA to evaluate the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine for authorisation.

- ONS data shows 3,040 related deaths in the week ending 27th November in England and Wales, the highest percentage of total deaths recorded since the week ending 15th May.

28th November

❏ **ONS Infection Survey (22nd November - 28th November)**

- ❏ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 521,300 and ratio 1 in 105. Wales is 18,100 and ratio 1 in 170. Scotland is 40,900 and ratio 1 in 130. Northern Ireland is 9,500 and ratio 1 in 190.
- ❏ Estimated daily infections in England is 25,700.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson wrote to rebel MPs offering them a 'sunset' of 3rd February for the expiration of the strict tier system.
- Nadhim Zahawi is appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Coronavirus Vaccine Deployment.
- Estonia and Latvia removed from the UK's travel corridor list. Pacific Islands, Bhutan, Timor-Leste, Mongolia and Aruba added to the list.
- Travel ban on Denmark is lifted but the country stays off the government's travel corridor list, meaning passengers coming into the UK will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

29th November

- The UK Government signs a deal for a further 2 million doses of the Moderna vaccine, bringing total numbers secured to 7 million.

30th November

- Downing Street News Conference 113 (Matt Hancock, Stephen Powis and Gordon Messenger).

❏ **ONS Infection Survey ANTIBODIES (November)**

- ❏ In England, an estimated 8.7% of people would have tested positive for antibodies against COVID-19 on a blood test in November, suggesting they had the infection in the past.
- ❏ Variation across England. London estimated 12.8% and South West 3.9%.
- ❏ In Wales an estimated 5.5%, Northern Ireland 3.3% and Scotland 7.3%.
- The UK Government releases data behind the decision to put a new three tier system in place, in a bid to gain backbench support in Parliament.

1st December

- MPs vote 291-78 in favour of introducing England's tough new COVID tier system, with 55 backbench Conservatives voting against the government, while another 16 abstain.
- Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove says there are no plans to introduce a "vaccine passport" giving people access to places such as pubs and restaurants once a vaccine becomes available.

2nd December – SECOND NATIONAL LOCKDOWN ENDS

Downing Street News Conference 114 (Boris Johnson, Jonathan Van-Tam and Simon Stevens).

- ❑ ***NHS Test and Trace Data (26th November - 2nd December):***
 - ❑ 91,578 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 87.3% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 197,280 contacts given, 85.9% reached (169,450)
 - ❑ 95.2% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 72.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- England's national lockdown ends and Boris Johnson introduces new tougher tiers.
- The UK becomes the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, with vaccinations to begin once the supplies arrive the following week.
- The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation publishes advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccinations.

3rd DecemberSAGE 71

- The epidemic is shrinking in most NHS England regions including the North West of England, Midlands, and North East and Yorkshire where the R estimates are below 1. London and the South East have upper bound R estimates above 1 (both at 1.1).
- Considering the impact of the festive period on transmission of SARS-CoV-2, modelling suggests there could be changes in the age distribution of infections over the festive period, specifically a slight shift towards a higher proportion of cases in older and more vulnerable age groups, which could lead to an increase in hospitalisations.
- ***It is likely that mixing between households over the holiday period for one or two days would be less risky than multiple households spending the entire time together (high confidence).*** Exclusivity of bubbles is also an important factor in limiting the additional risk (high confidence).
- Some modelling suggests there may be benefits if everyone were to take a single lateral flow test before a multi-day gathering inside a home, though the impact is sensitive to the assumptions made including around test sensitivity and adherence to isolation.
- Considered a paper on the number of infections potentially resulting from returning travellers under different quarantine and testing strategies. Under the scenarios outlined in the paper, ***there are potentially higher counts of infections resulting from returning travellers for a daily lateral flow testing approach as compared to the 5-day and 14-day quarantine options.***

- Dr Anthony Fauci, the leading infectious disease expert in the United States, criticises the UK's approval process for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, suggesting that it has not been as rigorous as that of the US. In defence the UK says the vaccination is safe and effective. Fauci later retracts his statement and apologises for the comments.
- Gavin Williamson boasts vaccine approval speed proves UK 'much better country' than others.
- Boris Johnson warns of 'immense logistical challenges' in distributing vaccines. This is due to the -70c degree storage required for the Pfizer vaccine.
- Gavin Williamson promises that summer exams will not be scrapped.
- Student travel window opens until 9th December, allowing students to return home for Christmas.
- Major retailers to return £1.8bn in COVID-19 business rates relief.
- Imperial REACT Survey for 13th November - 3rd December shows the rate of new coronavirus infections in England is no longer on a downward trend and has flattened. 1 in 110 infected, or 0.94% of the population.

4th December

- The R number range for the UK is 0.8-1.0 and the growth rate range is -3% to -1%.
- Business Secretary Alok Sharma refuses to confirm that the UK will get 10 million doses of the Pfizer vaccination by the end of the year. Month previously Downing Street said the UK should get 10 million by the end of the year.

5th December

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (29th November - 5th December)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 481,500 and ratio 1 in 115. Wales is 25,600 and ratio 1 in 120. Scotland is 43,300 and ratio 1 in 120. Northern Ireland is 7,800 and ratio 1 in 235.
 - ❑ ONS Infection Survey for the week ending 5th December indicates COVID cases in England are continuing to fall, apart from in London and East of England.
- Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer is reported to be self-isolating after a member of his staff tested positive for COVID.
- The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge announce a three day UK tour aboard the Royal train during which they will meet community and health workers who have played an important role during the COVID crisis.
- Limited exemptions announced for travel to and from the UK:
 - Individuals undertaking specific business activity which would deliver a significant benefit to the UK economy are no longer required to self-isolate when travelling or returning from non-exempt countries.
 - Also includes arts professionals, TV production staff, journalists, and recently signed elite sportspersons.
- Christ Whitty writes to healthcare colleagues and says COVID-19 will keep hospitals under continued strain in the coming months as new vaccines will only have a "marginal impact" on patient numbers of winter.

6th December

- The Department of Health and Social Care confirms that the UK's vaccination program will begin on Tuesday 8 December.
- NHS Chief hails 'beginning of the end' of the virus as vaccine begins arriving at hospitals.
- Poll by King's College London and Ipsos Mori finds that the majority of the British public does not trust the government to manage the coronavirus pandemic.
- Public Health England figures show that London had the highest average infection rate in the country, 191.8 per 100,000 people (30th November - 6th December).

7th December

- The UK Government says it expects the "majority" of vulnerable people to receive the vaccine in January and February 2021.
- B&Q owner Kingfisher says it plans to return up to £130m of business rates relief to the UK and Irish Governments. Sky reports total returned relief has totalled £2bn.

8th December

- Margaret Keenan, 90, becomes the first person to receive the Pfizer Covid-19 as the rollout of vaccinations begins. William Shakespeare, 81 from Warwickshire becomes the second.
- Research published in The Lancet has concluded the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID vaccine is safe and effective, giving good protection. The majority of those involved in the research were under-55, there is evidence it will protect older people too.
- UK Vaccine Taskforce (VTF) End of Year report published:
 - Struck agreements to access seven different vaccines across four different formats, with a total of 357 million doses of different vaccines.
 - Oxford/AstraZeneca (100m), Pfizer/BioNTech (40m), Janssen (30m with an option for further 22m), Novavax (60m), Moderna (7m), GSK/Sanofi (60m), Valneva (60m + 40m option; plus options for a further 4 years) and AstraZeneca antibodies (TBC).
 - The UK made up to £548 million available to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access facility (COVAX).
 - Funded and expanded the UK's ability to produce vaccines at three sites: VMIC (Harwell), CGTC Braintree and Valneva (Livingston).
 - To prepare for future pandemics the group created the NHS Citizen Registry to accelerate future clinical trials. Over 360,000 people have already signed up.
- ONS figures show a total of 3,040 registered deaths in England and Wales for the week ending 27th November with COVID-19 mentioned on the death certificate. This is the highest weekly number of deaths involving coronavirus since the week ending 15th May.

9th December

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (3rd December - 9th December):**
 - ❑ 96,631 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 88% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 195,734 contacts given, 92.7% reached (181,526)
 - ❑ 97.3% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 76.4% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.

- Regulators urge any with a history of allergies not to take the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID vaccine for the time being after two NHS workers vaccinated the previous day had allergic reactions.
- The COVID-19 Genomics UK Consortium (COG-UK) publish a paper stating that the origins of many of the second wave of Covid infections in Scotland can be traced to countries outside the UK.

10th December

- Downing Street News Conference 115 (Matt Hancock, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).

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- Expired PPE stock found to be covered over with new dates – while one box was full of insects, MPs told.
 - MPs are told that some stock had been rebranded with new use-by date stickers that gave a different date to the one underneath.
- Matt Hancock announces that mass testing will be rolled out for secondary school children in coronavirus hotspots across London, Essex and Kent.
- Matt Hancock announces that those told to isolate by the COVID-19 app can claim the £500 Test and Trace Support payment through the app due to an update.

11th December

- The R number range for the UK is 0.9-1.0 and the growth rate range is -2% to 0%.
- A study in Nature, a peer reviewed science journal, identifies DNA and a shortfall of interferon as contributing factors in asymptomatic COVID.

12th December

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (6th December - 12th December)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 567,300 and ratio 1 in 95. Wales is 33,400 and ratio 1 in 90. Scotland is 52,500 and ratio 1 in 100. Northern Ireland is 8,500 and ratio 1 in 215.
- Botswana and Saudi Arabia added to the list of travel corridors. Canary Islands removed from the list of travel corridors.

13th December

- Leader of Royal Borough of Greenwich writes to headteachers asking them to close due to “exponential growth” of the virus. Gavin Williamson uses legal powers the next day to keep them open.

14th December

- Downing Street News Conference 116 (Matt Hancock, Chris Whitty and Kevin Fenton).
- Gavin Williamson uses legal powers to force schools in Royal Borough of Greenwich to remain open.

- Matt Hancock announces to Parliament that London will be in Tier 3 from 16th December. As well as South Essex and South Hertfordshire.
- A 'new variant' of coronavirus has been identified in the South of England.
 - As of the 13th December, 1,108 cases of the new strain are identified.
- The period of self-isolation for contacts of someone testing positive for COVID-19, and travellers returning from non-travel corridor countries, is reduced from 14 to 10 days, effective Monday 14 December.

15th December

- Figures show that there were 819,000 fewer people on company payrolls at the end of November when compared to March and the start of the first lockdown, with a third of jobs lost being in the hospitality sector.
- Representatives from the four nations meet to discuss relaxation of regulations over Christmas.
- The Test to Release scheme begins in England. Allows travellers to pay privately for a COVID test five days after arrival, and end their quarantine period if they receive a negative test.
- The Health Service Journal and British Medical Journal describe the decision to relax COVID regulations over Christmas as a "rash decision" that could "cost many lives".
- An article in the BMJ outlines logistical problems that are frustrating GPs reading to deliver the COVID-19 vaccines in England. This lead the cancelling of book appointments.

16th December

- Downing Street News Conference 117 (Boris Johnson and Chris Whitty).
- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (10th December - 16th December):**
 - ❑ 139,332 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 89.1% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 287,852 contacts given, 92.6% reached (266,668)
 - ❑ 97.5% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 77.2% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- London, and parts of Essex and Hertfordshire, are placed into tier three. PM's speech.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that COVID regulations will still be relaxed for five days over the Christmas period, but urges people to think before meeting up with relatives.
 - The three household rule will stay in place, except in Wales where the law is to be changed to specify only two households can meet.
 - in Scotland people will be urged to meet up on only one of the five days.
- 108,000 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in England in the last seven days and 137,897 in the UK.

17th December

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- ***A new variant of SARS-CoV-2 has been identified in the South-East of England.*** There are indications that this variant may be spreading more quickly than others by the extent of any increase in transmissibility is not yet known.
- Latest R estimates have R in UK at 1.1 to 1.2, England at 1.1 to 1.3. Scotland and Northern Ireland are both 0.9 to 1.1 and Wales is 1.0 to 1.3.
- ***Concerned that case rates are continuing to rise in areas that have been Tier 3 since the relaxation of national measures. Additional intervention may need to be considered.***
- ***Nosocomial (originating from hospital) infection has increased steadily over October and November, a significant concern.***
- Risk that changes in behaviour will offset the benefits of vaccination, particularly in the early months of vaccine rollout. Mitigating actions for any decline in adherence to rules related to roll-out should be included.
- ***Significant risk that vaccine uptake for COVID-19 will be lower among minority ethnic groups,*** mainly related to trust in vaccine safety and efficacy.
- Evidence is consistent that transmission occurs amongst children when schools are open (high confidence). Data sources indicate that half-term led to a reduction in transmission in children and that transmission rates picked up again in many places when schools reopened following half term (medium confidence).
- Analysis of ONS to 2nd December still indicates a higher role of those aged 12-16 in introducing infection into households than those 17 and over (medium confidence).
- Data shows no evidence of difference in the rates of teachers/education workers testing positive for COVID-19 compared to key workers and other professions (medium confidence).
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak extends the furlough scheme for a further month until the end of April 2021.
- Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood apologises after breaching COVID regulations by giving a speech at a dinner in London where 27 people were present.

18th December

- R number estimated above 1, between 1.1 and 1.2.
- ***ONS Infection Survey (12th December - 18th December)***
 - *Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 645,800 and ratio 1 in 85. Wales is 52,200 and ratio 1 in 60. Scotland is 37,100 and ratio 1 in 140. Northern Ireland is 10,100 and ratio 1 in 180.*
- NERVTAG states that the coronavirus mutation (VUI-202012/01 or B.1.1.7) has a growth rate 71% higher than other variants and brings an absolute increase in the R-value between 0.39 and 0.93. Moderate confidence that the variant demonstrates a substantial increase in transmissibility compared to other variants.
 - Insufficient data to draw conclusions on severity of new variant.
- ONS figures show that UK retail sales fell by 3.8% during November due to lockdown restrictions.

19th December

- Downing Street News Conference 118 (Boris Johnson, Patrick Vallance and Chris Whitty).
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that London, South East and East of England are to go into new Tier 4 restrictions from the following day. The rules are mostly the same as the national restrictions in November, with non-essential retail, hairdressers and gyms closing.
- Pictures of long queues in London stations and sold out trains as people try to leave before midnight.
- In England, plans for Christmas bubbles are scrapped completely in Tier 4, while in the rest of England Christmas bubbles are limited to meeting up on Christmas Day.
- The Scottish Government announces national restrictions and bans travel between Scotland and the rest of the UK.
- The Welsh Government announces national restrictions.
- Uruguay, Namibia and US Virgin Islands removed from list of UK travel corridors.
- The total number of COVID-19 cases across the UK exceeds 2 million.
- The COVID-19 Genomics UK Consortium (CoG-UK) paper traces the new coronavirus variant as far back as September.
- Researcher Tony Cox of the Milton Keynes Lighthouse Lab tweets graph of the rise of the new covid variant going back as far as September.

20th December

- ❑ ***Vaccine Weekly Update (8th December - 20th December)***
 - ❑ Usually weekly numbers.
 - ❑ 669,674 first doses given by December 20th.
- London, South East and East of England enter Tier 4 restrictions.
- Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada and Belgium halt flights to and from the UK following the emergence of the new variant. France halts ferries for 48 hours, and the Port of Dover is closed.
- 35,928 new cases of COVID are reported, almost double the number recorded on the same day the previous week.
- The UK Government stated that the new variant first came to light in late November when PHE was investigating why infection rates in Kent were not falling despite national restrictions.

21st December

- Downing Street News Conference 119 (Boris Johnson, Patrick Vallance and Grant Shapps).
- NERVTAG presents three new estimations of R value for new variant (VUI-202012/01 or B.1.1.7). University of Edinburgh estimates R to be 1.57 or 1.72 depending on the time window used for analysis. Imperial College London indicates it grows 71% faster every 6.5 days than other variants. LSHTM calculated it to be 56% more transmissible. NERVTAG high confidence that the new variant can spread faster than other coronavirus variants.
- More than 40 countries suspend flights to and from the UK.
- Talks begin between UK and French officials over reopening freight transport links.
- Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK's chief scientific adviser, suggests that more areas of England will need to go into tier four restrictions to combat the new variant of COVID-19.

- Reports that a rising number of hospital admissions have potentially caught the virus in hospitals.

22nd December

❑ **ONS Infection Survey (16th December - 22nd December)**

- ❑ *Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in Northern Ireland is 7,900 and ratio 1 in 230.*

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- ➔ *R estimates continue to increase and are clearly above 1 in London, the Midlands, the South East and the East of England. The latest estimate of R for the UK is 1.1 - 1.3. For England it is 1.1 - 1.4, for Scotland 0.9 - 1.1, for Wales 1.0 - 1.3, and for Northern Ireland 0.8 - 1.1.*
- ➔ *There is high confidence that the new variant is spreading faster than other SARS-CoV-2 virus variants currently circulating in the UK. The cause of the faster spread is unclear, but evidence is consistent with an increase in transmissibility being a factor. This includes some evidence of lower Ct values in those infected with this variant, which is consistent with some increase in viral load (though there are possible confounding factors). There is also some evidence that the variant is more likely to transmit within households.*
- ➔ *Whilst it is theoretically possible that the mutations might alter immune recognition, this is currently considered low probability on the available evidence.*
- ➔ *Existing mitigation measures (e.g. social distancing, ventilation, hand hygiene and mask usage) remain important, but given the increase in risk associated with the new variant, a commensurate strengthening in the measures taken (rather than a need for different measures) may be needed (i.e. greater use of all these mitigations).*
- ➔ ***It is highly unlikely that measures with stringency and adherence in line with the measures in England in November (i.e. with schools open) would be sufficient to maintain R below 1 in the presence of the new variant.*** *R would be lower with schools closed, with closure of secondary schools likely to have a greater effect than closure of primary schools. The potential for the new variant to increase transmission associated with the return of universities in the new year also needs to be considered.*
- ➔ ***A variant in South Africa has some similar and some different mutations. It is spreading rapidly and has mutations that raise theoretical concerns in terms of immune recognition.***
- *The UK and France reach an agreement to reopen their border the following day. Freight drivers and EU citizens will be among people allowed to travel between the two countries, subject to a recent negative COVID test.*
- *Scientists have said the new variant of COVID was spotted in the UK because of the surveillance system in place, but that it may or may not originate outside the UK.*
- *Ugur Sahin, chief executive of BioNTech, says the vaccine developed by his firm in conjunction with Pfizer will work against the new strain.*
- *Figures show London and east of England lag behind the rest of the nation in vaccinations.*

23rd December

- *Downing Street News Conference 120 (Matt Hancock, Jenny Harries and Susan Hopkins).*
- *The UK R number is between 1.1 and 1.3, with a growth rate between 1% and 6%.*

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (17th December - 23rd December):

- ❑ 211,914 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ❑ 86.8% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ❑ 407,738 contacts given, 92.6% reached (377,655)
- ❑ 97.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ❑ 78.5% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.

❑ **ONS Infection Survey** (17th December - 23rd December)

- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 800,900 and ratio 1 in 70. Wales is 58,000 and ratio 1 in 50. Scotland is 36,100 and ratio 1 in 145.
- Scientists detect two cases of a second new strain of COVID-19, that is believed to originate from South Africa.
- Matt Hancock announced that a number of areas will move up tiers on Boxing Day, including more areas in the east and south east of England being placed in Tier 4.
 - Added to Tier 4: Sussex, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire, with the exception of the New Forest, and the parts of Essex and Surrey not already in the toughest restrictions.
 - Added to Tier 3: Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset, including the North Somerset council area, Swindon, the Isle of Wight, the New Forest and Northamptonshire as well as Cheshire and Warrington.
 - Added to Tier 2: Cornwall and Herefordshire.
- Former Prime Minister Tony Blair urges the government to give people a single dose of COVID vaccine rather than preserving stocks for a second jab.

24th December

- Researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have suggested schools and universities may need to remain closed after Christmas to help control the spread of the new variant of COVID, as well as tougher restrictions.
- House of Commons recalled to debate the European Union (Future Relationship) Bill on 30th December.
- Travel ban from South Africa comes into force at 9am. The ban excludes UK and Irish nationals arriving in the UK.

25th December

- Queen Elizabeth II delivers her Christmas Message, telling people struggling without friends and family on Christmas Day that they "are not alone".
- The United States becomes the latest country to impose travel restrictions on the UK because of the new strain of COVID: any passengers going to the US must produce a negative COVID test before being allowed to travel.

26th December

- The tougher COVID Tiers announced on 23rd December are introduced to parts of England. Six million more people living in Tier 4. Tier 4 measures for mainland Scotland and Wales. Lockdown in Northern Ireland.

- In the first trial of its kind held by University College London Hospitals, ten people who have been in close contact with a person testing positive for COVID-19 have been given antibodies as a form of emergency protection.

27th December

- The B117 strain of COVID, the presence of which was first detected in the UK, has now been identified in a number of other countries, including Australia.
- A surgeon warns that life-saving care for non-coronavirus patients is under threat due to hospital strain.

❑ **Vaccine Weekly Update UK** (21st December - 27th December)

- ❑ 328,769 first doses given.
- ❑ 1,001,985 first doses given since 8th December.

28th December

- A further 41,385 COVID cases are recorded in the UK, while officials express concern for the pressure on the health service in England, where 20,426 people are being treated in hospital for the virus.
- More than 200 British tourists have fled the Swiss ski resort of Verbier after Switzerland imposed a retrospective ten day quarantine backdated to 14 December because of the B117 strain of COVID.

29th December

- A further 53,135 new COVID-19 cases are confirmed, the largest daily number so far as the figures catch up with data that went unreported over Christmas.
- Figures show that Hospitals in England have more patients than during the peak of the first wave.
- Margaret Keenan, who was the first person in the UK to receive a dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, returns to hospital for her follow-up injection.
- Sir Simon Stevens says NHS staff are anxious, frustrated and tired as the service comes under extreme pressure, with hospital admissions top the first peak.

30th December

- Downing Street News Conference 121 (Boris Johnson, Jonathan Van-Tam and Stephen Powis).

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (24th December - 30th December):

- ❑ 269,887 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ❑ 86% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ❑ 493,706 contacts given, 92.4% reached (455,989)
- ❑ 96.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ❑ 70.8% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- The UK regulator (MHRA) is the first in the world to approve the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, meaning it is the second vaccine to enter the national rollout.

- Tier four measures are extended to more parts of England from midnight, with the Midlands, North East, parts of the North West and South West joining London and the South East in the toughest restrictions.
- The 2021 New Year Honours are published, recognising several hundred people for their work during the COVID crisis.
- House of Commons agrees a motion to allow participation in debate proceedings in the chamber virtually, previously MPs attending virtually and voting via proxy could not contribute to chamber debates.
 - MPs had been allowed to participate in proceedings on Questions, Urgent Questions and Statements virtually, after motions passed on June 2nd and 4th were continually extended.
- Gavin Williamson announces a delay for secondary school pupils to return to allow for COVID testing preparations.
 - Exam year students planned to return on 11th January.
 - All other years to return on 18th January

31st December

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey ANTIBODIES (December)**
 - ❑ In England, an estimated 1 in 8 people would have tested positive for antibodies against COVID-19 on a blood test in December, suggesting they had the infection in the past.
 - ❑ In Wales an estimated 1 in 10, Northern Ireland 1 in 13 and Scotland 1 in 11
- ❑ Figures show the highest weekly total of positive tests recorded since Test and Trace began for the week to 23rd December.
- ❑ Further 55,892 cases are confirmed, the largest daily number so far.
- ❑ Imperial College London (and others) study finds that the new variant (B.1.1.7 / South East strain) has a transmission advantage of 0.4 to 0.7 in R number compared to the previously observed strain.
- University College Hospital warns it is classing itself as a COVID-only facility, such is the level of demand
- Nightingale hospitals are being 'readied' for use as COVID patient numbers rise.

1st January 2021

- Muted New Year's celebrations across the UK due to COVID restrictions.
- The UK government announces that from Monday 4th January, London Primary Schools will be required to provide remote learning to all children but vulnerable or critical worker children can continue to attend school.

2nd January

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (27th December - 2nd January 2021)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 1,122,000 and ratio 1 in 50. Wales is 44,100 and ratio 1 in 70. Scotland is 45,900 and ratio 1 in 115. Northern Ireland is 9,100 and ratio 1 in 200.

- A further 57,725 COVID cases are recorded for the UK, the largest daily number so far.
- Batches of the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID vaccine begin to arrive at hospitals throughout the UK in preparation to begin on Monday 4th January.
- Pfizer says there are no shortages of coronavirus vaccine in the UK.
- Leaked email shows that three intensive care units in London were "full" on New Year's Eve.

3rd January

- ❑ **Vaccine Weekly Update UK (28th December - 3rd January 2021)**
 - ❑ 373,432 first doses given.
 - ❑ 1,375,417 first doses given since 8th December.
 - ❑ 21,834 second doses given.
 - ❑ 21,834 second doses given since 8th December.
- Data from the COVID Symptom Study suggests that COVID cases increased by a third in the UK and reached 70,000 cases a day between 26th December and 3rd January.
- NHS announces that hundreds of new vaccination sites are due to be launched next week ready for the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine.
- Ofsted chief states education "cannot be furloughed", as most primary schools were set to reopen on Monday, followed by a staggered start for secondary schools a week later. Lockdown announced the next day, closing schools with exceptions for vulnerable and children of key workers.

4th January - THIRD NATIONAL LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCED

- In an address to the nation, Boris Johnson announced the 3rd national lockdown in England.
 - Sky News explainer on rules across each nation here.
- The UK Chief Medical Officers jointly recommend that the UK COVID-19 alert level moves from level 4 to level 5.
- Some primary schools in England return, with some in hotspots such as 22 London Boroughs remaining closed.
- SNP MP Margaret Ferrier is arrested by Scottish police and charged in connection with "alleged culpable and reckless conduct" for using public transport whilst experiencing COVID symptoms.
- Brian Pinker becomes the first person to receive the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID vaccine as vaccinations using the vaccine begin in the UK.

5th January

- Downing Street News Conference 122 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
- 60,916 new COVID cases are confirmed, the largest daily number so far.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces business in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will receive up to £9,000 in one-off grants to help them through latest COVID restrictions.
- Chris Whitty warns some coronavirus restrictions could return next winter; chief medical officer warns.
- Gavin Williamson announces that A-level and GCSE exams will be scrapped in the summer of 2021, as schools are shut due to the lockdown.

6th January

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data** (31st December - 6th January):
 - ❑ 388,257 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 87.9% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 737,127 contacts given, 92.7% reached (683,420)
 - ❑ 97.3% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 67.7% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- 62,322 new COVID-19 cases are confirmed, the largest daily number so far.
- Reported that fraudsters are sending out fake text messages about the COVID-19 pandemic in an attempt to get people's bank details.

7th January

- Downing Street News Conference 123 (Boris Johnson, Simon Stevens and Phil Prosser).

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- ➔ The numbers of cases, hospital admissions and deaths have increased to high levels of the country.
- ➔ **The B.1.1.7 strain is now the dominant strain in London, South East England and East of England.**
- ➔ **Mortality reductions from vaccination will not begin to be seen before the end of January at the very earliest, and more likely it will be later in February.** The pressures on the NHS will take longer to reverse.
- ➔ Vaccines take 2-3 weeks to induce an immune response, and there are further lags between infections, hospitalisations and deaths.
- ➔ This is because on average, the age of those being hospitalised and entering ICU is lower than the age of those who die, so many of the people going into hospital and ICU are not in the groups which will be vaccinated first, though they are still largely from groups within the JCVI phase 1 priority list.
- ➔ The impact of vaccination on the overall epidemic is critically dependent upon uptake, and upon how effective vaccines are in reducing transmission as well as severe disease.
- ➔ **There are theoretical and experimental data supporting the possibility that SARS-CoV-2 variants may arise which are less susceptible to pre-existing or vaccine-induced immunity. (NERVTAG to release a report)**
- ➔ The E484K mutation is of concern as it has been associated with evasion of neutralisation by monoclonal antibodies. This mutation is present in the B.1.351 variant which has been identified in South Africa.
- ➔ The unquantifiable but likely small probability of the delayed second dose generating a vaccine escape mutant must be weighed against the measurable benefits of doubling the speed of vaccine-induced protection to the most vulnerable. These benefits are particularly significant when prevalence is high.
- ➔ **Community infection levels and hospital admissions continue to be a key driver of nosocomial transmission.** There is significant variation in levels of nosocomial transmission across hospital trusts, and whilst some of this relates to factors which cannot readily be

changed (e.g. building design), some trusts have been successful in reducing transmission. Sharing the lessons from successful trusts will be important.

- NHS trials of two-inflammatory drugs, tocilizumab and sarilumab, indicate they cut the number of COVID deaths by a quarter.
- Clap for Carers relaunches under the name Clap for Heroes and is met with a quieter response than its previous run in Spring 2020; founder Annemarie Plas distanced herself from it after receiving online abuse.
- National Express announces the suspension of its entire coach fleet from midnight on 10th January.
- The UK Government announces that road haulage drivers crossing the English Channel will continue to need negative COVID test results until further notice.
- University Russell Group makes a statement that, unlike exams in 2020, they see no need for a 'no-detriment' policy for this year's university exams.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that the armed forces are to help with the rollout of COVID vaccines, while 1,000 GP surgeries will be able to administer "hundreds of thousands" of vaccines per day by 15th January.
- The GP Surgery visited by Matt Hancock today, to mark the expanded roll out of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, has its delivery of the vaccine delayed by 24 hours.
- Matt Hancock tells the Health and Social Care Select Committee that the decision to impose a third lockdown was announced on 4th January, despite hospital patients exceeding the first wave in the week before, due to data such as the number of people coming for a test over Christmas being lower, "the data was less clear. What happened was that, as the data came through in the post-Christmas period, it became extremely clear."

8th January

- The UK R number is between 1 and 1.4, with a growth rate between 0% and 6%.
- The Moderna vaccine becomes the third COVID vaccine to be given approval for use in the UK.
- Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, declares a "major incident" in London, where he says COVID is "out of control".
- The UK records its largest number of daily COVID-related deaths so far, with 1,325 new deaths, bringing the total to 79,833.
- An England-wide advertising campaign launches on television, fronted by Chris Whitty, urging people to stay at home and act as though they have COVID.

9th January

- A further 1,035 COVID-related deaths take the total past 80,000 to 80,868.
- People travelling from the UK to the Republic of Ireland must from today produce a negative COVID test before being allowed to enter the country.
- With the exception of British and Irish nationals, travellers from or who have travelled through Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana, Mauritius and Seychelles, are banned from entering England because of the South Africa COVID strain.
- Israel and Jerusalem removed from the travel corridor list.
- Buckingham Palace confirms the Queen and Prince Phillip have received COVID vaccinations.
- Reported by Pulse that The Hacking Trust, a property investment company, had approached staff at GP surgeries offering to pay £5,000 for unused COVID vaccines.

10th January

- ❑ ***Vaccine Weekly Update UK (4th January- 10th January)***
 - ❑ 1,080,642 first doses given.
 - ❑ 2,456,059 first doses given since 8th December.
 - ❑ 398,062 second doses given.
 - ❑ 419,896 second doses given since 8th December.
- Professor Peter Horby, chair of the government's New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group told the Andrew Marr Show "we are now in the eye of the storm" and "it was bad in March, it's much worse now".
- Priti Patel defends the way police have handled lockdown breaches, and says they "will not hesitate" to enforce the rules.

11th January

- Downing Street News Conference 124 (Matt Hancock and Stephen Powis).
- Seven mass vaccinations centres open in the UK.
- Boris Johnson warns of a "perilous moment" in the pandemic with "the shortage of oxygen in some places", and calls for "maximum observance of the rules". *Speaks as 40% of over 80s vaccinated.*
- Southend Hospital says its oxygen supply has reached a "critical situation" due to the influx of Covid patients.
- Sir Simon Stevens tells the Public Accounts Committee that "in many parts of the country, it [coronavirus] is spreading out of control".
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock states that the government is on target for everyone in the top four vulnerable groups to be offered a vaccine by 15th February, while every adult in the UK will be offered one by autumn.
- Boris Johnson criticised after travelling seven miles to go cycling in the Olympic Park.
- House of Commons returns from Christmas recess.

12th January

- Downing Street News Conference 125 (Priti Patel, Martin Hewitt and Vin Dewakar).
- UK police forces say they will take more robust action against those who break coronavirus regulations.
- Data shows the pandemic has caused excess deaths to rise to their highest levels in the UK since World War II.
- Home Secretary Priti Patel says a minority of people are "putting the health of the nation at risk".
- Tesco, Asda and Waitrose become the latest supermarkets to announce a clampdown on shoppers not wearing masks in stores.
- The United Arab Emirates are removed from the list of travel corridors.
- Dr Vin Diwakar, NHS England, tells the Downing Street press conference that the Nightingale hospital in London is now being used to treat non-Covid patients.
- The Speaker of the House of Commons announces that virtual participation in select committee will continue until 30th April.

13th January

- ❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (7th January - 13th January):**
 - ❑ 351,555 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
 - ❑ 87.6% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
 - ❑ 613,842 contacts given, 92.9% reached (570,149)
 - ❑ 98% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
 - ❑ 72.2% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- Scotland announces a tightening of lockdown rules, with guidance for click and collect and takeaway services changed.
- The World Health Organization says it is concerned about the spread of new coronavirus variants.
- Public Health England confirms that there has been more deaths in the second wave of the pandemic than the first.
- Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, says he has pleaded with the government to enforce stricter measures in the virus-stricken capital.
- Boris Johnson, appearing before the Liaison Committee, says the government is "taking steps" to ensure the Brazilian variant does not reach the UK.
 - At the same committee hearing, the prime minister says it is "too early" to say whether schools will reopen after the February half-term break.
- House of Commons vote to temporarily suspend Friday sittings and Westminster Hall sittings.

14th January

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- **Numbers of cases, hospital and ICU admissions, and deaths remain high nationally. There remains significant pressure on the NHS.** There are indications that new infections may have started to decline in those areas which have been in Tier 4 for the longest (London, East & South East of England).
- The continued growth in new infections in the North West and South West of England is a concern and means that there will continue to be increases in hospital and ICU admissions and deaths in these areas for several weeks.
- **Vaccines are not 100% effective, and there will not be 100% coverage. The relaxation of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) could lead to a further epidemic wave if it is not done cautiously.**
- The risk associated with a further wave is reduced if there is high vaccine coverage, particularly amongst the most vulnerable groups, and if community prevalence and hospital occupancy are reduced to low levels before relaxation happens. Any changes should be gradual and carefully monitored.
- **New variants which have emerged in South Africa and Brazil have been associated with rapid growth in cases, which could be due to increases in transmissibility, antigenic escape, or both.**
- The impact of staggering the return of students to higher education establishments suggests that this approach is likely to have limited effect - modelling indicates that asymptomatic testing and isolation would have some impact

- Numbers of cases, hospital and ICU admissions, and deaths remain high nationally. There remains **significant pressure on the NHS**.
- There are indications that **new infections may have started to decline in those areas which have been in Tier 4 for the longest** (London, East & South East of England), which indicates that it is likely that R can be brought below 1 even in the presence of the B.1.1.7 variant
- In the **South West, there is a particular risk around care homes** which were not as badly affected in the first wave and so where there may be lower levels of immunity than in care homes elsewhere. Vaccine rollout to care homes is continuing to be prioritised.
- Multiple studies indicate that **South Asians (particularly people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds) have had higher hospital admissions and mortality rates** than those in the White majority group during the second wave. Although children of all ethnicities remain at low risk of severe disease, analysis from QResearch indicates that South Asian children are more likely to be admitted to intensive care than others.
- UK announces ban on travel from most of South America and Portugal from 04:00 GMT on Friday in response to concerns over the new variant.
- Medics say the pandemic is having a "calamitous impact" on other NHS treatment as new NHS figures are released.
- More than 92 million registered Covid cases and almost two million deaths now recorded across the world, according to Johns Hopkins University.
- France announces a new evening curfew from 18:00 in response to high infection rates.

15th January

- Downing Street News Conference 126 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
 - Professor Chris Whitty says deaths will continue to rise into the next week with more Covid patients in hospitals than ever before.
- The R rate in the UK is between 1.2 and 1.3, with a growth rate between 2% and 5%.
- UK announces plan to close all travel corridors amid growing fears over new strains of Covid.
- Chile, Madeira and the Azores removed from the travel corridor list.
- Travel ban put in place from South and Central American destinations, Portugal, Panama and Cape Verde.
- Anyone arriving in the UK must show a negative test and have to quarantine for 10 days.
- Leading scientist says one of two coronavirus variants first detected in Brazil has been found in the UK - but not the most concerning one.
- Hospitals in the Brazilian city of Manaus reach breaking point, with widespread reports of oxygen shortages and desperate staff.

Sky coverage

- ☆ Special report: Missing from education

16th January

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (10th January- 16th January)**
 - ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 1,023,700 and ratio 1 in 55. Wales is 44,000 and ratio 1 in 70. Scotland is 52,200 and ratio 1 in 100. Northern Ireland is 29,400 and ratio 1 in 60.

- Doctors' groups call for protection from prosecution over Covid treatment decisions made under the pressure of the pandemic.
- Aruba, Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, and Qatar are removed from the travel corridor list.

17th January

- ❑ **Vaccine Weekly Update UK** (11th January- 17th January)
 - ❑ 1,817,669 first doses given.
 - ❑ 4,273,728 first doses given since 8th December.
 - ❑ 50,019 second doses given.
 - ❑ 469,915 second doses given since 8th December.
- Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab tells Sophy Ridge that he hopes lockdown measures can begin to be eased "hopefully by March".
 - He adds that people "ought to be" offered their second dose within 12 weeks of their first, the recommended timeline.
- Sophy Ridge reports exclusive figures from the Social Mobility Foundation:
 - Half of students from disadvantaged backgrounds believe they won't get the grades they deserve after this year's examinations were scrapped.
 - 73% said they are worried about being able to study enough in lockdown with school closed.

18th January

- Downing Street News Conference 127 (Matt Hancock, Susan Hopkins and Simon Stevens).
 - Matt Hancock, in the Downing Street press conference, says: 4,062,501 people have received the first dose of vaccine with more than half of UK care home residents having had their first jab.
- Boris Johnson hails the vaccine news as a "significant milestone".
- Over-70s and those classed as "clinically vulnerable" begin to be offered vaccinations in England.
- The UK suspends all travel corridors: arrivals in England from anywhere outside the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man need to self-isolate for 10 days.
- The Vaccines Minister says the aim to offer the vaccine to all adults in the UK by September is "achievable", as he confirms 24/7 pilot in London before the end of January.
- Ten new large vaccination centres open as the government seeks to ramp up the rate of delivery.
- Baroness Dido Harding tells the Commons Public Accounts Committee that close to 1,000 people per minute are being tested through the Test and Trace programme.
- World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus accuses richer countries of vaccine hoarding, saying the world is on the verge of a "catastrophic moral failure".

19th January

- A further 1,610 people died within 28 days of testing positive for Covid-19 – the highest number of UK deaths reported on a single day since the outbreak began.
- ONS figures show one in 10 people in the UK had antibodies against the virus by December.

- [Matt Hancock to self-isolate after receiving an alert through the NHS Covid app](#)
- [In an interview on LBC, Metropolitan Police commissioner Dame Cressida Dick says people should call the police on their neighbours if they repeatedly flout lockdown rules.](#)
- [Criminal justice watchdogs for England and Wales warn they have "grave concerns" about the impact of court backlogs caused by the pandemic.](#)
- [Dr Jenny Harries, one of England's deputy chief medical officers, says school reopening in England is likely to be staggered on a regional basis.](#)
- [Scotland extends its Covid-19 lockdown extended until at least the middle of February.](#)

20th January

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (14th January - 20th January):**

- ❑ 275,353 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ❑ 86.9% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ❑ 471,509 contacts given, 93.2% reached (439,461)
- ❑ 97.9% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ❑ 73.6% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- [The highest daily death toll so far is reported in the UK with 1,820 people dying within 28 days of testing positive for Covid-19.](#)
- [The UK will look "very carefully" at the protection provided by the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine; Sir Patrick Vallance told Sky News. This followed analysis from the vaccine roll out in Israel in which a study suggested the effectiveness of the vaccine after a single dose was as low as 33%, rather than the 89% initially thought.](#)
- [A leaked recording reveals Home Secretary Priti Patel telling a group of party supporters that she argued in favour of closing the country's borders last March.](#)
- [Boris Johnson tells PMOs that the NHS is under "unprecedented pressure" as he dismisses pressure to begin an immediate inquiry into the pandemic response, but adds: "Of course we will learn lessons in due course".](#)

21st January

- [Downing Street News Conference 128](#) (Priti Patel, Martin Hewitt and Vin Dewakar)

SAGE 77

- ➔ *R in the UK and in England is between 0.8 and 1.0. Estimates of R for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are between 0.8 and 1.1, 0.7 and 0.9, and 0.7 and 1.1 respectively.*
- ➔ *Hospital admissions are now declining in those areas which entered Tier 4 earliest (London, East & South East of England). Occupancy in these regions has begun to level out, but at very high levels. Across most of the rest of the country the rate of admissions is still increasing but has slowed. ICU admissions and deaths lag hospital admissions and are still rising across the country.*
- ➔ ***New analyses are consistent in indicating some increase in disease severity in people infected with B.1.1.7 when compared to other variants.*** *There are several limitations in the datasets used, but there is a realistic possibility that infection with B.1.1.7 is associated with a small increase in absolute risk of death compared to wild-type variants.*
- ➔ *There remains significant uncertainty about the size of any effect on disease severity or mortality. As with other variants, for most people, infection with this variant results in mild*

disease, and the risk of death for each infection remains low. Analyses of CO-CIN data do not indicate increased hospital case fatality rates.

- **Measures to reduce importations are most important when domestic prevalence (either overall or of a particular variant of concern) is low and when importation could lead to $R > 1$.**
- Reactive, geographically targeted travel bans cannot be relied upon to stop importation of new variants, due to the lag between the emergence and identification of variants of concern, as well as the potential for indirect travel via a third country (moderate confidence, moderate evidence).
- Measures such as monitored quarantine (e.g. at airport hotels) for international travellers could reduce risks associated with non-adherence. Hotel quarantine would also reduce the risk of onwards transmission within households.
- **No intervention, other than a complete, pre-emptive closure of borders, or the mandatory quarantine of all visitors upon arrival in designated facilities, irrespective of testing history, can get close to fully preventing the importation of cases or new variants (moderate confidence, moderate evidence).**
- All strategies are highly dependent on the level of adherence to quarantine, self-isolation, and testing protocols. Adherence is not binary, and different types of non-adherence will vary in terms of risk.
- SPI-M has set out a range of scenarios, which are not forecasts or predictions, showing different possible trajectories (for R values between 0.8 and 1.2) over the next six weeks. Even in the more optimistic of these cases, hospital occupancy by mid-February will remain at high levels.
- There is a need for standardisation of measurement of antigenic changes, including of the assays and doses used. The ability to reliably measure and interpret antigenic changes will be important when considering potential vaccine updates.

NERVTAG document on B.1.1.7 severity (released 22nd January)

- The variant B.1.1.7 appears to have substantially increased transmissibility compared to other variants and has grown quickly to become the dominant variant in much of the UK.
- Initial assessment by PHE of disease severity reported no significant difference in the risk of hospitalisation or death in people infected with confirmed B.1.1.7.
- **However new analyses are consistent in reporting increased disease severity in people infected with B.1.1.7.**
 - ◆ LSHTM: reported a relative hazard of death within 28 days of test for B.1.1.7 infected individuals and non-B.1.1.7 individuals as 1.35
 - ◆ Imperial College London: mean ratio of CFR for B.1.1.7 infected individuals compared to non was 1.36 by a case-control weighting method, 1.29 by a standardised CFR method.
 - ◆ University of Exeter: mortality ratio for B.1.1.7 infected individuals compared to non-B.1.1.7 was 1.91.
- An updated PHE matched cohort analysis has reported a death risk ratio for B.1.1.7 infected individuals compared to non-B.1.1.7 of 1.65
- There are several limitations to these data sets including representativeness of death data, power, potential biases in case ascertainment and transmission setting.
- **Based on these analyses, there is a realistic possibility that infection with VOC B.1.1.7 is associated with an increased risk of death compared to infection with non-VOC viruses.**

- *It should be noted that the absolute risk of death per infection remains low.*
- *An analysis of CO-CIN data has not identified an increased risk of death in hospitalized B.1.1.7 cases. However, increased severity may not necessarily be reflected by increased in-hospital death risk.*
- *Since the time lag from infection to hospitalization and death is relatively long, data will accrue in coming weeks, at which time the analyses will become more definitive.*
- Lockdown restrictions in Northern Ireland are extended until 5th March.
- Newly-inaugurated President Joe Biden signs 10 executive orders in an attempt to tackle the severe outbreak in the US.
- Scientists at Imperial College London release new findings suggesting infection levels in the community may have risen at the start of the latest lockdown.
- Education Secretary Gavin Williamson tells Sky News that schools will get a two-week notice period before they reopen.
- Matt Hancock says the UK is giving 200 vaccinations every minute, adding that more than five million doses of the vaccine have been administered to 4.6 million people.
- The online system for booking COVID vaccine appointments has been criticised after claims ineligible people have been using it to “que-jump” and receive the jab.
- Home Secretary Priti Patel calls queue-jumpers “morally reprehensible”.
- She also announces a £800 fine for anyone attending a house party of more than 15 people.
- Independent SAGE member Christina Pagel reacts to the Downing Street Press Conference on LBC by saying: “It just made me so angry because they’ve been doing this for weeks and weeks as if people just aren’t obeying the rules. That’s not what’s happening. The rules are just much laxer this time than in March: we’ve got loads more people going to work, we’ve got more kids in school, we’ve got more shops allowed to be open. If they don’t want people to go out and transmit the virus then change the rules and stop blaming people.”
- Glastonbury Festival is cancelled for the second year running.

Sky coverage

- ☆ Special report: The miracle of the pandemic baby

22nd January

- Downing Street News Conference 129 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance).
 - Boris Johnson: It “appears there is some evidence” that the new variant “may be associated with a higher degree of mortality”.
 - Sky coverage here.
- Sharp drop in UK’s R number, estimated between 0.8 and 1, growth rate between -4% and -1%.
- The government considers offering £500 one-off payments to anyone who tests positive for COVID in a bid to improve self-isolation rates.
- Conservative MP Brendan Clarke-Smith, 40, defends accepting offer of ‘leftover’ vaccine.
- The Department of Health says one in three women invited to a cervical screening over the past year have not attended because of Covid fears.
- The CEO of the British Beer and Pub Association tells Sky News that pubs will not survive without more support if forced to close until May.

23rd January

❑ **ONS Infection Survey (17th December - 23rd January)**

- ❑ Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 1,018,700 and ratio 1 in 55. Wales is 43,600 and ratio 1 in 70. Scotland is 48,500 and ratio 1 in 110. Northern Ireland is 36,800 and ratio 1 in 50.
- Medical leaders call on the government to review the gap between the first and second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, currently set at 12 weeks.
- Pictures emerge of crowded queues at Heathrow Airport, sparking "super spreading" concerns.
- Paul Davies, Conservative leader in the Welsh Parliament, quits after being seen drinking with colleagues in the Senedd during a pub alcohol ban.
- AstraZeneca warns of vaccine supply disruption to the European Union due to a production problem.
- The Times report on Saxonbury House surgery's effort in organising vaccines for an extra 1,170 extra patients after an extra box of the Pfizer vaccine was delivered.

24th January

- Sky News sees evidence that vulnerable inpatients in hospitals that are eligible for Covid jabs are not being vaccinated in at least three hospitals.
- ❑ **Vaccine Weekly Update UK (18th January- 24th January)**
 - ❑ 2,532,381 first doses given.
 - ❑ 6,806,109 first doses given since 8th December.
 - ❑ 9,127 second doses given.
 - ❑ 479,042 second doses given since 8th December.
- More than 4,000 coronavirus patients are on a ventilator - a new record.
- Matt Hancock, in political show interviews, says:
 - There is a "long, long, long way" before coronavirus cases are low enough for lockdown to be lifted.
 - The UK has identified 77 cases of the coronavirus variant first detected in South Africa and that they are associated with travellers entering the country
 - He is unsure whether schools would reopen by Easter.
 - 75% of all people aged 80 and over have now had their first coronavirus jab.

Sky coverage

- ☆ Special report: The harrowing reality of a coronavirus ward

25th January

- Downing Street News Conference 130 (Matt Hancock, Jenny Harries and Susan Hopkins).
 - The health secretary reveals that there are 37,899 COVID patients in UK hospitals, including 4,076 on ventilators - the largest number on ventilators than ever before in the pandemic.
 - 78.7% of over 80s have been vaccinated. The limiting factor of vaccines remains supply. 1 in 9 of the adult population has been vaccinated. On track to vaccinate everyone in the top four groups by 15th February.
 - New variant, B.1.1.7, spreading 30-70% more quickly.

- A Downing Street source is forced to clarify comments made by Boris Johnson that lockdown measures could be eased by mid-February.
- UK records the lowest daily rise in coronavirus cases so far in 2021.
- The vaccine programme continues to expand with 32 new centres across England.
- Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer announces he is self-isolating again after coming into contact with someone who later tested positive for coronavirus.

26th January - 100,000 DEATHS PASSED (INITIALLY REPORTED)

- Downing Street News Conference 131 (Boris Johnson, Chris Whitty and Simon Stevens).
 - Sky News analysis after the conference.
- The UK government reports that more than 100,000 people have now died with coronavirus, 25,000 deaths in the past three weeks.
- 100,000,000 cases recorded worldwide, according to John Hopkins University.
- Asked whether late lockdowns, the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, Christmas relaxation of restrictions and not enforcing more stringent border measures contributed to infection rate, Senior Tory backbencher Tobias Ellwood replies: "Looking back, you have to say yes to all of that."
- Jobless rate hits 5% as unemployment rises by 202,000 in three months.
- UK access to Pfizer jab threatened as EU imposes new controls on COVID vaccine exports.
- Home Secretary Priti Patel, answering an urgent question on COVID-19 border protection in the Commons, says existing measures are "robustly enforced" but all "under review"; also reveals 2,300 fixed penalty fines have been issued to rule-breakers so far with 22,000 cases referred to police.
- Simon Stevens, the head of NHS England, offers wide-ranging testimony to the Health and Science Select Committee:
 - Reveals the number of people in hospital has "plateaued" at just under 33,000, saying the numbers are "stretching the system in an extreme way".
 - States that "about a quarter" of current hospital admissions are for patients under the age of 55.
 - Says he is particularly worried about patients who need cancer surgery
 - Speaks of the "huge pressure on anaesthetists at the moment" which has an impact on the ability to carry on non-COVID treatment.
 - Confirms the health service is collecting data on the ethnicity of people taking up the COVID vaccine.
 - Says there is a vaccine "supply shortage" and that the UK has "done very well to get the supply we have available".
 - Claims it is "possible" that COVID will become a "much more treatable disease" over the next six to 18 months.

27th January

- Downing Street News Conference 132 (Boris Johnson, Patrick Vallance and Jonathan Van-Tam).
 - PM: "The problem is not schools are unsafe ... the problem is that by definition schools bring many households together and that contributes to the spread of the virus within the community and drives up the R."
 - PM announces an extension in free school meal support and a further £300 million in catch up services for tutoring.

❑ **NHS Test and Trace Data (21st January - 27th January):**

- ❑ 198,874 people who tested positive for COVID-19 were contacted.
- ❑ 86.4% were reached and asked to provide contacts.
- ❑ 358,959 contacts given, 93.6% reached (335,845)
- ❑ 98% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of details provided.
- ❑ 73.2% of non-complex contacts reached within 24 hours of the original case being transferred to test and trace.
- The UK's six-figure coronavirus death toll dominates almost every newspaper cover.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirms that schools will not reopen after the February half-term. States that the government hopes to reopen schools from Monday 8th March.
 - He confirms he will outline a 'roadmap' out of lockdown on 22nd February if there are no new variants and the vaccine rollout continues apace.
- Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick tells Sky News the government "took the right decisions at the right time" and that there is "no textbook" for dealing with a pandemic
- Sky News reports that Conservative MP Sir Desmond Swayne urged anti-vaxxers to 'persist' with their campaign and cast doubt on intensive care capacity figures
- A bomb disposal unit is dispatched to Wrexham Industrial Estate, where AstraZeneca vaccines are produced and stored.
- The PM says that travellers returning to the UK from 'red list' countries must quarantine hotels for 10 days.

28th January

- Trials of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine demonstrate 89.3% efficacy against the virus; the jab is also the first to show in trials that it is effective against the new UK strain - Boris Johnson says the UK medicines regulator will now assess whether to sign off on its use
- Michael Gove tells Sky News that Sir Desmond Swayne should apologise and retract his comments that NHS capacity figures were being "manipulated".
- Imperial College's REACT study shows that lockdown is beginning to slow the spread of the virus, but not in all areas. Rates are highest in London, where 2.83% of people, one in every 35, had the virus.
- Nicola Sturgeon criticises Boris Johnson's trip to Scotland to promote the value of the United Kingdom working together against COVID-19, deeming it non-essential
- Amid an escalating row with AstraZeneca, a senior EU official suggests coronavirus vaccines produced in the UK should be shared with the bloc.

29th January

- The UK's R number is between 0.7 and 1.1. Latest growth rate between -5% and 0%.
- Wales extends its national lockdown for another three weeks, but First Minister Mark Drakeford says primary school children could return after half-term if infection rates continue to fall
- Johnson & Johnson says its one-dose COVID-19 vaccine is 66% effective, rising to 85% efficacy against the most serious symptoms of the virus
- Professor Chris Whitty hails the Novavax vaccine development, saying: "A highly effective vaccine to add to the medical countermeasures against COVID-19 trialled in the UK. If it gets MHRA approval this increases our future resilience, including against the B.1.1.7 variant."

- [*ONS figures suggest that BAME communities are less likely to take a coronavirus vaccine.*](#)
- [*The EU authorises use of AstraZeneca COVID vaccine and the European Commission introduces measures to tighten rules on the exports of vaccines produced in the 27 EU countries.*](#)
 - [*The EU had earlier introduced controls to the export of COVID-19 vaccines from the bloc to Northern Ireland. However, this decision is reversed hours later.*](#)

30th January

- ❑ **ONS Infection Survey (24th December - 30th January)**
 - ❑ [*Estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 during the period in England is 846,900 and ratio 1 in 65. Wales is 42,700 and ratio 1 in 70. Scotland is 46,100 and ratio 1 in 115. Northern Ireland is 28,700 and ratio 1 in 65.*](#)
- [*598,389 first doses of a coronavirus vaccine are given in one day, the highest daily total so far.*](#)
- [*Michael Gove says the EU "recognise they made a mistake" to move to block vaccine exports.*](#)

31st January - A YEAR ON FROM THE FIRST CONFIRMED CASE IN THE UK

- [*According to the UK Government, between 1st January 2020 and 31st January 2021, **106,158** people died due to COVID-19 and **3,817,176** people tested positive for COVID-19.*](#)
- ❑ **Vaccine Weekly Update UK (25th January- 31st January)**
 - ❑ [*2,518,455 first doses given.*](#)
 - ❑ [*9,324,564 first doses given since 8th December.*](#)
 - ❑ [*12,702 second doses given.*](#)
 - ❑ [*491,744 second doses given since 8th December.*](#)
- [*Today is exactly a year on from the first confirmed case of coronavirus in the UK.*](#)
- [*Captain Sir Tom Moore is reported to be in hospital with coronavirus.*](#)
- [*AstraZeneca agrees to supply nine million more coronavirus vaccine doses to the EU after a row over shortages.*](#)
- [*The number of people suffering from the flu in England has plunged by more than 95%, to levels not seen for 130 years. It is believed that measures to tame the COVID-19 pandemic are quashing the influenza and many other respiratory diseases.*](#)

All information and links correct at date of publication (12th February 2021).

For the latest news on COVID-19, visit

