



Title: Covid-19 IPC Guidance

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This briefing summary note is correct at the time of publishing. However, guidance on COVID-19 is subject to regular updates on GOV.UK, please use the hyperlinks to read further.

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Confirmed cases of COVID-19 variants identified in UK

Published: 23 December 2020

Last updated: 13 May 2021

Background

Public Health England (PHE) releases [weekly updates](#) on the number of confirmed new cases of variants of concern and variants under investigation identified in the UK

Update

The Variant of Concern, VOC-21APR-02, first detected in India, have risen from 520 to 1,313 cases this week in the UK.

- The variant was confirmed as a Variant of Concern on 7 May after a rise in cases and evidence of spread in some areas.
- 60,000 additional PCR test kits have been distributed so far as part of ongoing surge testing activity for VOC-APR21-02, with cases and close contacts traced and asked to isolate.
- Over 150 existing test sites and 10 schools have distributed test kits.
- 133 Mobile Testing Units deployed to provide PCR testing for people without symptoms.
- In Bolton, mobile testing units have been deployed and door to door, PCR testing has been offered to 22,000 residents.

PHE health protection teams, NHS Test and Trace and local authorities are taking all the appropriate public health actions and control measures to limit the spread are being taken to investigate targeted case identification of clusters and outbreaks

Link to the document:

[Confirmed cases of COVID-19 variants identified in UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-variants-identified-in-uk)

Following close monitoring, one Variant under Investigation VUI-21MAR-01, which includes the spike mutations E484K and N501Y, is now considered provisionally extinct in the UK.

- Designated a Variant under Investigation on 4 March, the contacts of confirmed cases were traced and followed public health advice to isolate.

New measures to boost response to the B.1.617.2 variant

Page summary:

This is a press release: Action is being taken to control the variant first identified in India which is beginning to spread in certain areas across the country.

Change made: N/A

First published: 13 May 2021

Time updated: N/A

Action is being taken to control the variant first identified in India which is beginning to spread in certain areas across the country.

- The government is closely monitoring the variant first identified in India (B.1.617.2) and taking action along with Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace and local authorities.
- A new Surge Rapid Response Team is being deployed in Bolton, additional surge testing will shortly launch in areas such as Formby, and enhanced contact tracing is in place across England.
- Ministers are also considering a range of options which could include bringing forward second doses for eligible groups.

Most cases are in the North West of England, with some in London.

Additional measures will be implemented in areas where clusters of cases have been detected to stop further spread. These include:

- enhanced testing and contact tracing, including enhanced community and surge testing in areas defined by the local authorities and regional teams.
- increased genome sequencing of positive cases
- increased community engagement, including ensuring that messages are accessible in languages that are used by communities.
- working closely with communities and community leaders to ensure that individuals are supported to test and self-isolate.
- ensuring access to vaccination in the age and risk groups currently prioritised for vaccination and encouraging uptake.

Link to the document:

New measures to boost response to the B.1.617.2 variant

COVID-19 vaccination programme

The collection of documents relate to the new coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination programme.

From: [Public Health England](#)

Published: 27 November 2020

There have been 2 updates

7 May 2021

Added 'Use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine: JCVI statement, 7 May 2021'.

11 May 2021

Added link to updated COVID-19 vaccination training slide set.

Background

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 vaccination programme on 8 December 2020, Public Health England (PHE) has been monitoring the effectiveness of the vaccines in the real world as set out in the [COVID-19](#)

[vaccine surveillance strategy](#) and had published its first analysis of the impact of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine on:

- symptomatic disease
- hospitalisation
- death
- infection (symptomatic or asymptomatic)

This guidance contains the [Summary of evidence from various studies to determine vaccine effectiveness against different outcomes](#). The studies are listed below.

- A [study using the SARI watch surveillance system of COVID-19 hospitalisations](#)
- A [study on deaths with COVID-19](#)
- The [Impact of vaccination on household transmission of SARS-COV-2 in England](#)
- The [VIVALDI study](#)
- The [Avon CAP study](#)
- [PHE's SIREN study](#)
- [Early data from routine COVID-19 testing in older adults](#)
- The [Impact of COVID-19 vaccination programme on seroprevalence in blood donors](#) in England, 2021.

New information added to the updated version:

On 14 May, this guidance was updated with a link to the weekly surveillance report added ([Weekly COVID-19 vaccine surveillance reports](#))

Here is the link to the guidance:

[COVID-19 vaccination programme](#)

PHE monitoring of the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination

Background

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Link to this guidance: [PHE monitoring of the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination](#)

PPE deliveries (England): 3 May to 9 May 2021

Official Statistics

Published: 11 May 2021

Details

These experimental statistics about PPE items distributed for use by health and social care services in England include a breakdown of deliveries by PPE item.

The 'Weekly PPE data' attachment gives a more detailed breakdown of daily PPE deliveries from 3 May to 9 May 2021.

Main points

In the 7 days to 9 May 2021, DHSC distributed over 236 million PPE items for use by health and social care services in England through the PPE Dedicated Supply Channel, NHS Supply Chain and other routes.

Since 25 February 2020 DHSC has distributed over 11 billion items of PPE, predominantly for use by health and social care services in England. This figure also includes:

over 337 million items of PPE authorised for release to designated wholesalers^[footnote 1] for onward sale to GPs (40 million), adult social care providers (258 million), community pharmacies (1.2 million) and dentists (38 million). This data has been reported by the date of delivery to the wholesaler

- over 306 million items of PPE to local resilience forums (LRFs)
- over 133 million items of PPE to local authorities that have taken over the role of LRFs, in areas where LRFs have stood down from 14 September 2020
- over 35 million items of PPE to public services overseen by other government departments and organisations. This includes PPE distributed to Public Health England, MOD Medical Service, Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Ministry of Justice
- over 13 million items of PPE provided to the devolved administrations between April and June 2020^[footnote 2]. This data has been ratified by the devolved administrations
- a small proportion of items distributed to Crown Dependencies

Organisations may procure additional PPE independently of these routes. Any additional PPE is not included in this data.

Link to the document: [PPE deliveries \(England\): 3 May to 9 May 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ppe-deliveries-england-3-may-to-9-may-2021)

More restrictions eased for care homes

Department of Health and Social Care

Published

10 May 2021

From Monday 17 May care home residents will be able to have more named visitors and more opportunities to make visits out with no need to self-isolate when they return.

From:

- Care home residents will be allowed 5 named visitors from Monday 17 May, up from 2 currently
- Self-isolation no longer required following visits to GPs, dentists and day centres
- Visits will only pause for a minimum of 14 days rather than 28 days following an outbreak

As part of [step 3 of the roadmap](#), the number of named family members or friends able to visit their loved ones in care homes will be increased from 2 to 5, as the visiting restrictions continue to ease. A maximum of 2 visitors will be allowed at any one time or on any given day.

This follows a reduction in COVID-19 cases and the ongoing successful vaccine rollout with 95% of older care home residents receiving their first jab.

Residents will also be able to go to medical appointments, a workplace, educational setting and day centres without having to self-isolate on their return.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:

The measures we have taken during this pandemic have always been to protect our most vulnerable, but I have heard first-hand from those living and working in care homes how difficult the restrictions have been.

Thanks to the phenomenal success of the vaccine rollout and a reduction in cases across the country, I am pleased we can now take another step towards getting back to normal, while protecting those in care homes from the continued risk of COVID-19.

The new guidance allows more family and friends to reunite and reduces the need to self-isolate, which I know many have found incredibly challenging. As we turn the tide on this cruel virus I want to make visiting as normal as possible by the summer, and this is an important step on that path.

The period when a COVID-19 outbreak in a care home can be declared over will also change from 28 days to 14 days after the last positive case assuming there are no Variants of Concern (VOCs) identified.

This means visits can resume sooner following an outbreak, once the relevant testing has been completed and provided all staff and residents tested receive a negative result.

Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, Professor Deborah Sturdy said:

The pandemic has been so difficult for those living in care homes and our social care workforce have done a brilliant job of keeping their residents safe and supported. I know this change to the guidance will be a huge boost to so many, giving more people the chance to reunite with more of their friends and family.

Chair of the Social Care COVID-19 Taskforce, Sir David Pearson said:

I would like to thank all our social care workers for their efforts during the last very difficult year, and for having the vaccine and supporting those they care for to get vaccinated.

This is a significant step on the road to normality for so many. We are only able to increase visits in and out of care homes thanks to the hard work of social care staff maintaining good infection prevention and control, and the effect of the vaccines in driving down transmission.

The government announced an interim change in guidance last week to allow low-risk outdoor visits out, such as a trip to the park, a garden or the beach, without the need to isolate afterwards.

Thanks to the success of the vaccination roll out and the reducing level of infection across the country, the government is able to keep this guidance under review with a view to removing further restrictions as soon as possible.

Background information

Updated guidance will be published in due course.

Residents can now be visited by 5 named visitors (including their essential care giver if they have one), with a maximum of 2 visitors at any one time or on a given day. These daily limits do not apply for very young children or essential care givers.

Visits out of the care home will be planned in consultation with the family and care home managers, subject to testing requirements and risk assessments to protect residents.

Activities outside of the care home that will not require self-isolation include:

- outdoor visits to parks, beaches or gardens
- medical appointments
- visiting day centres
- attending educational settings
- going to work

Recovery testing will take place 14 days after the last positive result in an outbreak, rather than 28 days, except where the outbreak included evidence of VOCs. Where all the recovery testing showed negative results the restrictions on visits would be removed.

Link to the guidance:

More restrictions eased for care homes

Face coverings in Education

Updated 10th May 2021

(Summary)

Guidance on the use of face coverings for schools and other education institutions that teach people in years 7 and above in England.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/984846/FINAL_Face_coverings_in_education_guidance.pdf

Details

This guidance is intended to support early years and childcare providers, schools, including alternative provision, and colleges with advice on the use of face coverings.

Link to the guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=6ea1d0b9-1861-4fb9-bccc-c55d7c1640e4&utm_content=daily