COVID-19 recovery

10th September 2021

**Title:** Building Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street | Department of Health and Social Care | 7th September 2021

This paper sets out the government’s new plan for health and social care. It provides an overview of how this plan will tackle the electives backlog in the NHS and put the NHS on a sustainable footing.

It sets out details of the plan for adult social care in England, including a cap on social care costs and how financial assistance will work for those without substantial assets.

It covers wider support that the government will provide for the social care system, and how the government will improve the integration of health and social care. It explains the government’s plan to introduce a new Health and Social Care Levy.

Full paper: [Building Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015736/Build_Back_Better-_Our_Plan_for_Health_and_Social_Care.pdf)

Press release: [Record £36 billion investment to reform NHS and Social Care](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-36-billion-investment-to-reform-nhs-and-social-care)

See also: [The King's Fund responds to the announcement of a health and social care levy](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/press/press-releases/health-and-social-care-levy)

**Title:** Additional £5.4 billion for NHS COVID-19 response over next 6 months

Department of Health and Social Care | 6th September 2021

The NHS will receive an extra £5.4 billion over the next 6 months to support its response to COVID-19 and help tackle waiting lists.

The funding will immediately go towards supporting the NHS to manage the immediate pressures of the pandemic. This includes an extra £1 billion to help tackle the COVID-19 backlog, £2.8 billion to cover related costs such as enhanced infection control measures to keep staff and patients safe from the virus and £478 million to continue the hospital discharge programme, freeing up beds.

The additional £5.4 billion brings the government’s total investment to health services for COVID-19 so far this year to over £34 billion, with £2 billion in total for the NHS to tackle the elective backlog.

Full detail: [Additional £5.4 billion for NHS COVID-19 response over next 6 months](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/additional-54-billion-for-nhs-covid-19-response-over-next-six-months)

**Title:** Health and social care funding to 2024/25

The Health Foundation | 6th September 2021

This analysis sets out the scale of the challenge facing government if it wants to clear the backlog in NHS care over the course of this parliament and return hospital waiting times to 18 weeks. It estimates it will cost up to £16.8bn over the remainder of this parliament (up to 2024/25) to enable the NHS to clear the backlog of people waiting for routine elective care, return to 18 weeks, and treat millions of ‘missing’ patients who were expected to receive care during the pandemic but did not. In all, this would allow an additional 2.2million extra patients to be seen a year.

This slide deck provide a summary of key findings from the report which will be published later in September.

Full detail: [Health and social care funding to 2024/25](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2021/20210906_Health%20and%20social%20care%20funding%20to%202024-25_FINAL.pdf)

Press release: [Almost £17bn needed to clear backlog and treat expected rise in patients needing NHS hospital care](https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/news/almost-17bn-needed-to-clear-backlog-and-treat-expected-rise-in-patients)

**Title:** The NHS Long Term Plan and COVID-19: Assessing progress and the pandemic’s impact

The Health Foundation | 9th September 2021

This analysis looks at progress on the main pledges in the NHS Long Term Plan and the impact of COVID-19 on their delivery.

Key points

* In 2019, the *NHS Long Term Plan* set out a 10-year strategy for improving and reforming the NHS in England. No part of the plan has been unaffected by COVID-19.
* Some long term plan commitments have been accelerated by the COVID-19 response, such as improving access to remote consultations in primary care and outpatients. These changes will need careful monitoring and evaluation.
* However, the overall picture is of one of major delay, disruption and increased demands on services. Previous national targets – such as for expanding access to mental health services – will need to be revised to account for greater need.
* COVID-19 has exposed and widened existing inequalities in health and care in England. While new partnership structures have been developed to help local agencies improve care, the pandemic has held back the broader process of redesigning care to improve health and reduce inequalities. A more detailed framework for NHS agencies on tackling inequalities is now needed.
* The Health and Care Bill 2021–22 will introduce changes to NHS structures in England – including formalising local partnerships. But the health system needs an updated strategy for delivering the long term plan, which addresses the backlog in elective care without compromising interventions to prevent disease and reduce inequalities.
* Significant additional investment in the NHS is promised, but major unknowns around the future course of the pandemic mean there is considerable uncertainty over whether this will be enough. Before the pandemic, government failed to provide the long-term investment needed to expand the NHS workforce and improve infrastructure. Without enough staff and adequate buildings and equipment, the NHS will not be able to recover services after the pandemic.
* The NHS cannot prevent disease and reduce inequalities on its own. Increased investment in the NHS must go alongside investment in public health, adult social care reform and a broader range of policy interventions to give more people the opportunity to live a healthy life.

Full detail: [The NHS Long Term Plan and COVID-19: Assessing progress and the pandemic’s impact](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2021/The%20NHS%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20and%20COVID-19_WEB.pdf)

**Title:** Innovation and new technology to help reduce NHS waiting lists

Department of Health & Social Care | 8th September 2021

Surgical hubs, new technology to speed up diagnosis, and innovative ways of working will help the NHS to tackle growing waiting lists and treat around 30% more patients who need elective care by 2023 to 2024. Backed by a new £36 billion investment in health and social care over the next 3 years, ‘doing things differently’ and embracing innovation will be the driving force to get the NHS back on track.

The funding will see the NHS deliver an extra 9 million checks, scans and operations for patients across the country. The NHS has been trialling a range of new ways of working in 12 areas, backed by £160 million, to accelerate the recovery of services.

This includes setting up pop-up clinics so patients can be treated quickly, in person, and discharged closer to home, as well as virtual wards and home assessments to allow patients to receive medical support from the comfort of their home, freeing up beds in hospitals.

GP surgeries are using artificial intelligence to help prioritise patients most in need and identify the right level of care and support needed for patients on waiting lists.

Full detail: [Innovation and new technology to help reduce NHS waiting lists](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/innovation-and-new-technology-to-help-reduce-nhs-waiting-lists)

**Title:** 4 in 5 people aged 16 and over vaccinated with both doses

Department of Health and Social Care | 7th September 2021

Four in 5 people aged 16 and over in the UK have received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, the latest figures show. A total of 43,535,098 people have received 2 doses (80.1%) and 48,292,811 people have received one dose (88.8%).

More than half of all teenagers aged 16 to 17 in England have already received their first jab, just over 4 weeks after the green light was given for this age group to be offered the vaccine.

Full detail: [4 in 5 people aged 16 and over vaccinated with both doses](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/four-in-five-people-aged-16-and-over-vaccinated-with-both-doses)

**Title:** Open consultation: Making vaccination a condition of deployment in the health and wider social care sector

Department of Health and Social Care | 9th September 2021

The government is seeking views on whether or not to extend vaccination requirements to other health and care settings for COVID-19 and also for flu. This consultation closes at 11:45pm on 22 October.

The consultation proposes that, if introduced, requirements would apply to frontline health and care workers– those with face-to face contact with patients and clients though the delivery of services as part of a CQC regulated activity. It would mean only those workers that are vaccinated could be deployed (or those with a legitimate medical exemption) to deliver those services.

Further detail: [Open consultation: Making vaccination a condition of deployment in the health and wider social care sector](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/making-vaccination-a-condition-of-deployment-in-the-health-and-wider-social-care-sector)

Survey: [Making vaccination a condition of deployment in the health and wider social care sector](https://consultations.dhsc.gov.uk/612f51cbbf327c44607a7bb9)

**Title:** Long-term air pollution linked to greater risk of COVID-19 hospitalisation

Imperial College London | 6th September 2021

A new report finds a link between long-term exposure to air pollution and the severity with which a person will experience the effects of COVID-19.

Air pollution has harmful effects on the lungs. When COVID-19, a disease which infects the airways of the lungs, became a global pandemic it raised the question - does air pollution increase the chance of catching COVID-19 or worsen health outcomes if you do contract it?

The new report provides a comprehensive overview of the best recent evidence and finds a link between toxic air and more severe cases of COVID-19.

Full report: [Investigating links between air pollution, COVID-19 and lower respiratory infectious diseases](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/medicine/sph/environmental-research-group/ReportfinalAPCOVID19_v10.pdf)

Press release: [Long-term air pollution linked to greater risk of COVID-19 hospitalisation](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/229233/long-term-pollution-linked-greater-risk-covid-19/) 

**Title:** People seeking NHS weight loss help heavier than those before COVID new study finds

NHS England | 4th September 2021

People seeking NHS help to lose weight during the pandemic are on average five pounds heavier than those starting the programme during the previous three years, new NHS research has revealed.

Extra weight, gained as people lived through the COVID pandemic, means people are at higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

The study, published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology, showed that people aged under 40 enrolling on the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme have seen the greatest differences in weight and are an average of eight pounds heavier than those enrolling before.

Further detail: [People seeking NHS weight loss help heavier than those before COVID new study finds](https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/09/people-seeking-nhs-weight-loss-help-heavier-than-those-before-covid-new-study-finds/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+NHSCBoard+%28NHS+England%29)

Full research: [Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on body weight in people at high risk of type 2 diabetes referred to the English NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2213-8587%2821%2900218-7)

**Title:** Infection increases the risk of kidney disease even in mild cases, finds study

BMJ | 2021; 374: n2189 | 6th September 2021

People who have recovered from covid-19 have a greater risk of kidney disease, even if they only experienced mild to moderate covid-19 symptoms and were not admitted to hospital, shows a study published in the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*.

Damage to organ systems such as the kidneys is a recognised complication of the post-acute phase for patients who were severely ill during the acute phase of covid-19, but the risks for patients who experienced milder covid-19 is less clear.

Researchers used data collected by the Veterans Health Administration in the US to compare the risks of kidney related conditions in 89 216 people who had recovered from covid-19 for at least 30 days against the risks in 1 637 467 who had not had covid-19.

Their analysis showed that people who had had covid-19 had a higher risk of acute kidney injury and major adverse kidney events.

Further detail: [Infection increases the risk of kidney disease even in mild cases, finds study](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2189)

Full research: [Kidney outcomes in long covid](https://jasn.asnjournals.org/content/jnephrol/early/2021/08/25/ASN.2021060734.full.pdf?with-ds=yes) | Journal of the American Society of Nephrology

**Title:** Seizing the moment to rethink health systems

The Lancet Global Health | 7th September 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has made vivid the need for resilient, high-quality health systems and presents an opportunity to reconsider how to build such systems.

Although even well resourced, well performing health systems have struggled at various points to cope with surges of COVID-19, experience suggests that establishing health system foundations based on clear aims, adequate resources, and effective constraints and incentives is crucial for consistent provision of high-quality care, and that these cannot be replaced by piecemeal quality improvement interventions.

This paper identifies four mutually reinforcing structural investments that could transform health system performance in resource-constrained countries:

1. revamping health provider education
2. redesigning platforms for care delivery
3. instituting strategic purchasing and management strategies
4. developing patient-level data systems.

The authors believe countries should seize the political and moral energy provided by the COVID-19 pandemic to build health systems fit for the future.

Full detail: [Seizing the moment to rethink health systems](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2214-109X%2821%2900356-9)

**Title:** Children's perspectives and experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and UK public health measures

Health Expectations | 8th September 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound impacts on how we live our lives; yet, the implications for children and the effects on children's everyday lives have been relatively underacknowledged. Understanding children's views on COVID-19 and related restrictions on their lives provides an important opportunity to understand how children have responded to the pandemic, including the impacts on their social and emotional well-being.

This qualitative study explored the experiences and perspectives of children in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on everyday life.

Themes included children's reflections on (1) COVID-19 as a deadly contagion; (2) fears and sadness and (3) social responsibility and opportunities to respond positively. Young children offer insightful reflections on their experiences during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom. Children and young people's perspectives must be considered in future public health discourse.

Full paper: [Children's perspectives and experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and UK public health measures](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/hex.13350)

**Title:** Home learning experiences through the COVID-19 pandemic

Institute for Fiscal Studies | 6th September 2021

There is growing evidence that disruption during the pandemic has undermined children’s education and increased inequalities between those from disadvantaged backgrounds and their better-off peers.

This report examines how the learning experiences of English school children evolved over the course of the first 12 months of disruption, from the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020 until the end of the second period of school closures in March 2021. It considers learning experiences during both periods of nationwide school closures as well as during the 2020 autumn term – when schools were open but periodically disrupted. Specifically, it looks at how learning time changed between the closures, the extent of self-isolation during the autumn, and the nature of school remote learning provisions throughout.

The report also examines how inequalities between richer and poorer pupils evolved over the course of the pandemic, and what this implies about catch-up policies in the future.

Full report: [Home learning experiences through the COVID-19 pandemic](https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R195-Home-learning-experiences-through-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf)

Press release: [Inequalities in home learning experiences improved over the pandemic – but targeted interventions will be essential to closing the gaps that the first lockdown widened](https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15593)

**Title:** Estimating the Impact of the Pandemic on Children's Physical Health: A Scoping Review

Journal of School Health | 8th September 2021

Children are expected to adhere to the recommended physical activity (PA) dose of 60 minutes per day and minimize sedentary behaviors (SB) to stray away from the cardio-metabolic disease risk. However, there is a lack of review of current evidence pointing to the negative physical health effects of the Covid-19 lockdown, with its barriers and facilitators for effective PA implementation in children aged 3 to 13.

This review noted a 34% reduction in PA while SB, including screen time, increased by 82%. The review identified potential barriers to the effective implementation of PA behaviors in children at four levels: individual, family, school, and government policies.

Stakeholders should consider the above barriers when designing and implementing interventions to address low PA and SB practices.

Full paper: [Estimating the impact of the pandemic on children's physical health: A scoping review](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/josh.13079)

**Title:** The Impact of Dementia Daycare Service Cessation Due To COVID-19 Pandemic

International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry | 7th September 2021

This study aimed at revealing the caregiving challenges of the caregivers of people with dementia (PwD) during the COVID-19 pandemic when daycare service was stopped as an infection control measure, and discussed ways to help PwD and their family caregivers to maintain their well-being in the era of the pandemic.

The study found that family caregivers of PwD experienced greater caregiving stress after cessation of daycare service. Infection was their main challenge in caregiving, and their physical and emotional health was adversely affected by the longer time commitment with PwD under the stay-home policy. Older age of caregivers, greater emotional and communication problems of PwD, and more time spent with PwD were associated with greater caregiving stress. More than one-third of the participants preferred the continuation of daycare service during the pandemic.

Policy makers should consider the well-being of PwD and their caregivers when planning infection control measures. Daycare service with enhanced infection controlled measures should remain available to PwD during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Full paper: [The Impact of dementia daycare service cessation due to COVID-19 Pandemic](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/gps.5621)

**Title:** Drawing light from the pandemic: A new strategy for health and sustainable development (2021)

Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development | 9th September 2021

To build a post-pandemic future, in which everyone's health is protected and promoted, what can we learn from the events of the COVID-19 pandemic and previous crises? The Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development, established by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and comprising experts from a wide range of backgrounds and across the pan-European region, has now set out an ambitious agenda to achieve a healthy and secure future for all in this new report.

Over the past year, members of the Commission have reflected on what worked and, more often, what did not work in the COVID-19 response and in previous crises. This final report makes a series of recommendations with the aim of achieving seven key objectives to prevent a catastrophe on the same scale from happening again.

Full report: [Drawing light from the pandemic: A new strategy for health and sustainable development](https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/511701/Pan-European-Commission-health-sustainable-development-eng.pdf)

See also: [A new strategy for health and sustainable development in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01995-4/fulltext?rss=yes) | The Lancet

**Title:** A year of COVID-19 in the North: Regional inequalities in health and economic outcomes

Northern Health Science Alliance | 8th September 2021

People in northern England were 17% more likely to die with Covid than the rest of the country, official figures have revealed. The report by the Northern Health Science Alliance also found northerners had a 26% higher mortality rate in care homes than elsewhere in England.

The report also found people in the North compared to the rest of England:

* Spent almost six weeks longer in lockdowns
* Experienced a larger drop in mental wellbeing, more loneliness, and higher rates of anti-depressant prescriptions
* Had lower pre-pandemic wages which fell further, whereas wages increased in the rest of the country

The data, from March 2020 to March 2021, also showed:

* Unemployment rate in the North was 19% higher than the rest of England.
* There were 10% more hospital beds in the North occupied by Covid patients than the rest of the country.

Full report: [A year of COVID-19 in the North: Regional inequalities in health and economic outcomes](https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/09/COVID-REPORT-2021-EMBARGO.pdf)

See also: [More deaths and lower wages in north of England, report reveals](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-58486111) | BBC News