COVID-19 recovery

4th June 2021

**Title:** The potential impact of vaccine passports on inclination to accept COVID-19 vaccinations in the United Kingdom: evidence from a large cross-sectional survey and modelling study

medRxiv | 1st June 2021

The UK Government is considering the introduction of vaccine passports for domestic use and to facilitate international travel for UK residents. Although vaccine incentivisation has been cited as a motivating factor for vaccine passports, it is currently unclear whether vaccine passports are likely to increase inclination to accept a COVID-19 vaccine.

The first study to assess the impact of vaccine passports on vaccination inclination in the UK has been published as a pre-print. .The researchers behind this study surveyed 17 000 members of the UK public to explore attitudes to vaccine passports for domestic and international use.

* The authors find that the introduction of passports for either domestic or international use has a net negative impact on vaccination inclination
* Younger age groups, Black and Black British ethnicities compared to Whites), and non-English speakers are more likely to express a lower inclination to vaccinate if passports were introduced
* Vaccination passports may not only yield damaging health outcomes for already marginalised communities: this may lead to further distrust in the government and public health systems and may have negative downstream consequences for other health-seeking behaviours, for example, routine immunisations

Caution should therefore be exercised in introducing passports as they may result in less positive health-seeking behaviours for the COVID-19 vaccine (as well as other existing or future vaccinations) and may contribute to concentrated areas of low vaccinate uptake, which is an epidemic risk

*This article is a preprint and has not been certified by peer review. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.*

Full paper: [The potential impact of vaccine passports on inclination to accept COVID-19 vaccinations in the United Kingdom: evidence from a large cross-sectional survey and modelling study](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.05.31.21258122v1.full.pdf)

**Title:** The potential for vaccination-induced herd immunity against the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 variant

Eurosurveillance | Volume 26, Issue 20, 20 | May 2021

Initial reports of vaccine effectiveness against severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus responsible for coronavirus disease (COVID-19), have suggested a substantial reduction of the risk of infection . Nevertheless, with the emergence of more transmissible variants such as B.1.1.7, how large-scale immunisation programmes against SARS-CoV-2 will perform is currently unclear.

This study assesses the potential of COVID-19 vaccination to generate herd immunity and takes into account vaccine effectiveness, naturally-acquired immunity and achievable vaccination coverage (depending on the population age structure), as well as two transmissibility scenarios ((i) with pre-B.1.1.7, and (ii) with exclusively B.1.1.7 variants).

Full detail: [The potential for vaccination-induced herd immunity against the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 variant](https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.20.2100428?crawler=true)

**Title:** Happy to help: the welfare effects of a nationwide micro-volunteering programme

London School of Economics and Political Science | 31st May 2021

This report estimates the wellbeing benefits from volunteering for England’s NHS Volunteer Responders programme which was set up in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It found that active volunteers report significantly higher life satisfaction, feelings of worthwhileness, social connectedness, and belonging to their local communities.

In a survey of over 9,000 active participants on the NHSVR programme, the researchers found that even small acts of volunteering, including talking to at-risk individuals on the phone or helping to deliver groceries boosted participants sense of wellbeing and increased feelings of belonging within the local community. Importantly, the authors found that the positive impacts on wellbeing lasted up to three months after the last task had been completed.

A social welfare analysis shows that the benefits of the programme were at least 140 times greater than its costs.

Full report: [Happy to help: the welfare effects of a nationwide micro-volunteering programme](https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1772.pdf)

See also: [Volunteering in the NHS: Covid-19 Volunteer Responders Programme significantly increased volunteers' overall life satisfaction](https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/e-May-21/Volunteering-in-the-NHS-Covid-19-Volunteer-Responders-Programme-significantly-increased-volunteers-overall-life-satisfaction)

**Title:** Is it safe to lift all restrictions in England from 21 June?

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1399 | 1st June 2021

England is set to remove all legal limits on social contact from 21 June and allow nightclubs to reopen, although masks may still be required in some public spaces and the test and trace system will continue.

However, the emergence of the B.1.617.2 variant, first detected in India, has led to concerns that further easing may need to be delayed. As cases of this variant spread across the country, this article looks at what we know, and asks:

* On what basis will the government decide to lift restrictions?
* What do the data on cases and admissions show?
* What do the latest mortality data show?
* Is surge testing making any difference?
* What about surge vaccinations?
* How effective are the vaccines against the B.1.617.2 variant?
* What do the data on schools show?
* So, should the final stage of restriction easing go ahead on 21 June?

Full detail: [Is it safe to lift all restrictions in England from 21 June?](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1399)

**Title:** How the world should prepare for the next pandemic

Government Office for Science | 2nd June 2021

In this authored article, Patrick Vallance writes about the aim to have vaccines and therapeutics available at scale within 100 days. This piece was published in the Financial Times.

Full detail: [How the world should prepare for the next pandemic](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/how-the-world-should-prepare-for-the-next-pandemic)

**Title:** Life-saving vaccination programme to hit more major milestones as new vaccine added to armoury

Department of Health and Social Care | 29th May 2021

The outstanding success of the UK’s rollout of life-saving vaccines in its fight against COVID-19 continues to take significant strides with another new jab authorised and major milestones expected to be hit next week.

On Thursday, G7 Health Ministers will gather ahead of the leader’s summit where the Health Secretary will praise the fantastic efforts of the NHS, volunteers and scientists over the last year in developing and rolling out the vaccine programme at pace.

Next week, it is expected that three quarters of adults will have received their first dose and almost half of all adults will have had their second dose of a vaccine. The UK remains on track to offer the vaccine to all adults by the end of July.

Full detail: [Life-saving vaccination programme to hit more major milestones as new vaccine added to armoury](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/life-saving-vaccination-programme-to-hit-more-major-milestones-as-new-vaccine-added-to-armoury)

**Title:** The Beautiful Game: keeping spectators, players and communities safe

World Health Organization Europe | 28th May 2021

With the summer season approaching, excitement is building among people to once again attend major sporting events, such as tennis tournaments, football matches, horse races and cycling competitions. Declining trends in reported cases and deaths due to COVID-19 in some countries of the WHO European Region are encouraging governments and sports organizers to restart events that bring together large numbers of people.

However, there is no zero risk of infection. Last year’s experience showed us that reopening societies too early and rapidly can result in the resurgence of cases that will also create new socioeconomic problems. WHO’s recently released considerations for countries in the European Region will help them to take decisions with a risk-based approach about if, when and how to allow travel and gatherings of people.

Full detail: [The Beautiful Game: keeping spectators, players and communities safe](https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/news/news/2021/5/the-beautiful-game-keeping-spectators,-players-and-communities-safe)

Related publication: [Sporting events during the COVID-19 pandemic. Considerations for public health authorities](https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/502853/sporting-event-considerations-COVID-19.pdf)

**Title:** A New Commitment for Vaccine Equity and Defeating the Pandemic

World Health Organization | 31st May 2021

This article explains why the World Health Organization are calling for a new level of international support for – and implementation of – a stepped up coordinated strategy, backed by new financing, to vaccinate the world.

It explains that increasingly, a two-track pandemic is developing, with richer countries having access and poorer ones being left behind. Inequitable vaccine distribution is not only leaving untold millions of people vulnerable to the virus. It is also allowing deadly variants to emerge and ricochet back across the world.

As variants continue to spread, even countries with advanced vaccination programs have been forced to reimpose stricter public health measures, and some have implemented travel restrictions. In turn, the ongoing pandemic is leading to deepening divergence in economic fortunes, with negative consequences for all. 

A [recent proposal from International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff](https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/Issues/2021/05/19/A-Proposal-to-End-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-460263) puts forward a plan with clear targets, pragmatic actions, and at a feasible cost. At an estimated $50 billion, it will bring the pandemic to an end faster in the developing world, reduce infections and loss of lives, accelerate the economic recovery, and generate some $9 trillion in additional global output by 2025.

Full detail: [A new commitment for vaccine equity and defeating the pandemic](https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/a-new-commitment-for-vaccine-equity-and-defeating-the-pandemic)

**Title:** Coronavirus (COVID-19) roundup

Office for National Statistics | updated 3rd June 2021

The latest data and analysis related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its impact on our economy and society. This update includes the latest figures on Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: w/e 21 May 2021 and Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England: 10 to 15 May 2021

The main points include:

* 304 fewer deaths were registered in England and Wales in the week ending 21 May 2021 than the previous week; 3.2% below the five-year average.
* Of those registered deaths in the week ending 21 May 2021, 107 mentioned “novel coronavirus (COVID-19)” accounting for 1.1% of all deaths. This was a decrease compared with the previous week (151).
* The majority (86%) of those required to self-isolate due to COVID-19 reported fully adhering to the requirements throughout their self-isolation period, according to data collected between 10 and 15 May 2021.
* The majority (84%) of those who tested positive for COVID-19 reported having no contact with non-household members while they had any symptoms of illness or during the self-isolation period.
* The percentage of businesses currently trading has increased to 87%, the highest proportion since comparable estimates began in June 2020.
* Accommodation and food service businesses saw the further relaxation, in May 2021, of coronavirus (COVID-19) regulations with the re-opening of indoor dining. This saw trading increase from 61% to 83%.
* The proportion of businesses' workforce on furlough leave has fallen to 8% in mid-May 2021, as a result of coronavirus restrictions continuing to be relaxed across the UK

Full detail: [Coronavirus (COVID-19) roundup](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19roundup/2020-03-26)

**Title:** Weathering the storm? The pandemic’s impact on young people’s wellbeing

The Health Foundation | 27th May 2021

As the immediate danger of the virus to older people thankfully diminishes, focus is shifting to groups who have had their health suffer in a different way. This article looks how the pandemic has affected young people’s mental health, and what society can do to help.

Full detail: [Weathering the storm? The pandemic’s impact on young people’s wellbeing](https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/weathering-the-storm-the-pandemics-impact-on-young-peoples-wellbeing?utm_campaign=12409985_May%202021%20newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Health%20Foundation&dm_i=4Y2,7DZLT,6ZKZT4,TZUUT,1)

**Title:** COVID-19 pathophysiology: looking beyond acute disease

The Lancet Respiratory Medicine | June 2021

Severe disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 has clinical and pathophysiological features unlike those of respiratory failure due to other causes, and acute disease remains a priority for research as COVID-19-associated morbidity and mortality continue to pose a huge burden globally.

However, as this editorial discusses, long-term investment and support are now needed for national research studies and international collaborative efforts to unravel the complex pathophysiology of post-acute symptoms, which will inform clinical trials of therapeutic interventions and multidisciplinary pathways of care for the growing number of people in recovery after SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Full detail: [COVID-19 pathophysiology: looking beyond acute disease](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(21)00242-3/fulltext#coronavirus-linkback-header)

**Title:** Mitigating the impacts of COVID-19: where are the mental health trials?

The Lancet Psychiatry | 1st June 2021

COVID-19 will have continuing and long-term effects on mental health, and many unknowns remain. For some problems, the scaling up of existing treatments is a sufficient response. However, many problems will be new and will exacerbate pre-existing health inequalities; these will require new evidence-informed solutions. Some of the impacts of COVID-19 will be on sections of the population for whom innovative (and unevaluated) methods of delivery (such as eHealth) are needed in non-mental health settings, such as schools.

Other impacts are on the NHS workforce, for whom the problems of workplace stress and moral injury require scalable interventions and decisions about when, how, and whether to intervene. Some new problems, such as long COVID, will require increased integration of psychosocial models of care with physical health services.

This comment piece suggests that when evidence is not available to inform mental health practice and policy, then trials should be rapidly designed and delivered at scale to determine which treatment approaches work and discard those that are ineffective. Trials have been fundamental to the global pandemic response, but mental health has not been part of this success story. In short, the mental health research community has been successful at describing the nature of the impact of COVID-19, but less successful at generating solutions and providing clinical trial data to establish what works in mitigating the impacts.

Full detail: [Mitigating the impacts of COVID-19: where are the mental health trials?](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2821%2900204-2)

**Title:** Depressive symptoms, mental wellbeing, and substance use among adolescents before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Iceland: a longitudinal, population-based study

The Lancet Psychiatry | 3rd June 2021

Adolescence represents a crucial developmental period in shaping mental health trajectories. In this study, the authors investigated the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and substance use during this sensitive developmental stage.

The results of this study suggest that COVID-19 has significantly impaired adolescent mental health. However, the decrease observed in substance use during the pandemic might be an unintended benefit of isolation, and might serve as a protective factor against future substance use disorders and dependence. Population-level prevention efforts, especially for girls, are warranted.

Full paper: [Depressive symptoms, mental wellbeing, and substance use among adolescents before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Iceland: a longitudinal, population-based study](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2821%2900156-5)

Related Comment piece: [A lost generation? COVID-19 and adolescent mental health](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(21)00179-6/fulltext)

**Title:** COVID-19 susceptibility in long-term care facilities

The Lancet Healthy Longevity | 3rd June 2021

Disease outbreaks in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) have been a large driver of morbidity and mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic. This susceptibility to outbreaks in LTCFs is likely to be multifactorial, including frailty of residents, structural and environmental characteristics of buildings (eg, shared spaces, ventilation, and outdoor access), staffing policies and models, and the value society places on older people and LTCFs.

Understanding of the true burden of COVID-19 in LTCFs has been limited by gaps in measurement and reporting. The impact of COVID-19 has evolved during subsequent pandemic waves, but estimates suggest that internationally more than 40% of deaths have occurred among residents of LTCFs, with many national and local estimates indicating a much higher death toll. Additionally, LTCF staff have been greatly affected as frontline workers.

As this comment piece highlights, patterns of vulnerability to SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission within LTCF environments are thus crucial to addressing the pandemic at both clinical and policy levels.

Full detail: [COVID-19 susceptibility in long-term care facilities](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhl/article/PIIS2666-7568(21)00119-7/fulltext)

**Title:** UK Government urged to recognise post-COVID-19 cancer backlog

The Lancet Oncology | 3rd June 2021

The UK Government and NHS leadership is failing to accept the scale and urgency of the crisis facing cancer services as they recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a parliamentary report has warned.

After receiving consultation responses from more than 30 cancer organisations and professionals, the All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) for Radiotherapy and Health published a series of recommendations, including appointing a minister to lead a radical national recovery plan supported by an independent expert advisory group.

The report points to “considerable frustration” in the cancer community that more was not being done to prevent thousands of patients dying and presenting with advanced-stage cancers.

Further detail: UK Government urged to recognise post-COVID-19 cancer backlog

Related report: [Catch Up With Cancer - The Way Forward](https://e8604b0e-5c16-4637-907f-3091e4443249.filesusr.com/ugd/b68571_a18ace5b95fa4c3fa3027456b5928faf.pdf)

**Title:** The MHRA concludes positive safety profile for Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency | 4th June 2021

An extension to the current UK approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine that allows its use in 12- to 15-year-olds has today been authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This follows a rigorous review of the safety, quality and effectiveness of the vaccine in this age group by the MHRA and the Government’s independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM).

Further detail: [The MHRA concludes positive safety profile for Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-mhra-concludes-positive-safety-profile-for-pfizerbiontech-vaccine-in-12-to-15-year-olds)

**Title:** When Vaccine Apathy, Not Hesitancy, Drives Vaccine Disinterest

JAMA | 2nd June 2021

This Viewpoint explains how vaccine apathy rather than hesitancy may lead to population undervaccination, and uses marketing principles to explain how public health messaging might differ to persuade apathetic persons to be immunized to achieve more widespread COVID-19 protection.

Full detail: [When vaccine apathy, not hesitancy, drives vaccine disinterest](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2780792)

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