COVID-19 recovery

11th June 2021

**Title:** Implementation of COVID-19 Preventive Measures in Primary and Secondary Schools Following Reopening of Schools in Autumn 2020; A Cross-Sectional Study of Parents’ and Teachers’ Experiences in England

medRxiv | 6th June 2021

To better understand the impact of SARS-CoV-2 in educational settings, Public Health England (PHE) has been conducting SARS-CoV-2 surveillance since the start of the pandemic in England which has included swabbing and serological sampling in selected primary and secondary schools.

As part of this surveillance, the authors of this paper assessed the experiences and challenges of returning to school during the Autumn term by inviting the schools taking part in PHE school studies to participate in an online survey aimed at teaching staff and parents two months after the students returned to school in September 2020. By December of 2020 1 953 parent and 986 staff respondents had completed the online questionnaire.

The main objective was to assess implementation of and ease of implementation of control measures in schools as reported by staff and parents. The study found variable implementation of infection control measures was reported by staff and parents. Whilst the majority were not worried about returning to school, some parents and staff, were concerned about returning to school and the risks posed to children, staff and household members.

*This article is a preprint and has not been certified by peer review.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: [Implementation of COVID-19 Preventive Measures in Primary and Secondary Schools Following Reopening of Schools in Autumn 2020; A Cross-Sectional Study of Parents’ and Teachers’ Experiences in England](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.03.21258289v1.full.pdf)

**Title:** Furlough and changes in diet, physical activity and sleep during the COVID-19 pandemic

medRxiv | 8th June 2021

Using data from 8 studies the authors of this paper set out to investigate any associations between changes in employment status (with a focus on the UK’s furlough scheme) during the early stages of the pandemic and health behaviours, namely diet, physical activity and sleep by conducting coordinated analyses of data from more than 25,000 participants in eight longitudinal studies. They hypothesised that associations differ by participant characteristics, therefore also examined associations stratified by sex, education, and age.

The authors report that being furloughed was somewhat protective against unhealthy behaviours. Those who were furloughed did not differ in fruit and vegetable consumption or sleep and had a lower likelihood of infrequent exercise compared to those who remained employed. Stratified analyses showed that furloughed men, but not women, had a higher likelihood of low fruit and vegetable consumption than those who remained employed. Those who remained unemployed had worse health behaviours relative to the stable employed, although these differences were largely due to pre-pandemic behaviours. Infrequent exercise was more common among the stable unemployed for those with no degree and those in the 30-49 age group. Among 16-29 year olds, who were no longer employed or remained unemployed, there was a higher risk of atypical asleep. Men who remained unemployed were more likely to have atypical sleep than women.

*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 UK Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and changes in diet, physical activity and sleep during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from eight longitudinal studies](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.08.21258531v1.full.pdf)

**Title:** The four most urgent questions about long COVID

Nature | 9th June 2021

Scientists are starting to get insights into the lingering disorder that affects some people infected with SARS-CoV-2 — but many mysteries remain unsolved.

This news story published in Nature explores the following four questions:

1. How many people get long COVID and who is most at risk?
2. What is the underlying biology of long COVID?
3. What is the relationship between long COVID and other post-infection syndromes?
4. What can be done to help people with long COVID?

Full detail: [The four most urgent questions about long COVID](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01511-z)

**Title:** long covid and its societal consequences

Environmental Microbiology | 10th June 2021

COVID-19 is an acute, highly transmissible respiratory infection that is potentially lethal, but often mild, sometimes asymptomatic, especially in the young. However, it has become clear that, in some patients, there may be sequelae involving tissues other than the lung, resulting in other types of morbidity, and sometimes longer term consequences that are often termed “long covid”.

This article summarises recent findings about COVID-19 sequelae, with a particular focus on long covid. It also discuss some of the long scars that COVID-19 and long covid will collectively leave on society that the authors term *Societal Long Covid*.

Full article: [Long covid and its societal consequences](https://sfamjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1462-2920.15634)

**Title:** Prevalence of ongoing symptoms following coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in the UK

Office for National Statistics | 4th June 2021

This dataset estimates of the prevalence and characteristics of people with self-reported “long COVID”, and associated activity limitation, using UK Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey data to 2 May 2021.

Full detail: [Prevalence of ongoing symptoms following coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in the UK](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/datasets/alldatarelatingtoprevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infectionintheuk)

**Title:** Sequelae in adults at 12 months after mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

International Forum of Allergy & Rhinology | 9th June 2021
Severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection can cause a wide array of symptoms ranging from mild to severe or fatal forms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Furthermore, it has been observed that in a proportion of patients a variable range of symptoms may persist for a long time.

An increasing number of studies have been focused on long COVID, but they have mainly been concentrated on previously hospitalized severe COVID-19 patients reporting symptoms up to 6-months after illness. The main aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of COVID-related symptoms 12-months after the onset of mild-to-moderate disease.

The study indicates that persistent symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 infection can be detected beyond 12 months from the onset of the illness in more than half of outpatients. Identifying patients at risk for prevention and treatment will be critical to improving outcomes and reducing health costs. Finally, a structured and validated questionnaire for the assessment of symptoms in COVID-19 patients is highly desirable to characterize the full clinical spectrum of long COVID.

Full article: [Sequelae in adults at 12 months after mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/alr.22832)

**Title:** NHS COVID vaccine first dose drive enters ‘the home straight’ as final cohort called forward

NHS England | 7th June 2021

The NHS COVID vaccination programme will start inviting remaining adults for their COVID-19 jabs on the six month anniversary of administering the world-first approved jab.

The last group of adults will begin to be called forward for the first time, with around three million people aged between 25 and 29 getting invited to book their first dose. More than half of adults are now fully vaccinated giving them maximum possible protection from coronavirus.

Full detail: [NHS COVID vaccine first dose drive enters ‘the home straight’ as final cohort called forward](https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/06/nhs-covid-vaccine-first-dose-drive-enters-the-home-straight-as-final-cohort-called-forward/)

**Title:** Impact of vaccination on new SARS-CoV-2 infections in the United Kingdom

Nature Medicine | 9th June 2021

The authors of this paper used the Office for National Statistics (ONS) COVID-19 Infection Survey—a large community-based survey to assess the effectiveness of the BNT162b2 (BioNTech Pfizer) and ChAdOx1 (Oxford Astra Zeneca) vaccines, as implemented in the United Kingdom, against any SARS-CoV-2 PCR-positive test performed in the survey, where real-time PCR (RT-PCR) tests were performed on a fixed schedule, irrespective of symptoms, vaccine status and previous infection.

They assessed vaccine effectiveness based on overall RT-PCR positivity and split according to self-reported symptoms, cycle threshold (Ct) value (less than 30 versus more than or equal to 30; as a surrogate for viral load) and gene positivity pattern (compatible with B.1.1.7 or not).

Their findings indicate that vaccination against COVID-19, with either the ChAdOx1 vaccine or the BNT162b2 vaccine, substantially reduced the odds of individuals testing PCR positive with a new SARS-CoV-2 infection, with the greatest reductions in new infections observed in individuals with Ct < 30 and self-reported symptoms, and in those who had received two vaccine doses.

Full paper: [Impact of vaccination on new SARS-CoV-2 infections in the United Kingdom](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-021-01410-w.pdf)

**Title:** New research exploring vaccination confidence provides vital lessons for public health campaigns

Healthwatch England | 7th June 2021

It is well documented that there’s lower vaccine confidence   to COVID-19 vaccines among some ethnic minority communities living in the UK. This evidence follows a historical trend of lower vaccine uptake in areas with a higher proportion of ethnic minority groups across England.

At the root of the problem are institutional mistrust and misinformation – and that is what the healthcare sector and policymakers need to address. Addressing mistrust and misinformation about NHS programmes could also help reduce health inequalities at a local level.

Healthwatch England joined forces with Traverse, a social research organisation, to explore vaccination confidence among people from African, Bangladeshi, Caribbean and Pakistani backgrounds living in the UK.

The resulting report outlines a range of themes emerging from the findings. These can provide important lessons to the COVID-19 vaccine programme and anyone working on future public health campaigns.

Full report: [VacciNation: Exploring vaccine confidence](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/report/2021-06-07/vaccination-exploring-vaccine-confidence)

**Title:** Excess deaths from COVID-19 and other causes by region, neighbourhood deprivation level and place of death during the first 30 weeks of the pandemic in England and Wales: A retrospective registry study

The Lancet Regional Health – Europe | 7th June 2021

Excess deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic compared with those expected from historical trends have been unequally distributed, both geographically and socioeconomically. Not all excess deaths have been directly related to COVID-19 infection. This study investigated geographical and socioeconomic patterns in excess deaths for major groups of underlying causes during the pandemic.

During the first 30 weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic there was significant geographic and socioeconomic variation in excess deaths for respiratory causes, but not for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. Pandemic recovery plans, including vaccination programmes, should take account of individual characteristics including health, socioeconomic status and place of residence.

Full paper: [Excess deaths from COVID-19 and other causes by region, neighbourhood deprivation level and place of death during the first 30 weeks of the pandemic in England and Wales: A retrospective registry study](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2666-7762%2821%2900121-6)

**Title:** COVID-19: Local government finance

House of Commons Public Accounts Committee | 4th June 2021

In this report, the Public Accounts Committee says that the impact of the pandemic risks leading to reductions in services for local people even as council tax rises, meaning that local people could be paying more for less.

The committee acknowledges that MHCLG acted quickly and effectively to stave off widespread financial failure in local authorities as Covid19 hit. But, the Committee concludes, the Department’s over optimism about the resilience of local government is not matched by the reality. The long-term systemic funding issues in local government means that sector representatives are clear that most councils will not be able to manage solely using reserves.

Even if the sector’s current financial situation is stabilised, there is a looming problem in local government finance that needs a structural solution that now also takes account of the impacts of the pandemic.

Full report: [COVID-19: Local government finance](https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/6150/documents/68586/default/)

See also: [Paying more for less: Councils to cut services even as tax bills rise after Covid](https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/127/public-accounts-committee/news/155615/paying-more-for-less-councils-to-cut-services-even-as-tax-bills-rise-after-covid/)

**Title:** Freedom won’t last if UK doesn’t share excess vaccine doses, aid agencies warn

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1444 | 4th June 2021

Freedom from covid-19 restrictions will be short lived if the UK fails to share its huge supply of vaccine doses with low income countries, Unicef and Wellcome have warned the prime minister.

In an open letter to Boris Johnson the organisations said the UK had secured access to enough doses to vaccinate the entire UK population twice over, while other countries still did not have enough to vaccinate their healthcare workers and the most vulnerable groups.

The UK must now “show the historic leadership needed to end this crisis” and share at least 20% of its available doses between now and August, they said, and should call on the other G7 countries to commit to sharing one billion doses in 2021 and to fully fund the Access to Covid-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, launched by the World Health Organisation to accelerate the development of tests, treatments, and vaccines and to ensure their equitable distribution.

Full detail: [Freedom won’t last if UK doesn’t share excess vaccine doses, aid agencies warn](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1444)

**Title:** UK has highest vaccine confidence and Japan and South Korea the lowest, survey finds

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1439 | 4th June 2021

The UK population has the highest confidence in covid-19 vaccines and its health authorities, while Japan and South Korea have the lowest, a survey of 15 countries shows.

Carried out by Imperial College London and YouGov between March and May 2021, the survey included more than 68 000 people from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the US. It found that in 13 of the 15 countries more than 50% of people were confident in covid-19 vaccines and in 10 countries more than 50% were confident that their health authorities would provide them with an effective vaccine.

Almost nine in 10 people in the UK (87%) said they trusted the vaccines, while 83% said the same in Israel. But in South Korea and Japan just 47% said they trusted the vaccines.

Full detail: [UK has highest vaccine confidence and Japan and South Korea the lowest, survey finds](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1439)

Related: [Global attitudes towards a covid-19 vaccine](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/institute-of-global-health-innovation/GlobalVaccineInsights_ICL-YouGov-Covid-19-Behaviour-Tracker_20210520_v2.pdf) | Imperial College London

**Title:** Work from home—Work engagement amid COVID-19 lockdown and employee happiness

Journal of Public Affairs | 9th June 2021

The lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the need for many companies to reorganize their work and, consequently, shift some components to a WFH format. While working from home is not an entirely new concept, the suddenness and the magnitude of the shift were probably new for the majority of businesses and employees.

The findings from this study led to two main outcomes. First, the results from the study point toward the role of autonomy, convenience, and safety in influencing WFH work engagement. The second outcome has more relevance for employees, as it deals with their psychosocial well-being. Both outcomes, if viewed in totality, indicate that the post-COVID WFH mode, if handled and designed properly, may benefit organizations as well as employees.

The results from this study can be very useful for organizations in the post-COVID world of work when they begin focusing on designing initiatives or developing programs to foster employee engagement.

Full detail: [Work from home—Work engagement amid COVID-19 lockdown and employee happiness](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pa.2709)

**Title:** Does vaccinating adults stop kids from spreading COVID too?

Nature | 10th June 2021

Unvaccinated children seem to be reaping the benefits of mass COVID-19 vaccination programmes in many parts of the world. Infections in children have fallen as adults get their shots. But as this article explains, experts disagree on whether this means that unvaccinated children are unlikely to become a ‘reservoir’ for infection — and a potential hotbed for the emergence of new variants.

Full detail: [Does vaccinating adults stop kids from spreading COVID too?](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01549-z)

**Title:** Should we vaccinate children against SARS-CoV-2?

The Lancet Infectious Diseases | 10th June 2021

Following sharing with regulatory bodies of phase 3 trial data showing that Pfizer-BioNTech's mRNA BNT162b2 vaccine was efficacious, immunogenic, and safe in children aged 12–15 years, several countries have authorised the use of the vaccine in this age group. Reactions to this news have been mixed. Although it is considered likely that children will have to be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 eventually, there is the question of whether now is the right time.

As tis editorial discusses, many public health figures think not, considering that children typically experience only mild illness and many of the world's low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) are reporting vaccine shortages. Countries with enough doses to cover their children might consider donating excess doses to countries that do not have enough vaccine to immunise the extremely vulnerable, older people, and front-line health workers.

Full editorial: [Should we vaccinate children against SARS-CoV-2?](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099%2821%2900339-X/fulltext)

**Title:** Further measures in additional areas to tackle Delta (B1.617.2) variant

Department of Health and Social Care | 8th June 2021

Measures including surge testing, tracing, isolation support and maximising vaccine uptake will be deployed rapidly across Greater Manchester and all Lancashire County Council areas. The new interventions follow extensive COVID-19 surveillance which has detected a number of cases of the Delta (B1.617.2) variant in these communities. Introduction of these additional measures will be led by local authorities to ensure the right steps are taken at the right time. As part of the package, there is extra guidance on steps people can take, such as minimising travel in and out of the affected areas.

Full detail: [Further measures in additional areas to tackle Delta (B1.617.2) variant](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-measures-in-additional-areas-to-tackle-delta-b16172-variant)

**Title:** Managing COVID-19-related mental ill health in primary care

Guidelines in Practice | 28th May 2021

This article looks at mental health during the pandemic in the primary care setting, with a particular focus on the effect of COVID-19 on the experience and management of mental ill health.

The article looks at:

* the balance of positive and negative factors that contributes to mental wellbeing
* the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions on mental health
* assessing and managing mental ill health in the context of COVID-19.

Full detail: [Managing COVID-19-related mental ill health in primary care](https://www.guidelinesinpractice.co.uk/mental-health/managing-covid-19-related-mental-ill-health-in-primary-care/455995.article?utm_source=MGP%20Ltd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12430120_20210605%20GinP%20highlights&dm_i=HEZ,7EF54,W84HTI,U1TDN,1)

**Title:** Neurology and neuropsychiatry of COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the early literature reveals frequent CNS manifestations and key emerging narratives

Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry | 3rd June 2021

There is accumulating evidence of the neurological and neuropsychiatric features of infection with SARS-CoV-2. This systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to describe the characteristics of the early literature and estimate point prevalences for neurological and neuropsychiatric manifestations.

The review found neurological and neuropsychiatric symptoms of COVID-19 in the pandemic’s early phase are varied and common. The researchers found high numbers of patients reporting symptoms of mental health issues like depression (23%) and anxiety (16%).

Neurological symptoms were also commonplace, with the most frequently reported symptoms being a loss of smell (43%), weakness (40%), fatigue (38%), a loss of taste (37%), muscle pain (25%) and headache (21%).

While the majority of studies included in the review focused on severe cases, primarily where people had been admitted to hospital, the researchers surprisingly found similarly high levels of neurological and psychiatric symptoms in those with less severe illness.

Full paper: [Neurology and neuropsychiatry of COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the early literature reveals frequent CNS manifestations and key emerging narratives](https://jnnp.bmj.com/content/jnnp/early/2021/06/03/jnnp-2021-326405.full.pdf)

**Title:** Shift work is associated with positive COVID-19 status in hospitalised patients

Thorax | 10th June 2021

Shift work is associated with lung disease and infections. The authors of this study therefore investigated the impact of shift work on significant COVID-19 illness.

The study concludes that shift work is associated with a higher likelihood of in-hospital COVID-19 positivity. This risk could potentially be mitigated via additional workplace precautions or vaccination.

Full article: [Shift work is associated with positive COVID-19 status in hospitalised patients](https://thorax.bmj.com/content/thoraxjnl/76/6/601.full.pdf)

**Title:** UK and US agree new partnership to fight future pandemics and tackle health inequalities

Department of Health & Social Care | 10th June 2021

The UK and the US governments have agreed a new landmark partnership between the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the US National Centre for Epidemic Forecasting and Outbreak Analysis, run by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to turbocharge efforts to combat global pandemics and emerging health threats.

By bolstering disease surveillance, as well as genomic and variant sequencing capacity worldwide, this partnership will accelerate the recovery from COVID-19 around the world and establish an early warning system to detect diseases – which in turn will help low and middle-income countries that do not yet have the same capabilities.

Full detail: [UK and US agree new partnership to fight future pandemics and tackle health inequalities](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-us-agree-new-partnership-to-fight-future-pandemics-and-tackle-health-inequalities)

**Title:** NHS ahead of target in recovery of elective care, and mental health services back to pre-pandemic levels

NHS England | 10th June 2021

Operations and other routine care are ahead of ambitions set out in April with mental health services back at pre-pandemic levels, NHS figures show. The number of people waiting over 52 weeks to begin treatment dropped by more than 50,000 in April, while by May, operations and other elective activity had already climbed to 90% of pre-pandemic levels.

Services disrupted during the pandemic have continued to recover, with 1.1 million people beginning treatment and 1.8 million diagnostic tests taking place in April. Cancer services have continued to rebound strongly, with more than 200,000 people referred for cancer checks in April following a record high the month before.

The NHS also faced one of its busiest months on record in terms of emergency care in May, with staff responding to more than 800,000 incidents – an increase of over 70,000 from two years previously.

Important steps have been made in restoring mental health services to pre-COVID-19 levels and there has been an increase in the number of patients referred for talking therapies for common disorders such as depression and anxiety. Newly published data on mental health services show that Improving Access to Psychological Therapies referrals significantly increased to 159,140 in March 2021, a rise from 133,365 in February and from 108,330 the year before.

Full detail: [NHS ahead of target in recovery of elective care, and mental health services back to pre-pandemic levels](https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/06/nhs-ahead-of-target-in-recovery-of-elective-care-and-mental-health-services-back-to-pre-pandemic-levels/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+NHSCBoard+%28NHS+England%29)

**Title:** Improving mental health care key to COVID-19 pandemic recovery

OECD | 8th June 2021

The long-lasting COVID-19 crisis and the toll it is taking on mental health has made mental health systems more important than ever. This report provides an in-depth analysis of how well countries are delivering the policies and services that matter for mental health system performance.

The report highlights recent reforms countries have taken to strengthen mental health performance, including by increasing access to mental health care, ensuring that service users take the lead in planning and even delivering services, and prioritising integration and mental health promotion. The report also identifies promising approaches countries should pursue to better meet their populations’ mental health needs. This report sets up a framework for understanding mental health performance through internationally comparable indicators

Full detail: [A New Benchmark for Mental Health Systems. Tackling the Social and Economic Costs of Mental Ill-Health](https://read.oecd.org/10.1787/4ed890f6-en?format=html)

Press release: [Improving mental health care key to COVID-19 pandemic recovery](https://www.oecd.org/health/improving-mental-health-care-key-to-covid-19-pandemic-recovery.htm)

**Title:** With the pandemic far from over, we all need to practice #SummerSense

WHO-Europe | 10th June 2021

Learning from last year’s situation when COVID-19 cases surged in the autumn following a relaxation in measures in the summer, WHO/Europe is launching its #SummerSense campaign. The campaign aims to ensure people can enjoy the warmer months and avoid getting infected with COVID-19, thus maintaining efforts to bring the pandemic to an end sooner.

The #SummerSense campaign focuses on four key areas:

1. Travel and tourism;
2. Sports events, such as the UEFA European Football Championship;
3. Life outside the home, including social gatherings, festivals, weddings and beach holidays;
4. Returning to education, when children and young people go back to schools, colleges, and universities towards the end of the summer.

Full detail: [With the pandemic far from over, we all need to practice #SummerSense](https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/pages/news/news/2021/06/with-the-pandemic-far-from-over%2C-we-all-need-to-practice-summersense)

We

[TRFT Library & Knowledge Service](https://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/) aim to bring together the latest guidelines, research and news on Covid-19 through our [Covid-19 portal](https://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/coronavirus.html). For daily updates on Covid-19 visit our '[Latest Health](https://trfthealthweeklydigest.wordpress.com/)' newsfeed, or use the hashtag [#covid19rftlks](https://twitter.com/hashtag/covid19rftlks?src=hashtag_click) to see our latest tweets on Covid-19 research, guidelines and news.

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