COVID-19 recovery

17th September 2021

**Title:** Universal vaccination of children and young people aged 12 to 15 years against COVID-19

Department of Health and Social Care | 13th September 2021

This letter sets out the UK Chief Medical Officers advice on COVID-19 vaccination of 12 to 15 year olds. They recommend on public health grounds that ministers extend the offer of universal vaccination with a first dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to all children and young people aged 12 to 15 not already covered by existing JCVI advice.

Full detail: [Universal vaccination of children and young people aged 12 to 15 years against COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19)

**Title:** Impact on school absence from COVID-19 vaccination of healthy 12 to 15 year old children

Department of Health and Social Care | 13th September 2021

This note presents a range of initial, scenario-based estimates of school absences due to COVID-19 infections in 12 to 15 year olds in England with and without vaccinating healthy 12 to 15 year olds.

The analysis provided here is scenario-based because of the significant uncertainty in the epidemiological progression of COVID-19. Some of the modelling is highly simplified but this is proportionate given so much uncertainty in the background epidemiology.

Full detail: [Impact on school absence from COVID-19 vaccination of healthy 12 to 15 year old children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-on-school-absence-from-covid-19-vaccination-of-healthy-12-to-15-year-old-children/impact-on-school-absence-from-covid-19-vaccination-of-healthy-12-to-15-year-old-children)

**Title:** Assessing the impact of NHS Test and Trace on COVID-19 transmission

UK Health Security Agency | 13th September 2021

This report estimates the impact directly attributable to NHS Test and Trace by comparing to a counterfactual scenario which assumes that all individuals who tested with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms would self-isolate without ever taking a test, together with their household contacts.

Full detail: [The Canna model: assessing the impact of NHS Test and Trace on COVID-19 transmission](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016865/Canna_Model_Technical_Report__5_.pdf)

**Title:** Considerations in boosting COVID-19 vaccine immune responses

The Lancet | 13th September 2021

An international group of scientists provide an expert review of the evidence to date in this viewpoint in The Lancet

The vaccines that are currently available are safe, effective, and save lives. The limited supply of these vaccines will save the most lives if made available to people who are at appreciable risk of serious disease and have not yet received any vaccine. Even if some gain can ultimately be obtained from boosting, it will not outweigh the benefits of providing initial protection to the unvaccinated. If vaccines are deployed where they would do the most good, they could hasten the end of the pandemic by inhibiting further evolution of variants.

Full detail: [Considerations in boosting COVID-19 vaccine immune responses](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2821%2902046-8)

**Title:** Most vulnerable to be offered COVID-19 booster vaccines

Department of Health and Social Care | 14th September 2021

Millions of vulnerable people are to be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine as the government confirms it has accepted the final advice from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The programme will be rolled out to the same priority groups as previously. This means care home residents, health and social care workers, people aged over 50, those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19, adult carers, and adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals will be prioritised.

However, there will be flexibility in the programme, allowing all those eligible to receive their booster from 6 months after their second doses. This approach will allow more vulnerable people to be given their boosters quicker.

The move will ensure the protection vaccines provide for those most at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will be maintained over the winter months. Data published by ONS yesterday shows people who have not been vaccinated account for around 99% of all deaths involving COVID-19 in England in the first half of this year.

Full detail: [Most vulnerable to be offered COVID-19 booster vaccines](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/most-vulnerable-to-be-offered-covid-19-booster-vaccines-from-next-week)

See also: [Booster doses to be offered to 30 million people in UK](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2261?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_term=hootsuite&utm_content=sme&utm_campaign=usage) | BMJ

**Title:** Protection of BNT162b2 vaccine booster against Covid-19 in Israel

New England Journal of Medicine | 15th September 2021

Since July 30, 2021, more than a million fully vaccinated Israeli residents who were 60 years or age or older have received a third dose of the BNT162b2 mRNA vaccine. As of August 31, the rate of confirmed Covid-19 infection was lower in the booster group than in the nonbooster group by a factor of 11.3, and the rate of severe illness was lower by a factor of 19.5

Full article: [Protection of BNT162b2 vaccine booster against Covid-19 in Israel](https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa2114255?articleTools=true)

**Title:** Safety and Efficacy of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine through 6 Months

New England Journal of Medicine | 15th September 2021

In a multinational, observer-blinded, randomized trial involving 44,165 participants 16 years of age or older and 2264 participants 12 to 15 years of age, the efficacy of the BNT162b2 vaccine was 91% against Covid-19 and 97% against severe disease through 6 months of follow-up. In South Africa, where the beta variant was widespread, vaccine efficacy was 100%. Late toxic effects from the vaccine were not observed.

Full article: [Safety and efficacy of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 vaccine through 6 months](https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa2110345?articleTools=true)

**Title:** COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021

Department of Health & Social Care | 14th September 2021

The Prime Minister has set out the autumn and winter plan for Covid. This has now been followed by the release of the guidance COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021 which sets out a renewed focus on vaccines as the first line of defence, supported by testing, public health advice, and a world-leading variant surveillance system

The document outlines the government’s plans for autumn and winter 2021 for England. It includes the Government’s “Plan A” - a comprehensive approach designed to steer the country through autumn and winter 2021/22. It also outlines a Plan B which would only be enacted if the data suggests further measures are necessary to protect the NHS.

Full document: [COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1017779/COVID-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021.pdf)

See also:

* [Government must act now to stem spread of infection, not when it’s too late, says BMA](https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/government-must-act-now-to-stem-spread-of-infection-not-when-it-s-too-late-says-bma)
* [Government lays out its “plan B” to protect NHS this winter](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2270) | BMJ

**Title:** Act now or hospital admissions could soar, experts tell government

BMJ | 2021; 374: n2285 | 16th September 2021

The NHS in England could see between 2000 and 7000 admissions of people with covid to hospital next month if ministers are too slow to reintroduce precautionary measures, government scientific advisers have warned.

On 14 September the government published its covid-19 response plan for autumn and winter, which pledged to reintroduce a range of precautionary measures—including a legal requirement to wear face coverings, advising people to work from home if they are able to, and mandatory vaccine certification—if a further surge in cases threatens to overwhelm the NHS.

But new modelling from the government’s Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M-O), a subgroup of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), notes that cases, hospital admissions, and deaths from covid are all higher than a year ago despite the success of the vaccination programme.

“If enacted early enough, a relatively light set of measures could be likely be sufficient to curb sustained but slow growth [in admissions],” the group said. “As well as encouraging home working, more light touch measures could include clear messaging that recommends people acting cautiously, more widespread testing, a return to requiring all contacts of cases to isolate, and more mask wearing.”

The UK is currently seeing around 1000 covid hospital admissions a day and has more than 8000 patients in hospital with covid.This compares with around 200 admissions a day and 1000 patients in hospital a year ago. On 5 November 2020, when the second national lockdown came into force in England, the UK had 1500 admissions a day and 14 000 people in hospital with covid.

Further detail: [Act now or hospital admissions could soar, experts tell government](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2285)

Related: [Consensus statement on covid-19](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1017129/S1376_SPI-M-O_Consensus_Statement.pdf) | Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling. Operational sub-group (SPI-M-O), for the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

**Title:** Shielding programme ends for most vulnerable

Department of Health and Social Care | 15th September 2021

The government has agreed to end the requirement for shielding guidance for people previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable.

People previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable will not be advised to shield again, as the government agrees to end the requirement for centralised guidance for these groups following expert clinical advice. The closure of the shielding programme follows a pause to shielding guidance in place since 1 April 2021.

This decision is based on there being far more information available on the virus and what makes individuals more or less vulnerable, the success of the COVID-19 vaccination programme and the emergence of proven treatments, such as dexamethasone and tocilizumab, to support improved outcomes in clinical care pathways.

Full detail: [Shielding programme ends for most vulnerable](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shielding-programme-ends-for-most-vulnerable)

**Title:** Leading Public Services through Covid-19

National Leadership Centre | 14th September 2021

The National Leadership Centre (NLC) supported the Government’s response to COVID-19 by acting as the conduit between Central Government and the NLC’s network of public service leaders. As part of this, the NLC ran a quantitative survey with public service leaders from March to June 2020. The NLC also commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct qualitative research with their network, which ran from July 2020 to March 2021. This report brings together findings from both strands of research.

Full detail: [Leading Public Services through Covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leading-public-services-through-covid-19)

**Title:** HEALTH PROFILE FOR ENGLAND: 2021

Public Health England | 15th September 2021

The 2021 edition of the Health Profile for England provides aa overview of the health of people in England and updates indicators presented in previous reports. It also contains a summary of the wider impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many aspects of health and health inequalities. In addition, the report makes comparisons with health in a selection of other countries (US, Canada, Japan, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland) where possible.

Full detail: [Health Profile for England: 2021](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profile-for-england/hpfe_report.html)

**Title:** Barriers to Wellbeing: Migration and vulnerability during the pandemic

Doctors of the World | University of Birmingham | 13th September 2021

This report reveals that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants reported higher levels of bad health and inadequate housing during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as difficulties registering with a GP and accessing remote healthcare services, suggesting significant unmet healthcare needs.

The report makes a number of policy recommendations aimed at supporting those in vulnerable circumstances in accessing healthcare.

Full detail: [Barriers to Wellbeing: Migration and vulnerability during the pandemic](https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Barriers-to-wellbeing-09.21.pdf)

Press release: [New report reveals the extent of the barriers migrants face accessing healthcare during the pandemic](https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/news/new-report-reveals-the-extent-of-the-barriers-migrants-face-accessing-healthcare-during-the-pandemic/)

**Title:** Long covid must be recognised as occupational disease, says BMA

BMJ | 2021; 374: n2258 | 14th September 2021

The UK government must recognise long covid as an occupational disease and invest in its monitoring, research, and treatment, doctors have said.

In a motion passed at the BMA annual representative meeting, doctors called on the body to “seek the recognition of occupationally acquired acute covid and long covid in doctors as an occupational disease.” They also called for a multidisciplinary approach to the management of long covid that includes primary, specialist, and occupational medicine.

Further detail: [Long covid must be recognised as occupational disease, says BMA](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2258)

**Title:** Daily testing for contacts of individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection and attendance and SARS-CoV-2 transmission in English secondary schools and colleges

The Lancet | 14th September 2021

School-based COVID-19 contacts in England have been asked to self-isolate at home, missing key educational opportunities. This study trialled daily testing of contacts as an alternative to assess whether this resulted in similar control of transmission, while allowing more school attendance.

Daily contact testing of school-based contacts was non-inferior to self-isolation for control of COVID-19 transmission, with similar rates of symptomatic infections among students and staff with both approaches. Infection rates in school-based contacts were low, with very few school contacts testing positive. Daily contact testing should be considered for implementation as a safe alternative to home isolation following school-based exposures.

Full paper: [Daily testing for contacts of individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection and attendance and SARS-CoV-2 transmission in English secondary schools and colleges: an open-label, cluster-randomised trial](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2821%2901908-5)

**Title:** Experiences of maternity care during the COVID-19 pandemic in the North of England

British Journal of Midwifery | 1st September 2021

During 2020, UK maternity services made changes to service delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this study was to explore service users' and their partners' experiences of maternity services in the North of England during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Five major categories were identified: valuing support from health professionals, feeling lost in and let down by the system, the impact of restrictions to partners and others, virtual contact is not the same as in-person contact, and the need for emotional and psychological wellbeing support.

The changes implemented may have compromised mental health and wellbeing in a critical period of vulnerability. Bringing stakeholders together can maximise learning from the emergency measures, to better inform future service provision. Work is needed to better hear from minoritised groups and ensure they are not further marginalised by changes.

Further detail: [Experiences of maternity care during the COVID-19 pandemic in the North of England](https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/abs/10.12968/bjom.2021.29.9.516)

The full article can be requested by Rotherham NHS staff from the [Library & Knowledge Service](https://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/interlibrary-loans.html)

**Title:** health inequalities: the case for a cross-government strategy

Royal College of Physicians | 15th September 2021

The Royal College of Physicians has published a position paper setting out why we need an explicit cross-government strategy to reduce health inequalities to improve population health and address avoidable differences in health access and outcomes between certain groups.

Health inequality was a problem before COVID-19 – with a gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest areas of around 19 years – but the pandemic has tragically demonstrated how these inequalities can have an impact in just a matter of weeks.

The RCP’s new paper on health inequalities looks at a series of case studies which demonstrate how health inequalities affect people’s lives, and makes the case that progress will only be made by looking beyond the role of the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS.

Full paper: [RCP view on health inequalities: the case for a cross-government strategy](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/file/32561/download)

**Title:** COVID-19 and UK family carers: policy implications

The Lancet Psychiatry | October 2021

Informal (unpaid) carers are an integral part of all societies and the health and social care systems in the UK depend on them. Despite the valuable contributions and key worker status of informal carers, their lived experiences, wellbeing, and needs have been neglected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Health Policy brings together a broad range of clinicians, researchers, and people with lived experience as informal carers to share their thoughts on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on UK carers, many of whom have felt abandoned as services closed. It focusses on the carers of children and young people and adults and older adults with mental health diagnoses, and carers of people with intellectual disability or neurodevelopmental conditions across different care settings over the lifespan. The article provides policy recommendations with the aim of improving outcomes for all carers.

Full detail: [COVID-19 and UK family carers: policy implications](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2821%2900206-6)

**Title:** Anxiety, Depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms in Adolescents During the COVID-19 Outbreak and Associated Factors

International Journal of Clinical Practice | 16th September 2021

Outbreaks of infectious diseases have negative effects on mental health. Currently, there is very little information about the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescents and associated factors affecting their mental health. The aim of this study is to determine the severity of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in adolescents during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to investigate the associated factors with these symptoms.

The mean age of participants was 15.06, and 38.3% of the participants were male and 61.7% were female. The rate of participants with moderate or high levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD symptoms was 28%, 37.6% and 28.5%, respectively. High age and living in an urban area were associated with increased anxiety, depression and PTSD symptoms. In addition, female gender was associated with increased depression symptoms, and the presence of COVID-19 in the family or environment was associated with increased anxiety symptoms.

The study shows that adolescents have serious levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic. These results emphasize the need for mental health interventions that are appropriate for the characteristics of this age group.

Full paper: [Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in adolescents during the Covid-19 outbreak and associated factors](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijcp.14880)

**Title:** The willingness of UK adults with intellectual disabilities to take COVID-19 vaccines

Journal of Intellectual Disability Research | 16th September 2021

Given the much greater COVID-19 mortality risk experienced by people with intellectual disabilities (ID), understanding the willingness of people with ID to take a COVID-19 vaccine is a major public health issue.

This paper reports that Eighty-seven per cent of interviewees with ID were willing to take a COVID-19 vaccine, with willingness associated with white ethnicity, having already had a flu vaccine, gaining information about COVID-19 from television but not from social media, and knowing COVID-19 social restrictions rules.

A percentage of 81.7% of surveyed carers of adults with ID with greater needs reported that the person would be willing to take a COVID-19 vaccine, with willingness associated with white ethnicity, having a health condition of concern in the context of COVID-19, having had a flu vaccine, being close to someone who had died due to COVID-19, and having shielded at some point during the pandemic.

Reported willingness to take the COVID-19 vaccine is high among adults with ID in the United Kingdom, with factors associated with willingness having clear implications for public health policy and practice.

Full paper: [The willingness of UK adults with intellectual disabilities to take COVID-19 vaccines](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jir.12884)

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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