COVID-19 recovery

2nd July 2021

**Title:** Working well? How the pandemic changed work for people with health conditions

Centre for Ageing Better | June 2021

This research, conducted over the first year of the pandemic, indicates that employers who were already supportive of workers’ health stepped up during the crisis. However, those who were not supportive continued to fail – to the detriment of already vulnerable employees. To ensure a fully productive recovery, the government must recommit to its work and health agenda, incentivising and supporting more employers to properly support the people who work for them.

Full detail: [Working well? How the pandemic changed work for people with health conditions](https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Working-well.pdf)

**Title:** COVID-19 vaccines have prevented 7.2 million infections and 27,000 deaths

Public Health England | 28th June 2021

New analysis suggests the vaccination programme has prevented between 6.4 and 7.9 million infections and 26,000 and 28,000 deaths in England alone. This is the first analysis giving an estimated number of vaccine-prevented infections, providing further evidence of the staggering impact of the vaccination programme so far.

Press release: [COVID-19 vaccines have prevented 7.2 million infections and 27,000 deaths](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-vaccines-have-prevented-7-2-million-infections-and-27-000-deaths)

Full detail: [PHE monitoring of the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-monitoring-of-the-effectiveness-of-covid-19-vaccination)

**Title:** Pandemic will cast “a long shadow” on mental health, warns England’s CMO

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1655 | 28th June 2021

The covid-19 pandemic will continue to impact mental health and the provision of psychiatric services for a considerable period, England’s chief medical officer has warned.

Speaking at the Royal College of Psychiatrists international congress, held online on 23 June, Chris Whitty stressed that even if the pandemic were to end now, it would cast “a long shadow on mental health, on provision for mental health, on our understanding of disease, and the research elements that will arise from it.”

Whitty said the pandemic had led to considerable fear and public anxiety—particularly at the start of the first wave—and noted the impact of national lockdowns on people’s social support and financial vulnerability. “The mental health elements of the lockdowns and public anxiety were often underplayed,” he told delegates.

Further detail: [Pandemic will cast “a long shadow” on mental health, warns England’s CMO](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1655)

**Title:** Covid-19: GPs urge government to clear up confusion over symptoms

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1654 | 28th June 2021

GPs have called on the government to update the official list of covid-19 symptoms after seeing patients shun tests to check their infection status because they don’t believe they have been infected by SARS-CoV-2. They also said that a public communication campaign was needed to inform the public about the limitations of lateral flow tests and vaccination.

The website of the Covid Symptoms Study being run by the health science company ZOE and King’s College London said the most commonly reported covid-19 symptoms were now headache, runny nose, and sore throat and not fever, cough, and loss of sense of smell or taste, as listed by the government.

Lack of information about this changing profile of symptoms is making dealing with patients difficult and could thwart efforts to control the pandemic, GPs have told *The BMJ*.

Full detail: [Covid-19: GPs urge government to clear up confusion over symptoms](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1654)

**Title:** The government must support communities across the UK to tackle covid-19 long term

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1638 | 28th June 2021

With vaccination programmes driving forward across all four nations of the UK, it is certain that we have made much progress in our efforts to tackle covid-19. Public health professionals know, however, that we are far from the end of our work in tackling the wide ranging impacts of the pandemic.

Many of the problems that we have faced over the past 18 months remain unresolved, and considering that we will live alongside covid-19 for some time—especially as we see new, more potent variants emerge—these problems must be tackled with a sense of purpose and urgency.

This article argues that working with local public health teams is key to delivering an efficient, sustainable strategy.

Full detail: [The government must support communities across the UK to tackle covid-19 long term](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1638)

**Title:** Third vaccine dose boosts immune response but may not be needed, say researchers

BMJ | 2021; 373: n1659 | 29th June 2021

The interval between the first and second doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine can be extended up to 10 months and a third dose of the vaccine provides a strong boost to the immune response, according to preliminary results.

In the preprint, researchers from the University of Oxford reported that extending the interval between the first and second dose to 45 weeks resulted in higher antibody titres. They also found that a third dose given 44 to 45 weeks after the second increased antibody titres further, and that adverse events were lower after the second or third dose than after the first.

Researchers said the results are positive, especially for areas affected by vaccine shortages, as they could provide “greater flexibility in vaccination schedules.” But they said that currently there is no indication that a booster is needed and stressed that the “urgent priority” is to ensure people around the world receive their first dose.

Further detail: [Third vaccine dose boosts immune response but may not be needed, say researchers](https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1659)

Full pre-print: [Tolerability and immunogenicity after a late second dose or a third dose of chadox1 ncov-19 (azd1222)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3873839)

**Title:** Most vulnerable could be offered booster COVID-19 vaccines from September

Department of Health & Social Care | 30th June 2021

Millions of people most vulnerable to COVID-19 may be offered a booster vaccination from September to ensure the protection they have from first and second doses is maintained ahead of the winter and against new variants, following interim advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The JCVI’s interim advice is to plan to offer COVID-19 booster vaccines from September 2021, in order to prolong the protection that vaccines provide in those who are most vulnerable to serious COVID-19 ahead of the winter months. The 2-stage programme would take place alongside the annual flu vaccination programme.

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

Related report: [JCVI interim advice on a potential coronavirus (COVID-19) booster vaccine programme for winter 2021 to 2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-interim-advice-on-a-potential-coronavirus-covid-19-booster-vaccine-programme-for-winter-2021-to-2022)

**Title:** Prevention and Attenuation of Covid-19 with the BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273 Vaccines

New England Journal of Medicine | 30th June 2021

In a study involving 3975 health care personnel, first responders, and other essential workers, the effectiveness of mRNA vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 infection was 91% with full vaccination. The vaccines attenuated the viral RNA load, febrile symptoms, and illness duration among those who became infected despite vaccination.

Full paper: [Prevention and attenuation of Covid-19 with the BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273 vaccines](https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa2107058?articleTools=true)

**Title:** Safety and Efficacy of NVX-CoV2373 Covid-19 Vaccine

New England Journal of Medicine | 30th June 2021

In a phase 3 trial involving more than 15,000 participants, two doses of NVX-CoV2373, a recombinant SARS-CoV-2 nanoparticle vaccine, administered 21 days apart had a vaccine efficacy of 89.7%. and showed high efficacy against the B.1.1.7 variant. Reactogenicity was generally mild and transient, and adverse events were infrequent and of low grade.

Full paper: [Safety and efficacy of NVX-CoV2373 Covid-19 vaccine](https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa2107659?articleTools=true)

**Title:** Safety, tolerability, and immunogenicity of an inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine (CoronaVac) in healthy children and adolescents: a double-blind, randomised, controlled, phase 1/2 clinical trial

The Lancet Infectious Diseases | 28th June 2021

A vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 for children and adolescents will play an important role in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic. Here we aimed to assess the safety, tolerability, and immunogenicity of a candidate COVID-19 vaccine, CoronaVac, containing inactivated SARS-CoV-2, in children and adolescents aged 3–17 years.

CoronaVac was well tolerated and safe and induced humoral responses in children and adolescents aged 3–17 years. Neutralising antibody titres induced by the 3·0 μg dose were higher than those of the 1·5 μg dose. The results support the use of 3·0 μg dose with a two-immunisation schedule for further studies in children and adolescents.

Full paper: [Safety, tolerability, and immunogenicity of an inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine (CoronaVac) in healthy children and adolescents: a double-blind, randomised, controlled, phase 1/2 clinical trial](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S1473-3099%2821%2900319-4)

**Title:** Comparative performance of SARS-CoV-2 lateral flow antigen tests and association with detection of infectious virus in clinical specimens: a single-centre laboratory evaluation study

The Lancet Microbe | 30th June 2021

Lateral flow devices (LFDs) for rapid antigen testing are set to become a cornerstone of SARS-CoV-2 mass community testing, although their reduced sensitivity compared with PCR has raised questions of how well they identify infectious cases. Understanding their capabilities and limitations is, therefore, essential for successful implementation. This study evaluated six commercial LFDs and assessed their correlation with infectious virus culture and PCR cycle threshold (Ct) values.

In this comprehensive comparison of antigen LFDs and virus infectivity, the authors found a clear relationship between Ct values, quantitative culture of infectious virus, and antigen LFD positivity in clinical samples. The data support regular testing of target groups with LFDs to supplement the current PCR testing capacity, which would help to rapidly identify infected individuals in situations in which they would otherwise go undetected.

Full paper: [Comparative performance of SARS-CoV-2 lateral flow antigen tests and association with detection of infectious virus in clinical specimens: a single-centre laboratory evaluation study](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2666-5247%2821%2900143-9)

**Title:** Could expanding the covid-19 case definition improve the UK’s pandemic response?

BMJ | 2021; 374: n1625 | 1st July 2021

This BMJ analysis evaluates the potential opportunities and challenges of expanding the symptom list linked to self-isolation and testing as vaccines are rolled out.

Key messages:

* Covid-19 is associated with a wide range of symptoms
* Many patients do not experience the UK’s official case defining symptoms, initially, or ever, and other symptoms often manifest earlier
* Limiting the symptomatic testing to those with these official symptoms will miss or delay identification of many covid-19 cases, hampering efforts to interrupt transmission
* Expanding the clinical case definition of covid−19, the criteria for self-isolation, and eligibility for symptomatic testing could improve the UK’s pandemic response
* Dynamic targeting based on data could avoid overloading resources

Full detail: [Could expanding the covid-19 case definition improve the UK’s pandemic response?](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n1625)

**Title:** Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives

Institute of Health Equity | 30th June 2021

The Manchester City Region had a 25 per cent higher Covid-19 death rate than England as a whole in the 13 months to March 2021. This high death rate contributed to a decline in life expectancy in the North West region, which was larger than the average in England. Life expectancy fell in 2020 by 1.6 years for men and 1.2 years for women in the North West compared 1.3 years and 0.9 years, respectively, across England.

This report includes recommendations on how to reduce health inequities and build back fairer from the Covid-19 pandemic for future generations.

Full report: [Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-health-equity-and-dignified-lives/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-main-report.pdf)

Briefing note: [Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-health-equity-and-dignified-lives-briefing-note/build-back-fairer-in-greater-manchester-briefing-note.pdf)

Press release: [New bold & ambitious framework to reduce inequities & build back fairer for future generations](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/in-the-news/press-releases-and-briefings-/new-bold-ambitious-framework-to-reduce-inequities-build-back-fairer-for-future-generations-if-government-is-serious-about-levelling-up-heres-how-to-do-it-says-marmot)

**Title:** A panoramic view of the pandemic’s impact on our health

The Health Foundation | 29th June 2021

The Health Foundation’s COVID-19 impact inquiry began in October 2020, exploring the pandemic's implications for health and health inequalities in the UK. Since then, the inquiry team has been gathering evidence from a wide range of sources. The resulting report, due to publish next week, will provide a comprehensive review of the factors that affected people’s experiences of the pandemic and led to the UK’s devastating COVID-19 death toll. It also sets out what is needed to improve the nation’s health and shines a light on the immediate issue of recovery.

This Q & A piece explores the work that’s gone on behind the scenes to gather and analyse a wealth of important evidence and build a detailed picture of the pandemic’s impact on our country.

Full detail: [A panoramic view of the pandemic’s impact on our health](https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/newsletter-features/a-panoramic-view-of-the-pandemics-impact-on-our-health)

**Title:** General Practice Covid 19 Recovery: The power of relationships: what is relationship-based care and why is it important

Royal College of General Practitioners | June 2021

This report sets out to define what is meant by relationship-based care - “care in which the processes and outcomes of care are enhanced by a high quality relationship between doctor and patient” - what the evidence tells us about its benefits for patients, GPs and the wider health system and why it needs to be reinvigorated.

COVID-19, and particularly the rise of remoting consulting, has posed challenges for the delivery of effective relationship-based care, and this report argues that relationships between GPs and patients must be prioritised as choices are made about what the service should look like post-pandemic.

Full report: [General Practice Covid 19 Recovery: The power of relationships: what is relationship-based care and why is it important](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/Policy/power-of-relationships-rcgp-2021.ashx?la=en)

Press release: [General practice COVID-19 recovery: the power of relationships](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/policy/general-practice-covid-19-power-of-relationships.aspx)

**Title:** A systematic review of persistent symptoms and residual abnormal functioning following acute COVID-19: Ongoing symptomatic phase vs. post-COVID-19 syndrome

MedRxiv | 30th June 2020

The objective of this sytematic review was to compare the two phases of long COVID, namely ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 (OSC; signs and symptoms from 4 to 12 weeks from initial infection) and post-COVID-19 syndrome (PCS; signs and symptoms beyond 12 weeks) with respect to symptomatology, abnormal functioning, psychological burden, and quality of life.

The prevalences of OSC and PCS were highly variable. Reported symptoms covered a wide range of body systems, with general overlap in frequencies between the two phases. However, abnormalities in lung function and imaging seemed to be more common in OSC, whilst anxiety, depression, and poor quality of life seemed more frequent in PCS. In general, the quality of the evidence was moderate and further research is needed to better understand the complex interplay of somatic versus psychosocial drivers in long COVID.

Full paper: [A systematic review of persistent symptoms and residual abnormal functioning following acute COVID-19: Ongoing symptomatic phase vs. post-COVID-19 syndrome](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.25.21259372v1)

**Title:** Sharing Technology and Vaccine Doses to Address Global Vaccine Inequity and End the COVID-19 Pandemic

JAMA | 1st July 2021

This Viewpoint offers three strategies to address inequity in pandemic vaccine response: surge funding, increased funding, and an agreement to share technology and allow countries to waive intellectual property rights in global public health emergencies.

Full detail: [Sharing technology and vaccine doses to address global vaccine inequity and end the Covid-19 pandemic](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2781756)

**Title:** Ethical Considerations of Offering Benefits to COVID-19 Vaccine Recipients

JAMA | 1st July 2021

This Viewpoint discusses why offering incentives for COVID-19 vaccination is not only ethical, but an important tool in increasing vaccine uptake, which benefits society as a whole.

Full detail: [Ethical considerations of offering benefits to Covid-19 vaccine recipients](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2781755)

**Title:** Alcohol-Related Diseases Increased as Some People Drank More During the COVID-19 Pandemic

JAMA | 30th June 2021

This Medical News feature examines the association between changes in alcohol use patterns during the pandemic and increases in alcohol-associated diseases.

Full detail: [Alcohol-related diseases increased as some people drank more during the Covid-19 pandemic](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2781739)

We

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