

Government data shows mass events can take place safely but fans urged to remain cautious in crowds and get vaccinated

Data from NHS Test and Trace shows that mass participation events can be conducted safely, but caution must still be taken around specific aspects of event participation.

The data, drawn from a range of the 37 trial events that have formed the Events Research Programme over a four month period, has shown that case numbers were largely in line with or below community infection rates for the duration of the programme.

However, a cautious approach should be taken at unstructured events involving attendees being in close proximity for extended periods of time, when spectators are at high-density pinch points at venues, when travelling to and from events, and when mixing indoors before, during and after events.

Figures published today show that 585 cases were recorded by NHS Test and Trace at the time of the British Grand Prix, which hosted the largest crowd in the UK in over 18 months with over 350,000 people in attendance across three days.

When broken down, the 585 cases from the Grand Prix show that 343 of those cases were likely to have already been infectious around the time of the event, while 242 cases are from people likely to have acquired an infection around the time of the event.

In England over this period 1.36-1.57% of people were testing positive for COVID-19, which equates to between 1/75 to 1/65 people.

Data from The Wimbledon Championships, which hosted around 300,000 people over a two week period, recorded 881 cases through NHS Test and Trace.

This data breaks down to 299 cases that were likely to have already been infectious around the time of the event, with 582 cases likely to have acquired an infection around the time of the event. In England over this time period 0.31-1.36% of people were testing positive for COVID-19, which equates to between 1/320 and 1/75 people.

The data from these two events, alongside the majority of others conducted as part of the Events Research Programme, demonstrate that mass participation events can be conducted safely, with case numbers comparable to, or lower than community prevalence. It is however, important to note that when observing this data, assumptions cannot be made that transmission definitely happened at the event, nor that individuals became infected at the time of

their attendance at an event.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We've shown that we can reintroduce mass sports and cultural events safely but it is important that people remain cautious when mixing in very crowded settings.

So that we can keep the football season, theatres and gigs safe with full crowds this winter, I urge sport, music and culture fans to get the vaccine as this is the safest way we can get big events firing on all cylinders once more.

Health Minister, Lord Bethell, said:

Data is our greatest weapon in the fight against the pandemic, and these pilots inform our approach to mass events, now and in the future.

These events and the passion of supporters brought joy to millions of people across the country. But the reports make it clear that they also reinforce the need for us to not let our guard down. We all need to comply with the advice accompanying major events to keep everyone safe and so everyone can safely enjoy these important occasions. We can all keep doing our bit by getting tested regularly and getting the vaccine.

The two EURO 2020 matches on July 7 and 11 were events of national significance in England. They took place during a period of higher underlying community prevalence, and drew significant numbers of ticketless individuals to the area surrounding Wembley Stadium, likely contributing to the increased infections data around these events.

The associated Public Health England / NHS Test and Trace data for the EURO 2020 final shows that 2,295 people in or around the stadium were likely to have been infectious at the time of the event, with an additional 3,404 people in and around the stadium potentially acquiring infection around the time of the event.

Dr Jenifer Smith, Deputy Medical Director, Public Health England, said:

EURO 2020 was a unique occasion and it is unlikely we would see a similar impact on COVID-19 cases from future events.

However, the data does show how easily the virus can spread when there is close contact and this should be a warning to us all as we try and return to a cautious normality once again. When attending large events there are actions we can all take to help reduce the

risk. These include: getting both doses of the vaccine as soon as you can, wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces such as on public transport on your way, and if you are catching up with friends before an event, consider doing so outdoors to reduce the risk of the virus spreading.

Please do not attend events if you have symptoms – you must isolate and get a test as soon as possible. If you are a contact of a confirmed case and have had both doses of the vaccine, although you don't need to isolate you should still get a PCR test and limit socialising to keep your loved ones and the wider community safe.

The significant numbers of people seen outside Wembley Stadium at the Euro 2020 Final, and the events taking place under Step 4 are likely to make comparisons with the other ERP events misleading. As set out in the PHE research paper, while useful for informing the approach to managing risks at major sports events, these games are not considered typical of standard sporting events and should not be used as comparators.

On the days of England's latter EURO 2020 matches, data published by PHE shows there were subsequent spikes in cases across the country. The data shows that individuals tested positive reported participating in a variety of activities including visiting bars, pubs, other households and eating out on match days. This data highlights the need for members of the public to remain cautious in all settings, whether that be at an event, in homes, pubs or bars when coming together with family, friends or other members of the public.

The Latitude and Tramlines festivals took place after Step 4 of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown on July 21, when community prevalence rates were higher. The data published from these events shows they have been associated with a higher number of cases (over 1,000 per event) through NHS Test and Trace data.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- Additional reporting from Phase II and Phase III of the Events Research Programme is continuing to be compiled by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Public Health England and Department for Health and Social Care and science and research reports will be published in due course.
- Following the publication of the Phase I report, Phases II and III of the ERP have looked specifically at testing the safety of events at increasing size and scale, with greater crowd numbers present. Events participating in the latter two phases included the EURO 2020 matches at Wembley Stadium, the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, performances at the Piccadilly Theatre in London and music festivals, including Download, Tramlines and Latitude.
- The ERP has demonstrated how certification can be effectively implemented at large events via the NHS COVID Pass. These events

generated valuable insights resulting in improvements in the NHS COVID Pass to make the services as easy as possible to use.

- The data published today outlines the mitigations that were employed for each event, attendance numbers, NHS Test and Trace data recorded at the time of the event, proportion of venue space used and research studies conducted for all phases of the ERP. It also provides comparator data that shows the level of community prevalence in England at the time.
- See the full Events Research Programme [Data Dashboard](#).
- Read the Events Research Programme Phase I [report](#).
- Find the full list of [events in the ERP](#).
- Read the [‘Public Health Impact of Mass Sporting and Cultural Events in a rising COVID-19 prevalence in England’](#) paper.