

UK Health Security Agency to take on the modelling of the R value and growth rate

There will be no meaningful change to either the modelling or [publication of this data](#).

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will use an almost identical process to that used by SPI-M to model the R value and growth rates for England, NHS regions and the devolved administrations with individual SPI-M groups continuing to support and contribute to the modelling.

The reproduction number (R) is the average number of secondary infections produced by a single infected person, while the growth rate reflects how quickly the numbers of infections are changing day by day. Together they help scientists and the public understand the spread of the disease.

These metrics will be consolidated into UKHSA's existing analysis to inform local and national decision making in response to coronavirus outbreaks.

SPI-M will continue to support the government as an operational subgroup of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and advise on infectious disease modelling and epidemiology to assist the government response to coronavirus (COVID-19) and beyond.

This will also allow many academics who have volunteered significant amounts of their own time to return to their usual research. UKHSA's epidemiological modelling will complement the work of SAGE and support their continuing scientific work.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA said:

We are very grateful for SAGE and SPI-M's enormous effort and commitment during a period of exceptional need. They have truly gone above and beyond to support the provision of robust data to the government throughout the pandemic.

It is now only right that government scientists and epidemiologists take over operational pandemic monitoring, such as assessment of the R value.

UKHSA has a wealth of experience in scientific modelling and data science. We have worked very closely with SPI-M on our modelling approach and we are pleased to be taking this on alongside our wider pandemic modelling and surveillance work, including close monitoring of the impact of easing restrictions.

Professor Graham Medley, Co-chair of SPI-M said:

The modellers on SPI-M have been supporting SAGE and UK Governments since January 2020, and I want to thank them for volunteering their time and expertise. I am pleased that we are now able to hand over the responsibility of producing R value and growth rate estimates to UKHSA.

SPI-M has worked with UKHSA closely in the past months, and will continue to do so, and we are confident that they have the knowledge and expertise to continue and develop our work.

We will continue to support the government with scientific advice in their response to COVID-19.

UKHSA will estimate R value and growth rate estimates for all 4 nations of the UK, but the devolved administrations will continue to publish estimates for their own nations. In Northern Ireland, the R value is produced by the COVID-19 modelling group on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care.

It's important to remember that R and growth rates are not the only important measures of the pandemic and should be considered in the context of other metrics, such as estimates of prevalence, case rates, hospitalisations and vaccinations.

[Animal medicine seizure notice: Dr Grant, West Wickham, Kent](#)

News story

Details of the seizure notice served to Dr Paul Grant, West Wickham, Kent during an investigation case undertaken by Defra Investigation Services (DIS)



The following products were seized by a DIS investigator as part of an investigation case looking into prescription fraud.

- 120 x Hydroxychloroquine sulfate 200mg film coated tablets – unopened

This product is a human prescription only medicine.

The medicines were seized under Regulation 26 (Possession of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013

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[Civil/crime news: launch of web chat pilot for providers](#)

News story

We will be evaluating a live web chat service on our training website from Monday 26 July to Friday 22 October.



Providers now have a new web chat service which we will be evaluating between 26 July and 22 October, 2021.

The new service is available for both civil and crime providers from 9am to 5pm on weekdays.

It gives providers a new option for contacting the Legal Aid Agency.

Why is this happening now?

Feedback from our providers suggests that 96% would use the service and 100% believe the web chat would be very useful to them.

What happens during the pilot?

We'll review how well the service is being used and how effective it is in helping providers. We can then decide on the future of the new web chat tool.

How can I access the service?

You will just need to click on the 'start chat' button available on the training website. You will then be directed to a civil or crime customer services agent:

[Training and support website](#) – use the 'start chat' button.

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Statement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in Response to Preliminary Conclusions from the High Court on the Omagh Judicial Review

News story

Preliminary conclusions on the Omagh Judicial Review were unveiled at the High Court today. A statement from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis MP, is below.



Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis said:

The Omagh bombing was a terrible atrocity that caused untold damage to the families of the 29 people who were tragically killed and the

220 who were injured. The reverberations of that awful event were felt not just in Northern Ireland, but across the world.

I want to put on record my deep regret that the families of those killed and wounded have had to wait so long to find out what happened on that terrible day in 1998. They deserve answers and I have great respect for their patience, grace and determination.

We recognise that today the Court has set out that there are 'plausible allegations that there was a real prospect of preventing the Omagh bombing' and that more should be done to investigate this.

The UK Government will take time to consider the judge's statement and all its recommendations carefully as we wait for the full judgment to be published.

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[100 days until COP26 summit begins in Scotland](#)

News story

Scottish Secretary urges world leaders to commit to urgent action on climate change.



Marking the 100 day countdown to the start of the COP26 UN climate change conference in Glasgow, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

We are now just 100 days from the crucial COP26 event in Glasgow, where world leaders must commit to protecting our planet by doing more to tackle the urgent threat of global climate change.

As the countdown begins to the biggest summit the UK has ever hosted, every country, business and part of society must embrace their responsibility to slash greenhouse gas emissions.

The UK Government is setting a high bar for other countries to follow as we build back greener from the pandemic. This includes the Prime Minister's ten point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, which will help us reach our net zero commitments and create thousands of highly-skilled jobs.

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