

Latest REACT-1 study findings show COVID-19 infection rates three times lower for double vaccinated people

- Interim findings covering 24 June to 5 July from Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI show infections have quadrupled since the last REACT-1 study, which took place from 20 May to 7 June, with 1 in 170 people infected and a recent doubling time of 6 days.
- Infection rates for double vaccinated under-65s are three times lower than in unvaccinated under-65s, demonstrating the impact of the vaccination roll out.
- Cases expected to continue rising as society opens up, with people urged to remain cautious and exercise personal responsibility

Interim findings from the latest report of REACT-1, one of the country's largest studies into COVID-19 infections in England, have been published today (Thursday 8 July) by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI.

Over 47,000 volunteers returned PCR tests in England between 24 June and 5 July to examine the levels of COVID-19 in the general population. The latest data show infections in England have increased fourfold from 0.15% to 0.59% since the last REACT-1 report which covered 20 May to 7 June.

The main findings from the first half of the thirteenth round of the REACT-1 study show:

- overall prevalence nationally is substantially higher in round 13 interim (swabs taken 24 June to 5 July) than round 12 (swabs taken 20 May to 7 June), rising from 0.15% to 0.59% – an approximately fourfold increase with around 1 in 170 people testing positive;
- continued exponential growth in prevalence with an average doubling time of 15 days between round 12 (swabs taken 20 May – 7 June) and round 13;
- however, during the first half of round 13 only, there was a doubling time of 6.1 days with a corresponding R value of 1.87;
- there have been substantial increases in all age groups under the age of 75 years, and especially at younger ages, with the highest prevalence for 13 to 17 years at 1.33% and 18 to 24 years at 1.40%;
- infections have increased in all regions with the largest increase in London, where prevalence has increased more than eightfold from 0.13% in round 12 to 1.08% in round 13;
- in people aged 64 or younger, the prevalence of infection among those who had received two doses of vaccine was 0.35% compared with 1.15% among those who had not received any vaccine, demonstrating the impact of the vaccination rollout;
- prevalence is increasing to a lesser extent among those vaccinated, rising from 0.06% in people aged 65 and above who reported receiving two doses in round 12, to 0.24% in the same group in round 13.

The latest data from Public Health England (PHE) shows that our vaccination programme has saved over 27,000 lives and has prevented over 7 million people from getting COVID-19. It also shows that both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine can reduce symptomatic infection by almost 80%.

All those aged 18 and over can book their vaccination through the NHS booking service, and second doses are being accelerated by reducing the dosing interval from 12 weeks to 8 weeks.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As we unlock society and learn to live with COVID-19, we will inevitably see cases rise significantly over coming weeks. But today's finding show that infection rates are three times lower for those who have had two vaccine doses.

It is more important than ever to get that life-saving second jab so we can continue to weaken the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths and build a wall of defence against the virus.

As we move from regulations to guidance and get back to our everyday lives, see our loved ones and return to work, it is vital people practice good sense and take personal responsibility for their own health and those around them.

COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

It is hugely encouraging to see the vaccination rollout is having a significant impact on stopping the spread of the virus. Almost two thirds of adults – 64% – have had both doses, and so have got the fullest protection on offer.

I urge everyone to get their first and second dose when invited, as every jab helps to curb transmission and serious illness. The small number of people who are double jabbed and experience symptoms should continue to get tested so we all play our part to stop the spread of this awful virus.

On Monday 5 July, the government confirmed that step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown will go ahead on 19 July if its four tests are met, which means all current legal limits on social interactions and restrictions on large events, performances and life events will be lifted. Face coverings will also no longer be mandatory indoors although guidance will suggest where people might

choose to wear one.

The Prime Minister also made clear that cases are expected to rise as society opens up. He urged people to remain cautious and to get their vaccine when called, with the latest data showing the vaccination programme has weakened the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths.

Professor Paul Elliott, director of the REACT programme from Imperial's School of Public Health, said:

In spite of the successful rollout of the vaccination programme, we are still seeing rapid growth in infections, especially among younger people.

However, it is encouraging to see lower infection prevalence in people who have had both doses of a vaccine. It is therefore essential that as many people as possible take up both vaccine doses when offered.

Kelly Beaver, Managing Director, Public Affairs at Ipsos MORI said:

It looks very likely that the prevalence of COVID-19 will continue to rise as the country is unlocked further, but there are encouraging signs that the vaccine programme is working. These findings reiterate the importance of getting vaccinated. We are very grateful to all the research participants across England for their contribution to this study.

Restrictions in schools will also come to an end. 'Bubbles' will no longer be required for all children under 18, social distancing will no longer be necessary, and schools will not need to stagger start and finish times, though they can continue with existing arrangements until the end of term if they wish.

This report is the latest from the REACT-1 study which was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care and carried out by a world-class team of scientists, clinicians and researchers at Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and Ipsos MORI.

Robust population surveillance studies like this are essential to understanding the rate of COVID-19 infection, how the virus is spreading across the country and the impact of measures taken to contain the virus in order to inform current and future actions.

- More information on the Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT) programme of work can be found [here](#)
- This study falls under Pillar 4 of the Covid-19 National Testing

Programme, which focuses on mass surveillance in the general population.

Plan for jobs one year on: Chancellor visits Wolverhampton as over a million West Midlands jobs protected through the pandemic

- Latest figures show the UK Government has supported over 1.2 million jobs and individuals in the West Midlands since the pandemic began – and more than a third of the working population nationwide
- Statistics revealed on one-year anniversary of Plan for Jobs – with Chancellor Rishi Sunak visiting four businesses in Wolverhampton which have benefited
- Part of unprecedented £352 billion support package which helped safeguard jobs, businesses and public services in every region and nation of the UK

Since the beginning of the crisis, the government has rolled out one of the most generous packages of support in the world to safeguard businesses and livelihoods across the UK – including the furlough and self-employment support schemes which have helped 1.2 million West Midlands workers.

Yesterday (7 July) the Chancellor visited four businesses in Wolverhampton which have benefited from the government support as part of the Plan for Jobs. These include three companies which taken on new staff through the government's Kickstart scheme which provides funding to employers to create jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit.

The companies visited by the Chancellor were Robinson's Manufacturing, which makes high-quality timber products and has taken on 30 new workers, Arnold Clark, the UK's biggest independently-owned car retailer, which has taken on 7, and the Wolverhampton branch of PureGym, the UK's largest gym company, which put 2,700 workers on furlough, protecting their jobs.

The Chancellor also visited Wolverhampton Art Gallery, which received a £160,000 Capital Kickstart grant as part of the government £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, that has helped cultural organisations across the country.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

This time last year we faced a potential tidal wave of job losses with the UK on the brink of a financial crisis like no other in history.

But we made a Plan for Jobs, we stuck to that plan and it's working – supporting more than 14.5 million jobs to date and helping people in Wolverhampton, the West Midlands and across the UK gain the skills they need to get back into work.

We know the job is not yet done and our economy needs to recover – which is why we are continuing our support to give everyone the best chance of moving on from this crisis.

Exactly a year ago today, Chancellor Rishi Sunak set out the government's Plan for Jobs – an ambitious blueprint to protect, support and create jobs across the UK and help people gain the skills they need to get into work through scheme such Kickstart, apprenticeships and traineeships which have helped businesses throughout the West Midlands.

Rebecca Passmore, UK Managing Director of PureGym, said:

The last year has been devastating for PureGym but we are delighted to now be open so our members can work out and progress their health and wellbeing journey. The furlough scheme was a real lifeline for PureGym enabling us to effectively mothball the business so that we could preserve jobs and then ramp up operations as restrictions eased.

Looking ahead, we are delighted to be trading in our 287 gyms across the UK, which includes 14 brand new facilities that opened since April, with more to come. We have seen incredible demand from existing and new members since re-opening underscoring the increasing importance the public place on their health and fitness.

Pauline Marshall, GTG Group Commercial Operations Manager said:

After a challenging year, we launched our Kickstart Scheme because we wanted to use our facilities, experience and skills to help young unemployed adults improve their chances of finding long-term work. Our aim has always been to invest in the future workforce; to help people learn the skills they need to enjoy successful careers in the automotive, transport and health and safety industries. We're always thinking of new and innovative ways to meet the needs of our apprentices, clients, delegates and staff, and we hope to continue this success in the future.

City of Wolverhampton Council Director for Regeneration, Richard Lawrence, said:

City of Wolverhampton Council has a five-year plan to bring the very best art, music and sport to Wolverhampton to boost the city's economy, create new jobs, give visitors an experience to remember and build an outstanding cultural reputation.

Culture forms a key part of our Covid recovery strategy and the improvements to Wolverhampton Art Gallery will ensure it remains a major attraction and provides new opportunities.

One of the first events the new-look Wolverhampton Art Gallery will welcome is the prestigious British Art Show 9 in January 2022 – kicking-off a bumper year of major events in the city, including the Commonwealth Games cycling time trial, Creation Day Festival in West Park, Wolverhampton Literature Festival and big-name gigs at the newly refurbished Civic Halls.

As part of an unprecedented £352 billion support package, the Plan for Jobs has supported and created jobs across the country.

Across the UK, 11.6 million jobs have been protected through the furlough scheme and 2.9 million self-employed workers have received £25.2 billion in government grants. 1.06 million of those jobs were in the West Midlands, with 224,000 self-employed workers in the region receiving self-employment grants.

The £2 billion Kickstart scheme is helping to create new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the UK.

Further information

- Read more about the Plan for Jobs at gov.uk/planforjobs
- Photos of the Chancellor's Wolverhampton visit will be available [here](#)
- 33.1m is the UK's working population

The 1.2 million jobs and individuals protected in the West Midlands breaks down as follows:

- 1.06 million employments furloughed
- 224,000 self-employed individuals receiving government grants

The breakdown of the 14.5 million individuals and jobs protected nationwide is as follows:

- 11.6 million employments furloughed
- 2.9 million self-employed individuals supported with government grants

- 8,800 traineeship starts recorded in the first two quarters of 2020/21
 - 65,000 people in England and Scotland have enrolled in the Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) since March 2020
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Asymptomatic testing backed by new research studies

- Latest data shows most widely used LFD tests are effective at detecting the Delta variant – now the most widely transmitted strain of COVID-19.
- Studies find accuracy of tests remains high whether it is performed by an experienced or inexperienced user.

Findings from [three studies](#) on the real-world use of rapid tests, known as lateral flow devices (LFDs), have confirmed their effectiveness under a variety of conditions, demonstrating the reliability and adaptability of these tests.

The three research papers, two of which have been published by the government today (Wednesday 7 July) and one by Liverpool University yesterday, analysed the use of LFDs in a variety of scenarios: against variants of concern; on patients with high or low viral loads; as part of mass testing campaigns; in the hands of inexperienced users and; with different types of swabs.

Alongside the phenomenal scale and breadth of the rollout of the vaccination programme, and the 'Hands, Face, Space' guidance, regular testing is a vital tool in stopping transmission as the country follows the roadmap and starts to reopen.

With around one in three people infected with COVID-19 never developing symptoms, asymptomatic testing allows us to swiftly spot those cases most likely to be infectious. Knowing our rapid tests are effective in identifying the Delta variant means everyone who is currently engaged in regular twice-weekly testing can be confident the test will detect what is now the most common strain in circulation.

UKHSA Chief Executive Dr Jenny Harries:

The UK has now established itself as a powerful testing armoury. Millions of people have been taking lateral flow devices used every week to help us carefully reopen society.

These rapid tests continue to play an integral role in helping us stay on top of this virus by quickly identifying positive cases that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. This enables us to take

swift action, preventing asymptomatic cases from becoming outbreaks.

In vitro and clinical post-market surveillance of Biotime SARS-CoV-2 Lateral Flow Antigen Device in detecting the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant (B.1.617.2)

[Analysis](#) of the Innova LFDs and their ability to detect the Delta (B.1.617.2) and Alpha (B.1.1.7) variants of concern found there was no significant change in the sensitivity of the tests when identifying either variant. The government-commissioned research involved academics and scientists from Queen Mary, University of London, Public Health England and the Nuffield Department of Medicine, at the University of Oxford. It drew upon real-world performance data from between 1 April and 2 June 2021 for the most commonly used brand of LFD in the UK. Real-world testing data from over 2,000 cases of the Delta variant was used to investigate whether LFD tested positivity rates are significantly lower than PCR positivity rates in locations where prevalence of the Delta variant is high.

As new variants surface, standard laboratory-based surveillance and clinical surveillance in real world settings, covered by research like this, will be crucial to ensuring these rapid tests remain a useful tool in tracking COVID-19.

Asymptomatic testing for SARS-CoV-2 using antigen-detecting lateral flow devices

A [second study](#) has analysed the efficacy of rapid tests under different testing conditions and varying patient viral loads by making a statistical comparison of a number of different LFD user evaluation studies. The government-commissioned research drew on seven different user evaluation studies that included over 1,500 people with positive LFD results from a total population of over 18,000, and two professional use studies from PHE.

Research found LFD testing is effective at identifying people with the virus when they are at their most infectious, and that these tests are effective when used regularly, with only a small change in effectiveness between experienced test users like professional laboratory scientists or nurses and inexperienced test users. For nasal-only swabs, the sensitivity at high viral loads was the same (88%) whether administered by experienced or inexperienced users.

In November 2020 the government launched a community testing pilot in Liverpool and the [evaluation of the study](#) has now been published. Drawing on testing data from 48 testing sites across the city from when the pilot first began, the evaluation study shows there was a clear public health value to mass testing campaigns. During the pilot, widespread community testing of asymptomatic individuals resulted in an estimated increase in case detection of 18% when compared to other areas where the pilot was not running. There

was also a 21% reduction in cases up until mid-December when compared with other areas, after which time the surge in the Alpha (B.1.1.7) variant made meaningful comparisons difficult.

Regular, rapid testing is already well established for NHS and care home staff, and the government has also made twice-weekly testing using LFDs available to all. Anyone with symptoms should book a free test online or by phone. People can then go to a testing site or have a kit sent to their home. For those with no symptoms, they should visit their local authority's website for more information.

Additional support in North Tyneside scaled back

Press release

Extra support deployed in North Tyneside on 20 May is being scaled back as latest data shows local enhanced support has helped to slow the initial spread of the Delta variant in the area.



From Tuesday 6 July guidance on taking particular caution when meeting anyone outside a person's household or support bubble and minimising travel in and out of the affected areas will no longer apply in North Tyneside.

To continue to support this effort, everybody living and working in North Tyneside is still strongly encouraged to continue following key behaviours and actions to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This includes Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air and making use of the free, twice-weekly rapid testing offer. North Tyneside council will continue to work with other local authorities across the North East to share learnings and best practice about the extra support in place.

Importantly, all over-18s are advised to come forward for the vaccine as soon as possible, and to get their second dose when able for the fullest possible

protection.

Health Minister, Lord Bethell said:

I want to thank residents and local leaders in North Tyneside who have joined together to help protect their community against the spread of the Delta variant.

Our vaccination programme is building a wall of protection – with 86% of the adult population now vaccinated with one dose – alongside additional testing which is helping us manage the virus and safely reclaim our lost freedoms.

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[Additional support for Leicester scaled back as local spread of COVID-19 slows](#)

Press release

Extra support deployed in Leicester on 20 May is being scaled back as the latest data shows local enhanced support has helped slow the initial spread of the Delta variant in the area.



Following concerted efforts in the past few weeks, led by Leicester City Council and residents living in the area, the rate at which COVID-19 cases are growing is now in line with national and regional rates.

From Tuesday 6 July, guidance on taking additional caution when meeting anyone outside a person's household or support bubble and minimising travel in and out of the affected areas will no longer apply in Leicester.

To continue to support this effort, everybody living and working in Leicester is still strongly encouraged to continue following key behaviours and actions to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This includes Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air and making use of the free, twice-weekly rapid testing offer, even if not showing symptoms.

Importantly, all over-18s are advised to come forward for the vaccine as soon as possible, and to get their second dose when able for the fullest possible protection.

Health Minister, Lord Bethell said:

I want to pay tribute to residents and local leaders in Leicester who have helped to protect their community from the spread of the delta variant.

Our vaccination programme is building a wall of protection – with 86% of the adult population now vaccinated with one dose – alongside additional testing which is helping us manage the virus and safely reclaim our lost freedoms.

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