

New data strategy launched to improve patient care and save lives

- NHS patient data enabled world-first COVID-19 treatment saving one million lives
- Draft strategy to set out new patient rights to access their health records

Millions of patients are set to benefit from a revolutionary use of technology and life-saving lessons learned during the global coronavirus pandemic, as a new [draft data strategy](#) will be published next week.

Over the last 18 months, data has saved lives and helped ensure the NHS could provide better care to people suffering from COVID-19 and other health issues. This ensured doctors and nurses could deliver innovative support in the most effective and efficient way.

By empowering frontline staff to share data for patient care in a secure way that preserves privacy, ground-breaking clinical trials were approved in record time. New services to care for people in their own homes were set up via remote digital monitoring, avoiding lengthy hospital stays.

This enabled rapid research into COVID-19 treatments such as dexamethasone, which has saved over a million lives across the world. By rapidly speeding up the process to grant approvals for trials to get underway – which previously would have taken around 100 days – and giving researchers access to data in a safe and secure way, this world-leading trial led to the discovery of the first proven treatment to reduce coronavirus mortality.

The proposed strategy will ensure people are able to view their medical records, and empower them to keep a track of their health information.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock, said:

Data saves lives. We need to learn from the pandemic to improve the way our health and care system processes data, giving power to patients and enabling clinicians to use data in new ways to improve patient care and support research for innovative treatments.

This pandemic has shown us just how many lives can be saved through effective use of data. We must do all we can to harness this potential and the changes brought about through this strategy will no doubt go on to save countless more lives in the future.

The data strategy also includes proposals to make the UK a leader in innovation-friendly regulation of AI technologies, developing unified standards for the efficacy and safety testing of AI solutions and streamlining the path to market AI technologies.

Trials being supported include those which aim to replace the need for two radiologists to review breast cancer scans by instead using one radiologist and the AI, making the process faster and more efficient.

Looking to the future, the draft data strategy seeks to learn the lessons of the pandemic so the health and social care sectors can use data to design and deliver better services for the public and improve care when we are not in a pandemic situation.

Matthew Gould, chief executive of NHSX, said:

Data saves lives, and has saved thousands of lives in the past year. Safe access to a patient's data allows a doctor to make the right diagnosis and offer patients the right treatment. Safe access to aggregated data-driven research into new treatments like dexamethasone for COVID-19, which has now saved over a million lives.

The new data strategy will set out our vision to go further, to learn from the pandemic, to save more lives with data, to use technology to ensure patient privacy is even better protected, and to give patients more control of their health records.

Martin Landray, Professor of medicine and epidemiology at the Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford and the clinical trials lead at Health Data Research UK, said:

Within 100 days, the RECOVERY trial found that a low-dose steroid treatment called dexamethasone reduced the risk of death by a third for patients on ventilators. It was the world's first coronavirus treatment proven to save lives. Estimates are that it may have saved many hundreds of thousands of lives.

Pre-COVID, it would have taken 100 days to even get permission to go ahead with the trial. We cannot go back. It is a challenge, but one we have to take on, because the future of all of our care depends on robust knowledge on whether treatments work or do not work.

Deliveroo to boost government efforts to tackle variants of concern

- New tool is in addition to surge testing, enhanced contact tracing and

genomic sequencing being deployed to control and suppress variants.

From today, takeaway service Deliveroo will use its app and website to tell customers if surge testing is happening in their area, strengthening the decisive action already taken by the government to tackle rising cases of variants of concern across the country.

This new tool means that notifications will be visible to customers using the Deliveroo app in areas where the new COVID-19 variant is known to be spreading fastest. This will include areas where surge testing is being offered by the local authority, including areas where additional support packages are in place, including for testing, tracing and self-isolation.

Messages will be displayed to customers after the checkout stage of placing their order on the app, and they will be advised to visit their local authority's website to find out more information on where surge testing is being offered in the area. The Deliveroo app banner will also link to the government's website with more information on how people can get tested.

In addition to surge testing, the government is providing further support packages to stop the spread of the Delta variant which includes tracing, isolation support and maximising vaccine uptake. This has been rapidly deployed across areas including Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are using every tool at our disposal to stop the spread of variants of concern and, thanks to Deliveroo, this new partnership will reach even more of the public to help us test as many people as possible and identify variants of concern.

The government is committed to sending these variants into retreat and through our offer of free, twice-weekly testing combined with the phenomenal progress of our vaccination programme, we are doing everything we can to protect loved ones.

This further support follows extensive COVID-19 surveillance and, thanks to the UK's world-leading genomic sequencing capability, the government has detected a number of cases of the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant in these communities. Latest figures from Public Health England show that numbers of the Delta variant in the UK have risen by 29,892 in the last week.

Testing, isolation and vaccinations will help suppress and control the spread of the virus and variants in both the short and longer term, when used in combination with people following existing guidance such as hands, face, space and fresh air.

Deliveroo reaches over 60% of the UK population, including areas where surge testing is deployed. The delivery company works with 50,000 riders and 44,000 restaurants across the UK. During the course of the pandemic it has delivered a million free meals to NHS workers and vulnerable groups.

Will Shu, CEO and founder of Deliveroo, said:

We wanted to do our bit to help NHS Test and Trace when they asked. It's vital that people have the information they need to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. We've used our network to support the NHS throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so however we can.

We hope this and other measures the government is taking will accelerate the return to normality we all want to see.

With around 1 in 3 people not showing symptoms of COVID-19, everyone who lives or works in postcodes where surge testing is taking place is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Additional surge testing is quickly finding and isolating variants of concern. Enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern. In these instances, contact tracers will look back over an extended period in order to determine the route of transmission.

By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread.

People with symptoms should book a free test online or by phone so they can get tested at a testing site or have a testing kit sent to them at home. Those without symptoms should visit the local authority website for more information. People should also continue using twice-weekly rapid testing alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

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[The UK is Malawi's key partner in tackling climate change](#)

World news story

Foreign Affairs minister says Malawi will intensify engagements with the UK and the Commonwealth to advance its position and harness resources at COP26.



Mkaka and David Beer planted a tree in memory of the Duke of Edinburgh

Speaking during a reception to celebrate the 95th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which was held under the theme of COP26 and the environment, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eisenhower Mkaka said climate change is a global crisis threatening both present and future generations due to its impact on livelihoods, and Malawi has put in place a number of activities to ensure sustainable economic recovery process such as restoration of forests and landscape, promotion of renewable energy and creation of green jobs.

Honourable Mkaka said:

We are therefore grateful to the UK for being Malawi's key partner on issues of climate change in the country. COP26 which is scheduled for November this year in Glasgow under the UK Co-Presidency is an opportunity to renew global solidarity towards climate action.

For his part, British High Commissioner David Beer said the UK was working hard to ensure that COP26 can go ahead physically in November, to ensure the debates and discussions can lead to real solutions.

The envoy said success at COP26 will need every country to play its part, to address every issue, and to reach a balanced agreement around the negotiating table.

British High Commissioner David Beer said:

There are four tasks we collectively need to set ourselves. Firstly, to reach net zero emissions by the middle of this century. The second task is to protect people and nature. Our third goal is mobilising finance to tackle climate change, and making it easier to access.

The UK is playing its part, doubling our international climate finance commitments to £11.6 billion over five years. Our fourth and final common task is the most important – it's about working together across borders and across society to keep the 1.5 degree target in reach.

During the celebrations, Hon. Mkaka planted a tree in memory of Prince Phillip the Duke of Edinburgh who passed away in April this year. Prince Phillip was the Queen's devoted consort of over 60 years and advocate for the environment.

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Surge testing to be deployed in Lambeth and Cumbria

In Lambeth, surge testing will start today (19 June) in Clapham, Brixton, Stockwell, West Norwood and Vauxhall following a rise in confirmed cases of the Delta variant. All the confirmed cases have been instructed to self-isolate and their contacts have been identified.

If you live or work in these areas in Lambeth you're strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, which can be booked by phone or online, even if you are not showing symptoms. You can go to a testing site or have a kit sent to your home. More information is available on the [local authority website](#).

Surge testing also starts today in Cumbria following an increase in the number of confirmed cases of the Delta variant.

Anyone aged 12-30 who lives, works or studies in Cumbria is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, even if they are not showing symptoms. Those of school age will be offered testing at school. Everyone else in the age group can book a test online or by phone. They can then go to a testing site or have a kit sent to their home. More information is available from the [local authority website](#).

In all these areas, adults over 18 should also come forward for a vaccine if they haven't already done so. They can book their first and second dose online at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by speaking to their GP surgery.

Enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern (VOC). This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period to determine the route of transmission.

By using PCR testing, positive results are sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify COVID-19 cases with a VOC and then prevent their spread.

People in these areas should continue to make use of free, twice-weekly rapid tests, commonly known as lateral flow devices, alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.