

# Largest testing study for coronavirus publishes latest findings

- 175,000 volunteers tested across England between 18 September and 5 October 2020, as part of the country's largest study into coronavirus
- Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI findings show 1 in 170 people in England had the virus between 18 September and 5 October with 45,000 new infections every day
- Study reaffirms the need to maintain space from those you do not live with, self-isolate if you have symptoms and follow the 'rule of 6'

The [fifth report of the country's largest study on rates of COVID-19 infections in the general population in England](#) has been published today, after 175,000 volunteers were tested.

The latest findings, covering the period between 18 September and 5 October, show:

- there was an 8-fold increase in infections of those aged over 65 compared with the previous full report
- infections were increasing across all age groups and regions in England, with the highest rates seen in young people aged 18 to 24 years
- 1 in 80 every 18 to 24 year old in England was infected, with 1 in 170 infected across all ages
- 1 in 100 people in the North West had the virus, the highest regional prevalence, followed by the North East (0.9%)
- prevalence was highest among Asian and black participants at 0.90% and 0.73% compared with 0.45% in white participants

The report warns as infections continue to increase, it is likely the current levels of infection identified in the North of England will replicate across the rest of the country in a few weeks' time.

Professor Paul Elliott, Director of the REACT programme at Imperial from the School of Public Health, said:

Our robust findings paint a concerning picture of the growing epidemic across England. While certain areas are worse affected, if left unabated then infection trends will follow nationwide and could lead to high levels of unnecessary death and illness from the disease.

The report confirms the virus was doubling every 29 days and 60 people per 10,000 were infected. It follows an interim report of 80,000 volunteers for the period 18 and 26 September.

These findings reinforce the need for continued vigilance from the public. As we approach winter and spend more time indoors, everyone must follow local

restrictions where they apply, the rule of 6, get tested if they have symptoms and think hands, face, space.

The government works alongside scientific and public health experts and local leaders to constantly review the epidemiological evidence and we are prepared to take swift and decisive action to cut the transmission of the virus and protect communities, including where data suggests a rise in cases linked to specific settings.

The latest findings from Imperial are published today at the same time as the government's [official weekly R rate](#). The R rate published by Imperial has been estimated based on a cohort of 175,000 volunteers within a specific timeframe. The weekly official government R rate is produced by SAGE and uses many data sources and models to produce a consensus view in the scientific community of the likely R number over a longer timeframe.

This is one of several studies that feed into government decision-making and policies on tackling the spread of COVID-19 in England.

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

We have seen a huge response with 175,000 people taking part in this round which is hugely appreciated. The results from this study are so important during the pandemic and so I'd like to thank all of those who have taken part and encourage those who receive letters from us for the next round to take part so we can again have a set of strong results to help support government decision-making

The Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT-1) programme is the largest, most significant piece of research looking at how the virus is spreading across the country.

The study was commissioned by DHSC 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. It is one of many pieces of research that feeds into government decision making on keeping the country safe from COVID-19.

Latest findings from 18 September to 5 October:

- overall prevalence of infection in the community in England is 0.60% or 60 people per 10,000
- out of 174,949 results, 824 were positive
- during the period 18 September to 5 October the virus was doubling every 29 days in England
- the national reproduction number R was estimated to be 1.16
- prevalence of infection was highest in the North West (1.0%), North East (0.91%), Yorkshire and The Humber (0.63%)
- prevalence in London was 0.45%
- highest R rates were in the North West (1.27), Yorkshire and The Humber

(1.37) and West Midlands (1.33)

- highest prevalence was among 18 to 24 year olds at 1.2% – 1 in 80 infected – and increased 8-fold for those aged over 65 compared with the period 20 August to 8 September
- prevalence is highest in Asian and black ethnicity at 0.90% and 0.73% compared with 0.45% in white participants

There are no significant changes since the last report.

[The full report can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

See an [infographic of the results](#).

The report was commissioned by DHSC 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.

Read [more information on the Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission \(REACT\) programme of work](#).

This study falls under pillar 4 of the COVID-19 National Testing Programme, which focuses on mass surveillance in the general population. This is the second study which looks at a representative cross-section of the whole population.

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## [Environment Agency shuts down illegal waste site](#)

A court order is now in place prohibiting anyone from entering or depositing waste on the site, at Aln View, Old Swarland, to reduce the impact on the local community while the criminal investigation into activity at the site is ongoing.

It's the first time the powers have been used in the North East.

The Restriction Order was obtained at Bedlington Magistrates' Court on Thursday 8 October after Environment Agency solicitor Chris Bunting outlined the case.

He told the court that investigations began in February this year, when reports were received about waste being brought onto the site and burned.

The Environment Agency has now locked the site's access gate, placing a warning notice at the entrance. Anyone entering the land, or tampering with the lock or notice, will be committing a criminal offence.

The Environment Agency and Northumbria Police lock the gates of the site to prevent access

## **Determined to make life tough for waste criminals**

John Crowl, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader in the North East, said:

We are determined to make life tough for those who damage the environment and blight local communities.

This is the first time these powers have been used in the North East and demonstrates we will use all of the tools at our disposal to disrupt waste crime.

The order has been put in place following complaints about waste being illegally dumped and burned, and after extensive work together with our partners at Northumbria Police Rural Crime Team and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.

While most waste sites are operated responsibly, this type of illegal dumping causes huge harm to the environment and distress to communities.

Waste dumped illegally at the site in Northumberland

## **Investigation began in February**

The Environment Agency started receiving complaints about waste being imported and burned at the site in February this year. On 16 March, officers visited the site and saw several piles of waste and evidence of burning.

Letters requiring the site to stop taking in waste and for it to be cleared were sent but the fires continued. Following a number of visits to the site, a follow up enforcement notice again requiring the site to be cleared was issued in July, and the deadline for that to take place has now passed.

The Environment Agency is working alongside Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Northumbria Police in the ongoing criminal investigation into activities at the site.

They have continued to take enforcement action during Coronavirus restrictions adhering to all of the latest Government guidelines.

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# FGM campaigner Nimco Ali appointed as Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls adviser

Home Secretary Priti Patel has today (9 October) announced that she has appointed Nimco Ali OBE, CEO of The Five Foundation, The Global Partnership To End FGM, as an Independent government Adviser on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls.

She will advise the Home Secretary and other ministers on the government's new Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, which will be published in 2021.

Violence and abuse against women and girls can have lifelong physical and mental impacts on victims, as well as causing knock-on negative effects for their families, friends and for society as a whole.

The risks of violence to women and girls that existed ten years ago are still there, but the pace of societal and technological change means that new and evolving forms of abuse are continuously emerging, and the government is ready to face this challenge.

The new Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy will help to better target perpetrators and support victims of these crimes, and increase the government's ability to tackle, new and emerging forms of violence against women and girls such as upskirting and revenge porn. A continued effort is required to shine a light on these often hidden crimes.

Nimco Ali OBE is a leading voice in the UK and globally on violence against women and girls. As CEO of The Five Foundation, The Global Partnership To End FGM, she brings a wealth of both first-hand and professional experience in how to best protect and promote the rights of women and girls. Nimco has spearheaded the campaign to elevate FGM as a priority issue in the UK and globally – including persuading Sudan to ban FGM in recent months and changing the narrative on how grassroots efforts to end FGM on the African continent and beyond need to be properly funded.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The safety of the British people is my absolute priority. Our new Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy will help us to better target perpetrators and support victims of these abhorrent crimes.

Nimco Ali's dedication to raising awareness of the sickening practice of Female Genital Mutilation and advocacy for victims of gender-based violence, means she is ideally placed to advise the Government on tackling these appalling crimes.

Nimco Ali OBE, CEO of The Five Foundation, The Global Partnership To End FGM said:

I am delighted to independently advise the UK government on its pivotal efforts to end violence against women and girls.

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said:

Violence against women and girls are appalling acts that can destroy our families and communities.

We need to do more to bring offenders to justice and support victims and survivors, which is why we have appointed Nimco Ali to advise the government on these vital issues.

The previous strategy strengthened the law on violence against women and girls; including commissioning an end to end review of rape cases in the criminal justice system, and creating stalking protection orders.

Since it was launched in 2016, the government has committed £100 million of funding to women's services to support organisations tackling domestic violence and abuse, including £8 million to support children.

Ms Ali will support the consultation process for the new strategy, which will engage with girls and women throughout the UK from a range of backgrounds. A key part of her role will be to hear from a wide range of people, so ordinary voices from across the UK are heard throughout this consultation, and practical solutions are found to make a real difference to people's lives.

Yesterday (8 October), the Home Secretary and Nimco Ali met with members from Girlguiding from across the UK, to discuss their concerns relating to violence against women and girls, and some of the themes that come up in Girlguiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey. Girlguiding Advocates spoke to the Home Secretary and Ms Ali to share their views on these issues, and on the organisation's preventative and safeguarding work that the organisation undertakes with girls and young women, and how they tackle violence through advocacy, education, awareness raising, community action and research.

Emma Dixon, 20, on behalf of the Girlguiding advocate panel members who took part said:

We know from over a decade of Girlguiding research the very deep and serious effects of these unacceptable acts of violence.

This covers such a broad range of problems encountered by girls and women from all backgrounds, all of which are detrimental to their lives.

This discussion is a welcome start to a conversation where all

girls' voices must be central to tackling this issue.

The work of the Independent Advisor on Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls will be separate to the work of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and will complement the work of the Victims' Commissioner. This advisor role will not cover domestic abuse, and will focus exclusively on other forms of VAWG, including sexual violence, so called 'honour-based' abuse and stalking.

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## [New data shows proportion of steel procured within UK has doubled since last year](#)

News story

Government publishes its updated public steel procurement data.



The government today (October 9) publishes its updated public steel procurement documents, which show that the reported proportion of steel procured within the UK has nearly doubled since last year.

These documents include information on how much steel has been procured by government departments and arm's-length bodies, and how they have complied with guidance – as well as a pipeline of future steel requirements for national infrastructure projects.

This year's documents show that:

- all government departments complied with steel procurement guidance, where applicable
- the reported proportion of steel procured within the UK for public projects is 77% – up from 40% last year
- the reported value of contracts placed with UK suppliers has increased

by 20% – from £67 million to £81 million

- there is an estimated steel requirement of nearly 5 million tonnes of steel associated with central government infrastructure plans over the next decade

Wide-ranging action to support the steel industry includes more than £480 million relief for electricity costs since 2013 and providing guidance to ensure British steel makers have the best chance of competing for and winning public sector projects.

See [Steel public procurement 2020](#) for the full data.

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## [Jonathan Scott to be interim chair of the Competition and Markets Authority](#)

News story

Mr Scott previously served as a senior independent member of the CMA board.



The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Alok Sharma has appointed Jonathan Scott interim chair of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the UK body responsible for strengthening business competition and preventing and reducing anti-competitive activities.

Mr Scott – previously a senior independent member of the CMA board – will take on the role of chair while a recruitment round is carried out to find a permanent replacement for Rt Hon Lord Tyrie, who stepped down last month, as [announced](#) in June.

The primary role of the CMA is to make markets work well for consumers, businesses and the economy. It is responsible for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries as well as enforcing



competition and consumer law.

Mr Scott was originally appointed a non-executive director of the board on 1 October 2016 and has served as chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. His appointment as interim CMA chair takes effect on 9 October.

Mr Scott has been a leading practitioner in the legal profession. He previously served as Senior Partner and Chair of Herbert Smith and, post-merger, Herbert Smith Freehills, a leading global law firm.

He is also a Non-Executive Director of the Press and Assessment Board at the University of Cambridge, and earlier this year completed a term as Gambling Commissioner.

Mr Scott will occupy the role of interim chair for a period of up to one year. A permanent chair will be recruited and announced in due course.

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