

Lord-Lieutenant for Kincardineshire: 1 October 2020

Press release

The Queen is pleased to appoint Mr Alastair Macphie as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Kincardineshire.



The Queen is pleased to appoint Mr Alastair Macphie as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Kincardineshire to succeed Mrs Carol Kinghorn, who is due to retire on 16 December.

Mr Macphie was born in Kilmacolm and attended school in Edinburgh and Perth.

He joined Macphie Limited, the family business, in 1987. The company manufactures and supplies ingredients for the food processors and food service sectors. He was appointed Managing Director in 1995 and Executive Chairman in 2007. Mr Macphie also owns Glenbervie Management Limited, a farming and estate business. The farm spans over 1800 acres and is known for breeding Aberdeen Angus cattle. He currently employs 280 staff with a turnover of £59m.

For his contribution to the Food Industry he was awarded an honouree degree at Abertay University and for his support to Agriculture and Food was made a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society.

Over the past 30 years, he has been involved in many community projects. He has been the Chair of Drumlithie Village Hall since 1992 and Regional Director of Scotland Land and Estates since 2004. He undertakes a variety of community projects and has excellent relationships with various universities across Scotland with whom he has worked to set up internships.

Mr Macphie is particularly keen to protect the environment. As a result, his business only uses 100% renewable electricity and in 2015 became B Corp certified. He has also been asked to join a group at the Hutton Institute focussing on the circular economy and has previously supported the Institute on other projects.

02 launches UK's first driverless cars lab

- Businesses will trial driverless cars that use 5G and satellite technology to stay connected.

5G could address many of the technical challenges faced by driverless cars by providing stronger, faster and more reliable data signals. While satellite technology can augment 5G connectivity, allowing the vehicles to operate safely in areas that suffer from poor mobile phone signal.

Reducing the time it takes for information to be sent and received – the latency – compared to 4G is vital to the development of these cars, and could slash the current 20 milliseconds of lag to 1 millisecond – the equivalent of a camera flash.

Backed by funding from the UK Space Agency, the new lab – based at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in Oxfordshire – will invite businesses to test driverless cars and use 5G and satellite technology to trial ways of keeping vehicles connected.

With driverless cars and other new major applications requiring seamless connectivity the UK Space Agency is supporting companies to access satellite communications. This is not only growing the UK space sector but opening it up to companies that had previously not been able to access space.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The UK's space sector is applying pioneering technologies such as satellite and 5G to essential products and services that will help to transform our everyday lives.

I am incredibly excited that 02's first of its kind driverless car lab will enable our most innovative businesses to test these technologies and bring us another step closer to putting self-driving vehicles safely on our roads.

At the site, 02 has already converted two Renault TWIZY electric cars into driverless cars – dubbed 'Connected Autonomous Vehicles' or CAVs – that are fitted with LIDAR sensors which allow them to be controlled from the Lab and driven around the Campus.

Using 5G equipment provided by Nokia and geosynchronous communications

satellites (GEOs) provided by Hispasat, the satellite operator, O2's team can remotely track the status of each TWIZY, including their position, movement and speed.

The 4G systems we are familiar with on our mobiles operate with a throughput of about one gigabit (1,000,000,000 bits) per second. By contrast, 5G has a data rate of 20 gigabits.

The lab forms part of Project Darwin – a four-year programme backed by the UK Space Agency and the European Space Agency.

Derek McManus, Chief Operating Officer at O2 said:

We're delighted to announce that the Darwin SatCom Lab is now open for business at Harwell Campus, allowing companies to put theory into practice and test innovative ideas using our connected and autonomous vehicles.

The Lab is further proof that O2 is at the forefront of connectivity and accelerating Britain's recovery by helping British businesses to harness the power of 5G and satellite communications in order to benefit their customers.

It's the next step in getting autonomous vehicles on the road and making the UK's transport network greener.

Antonio Franchi, 5G Strategic Programme Manager at the European Space Agency said:

We are excited to continue working on 5G projects with our partners, especially the Darwin SatCom Lab located on the Harwell Campus, which is also home to the ESA's European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications.

The Lab, showcasing the integration of 5G and satellite communications for CAVs, is a great example of how next-gen 5G networks will enable new applications and services thanks to their ubiquity, security and resilience.

[Interim results from largest COVID-19](#)

study published

- Interim findings from Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI show 1 in 200 people were infected but suggest growth of infection may be slowing
- Figures reinforce the need for everyone to play their part remembering hands, face and space, the rule of six and self-isolation for those who risk passing on the virus

Interim results from the fourth report of the country's largest study on Coronavirus rates of infection have been published today.

The study examines levels of infection in the general population in England by testing over 150,000 participants each month over a two-week period.

Over 80,000 volunteers out of 150,000 have been tested so far between 18th and 26th September. Findings show infections increased substantially across the country before the R Rate fell to around 1.1, suggesting the growth of infection may be slowing. It is estimated 1 in 200 people in England were infected with the virus, reinforcing the need to remain vigilant.

Today's report shows prevalence of infection increased across all age groups and regions. Infection was highest in those aged 18 to 24 with 1 in 100 people infected, and cases increased seven-fold in those aged over 65. The North West had the highest levels of infection and the number of infections in London increased five-fold.

The final report and findings of all 150,000 volunteers tested between 18th September and 5th October will be published next week.

The high rate of infection reinforces the need for the public to follow the latest rules. Individuals must only meet socially in groups of up to six people in any settings indoors or outdoors, including your home, restaurants and pubs. There are some exemptions including organised sports, weddings and funerals and formal childcare.

It is important to continue to keep your distance from others outside your household, download the NHS Test and Trace app and follow advice from NHS Test and Trace if contacted. If you develop symptoms you must self-isolate, along with your household, and get a test. Some areas in England are subject to other local restrictions and it is vital residents follow the rules in place in their area.

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

While our latest findings show some early evidence that the growth of new cases may have slowed, suggesting efforts to control the infection are working, the prevalence of infection is the highest that we have recorded to date.

This reinforces the need for protective measures to limit the spread of the disease and the public's adherence to these, which will be vital to minimise further significant illness and loss of life from COVID-19.

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

The continuing support of the public by taking part in the study is something we remain immensely grateful for.

The number of participants gives this study the robustness and thoroughness which marks it out as world leading. Ipsos MORI would like to thank everyone who's volunteered so far and those who will volunteer for further rounds of this study.

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.

Top findings for over 80,000 volunteers between 19th and 26th September (9 day period) compared to previous study (24 August to 7th September).

- 363 out of 84,610 volunteers tested positive with prevalence of 0.55%. It means 55 people per 10,000 are infected, which is an increase on 13 people per 10,000 in the last report.
- This implies 411,000 people in England have the virus that causes COVID-19 meaning over 1 in 200 people were infected at any one time.
- Prevalence has increased across all ages. Prevalence was highest in those aged 18-24 at 0.96% meaning 1 in 100 people in this age group are infected. In the 65+ age group prevalence increased 7-fold from 0.04% to 0.29% compared to the last report.
- Prevalence increased in all regions. Highest prevalence is the North West at 0.86%. London has increased 5 fold from 0.10% to 0.49%.
- R Rate has decreased from 1.7 to 1.1 suggesting some deceleration, but with considerable uncertainty.
- People of Asian and black ethnicity are twice as likely to have the virus that causes COVID-19 compared to white people
- 50% of test positive volunteers did not have symptoms at the time of testing or the week before, but this does not mean they did not later develop symptoms.

The pre-print report can be accessed [here](#).

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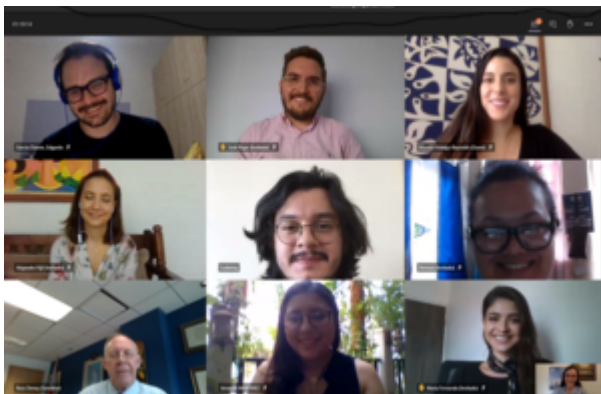
More information on the [REal-time Assessment of Community Transmission \(REACT\) programme](#).

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.

[British Ambassador hosts departure event for Chevening scholars](#)

World news story

The British Ambassador to Costa Rica and Nicaragua hosted a joint farewell event for scholars.



British Ambassador hosts departure event for Chevening scholars

On 17 September, the British Ambassador to Costa Rica and Nicaragua, Ross Denny, hosted a virtual farewell event for Chevening scholars selected to study a one-year Masters in the United Kingdom.

Ambassador Denny congratulated the six scholars, three from Costa Rica and three from Nicaragua, for having been selected for this prestigious award. He remarked that although the circumstances had prevented them from starting their courses physically in the United Kingdom, that UK universities' ability to adapt quickly to the current context meant that they were all able to begin their studies remotely. Ambassador Denny also encouraged them to make the most of the virtual activities that would be organised by different university groups.

This year, the following scholars will be doing their Masters in the UK:

- Jose Rojas (Costa Rica), International Development, University of Bristol
- Maria Fernanda Cruz (Costa Rica), Corruption and Governance, University

of Sussex

- Mónica Hildago (Costa Rica), Behaviour Change, UCL
- Alejandra Vijil (Nicaragua), Education (Psychology and Education), London School of Economics and Political Science
- Amanda Martinez (Nicaragua), Development Management, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Ludwing Moncada (Nicaragua), Crime Science, UCL

Established in 1983, Chevening, the UK government's flagship scholarship programme, aims to develop global leaders and represents "a unique opportunity for future leaders, influencers, and decision-makers from all over the world to develop professionally and academically, network extensively, experience UK culture, and build lasting positive relationships with the UK."

Applications for the 2021-2022 academic year have already opened and will close on 3 November 2020. For further information and application details, go to: [Chevening](#)

Published 1 October 2020

[Start of ban on plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds](#)

The ban on supplying plastic straws and stirrers and plastic-stemmed cotton buds has come into force in England today (Thursday 1 October), marking yet another major step in the Government's fight against single-use plastic waste to protect our environment and clean up our oceans.

Just one month after ministers confirmed the single-use plastic bag charge would be increased to 10p and extended to all retailers, today's commencement of the ban will further ensure the country builds back greener.

It is estimated [we use 4.7 billion plastic straws](#), 316 million plastic stirrers, and 1.8 billion plastic-stemmed cotton buds in England every year, many of which find their way into our ocean. By banning the supply of these items, we can further protect our marine wildlife and move one step closer to our ambition of eliminating all avoidable plastic waste, [as set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan](#).

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Single-use plastics cause real devastation to the environment and this government is firmly committed to tackling this issue head on.

We are already a world-leader in this global effort. Our 5p charge on single-use plastic bags has successfully cut sales by 95% in the main supermarkets, we have banned microbeads, and we are building plans for a deposit return scheme to drive up the recycling of single-use drinks containers.

The ban on straws, stirrers and cotton buds is just the next step in our battle against plastic pollution and our pledge to protect our ocean and the environment for future generations.

While making this important step to help the environment, disabled people and those with medical conditions will also be protected, and will be able to request a plastic straw when visiting a pub or restaurant and purchase them from pharmacies.

It is estimated that between 4.8 and 12.7 million tonnes of plastic enter the ocean globally every year, which has produced many scenes of marine wildlife being injured or killed by plastic waste. The UK is leading on a wide programme of overseas engagements, including [through the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance](#) and the Commonwealth Litter Programme, aiming to prevent plastic waste from reaching the ocean in the first place.

The government is also committed to launching a £500 million Blue Planet Fund to protect the ocean from plastic pollution, warming sea temperatures and overfishing.

Dr Laura Foster, Head of Clean Seas at the Marine Conservation Society, said:

It's fantastic news that the ban on plastic cotton bud sticks, stirrers and straws is now in place. The results of our annual Great British Beach Clean have shown a decrease in cotton bud sticks littering British beaches.

In 2017 we found an average of 31 cotton bud sticks per 100 metres of beach, and in 2019 we found just eight on beaches in England. This reflects that many companies have already made the switch away from plastic, in cotton buds and other items, something we need to see more companies doing.

Only with ambitious policy and forward-thinking brands and companies, can we truly stop the plastic tide.

Other key government actions on plastics include a [world-leading ban on microbeads](#), consulting on introducing a [deposit return scheme to drive up the recycling of single-use drinks containers](#), and committing to a ban on the export of polluting plastic waste to non-OECD countries. As announced recently, the [5p charge on single-use bags will be doubled to 10p](#) and extended to all retailers from April 2021.

The government will also introduce a new [world-leading tax on plastic](#)

[packaging](#) which does not meet a minimum threshold of at least 30% recycled content from April 2022 to encourage greater use of recycled plastic.

[Further guidance for businesses is available on gov.uk.](#)