

Government publishes changes to growth rates and R value

The latest growth rate for the whole of the UK is between -1% to -4% and the R estimate for the UK is between 0.8-0.9. A growth rate between -1% to -4% means the number of new infections is shrinking by between 1% to 4% every day. However, we are starting to see early indications that these values may be increasing. This is not yet reflected in these estimates because the data used to calculate R and growth rate reflect the situation from a few weeks ago. It is also important to recognise that these are estimates, and there is a high degree of uncertainty with them.

The Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), a subgroup of SAGE, use several different models, each using data from a variety of sources to estimate R and growth rate. Epidemiological data, such as hospital admissions, ICU admissions and deaths, usually take 2 to 3 weeks for changes in the spread of disease to be reflected in the estimates. This is due to the time delay between initial infection and the need for hospital care. As a result, the figures published today more accurately represent the average situation over the past few weeks rather than the situation today.

Models that use COVID-19 testing data that have less of a time delay, have recently suggested higher values for R in England. For this reason, SAGE does not have confidence that R is currently below 1 in England. We would expect to see this change in transmission reflected in the R and growth rate published over the next few weeks.

Estimates of R and the growth rates per day are less reliable and less useful in determining the state of the epidemic when disease incidence is low, or where there is significant variability in the population, for example during local outbreaks. When this is the case the estimates of R and the growth rate become insufficiently robust to inform policy decisions. Both are average measures and will smooth over localised outbreaks or over short periods of time.

When case numbers are low, uncertainty increases and fluctuations in the data can have a significant impact on the estimates. Furthermore, when there is a significant amount of variability across a region, for example due to a local outbreak, then a single average does not accurately reflect the way infections are changing throughout the region.

The latest calculated growth rates and the latest regional R values are:

Region	R	Growth rate % per day
UK*	0.8-1.0	-4 to -1
England	0.8-1.0	-4 to -1
East of England**	0.7-1.0	-6 to -1
London**	0.8-1.0	-4 to 0

Region	R	Growth rate % per day
Midlands	0.7-0.9	-6 to -2
North East and Yorkshire**	0.7-0.9	-6 to -2
North West**	0.8-1.1	-5 to +1
South East	0.8-1.0	-3 to 0
South West**	0.8-1.1	-4 to +1

*The UK estimate of R is the average over very different epidemiological situations and should be regarded as a guide to the general trend rather than a description of the epidemic state.

**Low case numbers and/ or a high degree of variability in transmission across the region means these estimates are insufficiently robust to inform policy decisions.

Estimates of the growth rates and R are currently updated on a weekly basis. However, as the numbers of cases decrease, these metrics will become less helpful indicators and other measures need to be considered.

[Health and care workers to self-isolate on return to England from high-risk countries](#)



The move brings them in line with the general public and further protects the NHS and social care system from the spread of coronavirus from overseas, as signs of second waves begin to show in other countries.

Following review of whether the measure is still necessary, an exemption has been removed to minimise the risk of onward chains of transmission that might infect the wider workforce.

An exemption was originally put in place, at the beginning of June, which meant registered health and care professionals did not have to self-isolate

when travelling to England from overseas.

This was to help ensure health and care workers travelling back from overseas could return to the England to provide essential healthcare, helping to strengthen the country's response to the coronavirus outbreak and save lives.

Following the reopening of travel routes, and as more people begin to holiday abroad, the government has removed this exemption and, from 31 July, all registered health and care professionals must lawfully self-isolate when returning to England from a high-risk country.

The current [list of countries](#) exempt from self-isolation measures is available on GOV.UK. The data for all countries and territories is kept under constant review, and the exemptions list is updated with any changes on a regular basis as and when required to reflect the shifting international health picture.

Health and care professionals returning from a country which has a travel corridor to the UK will not be required to self-isolate on return.

This amendment to the regulations will ensure consistency with wider self-isolation measures and continue to protect public health.

[Information on travel corridors can be found here](#)

Any changes to the regulations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is a matter for the devolved authorities.

Published 30 July 2020

Last updated 31 July 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 31 July 2020

The headline and summary have been changed to show that the rules apply to health and care workers returning to England, not the UK.

2. 30 July 2020

First published.

[End to maintenance schedule relaxation and extended temporary bus schedules included in traffic commissioner](#)

[COVID-19 advice update](#)

News story

The Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain have updated their coronavirus (COVID-19) advice document for operators as restrictions ease.



This includes an end to relaxed preventative maintenance inspection (PMI) intervals from 1 September 2020.

The traffic commissioners had agreed a risk-based approach during the COVID-19 pandemic where operators unable to access maintenance facilities could extend the usual maintenance intervals for their vehicles. As restrictions begin to lift, the commissioners have taken the decision to end this policy.

The [update](#) states that operators can stick to the extended maintenance schedules for their vehicles until the first inspection after 1 September. After that inspection, they must revert to the interval specified on their operator's licence.

The other major updates concern local bus services. Most important of these is extending the temporary local bus service processes until 4 January 2021 to allow operators opportunity to consider any permanent changes that may be required.

Another change is an increase in the notice period for service variations for Local Authorities from 24 hours to 72 hours in England and Scotland. This change took effect in Scotland on 29 June 2020 and will take effect from 3 August 2020 in England. There is no equivalent notice period in Wales for Local Authorities.

Other updates include guidance about:

- amending a registered local bus service to become a school or works bus service
- the use of additional vehicles on services

Read [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Advice for Heavy Goods \(HGV\) and Public Service](#)

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[Review of electoral regulation: written evidence](#)

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[Sarah Newton appointed as new Chair of HSE](#)

Press release

The Department for Work and Pensions has appointed Sarah Newton as Chair of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Board.



The appointment commences on 1 August 2020 and is a 5 year posting. She will replace Martin Temple at the conclusion of his term.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Thérèse Coffey said:

I'm pleased to welcome Sarah to this important role and look forward to working with her.

Her insight and experience will be huge assets as we work to safely resume everyday life across the country, helping to build confidence within business and workers as we get Britain back into work.

I would also like to thank Martin for his dedication throughout his service over the last five years.

Sarah Newton said:

As we move out of the nationwide lockdown and learn to live with Covid 19, the role of the HSE has never been more critical. I am looking forward to working with the HSE non executive and executive leadership team, tackling the challenges, building on the strengths of the organisation and working in partnership with employers, unions, trade associations, professional bodies, academics and others, enabling Great Britain to work safely and well.

Sarah Newton was Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions from November 2017 to March 2019. She was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office from 17 July 2016 to 9 November 2017. She was elected Conservative MP for Truro and Falmouth in May 2010. Sarah served as Assistant Government Whip from May 2015 until July 2016. Sarah was previously a councillor on Merton Council. During her time in Wimbledon, she served as the head of Friends of Cannizaro Park.

She has served on a wide range of boards and is currently a Non-Executive Director of the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust. Sarah was a marketing officer for IBIS, Citibank and American Express. After working for American Express for 4 years she became Director of Age Concern England. Sarah is also Founder and Initial Director of the International Longevity Centre.

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1. 31 July 2020

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