Latest numbers on COVID-19 in the UK – 24 July 2020

We have combined data from the government’s daily figures¹ and the government’s report on NHS Test and Trace² and each nation’s official death registries.

1. Number of new deaths from COVID-19 in the UK.

2. Number and location of new infections in the UK.

3. NHS Test and Trace.

4. The global challenge of coming out of lockdown.

Number of new UK deaths from COVID-19 per week

These are registered deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate.

Data from:
England and Wales: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregisteredweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest
Northern Ireland: www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/weekly-deaths
Number of new UK confirmed COVID-19 cases (people who have had a positive test)

Note: new confirmed cases reflect people infected about 1 week earlier

Data from https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/
Number of new UK confirmed COVID-19 cases (people who have had a positive test)

Note: new confirmed cases reflect people infected about 1 week earlier

The rolling 7-day daily average has increased every day for the past week. Yesterday’s 7-day daily average was almost 10% higher than a week ago (656 vs 609).

The last time this was true was 11th April.

Data from https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/
Testing has increased

Tests done for everyone else and processed by commercial partners “Pillar 2” – these rely on people with symptoms letting the NHS know and getting a test.

Tests done in hospital and processed by PHE/NHS labs “Pillar 1”

Positivity rate has been the same over the two weeks 2 – 15 July at about 1.1%

Graph from https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports
How many new infections a week?

Best estimates are somewhere between **15,000 and 25,000 new infections a week (2,000 – 3,500 a day).**

ONS (latest estimate 10 July)  
[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveypilot/previousReleases](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveypilot/previousReleases)

Cambridge (latest estimate 13th July)  

UCL (latest estimate 23 July)  
[https://www.fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk/spm/covid-19/dashboard/local/](https://www.fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk/spm/covid-19/dashboard/local/)

KCL app (latest estimate 23 July):  
[https://covid.joinzoe.com/](https://covid.joinzoe.com/)

KCL symptom tracker also has a slight increase since 6th July  
[https://covid.joinzoe.com/data#levels-over-time](https://covid.joinzoe.com/data#levels-over-time)
Where are the cases?

Data from [https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/](https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/)

Data from [https://www.fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk/spm/covid-19/dashboard/local/](https://www.fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk/spm/covid-19/dashboard/local/)
Towards zero COVID?

New daily confirmed cases per million people (average over last week)

Test and Trace metrics over the last 7 weeks (28 May – 15 July)

Very very slight improvement over last three weeks.

Over two thirds of contacts are within household – Royal Statistical Society* estimates that only 30% of external contacts are being reached.

Needs to get better, faster, especially case finding and support for isolation.


Also, worrying reports that contact tracing is much less effective in hot spot or deprived areas.
Spain had one of the most stringent lockdowns but is now experiencing new spikes. Suppression is hard.

South Korea success due to aggressive contact tracing + targeted closures, hygiene measures and, probably, face coverings.

Comparison to other countries

Average daily cases

Suppression is *really* hard. A “fingers crossed through reopening” strategy is unlikely to be enough.

A recent report* says that new outbreaks are often linked to:

- Hot-spot environments like bars & clubs
- Large social gatherings
- Breaking of social distancing guidelines
- Role of young people in spreading
- Absence of masks


Comparison to other countries

Average daily cases

The same report* highlights these challenges:

- Commuting on public transport has been shown to have increased risk
- Public facing roles (bus drivers, security guards, shop assistants) have been shown to be at higher risk
- Super-spreading settings often drive outbreaks (e.g. bars, factories)
- Role of young people in spreading
- Absence of masks


Suppression is *really* hard. A “fingers crossed through reopening” strategy is unlikely to be enough.

Deaths are continuing to decline, but new confirmed cases are going up consistently for first time since early April. **Might** be due to more testing but hard to tell with current data.

Certainly this is a time for caution and not more opening – like gyms and workspaces. And much better public messaging is needed (e.g. around face coverings and social distancing).

Adopting a towards zero COVID strategy is safer and ultimately better for the economy since it minimises chances of renewed lockdowns.

NHS Test and Trace needs to improve - quickly.