Latest numbers on COVID-19 in the UK – 2 October 2020

It’s been an eventful month: taking stock as we start October there are both good and bad signs...

1. Confirmed cases, hospital admissions & deaths

2. How to understand the data? Where, who and how

3. Test and Trace

4. Summary.

With many thanks to Catherine Finnecy for help in collating and understanding the data
Number of new UK confirmed COVID-19 cases (people who have had a positive test)

These numbers are not an accurate reflection of new cases because so many people can’t get tested.

There will be many more cases than this!

Data from https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk
Number of weekly new UK confirmed COVID-19 cases / 100,000 people by nation

Data from https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk
Number of new UK confirmed COVID-19 cases / 100,000 people – English regions

Data from https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk
Number of new hospital admissions with COVID-19 per day in England

Data from https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/

- 310 on 29th September
- 268 on 22nd September
3-day average of daily number of new hospital admissions with COVID-19 per day / million people across different regions in England

Data from https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-hospital-activity/
These are registered deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, regardless of location.
What age are the cases (Imperial REACT Study, 84,000 people, England)?

Increases in younger age groups are spreading to higher age groups

Week to 24th September, ONS also saw highest rates in the 17-24 year age group.

Imperial estimate 1 in 200 people infected, ONS 1 in 500 (week to 24th Sept)

BME populations twice as likely to be infected (and more likely to be severely ill (ICNARC))
Where are the cases (Imperial REACT Study, 84,000 people, England)?

Increases in North East, North West, Yorkshire & Humber, London, Midlands

**Figure 4.** Unweighted prevalence of swab positivity by region by round.

From [https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/institute-of-global-health-innovation/REACT1_12345_Interim-(1).pdf](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/institute-of-global-health-innovation/REACT1_12345_Interim-(1).pdf)
Estimated number of new people in UK with symptomatic COVID-19 from King’s College symptom tracker app

19,777 daily new cases in UK on 27 September 2020
95% confidence interval is (17,336 - 22,551) R = 1.2

Imperial REACT study:
R ~ 1.1
Four-fold increase over September
ONS some signs of levelling off
Doubling time -> 3-5 weeks?

From https://twitter.com/timspector/status/1311608718958657539?s=20
People’s behaviour: ONS opinion and lifestyle survey

Percentage of people who said they’d left home for the following reasons

- Social distancing remains high (82%), higher for 70+
- 97% said they wore face covering at least once
- 91% say wash hands as soon as returning home
- Slight increase in people working wholly or partly at home (36% -> 41%)

People’s behaviour: Opinium 23rd September

Percentage of respondents who said they were less likely to go to pubs or restaurants over next few months

- Only 16% of people thought new restrictions were too strict
- 76% are worried about COVID

Number of tests processed per day (UK)

Data from https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/

**Good news:** times for test results have come down, distance travelled to tests have gone down.
Number of tests processed per week / 100,000 people

Bolton, Rossendale and Bury added to watchlist.

Data from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921131/Pillar_2_antigen_tests_by_LTLAs_28_may_to_16_Sept.ods
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Bolton, Rossendale and Bury added to watchlist. All had their level of severity increased end of August.

These 4 London local authorities added to watchlist 20\textsuperscript{th} September

Data from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921131/Pillar_2_antigen_tests_by_LTLAs_28_may_to_16_Sep.xls
Contact Tracing (England)

Metrics flat except number of new cases reached which is getting worse... (not good) AND

...and we desperately need contacts & cases to self-isolate

Contact Tracing (England)

Metrics flat except number of new cases reached which is getting worse... (not good) AND

Proportion of people transferred to the contact tracing system who were reached by upper tier local authority (UTLA)

Figure 8: percentage of cases reached and asked to provide details of recent close contacts by UTLA since Test and Trace began.

Fewer cases reached in the NW

Contact Tracing (England)

Metrics flat except number of new cases reached which is getting worse... (not good) AND

Proportion of non-complex close contacts identified who were reached and asked to self-isolate by upper tier local authority

Figure 13: percentage of non-complex contacts reached and asked to provide details of recent close contacts by UTLA since Test and Trace began.

Far fewer contacts reached in the NW

This data is available to download as a csv on the weekly publication collection page.¹²

Summary

Bad news: COVID has spread rapidly over September – 1 in 200 people in England may currently have it. This has brought with big increase in hospitalisations and recent increase in death.

Good news: There are signs that growth is slowing quite a bit – we’ve bought ourselves several more weeks. BUT it is still growing (bad)

Test and trace in England worrying:
• While test results are coming quicker, and people are travelling less far (good)
• Capacity has not increased last 2 weeks & might be skewing London picture (bad)
• Fewer new referred cases being reached (82% -> 71%) (bad)
• Contact tracing working least well in areas it’s most needed (bad)
• Growing importance of super spreading events

We have slowed growth down a lot and this has bought us quite a bit more time.

BUT this time has to be bought for a purpose.

Government urgently needs to improve contact tracing to reverse growth and allow easing of restrictions.