

[Home](#) | [InDepth](#) | [Israel-Gaza war](#) | [War in Ukraine](#) | [Climate](#) | [UK](#) | [World](#) |[More](#)[Business](#) | [Politics](#) | [Culture](#)[UK](#) | [England](#) | [N. Ireland](#) | [Scotland](#) | [Alba](#) | [Wales](#) | [Cymru](#) | [Isle of Man](#) | [Guernsey](#) | [Jersey](#) |[Local News](#)

England restrictions to be lifted in stages - PM

17 February 2021

Summary

The easing of England's lockdown will be based on a "cautious and prudent approach", Prime Minister Boris Johnson says

England is still "some way away" from being able to start relaxing lockdown restrictions, the chief executive of NHS Providers says

A further 738 deaths have been reported in the UK within 28 days of a positive coronavirus test

There have also been another 12,718 daily UK cases, while 15,940,972 people have received the first dose of a vaccine

The UK will expose a group of healthy volunteers aged 18-30 to Covid-19 in a bid to establish which vaccines and treatments work best

Fatigue, headache, sore throat and diarrhoea should be added to the symptoms which trigger a Covid test, researchers suggest

The EU has bought up to 300 million Moderna vaccine doses, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen confirms

Live Reporting

Edited by Katie Wright

19:54 17 February 2021

Goodbye for now

Thank you for joining us for live updates on the coronavirus pandemic.

They were brought to you by Alice Evans, Becky Morton, James Clarke, Jennifer Meierhans, Katie Wright and Sophie Williams.

 Share

19:52 17 February 2021

What happened today?



PA MEDIA

| Boris Johnson visited a vaccination centre in Cwmbran, south Wales

We are going to be bringing the live page to a close soon, so here's a recap of the day's coronavirus news:

- Lockdown in England will be eased "cautiously" using a "data not dates" approach, **the prime minister says**
- The world's first Covid-19 "**human challenge trials**" will start in the UK, infecting healthy young volunteers with the virus to test vaccines and treatments
- A further 738 deaths have been reported in the UK within 28 days of a positive coronavirus test
- There have also been another 12,718 daily UK cases, while 15,940,972 people have received the first dose of a vaccine
- NI's vaccine rollout is running **weeks ahead of schedule**, so jabs for carers have been brought forward
- The vaccination campaign is starting to **reduce the Covid death toll in Scotland**, the country's first minister has said
- Researchers want the government to add fatigue, headache, sore throat and diarrhoea to the existing three symptoms which **trigger a Covid test in the UK**
- More than £500,000 has been raised to help a mountain rescue volunteer who suffered life-changing injuries going to the aid of **campers who had broken coronavirus lockdown restrictions**

- And Apple is changing its **syringe emoji** to remove the dripping blood, as it becomes widely used to talk about the Covid-19 vaccine

Share

19:47 17 February 2021

Family enjoy stay-at-home 'tropical holiday' in lockdown



A family have harnessed the power of the imagination to "go on holiday" at home during England's lockdown.

The Hodgsons packed their bags and embarked on a two-day trip to tropical "Hodgeland", complete with an airport departure lounge and a plane journey.

The Disney-mad family from Leeds say it lifted their spirits during the "toughest" lockdown yet.

The plan was conjured up by Heather Hodgson, who kept husband Dom and four-year-old Scarlett in the dark about the itinerary.

Mr Hodgson says: "The little details really made it, she built a website to check in our passports for our flight, pre-recorded airport announcements and put tropical air fresheners around the room."

Have a look at the holiday snaps [here](#).



19:41 17 February 2021

Police tackle 'resurgence' of parties and large gatherings



Police in Greater Manchester have dealt with 1,200 Covid-related incidents in a week after a "resurgence" in parties and large gatherings, officials say.

They have also seen greater "resistance" to police enforcement, officials for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority say.

Speaking at a weekly press conference Bev Hughes, deputy mayor for policing and crime, said 280 fixed penalty notices had been issued in the past week, including 55 fines of £800, of which 32 were handed out at a mass gathering in Salford.

Police also released footage of a large party at Beetham Tower on Deansgate which ended up in "a fight with about 50 people, and the owner is being pursued there for the £10,000 fine," she says.

Several gyms, backroom bars and pubs, and a large yoga gathering were also found to be operating in the region.



19:30 17 February 2021

Lockdown diaries: 'No-one has seen him as a baby'



Olivia Hall gave birth at the start of the pandemic. She was one of the first cases to be placed in isolation at Southmead Hospital in Bristol.

Her son, Harrison Ahyow, is now a toddler and she says it "saddens" her that no-one was able to see him as a baby.

She says she has flashbacks to his birth on 25 March during the first lockdown.

"I'd been left for hours labouring in the hospital car park," she says. "They didn't know where to put me, having shown symptoms for coronavirus 10 days previously.

"They weren't testing then so I went into hospital alone, and 24 hours later I went into surgery alone.

"An emergency C-section was required to deliver my first child. We're 10-and-a-half months later and I've seen a health visitor once."

Read Olivia's take on motherhood and lockdown life in her own words.

 Share

19:20 17 February 2021

Author Ian Rankin's son 'forgotten' by vaccine programme



Scottish crime author Ian Rankin **says his son Kit has been "forgotten"** as vaccines were delivered to care homes.

The 26-year-old - who has severe learning difficulties - lives in care in Edinburgh, but did not qualify in the first priority group.

The Scottish government said it had "rightly" prioritised those at higher mortality risk.

People with a "severe or profound" learning disability **are in priority group six for the coronavirus vaccine.**

Rankin told the BBC: "Our son can't look after himself and he's in the same group as us - his parents, who are healthy 65-year-olds. People with learning difficulties should have been prioritised.

"It's a bit late now. My son will get the jab in the next month or so. But we should learn lessons for the future about what it seems to be a bit of a lottery."

 Share

19:11 17 February 2021

Injured mountain rescuer appeal raises £500,000



More than £500,000 has been raised to help a mountain rescue volunteer who suffered life-changing injuries going to the aid of campers who had broken coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

Chris Lewis, a member of the Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team in the Lake District, suffered severe spinal injuries when he fell 500ft (150m).

Lewis, 60, also suffered multiple facial fractures in the fall at Red Screes, above Kirkstone Pass on 6 February.

Colleagues described the fundraising support, which saw more than 20,000 people donate in less than 48 hours, as "phenomenal".

The campers, from Liverpool and Leicester, have both been fined £200.

 Share

18:57 17 February 2021

Amazon being sued by New York over Covid response



REUTERS

An investigation was launched last March after numerous complaints about the lack of precautions for workers in New York

Internet giant Amazon is being sued by New York over its coronavirus response.

In a lawsuit, Attorney General General Letitia James said her inquiry into conditions at two warehouses in New York City found Amazon implemented a “deficient” programme to trace the contacts of infected workers.

She also claims the company did not follow rules requiring companies to shut and disinfect areas that had been visited by a sick person, among other violations.

James launched her investigation last March after numerous complaints about the lack of precautions for workers in New York, then the epicentre of the US coronavirus outbreak.

Amazon last week attempted to block the lawsuit with its own legal action.

It said James was applying "an inconsistent and unfair" standard.

[Read more here](#)

 **Share**

18:44 17 February 2021

NI's vaccination rollout 'weeks' ahead of schedule



GETTY IMAGES

Northern Ireland's vaccine rollout is running weeks ahead of schedule, Health Minister Robin Swann has said.

Carers and more people with underlying health conditions were due to be vaccinated in March but **this will be brought forward "on a staggered basis"**, he says.

"As ever, the rate of our progress through the eligible groups will depend on available supplies of vaccines," he says.

The vaccine rollout will be divided between GP practices and the seven regional vaccination centres.

On Wednesday, the Department of Health recorded six more Covid-19 related deaths, taking its death toll to 2,015.

[Share](#)

18:28 17 February 2021

Losing both of my parents to coronavirus



Cathy Killick
Journalist, BBC Look North

I lost both of my parents to Covid within six weeks.

I've been a reporter for the BBC for more than 30 years. In that time I've interviewed dozens of people who have experienced loss. I've done my best to convey their emotion faithfully, not having experienced it myself.

Now I find I am one of those people.

I've always been struck by the bravery of those I've talked to and I've always been grateful to them too. Journalism can only exist if people are willing to share their stories, so I'm going to share mine not because I'm brave, but because I owe them.

I've made this video below and the full story is [here](#).



 Share

18:16 17 February 2021

Premier League games on live TV until stadiums reopen



All Premier League football matches will **remain available to watch live in the UK until fans are allowed to return to stadiums.**

Matches will continue to be broadcast by Sky Sports, BT Sport, Amazon Prime Video and the BBC.

Premier League football has been played behind closed doors since the 2019-20 season resumed in June following the first coronavirus lockdown.

Some Premier League clubs were able to welcome up to 2,000 fans in December, but games were soon moved back behind closed doors amid rising cases of Covid-19.

Earlier this month, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden told BBC Sport there was a **"long path ahead of us"** before fans could return to stadiums.

On Monday, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to announce how the current lockdown in England will be eased.

 **Share**

18:05 17 February 2021

South Africa rolls out vaccination programme



| President Cyril Ramaphosa was amongst those vaccinated on the first day

As we mentioned earlier, South Africa has started Covid vaccinations following the suspension of an earlier plan to use the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

A new variant accounts for most of the new cases in South Africa.

South Africa put the rollout of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine on hold, following a study that **showed "disappointing" results against the country's new Covid-19 strain.**

South Africa says it has so far secured enough doses for the target population of 40 million.

However, there has been criticism the government was too slow to act.

[Read more about immunisations and what the government is saying.](#)

 Share

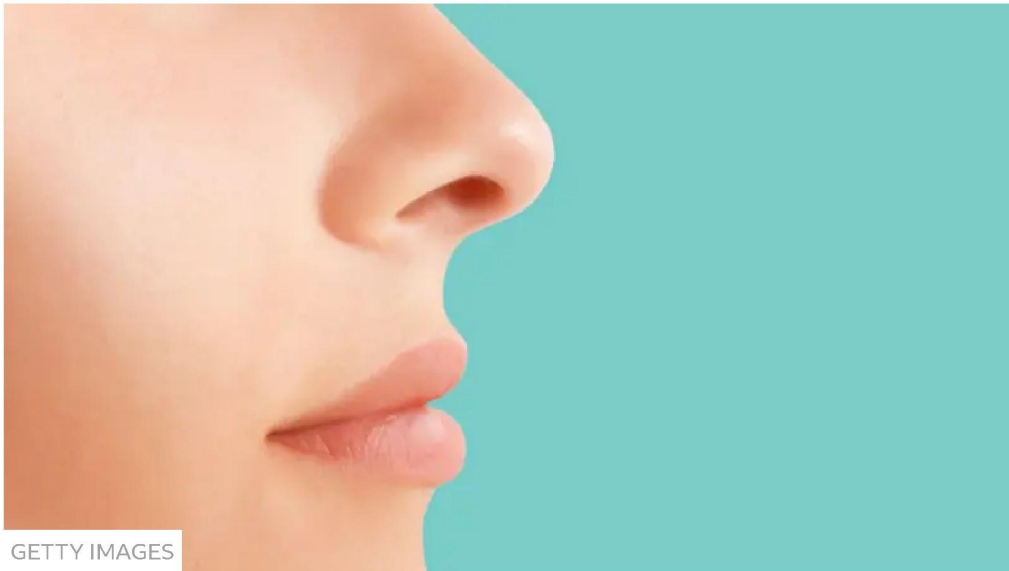
17:52 17 February 2021

What are challenge trials and why do we need them?



James Gallagher

Health and science correspondent, BBC News



GETTY IMAGES

| Volunteers will get coronavirus squirted up their noses

As we've been reporting today, a group of UK volunteers are **soon to be deliberately infected with coronavirus** in what's known as a "challenge trial".

It will be the first such trial in Covid anywhere in the world.

The volunteers will come into hospital and spend the whole time in a single room, and come into contact only with people running the trial.

On the third day, a small syringe filled with live virus will be squirted up their nose.

They will be monitored in hospital - including regular blood samples - for at least the following two weeks, after which they can go home if they are free of the virus.

The volunteers will continue to be followed up for a year.

Challenge trials and traditional trials are both important but there are some advantages to challenge trials, such as that they get results - including on vaccine effectiveness - incredibly quickly.

This is because everyone is deliberately infected, whereas a "real-world" trial would have to wait for people to catch the virus in their day-to-day lives.

The UK trial is focusing on young people (aged 18-30) with no health problems, who we know are very unlikely to have any health problems from a coronavirus infection, and they will be closely monitored in hospital.

The risk is low, but a challenge trial is not completely risk-free.

[Read the full explainer here.](#)

[Share](#)

17:42 17 February 2021

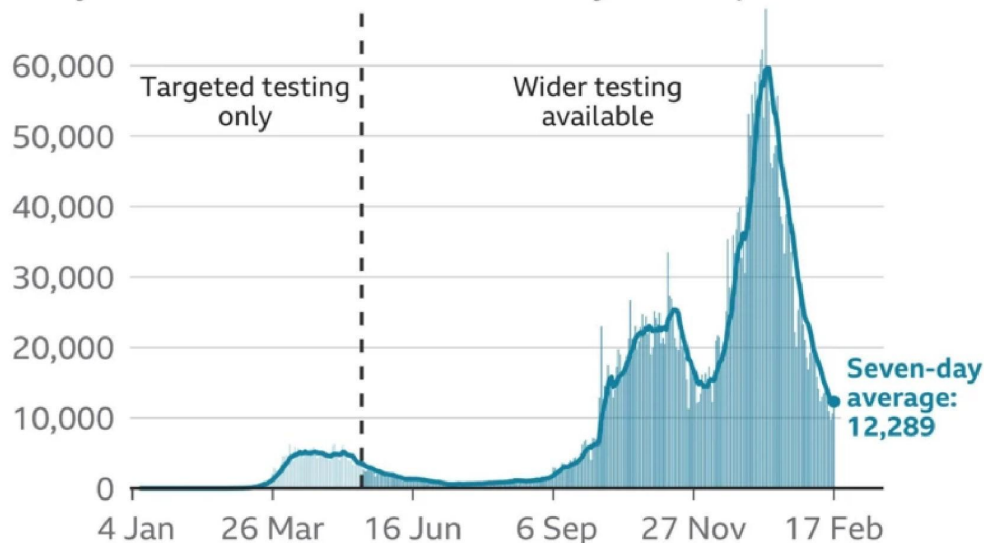
Latest UK Covid data, in charts

Following the UK government's release of daily coronavirus statistics, here are some charts showing the country's epidemic.

To track case numbers in your area and see more graphs and charts, [read our full story](#).

Daily cases continue to fall

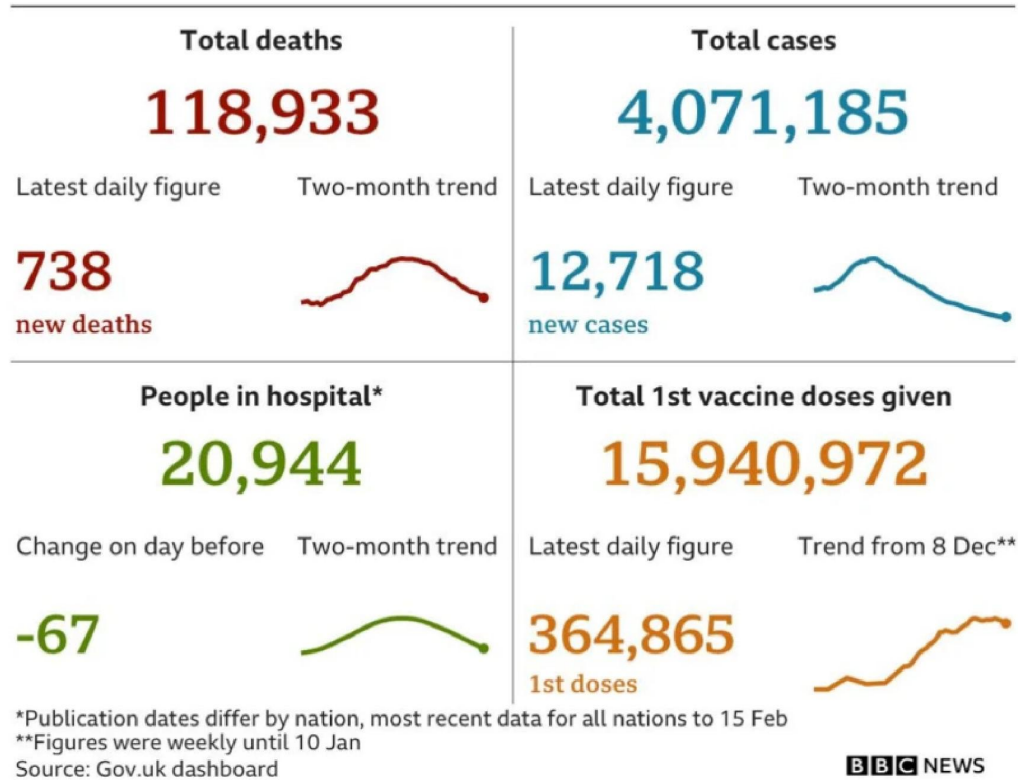
Daily confirmed coronavirus cases by date reported



Source: Gov.uk dashboard, updated to 17 Feb 09:00 GMT

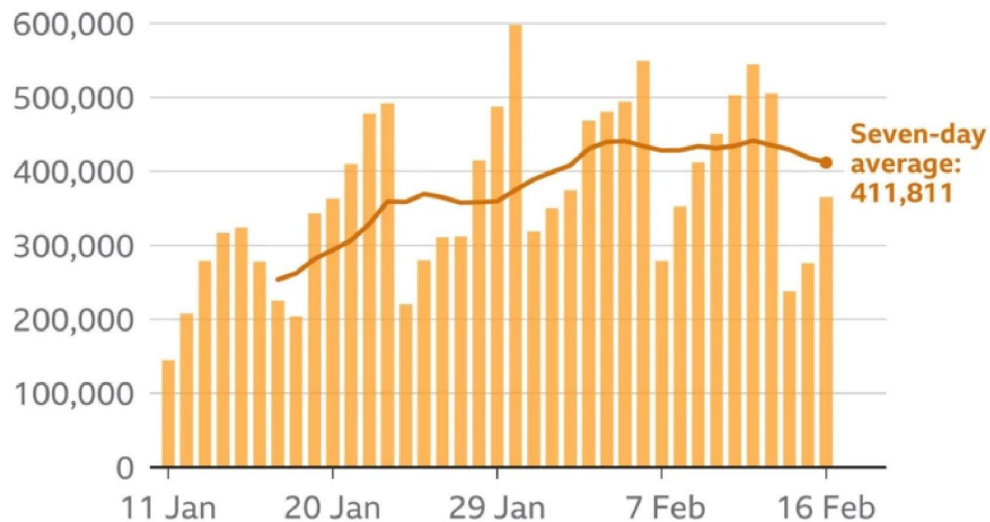
BBC

Coronavirus in the UK



More than 15 million first doses given

Daily first vaccine doses administered by date reported



Source: Gov.uk dashboard. Data to 16 Feb

BBC

[Share](#)

17:25 17 February 2021

'This has got to be the final lockdown' - Labour



Labour's shadow health secretary says he expects the government to lift Covid restrictions in England through "gradual easing" rather than ending lockdown "in one big snap".

Speaking to reporters, Jonathan Ashworth agrees with **Prime Minister Boris Johnson's comments made earlier today** - that any easing should be driven by data rather than dates.

"But we have to be cautious because this has got to be the final lockdown," Ashworth adds.

He agrees the vaccination programme has been "a success" but says the government needs to "do more" to stop the spread of the virus when lockdown measures are eased.

Ashworth lists sick pay as one of the elements that needs addressing and says "double-masking" - **a concept being recommended in the US** - should also be considered when UK ministers review the rules.

The PM will set out details on Monday on the plan for lifting restrictions.

 Share

17:12 17 February 2021

China stays Covid free during the holidays



Kerry Allen
BBC Monitoring, Chinese Media Analyst



Tens of millions of people will still be travelling daily between now and the beginning of March

In the past 24 hours, China has reported no new domestically-transmitted cases of Covid-19.

This has pretty much been the story for the last week, and Chinese media have been praising these statistics, and thanking groups of people that the government urged shouldn't travel during the Spring Festival holiday period. In particular, they have praised university students, migrants and overseas Chinese.

In January, there were multiple outbreaks of the virus in the northeast of the country.

And as hundreds of thousands of people traditionally travel across China for the Lunar New Year – which this year fell on 12 February - to spend time with their families, there were government concerns this annual migration might exacerbate the spread of the coronavirus.

Consequently, China's central government tried to discourage people from travelling this year, and local governments **introduced financial incentives for people to stay put.**

The government also introduced special measures for those who did still intend to travel, in order to keep them safe. Travellers were instructed to show a negative Covid-19 test within seven days of their journey, and encouraged to **self-isolate for 14 days on arrival at their destination.**

Tens of millions of people will still be travelling daily between now and the beginning of March, but today is the last public holiday in China, so

the majority of people made their return journeys today.

 Share

16:59 17 February 2021

Quarantine hotel rooms are 'like a prison'



Caroline Davies
BBC transport correspondent



| One of the hotel rooms being used to quarantine arrivals

Quarantine hotels in the UK opened to their first guests on Monday, but some have expressed concerns about their safety, the cost and whether the system works.

Everyone who has visited or transited through 33 countries on the UK's "red list" who arrive in England must stay 11 nights in a quarantine hotel - at a cost of £1,750 for a single person.

Mohammed Mostafa travelled to London after visiting family in Bangladesh. While the country is not on the red list, Mr Mostafa transited through the UAE which is - and the new measures took him by surprise.

"It was absolutely shocking and I felt quite intimidated as well," Mostafa told AFP news.

He is staying at the Holiday Inn hotel and described his room as "like a prison".

[Read more.](#)[Share](#)

16:48 17 February 2021

'Self-isolation cost my family £700'



Tracy Moore and her husband Jason lost hundreds of pounds when they were told to isolate

Self-isolation is costing people who do not qualify for financial support hundreds of pounds in lost income.

Most applications to Wales' £500 self-isolation grant scheme have been rejected.

Under the existing system, applicants must stand to lose income by isolating, and be on at least one of a range of benefits.

The Welsh government announced on Wednesday it was expanding the scheme to include people not on any benefits but with a personal income of less than £500 net per week or on basic statutory sick pay.

Tracy Moore, from Flintshire, saw her household income fall about £700 last month, and told BBC Wales Live the way the support system worked was "wrong".

Her husband and son work for a Tarmac company and shared their van with someone who tested positive the following day.

They called 111 and were advised to isolate for 10 days - but when they tried to apply for financial help they were told they were not eligible as they had not formally been asked to isolate by Test, Trace, Protect.

[Read more.](#)

[!\[\]\(004d352ca3e5c974252147a5c78e6fbb_img.jpg\) Share](#)

16:40 17 February 2021

Over-75s 'given time' to pay BBC licence fee



The BBC says it will give people over the age of 75 **more time to pay their licence fee due to the pandemic.**

The right to a free TV licence for the elderly ended last August for all except those in receipt of the pension credit benefit.

More than 2.7 million households with someone over 75 have now bought

Best of BBC iPlayer



Intense crime thriller with Staz Nair



Comedy from the producer of This Country



Chilling stories of the supernatural



Which top chef will cut the mustard?



Home

Australian celebrity chef Pete Evans has been banned from Instagram just weeks after his Facebook page was removed for repeatedly sharing misinformation about Covid.

News

Sport

Evans, who had about 1.5 million Facebook followers and some 278,000 Instagram followers, had shared a range of debunked theories about the severity of the virus, mask-wearing and vaccines, as well as incorrect claims about 5G telecom networks.

Terms of

Contact 1

The chef was a judge for 10 seasons on the Australian show My Kitchen Rules.

Copyright
external

Aside from his comments on coronavirus, he has also promoted pseudo-science about diets and cancer cures.

[Read more here.](#)

 **Share**

 **1** **2** **3** **4** 