

w/c 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Produced by Health Evidence Matters

## Public Health England

### **Caring as a social determinant of health: findings from a rapid review of reviews and analysis of the GP Patient Survey**

Public Health England commissioned Newcastle University to explore the consequences of being an unpaid carer of older people and identify evidence about how best to support this group of carers. This report found a lack of clear and robust evidence about how best to support people caring for older populations, and gaps in evidence on key outcomes. It concludes that unpaid caring should be considered a social determinant of health.

[Details](#)

### **NHS population screening: identifying and reducing inequalities**

Guidance and resources to support providers and commissioners in reducing screening inequalities.

[Details](#)

### **TB Strategy Update**

This latest issue of the TB Strategy Update was released on World TB Day, 24th March 2021

[Details](#)

### **Collaborative TB Strategy for England, 2015 to 2020 End of programme report**

This report highlights the outcomes of this collaborative strategy, which was created in response to the high rates of tuberculosis in England. It also makes recommendations for future work in order to achieve a 90% reduction in tuberculosis incidence by 2035.

[Details](#)

### **Variants of concern or under investigation: data up to 24 March 2021**

Updated figures for the total number of COVID-19 variants reported in the UK.

[Details](#)

### **Impact of COVID-19 vaccines on mortality in England - December 2020 to February 2021**

This report estimates that between 6,100 and 6,600 deaths have been averted as a result of the COVID-19 vaccination programme up to the end of February 2021. Early evidence suggests that vaccines also reduce transmission, therefore this is likely to be an underestimation.

[Details](#)

### **Public Health England vaccine effectiveness report**

This report presents data on the early effect of vaccination with the Pfizer/BioNTech (BNT162b2) and AstraZeneca (ChAdOx1) vaccines on symptomatic COVID-19, infection and hospitalisation, as well as the population level impact on hospitalisations and deaths.

[Details](#)

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### **Vaccine update: issue 316, January 2021, COVID-19 special edition**

This special edition covers various changes to the Green book (chapters 1 and 14a), COVID-19 vaccination resources (e.g. consent forms, template letters, PGDs), important information for vaccine handling, immunisation training webinars, and other useful COVID-19 links.

[Details](#)

### **Vaccine update: issue 317, February 2021**

This issue covers COVID-19 green book chapter 14a, COVID-19 vaccinations currently being offered to > 75 years of age and in at-risk groups, COVID-19 vaccination explainer videos, new 'Which COVID-19 vaccine?' poster and resources for people with a learning disability or autism.

[Details](#)

### **Vaccine update: issue 318, March 2021**

Topics covered include JCVI issues interim advice on phase 2 of COVID-19 (C19) vaccine programme rollout, delivering vaccines to homeless people, C19 programme resources and training, supply & priority groups for PPV23 & Easter/May bank holiday delivery schedule for C19 vaccines.

[Details](#)

### **Cancer survival: index for Clinical Commissioning Groups, 2003 to 2018**

This cancer survival bulletin includes estimates for the 1-year index of cancer survival (all cancers combined) for adults in England for CCGs, diagnosed between 2003 to 2018 and followed up to 2019.

[Details](#)

### **Public Health Matters: Taking place-based action to reduce health inequalities and build back better and fairer**

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have mirrored, and in some cases exacerbated, our entrenched health and social inequalities. Find out how PHE's new resource can help local areas to build back inclusive and sustainable economies.

[Details](#)

### **Public Health Matters: Investing in weight management services**

Earlier this month the Government announced £100 million of new funding to help support people in achieving a healthier weight. Find out what the funding will be used for and how PHE is supporting local authorities and service providers.

[Details](#)

### **Public Health Matters: Behind the scenes: Expanding the COVID-19 dashboard**

When the PHE COVID-19 Dashboard first started back in March 2020, it was just a map and a few charts reporting four metrics on cases and deaths. One year on, read how the dashboard has evolved into the most important and reliable daily statistical publication in the UK.

[Details](#)

### **National flu and COVID-19 surveillance report: 25 March 2021 (week 12)**

## **Department of Health and Social Care**

### **One-year report on the status on the non-devolved provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020: March 2021**

The Coronavirus Act 2020 was designed to protect public health and ensure that the NHS had the capacity to deal with the peak of the virus. The Act also required ministers to publish a one-year report on the status of the non-devolved provisions, contained in this publication.

[Details](#)

### **New UK study finds strong immune response following one dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine**

Early findings from the PITCH study of UK healthcare workers (n=273) found 99% of people generated a robust immune response against Covid-19 after one dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Those who had previously been infected with Covid-19 had higher T cell and antibody responses

[Details](#)

[Link to preprint](#)

### **Transforming the public health system**

Sets out reforms to the public health system in England to transform our national health protection capabilities, put health promotion at the heart of government, and more deeply embed prevention and health improvement expertise across local and national government and the NHS.

[Details](#)

### **UK Health Security Agency will launch on 1 April**

The Agency, led by England's deputy chief medical officer Dr Jenny Harries, will bring together Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre. The primary focus in its initial phase of operation will be the continued fight against the COVID-19 pandemic

[Details](#)

A policy paper sets out more detail on the government's plans for protecting and securing the public's health.

[Securing our health: the UK Health Security Agency](#)

### **New technology to detect known variants of concern being trialled in NHS Test and Trace laboratories**

The technology – known as 'genotype assay testing' – is set to halve the time it currently takes to identify if a positive COVID-19 sample contains a variant of concern, and could be used in addition to standard testing for COVID-19 to identify cases quickly.

[Details](#)

### **The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days**

Developed as part of the early years healthy development review, this document outlines 6 areas for action to improve the health outcomes of all babies in England as this period of 1,001 days sets the foundations for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing.

[Details](#)

### **Adult weight management services grant determination 2021 to 2022**

The adult weight management services grant is a new ringfenced grant available to local authorities to support the commissioning of adult behavioural (tier 2) weight management services worth £30.5 million. These documents provide information to local authorities on allocations and grant conditions.

[Details](#)

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### **Saving and improving lives: the future of UK clinical research delivery**

This policy document outlines the government's plan for clinical research delivery to tackle health inequalities, bolster economic recovery and improve the lives of people across the UK.

[Details](#)

### **Mental health recovery plan backed by £500 million**

The government's mental health recovery action plan will support hundreds of thousands of people with mental health issues.

[Details](#)

### **COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan**

Plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to the mental health impacts of the pandemic during 2021 to 2022.

[Details](#)

### **Suicide prevention in England: fifth progress report**

The fifth progress report of the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England details the steps taken to reduce deaths by suicide since January 2019.

### **Government increases support for those self-isolating**

Government bolsters its package of localised support with new cash injection of £12.9 million per month for local authorities to support those self-isolating.

[Details](#)

### **NHS mandate 2021 to 2022**

The government's mandate to NHS England and NHS Improvement sets out their objectives and budgets for 2021 to 2022.

[Details](#)

### **Coronavirus cases by local authority: epidemiological data, 25 March 2021**

Weekly watchlist giving epidemiological coronavirus (COVID-19) data for each lower-tier local authority (LTLA) in England.

[Details](#)

### **NHS England and NHS Improvement**

#### **Supporting CCGs to address vaccine inequalities – next steps**

This letter notifies CCGs of additional funding prioritised for local areas with significant vaccine inequalities, those and that have not received community champion funding, that are novel or innovative approaches, or address a historically underserved community.

[Details](#)

#### **Learning from lives and deaths – People with a learning disability and autistic people (LeDeR) policy 2021**

This policy aims to set out for the first time for the NHS the core aims and values of the LeDeR programme and the expectations placed on different parts of the health and social care system in

delivering the programme from June 2021. Autistic people will now be specifically included in an expanded learning from life and death reviews (LeDeR) programme to drive improvements in care. The NHS has worked with stakeholders including bereaved families, people with a learning disability and autistic people over the past 12 months to develop the new policy which will focus not only on completing reviews but on ensuring that local health and social care systems implement actions at a local level to improve and save lives.

[Details](#)

### **Strong integrated care systems**

One of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that people need support which is joined up across local councils, the NHS, voluntary and community organisations.

This video explains how integrated care systems (ICSs) embed this collaboration, helping local services to respond to the challenges of the pandemic and beyond.

[Details](#)

### **Government Office for Science**

#### **Latest R number and growth rate**

Last updated on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Latest R number range for the UK

0.7 to 0.9

Latest growth rate range for the UK

-5% to -2%

per day

[Details](#)

### **Independent SAGE**

#### **Why supported isolation is crucial to break community transmission**

Isolation of cases and contacts is the most efficient and focused way to clamp down on the virus and break transmission chains. Countries that have done this effectively have had fewer lockdowns and much lower death rates.

[Details](#)

### **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)**

#### **COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing COVID-19- guidance (NG191)**

This living guideline brings together existing recommendations on managing COVID-19 so that healthcare staff and those planning and delivering services can find and use them more easily, and includes new recommendations on therapeutics.

[Details](#)

#### **Vaccine uptake in the general population -- Call for evidence**

NICE is calling for qualitative evidence focusing on barriers and facilitators to COVID-19 vaccination uptake and quantitative evidence about effectiveness of interventions aimed at increasing COVID-19 vaccine for it guideline on vaccine uptake in the general population.

[Details](#)

## Research and analysis from academic journals - non- coronavirus-related

### **The Lancet Public Health: Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a health systems intervention for latent tuberculosis infection management (ACT4): a cluster-randomised trial**

A strategy of standardised evaluation, local decision making, and implementation of health systems strengthening activities can provide a mechanism for scale-up of tuberculosis prevention, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries.

[Full text](#)

### **The Lancet Public Health: Incidence and prevalence of tuberculosis in incarcerated populations: a systematic review and meta-analysis**

Globally, people in prison are at high risk of contracting *M tuberculosis* infection and developing tuberculosis, with consistent disparities between prisons and the general population across regions. Tuberculosis control programmes should prioritise preventive interventions among incarcerated populations.

[Full text](#)

[Comment](#)

### **The Lancet Public Health: Community-based active case-finding interventions for tuberculosis: a systematic review**

Community-based active case-finding for tuberculosis might be effective in changing tuberculosis epidemiology and thereby improving population health if delivered with high coverage and intensity. If possible, active case-finding projects should incorporate a well-designed, robust evaluation to contribute to the evidence base and help elucidate which delivery methods and diagnostic strategies are most effective

[Full text](#)

[Comment](#)

### **The Lancet Public Health: Homelessness, unstable housing, and risk of HIV and hepatitis C virus acquisition among people who inject drugs: a systematic review and meta-analysis**

Homelessness and unstable housing are associated with increased risk of HIV and HCV acquisition among PWID. Findings support the development of interventions that simultaneously address homelessness and unstable housing and HIV and HCV transmission in this population.

[Full text](#)

[Comment](#)

### **The Lancet Respiratory Medicine: Challenges and opportunities to end tuberculosis in the COVID-19 era**

Article highlights COVID-19 has challenged health systems and restricted essential health service delivery for tuberculosis in many countries. To avoid further morbidity and mortality, strategies are urgently required to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on tuberculosis.

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ: Comparative efficacy of interventions for reducing symptoms of depression in people with dementia: systematic review and network meta-analysis**

Review (256 studies; n=28 483) found non-drug approaches were associated with a meaningful reduction in symptoms of depression in people with dementia and without a diagnosis of a major

depressive disorder, and drug approaches alone were not more efficacious than usual care.

[Full text](#)

**BMJ Open: Anticipated responses to a hypothetical minimum price for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco: an online cross-sectional survey with cigarette smokers and ex-smokers in the UK**

In response to a hypothetical minimum price for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco, approximately a fifth of smokers in the UK indicated they would smoke less or quit and almost two-fifths of ex-smokers indicated the prices would help them stay quit.

[Full text](#)

**JECH: Influence of childhood socioeconomic position and ability on mid-life cognitive function: evidence from three British birth cohorts**

Study found a link between childhood socioeconomic position (SEP) and cognitive function in mid-life which acts via education and occupational attainment. Early socioeconomic advantage has a positive impact on both education and occupation, which in turn may serve as factors which benefit later cognitive function.

[Full text](#)

**Research and analysis from academic journals and preprints – coronavirus-related  
medRxiv (preprint): A convergence-based assessment of relative differences in age-stratified susceptibility and infectiousness for SARS-CoV-2 variants of B.1.1.7 lineage**

Modelling shows 0-19-year-olds tend to make up a larger share of total cases for B.1.1.7 than for wild type, and likely experience a larger relative increase in infectiousness than other age groups.

[Full text](#)

**medRxiv (preprint): Physical, cognitive and mental health impacts of COVID-19 following hospitalisation – a multi-centre prospective cohort study**

Since Mar 2020, ~330K people have been discharged alive from hospital after an admission for Covid-19 in England. That is potentially 67,000 people with a new disability; 125,000 people severely affected post-Covid and almost 240,000 not fully recovered by 5 months.

[Full text](#)

**medRxiv (preprint): Long Covid in adults discharged from UK hospitals after Covid-19: A prospective, multicentre cohort study using the ISARIC WHO Clinical Characterisation Protocol**

Effects on quality of life appear to be independent of age, suggesting that factors that determine long covid are independent of those that predict mortality.

[Full text](#)

BMJ analysis of these two papers - [Covid-19: Middle aged women face greater risk of debilitating long term symptoms](#)

**medRxiv (preprint): Characteristics of Long Covid: findings from a social media survey**

This is an exploratory survey of Long Covid characteristics. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that it is a non-representative population sample, it highlights the heterogeneity of persistent symptoms, and the significant functional impact of prolonged illness following confirmed or suspected SARS-CoV-2 infection.

[Full text](#)

### **medRxiv (preprint): Understanding the effectiveness of government interventions in Europe's second wave of COVID-19**

Estimates of the effectiveness of 17 NPIs from local case and death data from 7 countries showed that the combined effect of all NPIs was smaller relative to estimates from the first half of 2020, indicating the strong influence of safety measures and individual protective behaviours--such as distancing--that persisted after the first wave. Closing specific businesses was highly effective. Gathering restrictions were highly effective but only for the strictest limits. We find smaller effects for closing educational institutions compared to the first wave, suggesting that safer operation of schools was possible with a set of stringent safety measures including testing and tracing, preventing mixing, and smaller classes.

[Full text](#)

### **Breaking news: First Covid jab cuts infection risk by 62% in England care home residents**

Data from a UCL, DHSC-funded study of care home residents in England has found that their risk of infection with Covid-19 – either symptomatic or asymptomatic – fell by 62% five weeks after they received their first Oxford/AstraZeneca or Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine dose. Those who were infected after having the vaccine may also be less likely to transmit Covid-19. A total of 10,400 care home residents in England (with an average age of 86) were followed between December and March, and number of infections occurring in vaccinated and unvaccinated groups – using data retrieved from routine monthly PCR testing – were compared. Both vaccines reduced the risk of infection by about 56% at 28-34 days after the first dose, and 62% at 35-48 days. The effect is maintained for at least seven weeks,

[BBC news link](#)

### **AstraZeneca Press Release: AZD1222 US Phase III primary analysis confirms safety and efficacy**

AstraZeneca has updated the efficacy result of its coronavirus vaccine trial in the US, after health officials insisted they wanted to include the latest information. AZ has now adjusted the efficacy rate of its vaccine from 79% to 76%. Further data from the US trial showed efficacy among the over 65s rose from 80% to 85%.

[Details](#)

### **EuroSveillance: Case fatality risk of the SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern B.1.1.7 in England, 16 November to 5 February**

Study of 184,786 people from England, providing further evidence the UK (B117) variant is more dangerous. Risk of death was increased by 67%. In real terms, this means that where 3 deaths could previously have been expected to occur, there will now be 5.

[Full text](#)

### **Cochrane Database Syst Rev: Cochrane COVID-19 Diagnostic Test Accuracy Group: Rapid, point-of-care antigen and molecular-based tests for diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection**

SR has found rapid antigen (lateral flow) tests are better at identifying covid-19 infection in people with symptoms than in those with none, although the diagnostic accuracy of different brands of tests varies widely. The latest SR updates previous reviews and includes evidence from 64 studies up to November 2020. Most were conducted in Europe and the United States and assessed the accuracy of lateral flow tests in detecting current SARS-CoV-2 infection when compared with the standard laboratory genome testing.

The World Health Organization's performance standards require that tests correctly identify at least 80% of infected people (test sensitivity) and exclude infection in at least 97% of uninfected people (test specificity). The Cochrane analysis found that test sensitivity in symptomatic people ranged from 34% to

88%, with an average of 72%. The figure for the Innova test used in the UK was 58%. The tests worked best in the first week after symptom onset.

In people without symptoms the tests correctly identified an average of 58% of those who were infected. However, the number of samples from asymptomatic people was around 10 times lower than from symptomatic people in the studies analysed, limiting the conclusions that could be drawn. In uninfected people the tests correctly ruled out infection in 99.5% of people with covid-19-like symptoms and in 98.9% of those without. The review's lead author criticised the UK government for rolling out the lateral flow testing programme in the absence of empirical evidence.

[Full text](#)

### **Nature Medicine: Sensitivity of infectious SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 and B.1.351 variants to neutralizing antibodies**

Faster-spreading SARS-CoV-2 variants acquired a partial resistance to neutralizing antibodies generated by natural infection or vaccination, which was most frequently detected in individuals with low antibody levels. B.1.351, but not B.1.1.7, may increase the risk of infection in immunized individuals.

[Full text](#)

### **NIHR: Modelling of hypothetical SARS-CoV-2 point-of-care tests on admission to hospital from A&E: rapid cost-effectiveness analysis**

Thirty-two strategies involving different hypothetical SARS-CoV-2 tests were modelled as were recently published desirable and acceptable target product profiles for SARS-CoV-2 point-of-care tests. Given the heterogeneity of hospitals, no blanket solution can be provided.

[Full text](#)

### **The Lancet Infectious Diseases: Routine asymptomatic testing strategies for airline travel during the COVID-19 pandemic: a simulation study**

Analysis found routine asymptomatic testing for SARS-CoV-2 before travel can be an effective strategy to reduce passenger risk of infection during travel, although abbreviated quarantine with post-travel testing is probably needed to reduce population-level transmission.

[Full text](#)

### **The Lancet Infectious Diseases: Safety and immunogenicity of a recombinant tandem-repeat dimeric RBD-based protein subunit vaccine (ZF2001) against COVID-19 in adults: two randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase 1 and 2 trials**

In phase 1 (n=50) and phase 2 (n=900) trials, the protein subunit vaccine ZF2001 appears to be well tolerated and immunogenic, supporting the use of the 25mcg dose in a three-dose schedule in an ongoing phase 3 trial for large-scale evaluation of its safety and efficacy.

A commentary notes that the state of the current vaccine landscape continues to raise the bar for vaccine candidates and at present, it is unclear whether the use of a three-dose regimen (prime, boost, boost) in a limited timespan for the ZF2001 protein subunit vaccine will offset the benefits of the less demanding storage conditions that limit RNA vaccines. It highlights that as new SARS-CoV-2 variants emerge, the optimal COVID-19 vaccine should provide broad-spectrum coverage, which might be possible with an engineered spike-protein subunit vaccine comprising a more robust adjuvant. It questions if future studies of ZF2001 fall short of the high efficacy milestones seen with the other vaccines developed so far, will people be satisfied with the reduced efficacy.

[Full text](#)

[Commentary](#)

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### **NEJM: Antibody Responses after a Single Dose of SARS-CoV-2 mRNA Vaccine**

Study of Pfizer vaccine (n=188) found, that 3 weeks after vaccination, those who had a SARS-CoV-2 infection in the previous 30-60 days, or seropositive status, had significantly higher levels of antibody to four SARS-CoV-2 antigens than did those without a history of infection.

[Full text](#)

### **NEJM: BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine Effectiveness among Health Care Workers**

Single centre retrospective study (n=6,680) found a major reduction in new cases of COVID-19 (32.1 to 4.4 per 1000 workers from weeks 1 to 5) in those who had two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, even when a surge of the B.1.1.7 variant was noted in up to 80% of cases.

[Full text](#)

### **NEJM: Early Evidence of the Effect of SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine at One Medical Center**

Study (n=23,234) found rate of new SARS-CoV-2 infection was lower in the fully and partially vaccinated (0.05% and 1.82%) vs those who were nonvaccinated (2.61%). There was also a >90% decrease in the number of employees who were in isolation or quarantine.

[Full text](#)

### **NEJM: SARS-CoV-2 Infection after Vaccination in Health Care Workers in California**

Study at 2 healthcare institutions (n=36,659) found a positivity rate for SARS-CoV-2 infection at 2 or more weeks after the second vaccine dose (Pfizer or Moderna) of 0.05%. Most reported infections during the vaccine schedule were noted in weeks 1-3 after the first dose

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ: Remote management of covid-19 using home pulse oximetry and virtual ward support**

This article discusses practicalities of pulse oximeters (PO), who should use PO at home, use of virtual wards to support home monitoring and clinical assessment of patients being considered for this, critical success factors for virtual ward support, and ongoing research.

[Full text](#)

### **JAMA Neurology: Outcomes and Risk Factors Associated With SARS-CoV-2 Infection in a North American Registry of Patients With Multiple Sclerosis**

Study (n=1626) found increased disability was independently associated with worse clinical severity including death from COVID-19. Other risk factors for worse outcomes included older age, Black race, cardiovascular comorbidities, and recent treatment with corticosteroids.

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ Open: Rapid point-of-care testing for COVID-19: quality of supportive information for lateral flow serology assays**

Study using POKET coding guide found significant concerns around supportive information reported by manufacturers for 79 lateral flow serology assays; information transparency was poor and human factor issues were not properly addressed to mitigate risk of improper device use.

[Full text](#)

### **The Lancet: COVID-19 vaccines for the European region: an unprecedented challenge**

Commentary analyses the challenges ahead for vaccination programmes and what can be done to address them

[Full text](#)

### **Science: The emerging plasticity of SARS-CoV-2**

We should not underestimate SARS-CoV-2. Viruses evolve through mutation plus natural selection. When the virus replicates, it mutates. The more people the virus infects, the more it replicates, the more it mutates.

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ Feature: What do we know about lateral flow tests and mass testing in schools?**

The UK government has made mass testing a key plank of its strategy to reopen schools in England. This briefing reviews the questions and concerns over this approach.

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ Feature: How health data have been used during covid-19, and whether the changes are here to stay**

The pandemic has rewritten the rules on accessing and using health data. This article looks at how covid-19 has changed what is allowed, and whether things will go back to normal after the crisis has abated

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ Editorial: Covid-19: variants and vaccination**

Editorial suggests vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 will be needed for many years; those vaccines will change as variants (VRs) too divergent, similar to vaccines against flu. Surveillance, and assays to rapidly identify and characterise VRs will allow move to more proactive approach.

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ news: Covid-19 vaccine shortages: what is the cause and what are the implications?**

The government has announced that the covid-19 vaccination programme will downshift a gear because of “significantly constrained” supplies of the covid-19 vaccine. This article looks at the reasons and the consequences.

[Full text](#)

### **BMJ Opinion: Zero Covid—known unknowns**

On 11 March 2021, The BMJ hosted a webinar on zero covid. An expert panel explored what zero covid means, whether it is even possible, the different routes and paths countries are taking to manage the pandemic, and possible futures. This article summarises the discussion

[Full text](#)

### **NIHR Dissemination Centre**

#### **NIHR alert: Being overweight is linked with an increased risk of dementia in new research**

Expert commentary is provided on an English epidemiological study which shows that being overweight in middle-age is linked to an increased risk of developing dementia. Although causality cannot be established, this research adds to the evidence that obesity is a serious problem

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## Office for National Statistics

### Number of deaths from all causes below the five-year average for the first time since summer 2020

23 March 2021

There were 1,501 deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England and Wales in the week ending 12 March 2021 – the fewest since the week ending 30 October 2020.

The number of deaths from all causes also decreased in the most recent week, falling below the average for the corresponding week in 2015 to 2019 for the first time since the week ending 4 September 2020 (when registrations were lower than usual because of the August Bank Holiday). Excluding that week, the last time that deaths were below the five-year average was the week ending 7 August 2020.

In total, there were 10,987 deaths in England and Wales in the week ending 12 March 2021, of which 13.7% involved COVID-19.

[Details](#)

### Percentage of people in England testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to decrease

25 March 2021

The percentage of the population testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) has continued to decrease in all characteristic groups.

Analysis of those aged 16 to 74 years testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) in private residential households in England, between 3 September 2020 and 8 March 2021, showed a drop among people who work in both patient-facing job roles and those in non-patient facing job roles.

[Details](#)

### The percentage of children in school years 7 to 11 in England testing positive for the coronavirus has increased

26 March 2021

The percentage of children in school years 7 to 11 in England testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) increased in the week ending 20 March 2021.

In the same week, the percentage of people testing positive has continued to decrease in those in school years 12 to age 34 years and in those aged 50 to 69 years while trends are uncertain in other age groups.

[Details](#)

### Majority of respondents self-isolating following a positive COVID-19 test reported full adherence to requirements

26 March 2021

Of people surveyed between 1 and 13 February 2021, who had recently reached the end of the required self-isolation period following a positive COVID-19 test, 86% reported behaviour that fully adhered to self-isolation requirements.

Approximately 3 in 20 people (14%) reported at least one activity during self-isolation that was not adherent to the requirements. The most common non-adherent activity that people engaged in was leaving the home for reasons not permitted, such as going to the shops, work, school or university.

### People face fewer barriers to vaccination than they expect

26 March 2021

More than 90% of adults report no difficulties when getting the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. This week, respondents to the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey were asked if they expected, or had experienced, any difficulties getting the vaccine.

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The majority of adults answered “no” to both questions, with 92% of those who had received at least one dose of the vaccine saying they had not experienced any difficulties. This was better than people’s expectations (84% expected not having any difficulties).

[Details](#)

### **Comparisons of all-cause mortality between European countries and regions: 2020**

The UK had a higher rate of excess deaths among people aged under 65 in 2020 than almost every other country in Europe. By 18 December 2020 only Bulgaria had a higher cumulative excess mortality rate among under 65s (12.3% above the five year average) than the UK (at 7.7%).

The ONS report, which looked at data from 26 countries, look at Covid-19’s effects across Europe in 2020 and highlights the differing impact of the first and second waves of the pandemic.

[Details](#)

### **Local Government Association**

#### **Public health annual report 2021: rising to the challenges of COVID-19**

This year’s annual report looks back at what public health has helped to achieve and what could have been done better during the pandemic. It also looks to the future - the new National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP) and the publication of the Department of Health and Social Care’s (DHSC) white paper, ‘Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all’ and the significant organisational changes these could bring.

[Details](#)

#### **LGA: Frontline funding for public health teams crucial to post-pandemic recovery**

To match the growth in overall NHS funding as part of the Long Term Plan, the Government should commit to increasing the public health grant in future years to at least £3.9 billion by 2024/25.

[Details](#)

#### **LGA/ADPH Annual Public Health Conference 2021: Rising to the challenge parts 1 and 2, 23 March 2021**

Presentations from this webinar can be downloaded

[Details](#)

### **Royal Society for Public Health**

#### **Health claims on food labels: Putting it into words - The Health Claims Unpacked Project**

Senior Nutrition Scientist working on the EU-funded Health Claims Unpacked Project which is investigating the communication of health claims on food labels explores food labelling regulations and how wording around health benefits can mislead the public.

[Details](#)

#### **Going for bloke: Gambling as a men's health issue**

Peter Baker, Director, Global Action on Men’s Health explains the gender split in gambling and how this can be addressed.

[Details](#)

## Healthwatch

### GP access during covid-19: a review of our evidence: April 2019-December 2020. 2021

The covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated access problems in general practice and patients have reported finding it difficult to book appointments and access treatment

Its latest report looked at how covid-19 had changed the way people access their GP and how this affected their experience of care. It was based on 10 089 people's experiences of GP services between April 2019 and December 2020 and 458 local Healthwatch reports about GP services during the same period. It also used data from a survey of 2431 people in England, undertaken between 22 and 24 January 2021, about their experiences of accessing GPs during the pandemic.

The patients watchdog said that GPs must prioritise telling patients that they are open for face-to-face appointments wherever possible.

[Details](#)

## World Health Organization

### Global report on ageism

This report outlines a framework for action to reduce ageism including specific recommendations for different actors (for example, government, UN agencies, civil society organisations, private sector). It brings together evidence on the nature and magnitude of ageism, its determinants and its impact. It outlines what strategies work to prevent and counter ageism, identifies gaps and proposes future lines of research to improve understanding of ageism. It includes a discussion on the impact of ageism on health.

[Details](#)

## Health Foundation

### One year on: Three myths about COVID-19 that the data proved wrong

The three myths discussed are: 'Those who die from COVID-19 would have died soon anyway', 'It's just a bad flu season' and '-19 is the great leveller – we are all equally at risk.'

[Details](#)

### 1.5 million potential years of life lost to COVID-19 in the UK, with each life cut short by 10 years on average

The analysis by the Health Foundation shows that those who died had their lives cut short by 10 years on average.

People in the 20% most deprived parts of England were twice as likely to die from COVID-19 and they died at younger ages, the research found.

[Details](#)

## ASH

### Over 1.5 million people need social care because of smoking

Research reveals Smokers in England need care 10 years sooner than non-smokers, placing a considerable burden on local social care services. The analysis finds that 1.5 million people need help with everyday tasks, such as dressing, walking across a room and using the toilet due to smoking.

This high level of social care needed has a significant impact on local authority social care budgets. It is estimated that 102,500 people are receiving local authority funded care as a result of smoking (85,000

in their home and 17,500 in residential care). This adds up to £1.2bn each year, equivalent to 8% of the country's social care budget for home and residential adult care.

[Details](#)

### **National Audit Office**

#### **The adult social care market in England**

This report examines the current care market and the Department of Health and Social Care's role in overseeing the market now and in the future, with the aim of offering insights and recommendations ahead of future social care reforms. It finds levels of unpaid care remain high, too many adults have unmet needs and forecasts predict growing demand for care. The lack of a long-term vision for care and short-term funding has hampered local authorities' ability to innovate and plan for the long term, and constrained investment in accommodation and much-needed workforce development.

[Details](#)

#### **Investigation into government funding to charities during the Covid-19 pandemic**

In 2020, the government announced a £750 million financial support package for frontline charities. It designed the package as part of its response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It targeted its support at those organisations in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector providing vital services to the vulnerable. This report explores the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's distribution and oversight of £513 million of the package. It considers how the Department allocated funds, how financial support could be accessed by the sector and where financial support was received.

[Details](#)

### **The Nuffield Trust**

#### **Measuring mortality during Covid-19**

A year since the start of the first lockdown, Sarah Scobie has updated her Q&A on how mortality figures have been collected and measured during the pandemic. She looks at the total number of registered deaths in England and Wales over the 12 months, and how that compares to the number we would 'expect' to see over the same period. What impact has there been on a long-standing decline in mortality?

[Details](#)

#### **The extra quarter-trillion funding for Covid-19**

Analysis of the additional funding that the government has spent or put aside for dealing with the pandemic, now and into the future. Financial support for health and social care is only one element of the wider picture, with nearly half of the overall funding going towards support for businesses.

[Details](#)

### **British Medical Association**

#### **Rest, recover, restore: getting UK health services back on track**

This report states that the Covid-19 pandemic has left the health service running on empty, with staff burnt out, disillusioned, and even considering leaving the NHS as a result of the intense pressures and stress of the past year. It sets out a series of recommendations to UK governments to ensure that services resume safely for both staff and patients.

[Details](#)

### **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Loneliness (APPG on Loneliness)**

#### **A connected recovery: findings of the APPG on Loneliness Inquiry**

This inquiry makes the case for a 'connected recovery' from the Covid-19 pandemic. It explored problems and identified solutions within four crucial policy areas, including: translating national policy into local action through local authorities; community infrastructure (including housing, transport and public spaces); how to adequately fund the voluntary and community sector upon which social prescribing depends; and designing and implementing ways to test the implications of government policies on loneliness.

[Details](#)

### **The British Academy**

#### **Shaping the Covid decade: addressing the long-term societal impacts of Covid-19**

This report argues that the societal impacts of the pandemic have exposed several gaps in public policy-making that the government now has the opportunity to address. It suggests seven strategic goals for policy-makers to pursue: build multi-level governance; improve knowledge, data and information linkage and sharing; prioritise digital infrastructure; reimagine urban spaces; create an agile education and training system; strengthen community-led social infrastructure; and promote a shared social purpose.

[Details](#)

### **Office for Budget Responsibility**

#### **Welfare trends report**

This annual report examines the drivers of welfare spending in the UK, and this year it focuses on Universal Credit and the pandemic's impact on our working-age welfare spending outlook.

[Details](#)

### **NHS Digital**

#### **Adult Social Care Statistics in England: An Overview, 2020**

This report brings together data collected by NHS Digital across different aspects of adult social care supported by local authorities. It aims to produce an insightful and coherent narrative about the trends in adult social care in England.

[Details](#)