

England – 2020 Forecast

Domestic tourism:

The Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) is a national consumer survey measuring the volume and value of domestic overnight tourism trips taken by residents in Great Britain, and provides detailed information about trip and visitor characteristics. Ongoing Covid-19 related travel restrictions meant that data collection has had to be suspended and a planned update to the survey methodology during 2020, a temporary gap in the reporting of the domestic tourism monitors has resulted. This disruption means the National Tourist Boards will be unable to publish detailed results from GBTS for 2020 or Q1 2021 and any data from this period will only be published after a thorough review to ensure they meet necessary quality standards. Fieldwork resumed in April 2021 and it is anticipated that the commencement of the delivery of Q2 2021 summary data will occur at some stage during Q3 2021 (barring any unforeseen circumstances).

VisitBritain have run a domestic tourism forecast. As with their inbound forecast, this represents a snapshot in time and makes a number of assumptions to provide an estimate of impact. Subsequent developments could change the outlook. The forecast models each of the four journey purposes for overnight tourism (holidays, business, visiting friends and relatives and miscellaneous journeys), and 17 categories of spending for leisure day trips, separately. They have forecast £34.0 billion in domestic tourism spending in 2020, down 63% compared to 2019 when spending by domestic tourists in Britain was £91.6bn. This comprises £9.8bn from overnight tourism, down from £24.7bn in 2019, and £24.2bn from day trips, down from £67.0bn in 2019. In total, this represents a loss of £57.6bn (£14.9bn from overnights and £42.7bn from leisure day trips). The 2020 forecast is for a decline of 60% for overnights and 64% for leisure day trips, although with different patterns throughout the year and by journey purpose.

Inbound tourism:

Official inbound tourism statistics for 2020 from the Office for National Statistics were released on May 24th 2021. These numbers are usually based on the results of the International Passenger Survey (IPS), but the survey was suspended on 16 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. No IPS data was collected for the period when the survey was not operational. The full 2020 results are therefore based on administrative sources and modelling.

According to these estimates, the UK received 11.1 million inbound visits in 2020, a 73% decline from the visit levels seen in 2019. The majority (63%) of the visits to the UK were in Q1 (Jan-March). Visits in Q1 were down 16%, Q2 96%, Q3 80% and Q4 87%, compared to 2019. In 2020 inbound visitors to the UK spent a total of £6.2 billion, a decline of 78% on 2019 results.

This represents a loss vs the counterfactual pre-COVID forecast for 2020 of 31.0 million visits and £24.1 billion spending.

England – 2021 Forecast

Domestic tourism:

VisitBritain have also run a domestic 2021 forecast. Their central scenario forecast is for a recovery to £51.4bn in domestic tourism spending in Britain in 2021; this is up 51% compared to 2020 but still only 56% of the level of spending seen in 2019. This is a downgrade from their previous forecast run at the end of 2020. They are forecasting £13.5bn in domestic overnight tourism spending (38% growth on 2020 but 55% of the 2019 level) and £38.6bn in leisure day trip spending (59% growth on 2020 and 58% of the 2019 level).

As with their inbound forecast, this is a short-term forecast that describes one possible outcome and involves many assumptions and simplifications due to the fast-moving and uncertain situation; it is therefore subject to revision. The forecast assumes a step change in mid-May as restrictions ease and confidence returns, followed by a gradual recovery throughout the rest of the year and beyond. It is likely that we will see different patterns of recovery for different purposes of overnight trips and for different categories of day trips. They do not expect an immediate return to pre-COVID levels of spending in any domestic tourism journey purpose or activity type, although they anticipate different recovery rates in different areas; some could see a strong summer while others remain below baseline levels for much longer.

Inbound tourism:

VisitBritain's revised central scenario for inbound tourism in 2021 is for 11.3 million visits, up 2% on 2020 but only 28% of the 2019 level; and £6.2 billion to be spent by inbound tourists, the same as 2020 but only 22% of the 2019 level. This is a slight downgrade from the previous forecast, run in January.

The forecast assumes the start of a recovery from May, albeit slow at first, with a step change in the summer followed by gradual recovery throughout the rest of the year as international travel opens up to and from a growing number of markets. Inbound tourism is still likely to remain well below normal levels throughout the rest of the year and by the end of 2021 we still do not expect inbound tourism to be back to, or even close to, normal levels.

In general, European inbound markets are forecast to recover quicker than long haul markets. However, there will be variations within each of Europe and long haul. Inbound tourism from some countries is still likely to be minimal even by the end of 2021. There are forecast to be 9.0 million visits from Europe in 2021, 33% of the 2019 level; and 2.2 million visits from long haul markets, 17% of the 2019 level. The value of visitor spending in 2021 is forecast to be £3.4 billion and £2.8 billion from European and long-haul visitors respectively.

There are a number of assumptions behind, and significant risks to, this forecast. It reflects a balance between the resilient demand amongst many for international leisure travel as per VisitBritain's sentiment research and the likelihood of restrictions persisting for some time for many countries. The most crucial drivers will be the progression of vaccinations and of any new variants, both in the UK and in our key inbound markets. It is assumed that in the UK and most advanced markets, the majority of the adult population will be vaccinated in 2021 and that by the end of the year COVID-19 will be endemic and controlled rather than pandemic.

The market composition effect (Europe recovering faster than long haul) is likely to push down average spend per visit, but it is assumed that the net effect of other factors (such as changes in average length of stay and average spend per night) is neutral. The forecast does not specifically model journey purpose but assumes that visits to friends and relatives are likely to recover faster than average; business trips (excluding those delivering goods) are likely to recover slower than average; and holiday visits are likely to recover at a rate in between.

A number of factors are likely to prevent inbound tourism quickly recovering to pre-COVID levels. Aside from vaccines and new variants, these include the economic situation in each market, with demand hit by unemployment and possible fiscal tightening; new behavioural habits affecting leisure and business travel, both short and long term; potential loss of supply.

Forecasting at this time is difficult, given the fast-moving situation and the unique circumstances. Events are moving fast during the COVID-19 pandemic and the outlook can change daily. VisitBritain stress that this central scenario is merely one possible outcome and involves several assumptions and simplifications due to the fast-moving and uncertain situation. VisitBritain's central scenario forecasts therefore reflect a snapshot in time based on current understanding and a set of assumptions. Subsequent developments could change the outlook. They will revise this forecast a number of times during 2021.

2020 Month by Month Impacts

	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>The Covid-19 Pandemic</u>
<u>January</u>	<p>At the start of January high pressure lay over southern parts of the UK bringing settled weather but generally with plenty of cloud. This gradually moved away south-eastwards allowing frontal systems in from the west and from the 7th to 17th the weather was mild, unsettled and also very windy at times. High pressure brought settled weather from the 18th to 25th with plenty of sunshine initially but by the 22nd most places were overcast. Wet and windy weather returned from the 26th and there was snow in some areas on the 27th and 28th, mainly on high ground, but very mild air returned on the last three days.</p> <p>Strong winds affected some northern areas of the UK on the 7th. In Scotland, the A1 between Haddington Junction and Thistly Cross was pre-emptively closed, despite which there was a report of an overturned vehicle at Thorntonloch. The Forth Road Bridge was closed to double-decker buses, motorcycles, cyclists and pedestrians, while the Tay Road Bridge was closed to doubledecker buses with a speed restriction for other vehicles. Speed restrictions were imposed on East Coast Main Line trains, a number of tourist sites were closed in Edinburgh, and there were flight delays, ferry disruptions and road closures, with some power outages near Thurso. In Northern Ireland, the Foyle Bridge was closed to high-sided vehicles</p> <p>Wind and rain again affected northern parts on the 10th and 11th. In Gateshead, power lines were brought down, with some travel disruption arising on the Newcastle Metro. Several roads around Newcastle were closed due to fallen trees, with further disruption on flights from Newcastle airport and on the Shields Ferry service. In Scotland, the Tay Road Bridge was closed to all vehicles. Railway lines were flooded between Kingussie and Aviemore, between Larbert and Croy, and between Carlisle and Lockerbie, with flooding also on the B829 and in the village of Glenfarg, and weather-related collisions on the M8 and M9.</p> <p>On the 13th and 14th wind and rain affected western areas. In Scotland, numerous fallen trees blocked roads and rail lines; all schools in the Western Isles and some in Highland Region were closed. Rail services were suspended at Saltcoats due to overtopping waves crashing onto the tracks, and a fallen tree caused a power outage which affected some rail services</p>	<p>23 January – The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to the city of Wuhan, the original epicentre of the outbreak.</p> <p>25 January – The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel to China's Hubei Province, where the city of Wuhan is located.</p> <p>27 January – The Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, tells the House of Commons that 200 British citizens trapped in Wuhan, China, will be offered repatriation to the UK, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak there.</p> <p>28 January – The Foreign and Commonwealth Office updates its travel advisory, advising against all but essential travel to the rest of Mainland China.</p> <p>29 January – British Airways suspends all flights to and from mainland China with immediate effect, due to the ongoing coronavirus threat.</p> <p>31 January – The first two cases of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom are confirmed.</p>

	<p>between Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as services between Milngavie and Cumbernauld; numerous roads were closed too. In Northern Ireland, sailings between Larne and Cairnryan and also the Rathlin Island Ferry were cancelled, while the Foyle Bridge was closed to high-sided vehicles. A number of fallen trees blocked roads, with some reports of surface-water flooding and coastal flooding, and the A2 in Warrenpoint and Carrickfergus flooded due to overtopping waves and suspected damage to the sea wall. Trains were delayed due to fallen trees, and NI Power reported that 3500 customers lost power. In Wales, numerous fallen trees, debris and flooding caused some road closures, and around 1000 homes lost power for a short time.</p> <p>On the 14th snow caused problems on the A9 in Scotland, and locations in the Western Isles were flooded. There was widespread travel disruption across the east and south-east of England due to fallen trees, debris and some flooding. The Orwell Bridge was closed, and major delays arose on the M25, A12 and M11. There were some power outages, a landslip between Horsham and Dorking, and trees on train lines caused delays and cancellations. Some flights to Gatwick were diverted to alternative airports, and fire services rescued a number of drivers that had driven into floodwater. In Wales, the roof of a primary school at Maerdy in the Rhondda Valley blew off in the strong winds.</p> <p>After a quieter spell, the last week of January saw a series of snow and ice warnings for Scotland. A number of roads were closed while gritters cleared them, and HGVs struggled for traction on the M8, A98 and other roads. Drivers were stranded on the M74 for several hours overnight. On the 29th some A-roads in Scotland saw flooding, and the A83 at Rest and Be Thankful was closed for a number of days after a landslip. Snow and hail in Wales on 28th may have contributed to some road collisions. On the evening of the 30th in Whickham near Newcastle a couple of large trees were brought down in strong winds.</p>	
<p><u>February</u></p>	<p>February opened with four days of changeable westerlies, then high pressure briefly moved across the country between the 5th and 7th bringing settled weather with sunshine and frosty nights to many central and southern counties. The rest of the month was windy and exceptionally wet, with rain frequently moving in from the west and south-west and giving large totals. Storm Ciara on the 9th and Storm Dennis on the 15th brought exceptional rainfall totals to much of the country, and it was also</p>	<p>6 February – A third case of COVID-19 is confirmed in the UK.</p> <p>10 February – The total number of cases in the UK reaches eight as four further cases are confirmed in people linked to an affected man from Brighton.</p> <p>11 February – A ninth case is confirmed in London.</p>

very wet on the 28th with Storm Jorge. In between the rain belts, there were brighter spells and blustery showers, and the showers were wintry at times, especially in the north, but any lying snow on low ground was short-lived.

After a relatively quiet first week, Storm Ciara brought very wet and windy weather and considerable disruption between the 8th and 10th. Flooding and falling debris widely caused disruption to road and rail travel, and the M11 and A505 were closed for 24 hours due to an unsafe hanger roof at Duxford Air Museum. Some bridges, notably on the M4, M25, A14 and A249, were closed or had restrictions for much of the 9th. Flights were affected, and one flight needed 4 attempts to land at Gatwick Airport. There were overturned lorries on the M1 between junctions 14 and 15 and the A96 near to Inverness Airport, and parts of the A628 and M62 were closed to high sided vehicles. Some ferries across the Irish Sea were cancelled, and the P&O North Sea ferry to Hull had an 8 hour delay. Power outages in Wales, Northern Ireland and England affected about 100,000 customers in total. Three people were injured in Perth, Scotland when a pub roof collapsed, and in Hampshire, England, a man died when a tree fell on his car.

As Storm Ciara cleared away between the 10th and 14th, snow showers and further flooding caused some disruption to transport, some vehicles were stranded, notably on the A702 Dalveen Pass, Dumfries and Galloway, and on the A470 in North Wales, and some schools were closed in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

On the 16th, Storm Dennis brought even wetter weather, exacerbating the problems with flooding. Most parts of the UK saw impacts from flooding, standing water, fallen trees and landslips, many railways and roads were affected, and some people had to be evacuated from their homes. Most of the major bridges had restrictions or closures, and ferries in Northern Ireland and the Solent were cancelled. Sports events were widely cancelled, and storm surges affected some roads in Northern Ireland.

The weather continued wet and windy during the rest of February and so the problems with flooding persisted, especially in Scotland, Northern Ireland, north-east England, Wales and the Midlands. Roads, railways, homes and businesses were widely disrupted. Some of the precipitation fell as snow, particularly on high ground and in the north, adding to the

23 February – The DHSC confirms a total of 13 cases in the UK as four new cases in passengers on the cruise ship Diamond Princess are detected. They are transferred to hospitals in the UK.

25 February – Government guidance states that travellers returning from Hubei, Iran, and certain regions of South Korea should self-isolate on reaching home or their destination, even if they have no symptoms.

26/27 February – There is a COVID-19 outbreak at a Nike conference in Edinburgh from which at least 25 people linked to the event are thought to have contracted the virus, including 8 residents of Scotland. Health Protection Scotland establishes an incident management team, and full contact tracing is done for delegates who have tested positive.

27 February - The total number of confirmed cases in the UK is reported as 16. Authorities confirm the first case of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland.

28 February - The first British death from the disease is confirmed by the Japanese Health Ministry; a man quarantined on the Diamond Princess cruise ship. Authorities confirm the first case of COVID-19 in Wales, an individual who recently returned from holiday in Italy.

29 February - Three further cases of the virus are confirmed, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 23, after 10,483 people have been tested. Two of the three affected people had recently returned from Italy while the third had come back from Asia. Around 442,675 calls were made to the non-emergency line 111 in the last week of February.

	<p>disruption. In Northern Ireland, Lough Erne levels increased and cut off some houses by making local roads impassable</p>	
<p><u>March</u></p>	<p>March began with a cool showery westerly type, bringing sunshine and showers and occasional longer spells of rain, with sleet and snow on high ground. It was generally milder and more unsettled from the 7th to 15th, with belts of rain crossing the country at regular intervals, interspersed with brighter showery weather. High pressure then slowly built across the British Isles, and a spell of dry sunny weather followed for most of the country, with much of England, Wales and southern Scotland having plenty of sunshine from the 22nd to 27th inclusive, with warm days and cold nights. During this spell, slowmoving fronts often brought more cloud and some rain to north-western Britain. A northerly outbreak brought wintry showers to eastern areas on the 28th, followed by mostly dry but relatively cloudy weather.</p> <p>On the 5th rain in parts of the south and south-east of England caused some flooding, with some residents in Yalding being evacuated, and disruption for motorists as numerous roads were closed due to flooding (more than 60 roads were closed in Kent), and the northbound Hindhead tunnel was closed to facilitate emergency drainage. In Northern Ireland, waters in Lough Erne continued to rise which cut off local roads, left homes stranded and inundated farmland.</p> <p>Unsettled conditions in the second week of March saw warnings issued for parts of Scotland, midWales, north-west England, Yorkshire and the Peak District. In Wales, there was flooding in several places but impacts were mostly confined to travel disruption. The Fire and Rescue service carried out a number of rescues after a tidal surge in Carmarthenshire. Some roads and rail lines were temporarily closed due to flooding and high tides. In north-west England some roads were flooded, with lane closures on the M56 and M62, with some local roads reported as impassable.</p> <p>On the 12th, Northern Ireland and parts of northern England were windy. Northern Ireland saw some fallen trees and the Rathlin Island Ferry was cancelled, with a power outage reported in Armagh. There were reports of flooding in Cheshire, and a landslip on the railway between Whitehaven and Workington in Cumbria.</p> <p>The weather was more settled for the remainder of the month.</p>	<p>1 March – A further 13 cases are reported, adding Greater Manchester to the list of areas affected and bringing the total to 36, three of which are believed to be contacts of a case in Surrey who had no history of travel abroad.</p> <p>2 March – The government holds a COBRA meeting to discuss its preparations and response to the virus, as the number of UK cases jumps to 36.</p> <p>3 March – The government publishes its action plan for dealing with COVID-19. This includes scenarios ranging from a milder pandemic to a "severe prolonged pandemic as experienced in 1918" and warns that a fifth of the national workforce could be absent from work during the infection's peak.</p> <p>4 March – The total number of confirmed cases increases to 85.</p> <p>5 March - The first death from COVID-19 in the UK is confirmed, as the number of cases exceeds 100, with a total of 115 having tested positive. England's Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty, tells MPs that the UK has now moved to the second stage of dealing with COVID-19 – from "containment" to the "delay" phase.</p> <p>6 March – The Prime Minister announces £46 million in funding for research into a COVID-19 vaccine and rapid diagnostic tests. During a visit to a laboratory in Bedfordshire, he says: "It looks like there will be a substantial period of disruption where we have to deal with this outbreak."</p> <p>7 March – The number of cases rises to over 200.</p> <p>8 March – A third death from COVID-19 is reported, at North Manchester General Hospital, as the number of cases in the UK reaches 273, the largest single-day increase so far.</p> <p>9 March - The FTSE 100 plunges by more than 8 percent, its largest intraday fall since 2008, amid concerns over the spread of COVID-19. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to Italy due to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country and the nationwide lockdown. The first three cases are discovered in Dorset.</p>

10 March – Health minister Nadine Dorries becomes the first MP to test positive for coronavirus.

11 March - The Bank of England cuts its baseline interest rate from 0.75% to 0.25%, back down to the lowest level in history. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, presents the Johnson Government's first budget, which includes £30 billion in measures to protect the economy from COVID-19.

12 March - The UK Chief Medical Officers raise the risk to the UK from moderate to high.

The government advises that anyone with a new continuous cough or a fever should self-isolate for seven days. Schools are asked to cancel trips abroad, and people over 70 and those with pre-existing medical conditions are advised to avoid cruises.

Following a recent series of major falls, the FTSE100 plunges again, this time by over 10%, its biggest drop since 1987. Other markets around the world are similarly affected by ongoing economic turmoil.

Public Health England stops performing contact tracing, as widespread infections overwhelm capacity.

The rules published on 25 February for travellers returning from certain countries are withdrawn; they should now follow the same guidance as other households.

13 March - Authorities confirm the first death from coronavirus in Scotland. The UK Government restricts the export of three drugs being administered to COVID-19 patients in clinical trials in China: Kaletra, Chloroquine phosphate, and Hydroxychloroquine.

BBC Radio 1 cancels its Big Weekend music festival, scheduled to take place at the end of May. Organisers subsequently run an alternative event called Big Weekend UK 2020, with acts appearing on one of five virtual stages and performed from their homes; the event also features past performances from previous Big Weekend events.

14 March - The number of confirmed cases rises to 1,140.

A further 10 people are reported to have died from COVID-19, almost doubling the UK death toll from 11 to 21. The government's aim for a "herd immunity" approach generates controversy.

Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence, announces the US is to extend its European COVID-19 travel ban to include the UK from 16 March.

UK retailers release a joint letter asking customers not to panic buy products after some supermarkets sell out of items such as pasta, hand gel and toilet paper.

15 March - The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all but essential travel to Spain.

The FCO advises against all but essential travel to the United States due to the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock says that every UK resident over the age of 70 will be told "within the coming weeks" to self-isolate for "a very long time" to shield them from COVID-19.

The government announces plans to hold daily televised press conferences to update the public on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, starting on Monday 16 March.

London's Old Vic becomes the first West End theatre to cancel a performance because of the pandemic when it ends its run of Samuel Beckett's Endgame two weeks early.

16 March - The UK death toll from the pandemic reaches 55, with the number of cases of the illness passing 1,500.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson advises everyone in the UK against "non-essential" travel and contact with others, to curb COVID-19, as well as to work from home if possible and avoid visiting social venues such as pubs, clubs or theatres.

Pregnant women, people over the age of 70 and those with certain health conditions are urged to consider the advice "particularly important", and will be asked to self-isolate within days. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport states "it is advised that large gatherings should not take place".

The government issues a call for businesses to support the supply of ventilators and ventilator components; the NHS has access to 8,175 ventilators but it is thought that up to 30,000 may be needed.

The BBC delays its planned changes to TV licences for the over-75s from June to August because of the pandemic.

Theatres in London, as well as elsewhere around the UK, close following Boris Johnson's advice that people should avoid such venues.

17 March - The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announces that £330bn will be made available in loan guarantees for businesses affected by the virus.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all non-essential international travel due to the pandemic and the border restrictions put in place by many countries in response.

The UK government provides a £3.2million emergency support package to help rough sleepers into accommodation. With complex physical and mental health needs, in general, homeless people are at a significant risk of catching the virus. The BBC announces major changes to the schedule across the network. While programmes such as Politics Live, Victoria Derbyshire, The Andrew Neil Show, Newswatch, The Travel Show and HARDTalk have been suspended, others such as Newsnight and The Andrew Marr Show will continue with a smaller number of production staff. Question Time is moved to an earlier 8pm Thursday timeslot and will be broadcast without an audience from a fixed location. Podcasts programmes Americast, Beyond Today and The Next Episode are also suspended. Cinema chains Odeon, Cineworld, Vue and Picturehouse announce they will be closing all their UK outlets, in response to the advice to avoid visiting such venues.

18 March - Pound sterling falls below \$1.18, its lowest level since 1985. Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey, commenting on the UK and wider economic situation, says: "It's obviously an emergency. I think we're living in completely unparalleled times... It's going to be a very big downturn – we know that." The UK death toll from COVID-19 exceeds 100, with 32 new cases taking the total to 104.

The government announces that all schools in the country will shut from the afternoon of Friday 20 March, except for those looking after the children of key workers and vulnerable children. No exams will take place this academic year, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson confirms.

Princess Beatrice cancels her wedding reception at Buckingham Palace and will take further advice on whether to carry on with a private wedding ceremony, scheduled to take place on 29 May.

The 50th anniversary Glastonbury Festival is cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

The government announces emergency legislation to bring in a ban on new evictions for three months, as part of measures to help protect renters in social and private rented accommodation.

The BBC announces that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, filming on Casualty, Doctors, EastEnders, Holby City, Pobol y Cwm and River City is suspended until further notice. Weekly episodes of EastEnders will also be reduced from four to two to keep it on the air for as long as possible.

MP Lloyd Russell-Moyle announces that he has tested positive with COVID-19.

19 March - The first COVID-19 death is confirmed in Northern Ireland. The Ministry of Defence announces the formation of the COVID Support Force, enabling the military to support public services and civilian authorities in tackling the outbreak.^[91] Two military operations are also announced: Operation Rescript, which focuses on the outbreak in the United Kingdom; and Operation Broadshare, which focuses on British military activities overseas. In an emergency move, the Bank of England cuts interest rates again, from 0.25% to just 0.1%. This is the lowest rate in the Bank's 325-year history. The government announces £1.6bn for local authorities, to help with the cost of adult social care and support for the homeless; and £1.3 billion to the NHS and social care, to allow up to 15,000 people to be discharged from hospital. The UK government no longer deems COVID-19 to be a "high consequence infectious disease" (HCID) following opinion from the UK HCID group and the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens.

20 March - Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces that the government will pay 80% of wages for employees not working, up to £2,500 a month, as part of "unprecedented" measures to protect people's jobs. Prime Minister Boris Johnson orders all cafes, pubs and restaurants to close from the evening of 20 March, except for take-away food, to tackle COVID-19. All the UK's nightclubs, theatres, cinemas, gyms and leisure centres are told to close "as soon as they reasonably can".

21 March - Environment Secretary George Eustice urges shoppers to stop panic buying, as supermarkets around the UK struggle to keep up with demand. Tesco, Asda, Aldi, and Lidl are reported to have begun a recruitment drive for up to 30,000 new staff. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency announces that all pending practical and driving theory tests are to be postponed, for at least three months in the case of practical tests, and up to and including 20 April for theory tests. All candidates are to receive notification of when their tests are rescheduled.

22 March - The Nursing and Midwifery Council announces that more than 5,600 former nurses have registered to offer their services in the fight against coronavirus. Boris Johnson warns that "tougher measures" may be introduced if people do not follow government advice on social distancing. Downing Street confirms Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab will act in place of Prime Minister Boris Johnson if he becomes "incapacitated".

The press reports the UK's virus's youngest victim so far, an eighteen-year-old with underlying health problems.

23 March - The government announces emergency measures to safeguard the nation's rail network, with season ticket holders given refunds if working from home, and rail franchise agreements nationalised for at least six months to prevent rail companies from collapsing.

In a televised address, Boris Johnson announces new strict rules applicable to the entire United Kingdom with the aim to slow the spread of the disease, by reducing transmission of the disease between different households. The British public are instructed that they must stay at home, except for certain "very limited purposes" – shopping for essential items (such as food and medicine); one form of outdoor exercise each day (such as running, walking or cycling), either alone or with others who live in the same household; for any medical need, or to provide care to a vulnerable person; and to travel to and from work where this is "absolutely necessary" and the work in question cannot be done from home. However, when these restrictions came into force on 26 March, the statutory instrument for England omitted any limit on the number of exercise sessions. All non-essential shops, libraries, places of worship, playgrounds and outdoor gyms are closed, and police are given powers to enforce the measures, including the use of fines.

24 March - The UK records its highest number of coronavirus deaths in one day, after a further 87 people die across the country, bringing the total to 422.

For the first time, all of the UK's mobile networks send out a government text alert. The message reads: "GOV.UK CORONAVIRUS ALERT. New rules in force now: you must stay at home. More info and exemptions at gov.uk/coronavirus Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives."

Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces the government will open a temporary hospital, the NHS Nightingale Hospital at the ExCeL London, to add extra critical care capacity in response to coronavirus pandemic.

The Church of England closes all its buildings.

BBC News announces that it is delaying plans to cut 450 news jobs due to the pressure of covering the COVID-19 pandemic.

25 March - Prince Charles tests positive for COVID-19.

Parliament shuts down for a month.

British Transport Police deploys 500 officers to patrol the UK's rail network, in an effort to discourage non-essential journeys. New measures are also introduced on the London Underground to reduce passenger numbers.

British diplomat Steven Dick, deputy ambassador to Hungary, dies in Budapest after contracting the virus.

The police will be given the power to use "reasonable force" to enforce the lockdown regulations.

The first two working NHS doctors die from COVID-19 on the same day, one a GP, the other a surgeon.

The Contingencies Fund Act 2020 receives royal assent.

26 March - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 350) (the 'Lockdown Regulations') come into effect, significantly extending the range of businesses that are required by law to close with immediate effect including all retail businesses not on an approved list. These regulations also include significant restrictions on freedom of movement: "no person may leave the place where they are living without reasonable excuse".

The number of UK COVID-19 deaths increases by more than 100 in a day for the first time, rising to 578, while a total of 11,568 have tested positive for the virus. The government announces that some self-employed will be paid 80% of profits, up to £2,500 a month, to help them cope during the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19.

At 8pm, millions of people around the country take part in a "Clap for Carers" tribute, applauding the NHS and other care workers.

The National Theatre launches National Theatre at Home, a two-month programme whereby a different production from its archives will be streamed for free each week. The project begins with Richard Bean's comedy One Man, Two Guvnors, featuring James Corden.

27 March - Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Health Secretary Matt Hancock both test positive for COVID-19. Johnson will self-isolate in 10 Downing Street and Hancock is self-isolating at home whilst working.

Chief Medical Adviser Chris Whitty and Labour Party MP Angela Rayner, the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, also confirm they have been suffering symptoms and are self-isolating.

Leon Restaurants sets up the "Feed NHS" initiative to deliver 5,600 free meals a day to NHS critical care staff at London hospitals.

The 2020 Cambridge Folk Festival is cancelled.

Dominic Cummings, Johnson's lead adviser, drives 250 miles to Durham with his wife and child. When this came to public notice in May, he explained that "there was nobody in London that [he] could reasonably ask to look after [his] child".

28 March - Alister Jack, the Secretary of State for Scotland, announces that he is self-isolating after experiencing coronavirus symptoms.

A further 260 deaths takes the number of fatalities past 1,000, with a total of 1,019 deaths having occurred so far; 17,089 people have tested positive.

At 11pm, new regulations come into force in Northern Ireland giving authorities the power to force businesses to close, and impose fines on them if they refuse, as well as on people leaving their homes without a "reasonable excuse". The measures, introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive, bring Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK.

29 March - The government will send a letter to 30 million households warning things will "get worse before they get better" and that tighter restrictions could be implemented if necessary. The letter will also be accompanied by a leaflet setting out the government's lockdown rules along with health information. Dr Jenny Harries, England's deputy chief medical officer, suggests it could be six months before life can return to "normal", because social distancing measures will have to be reduced "gradually".

The first NHS nurse dies of COVID-19.

30 March - As the number of reported deaths rises to 1,408, Patrick Vallance, the UK's chief scientific adviser, says there are early signs social distancing measures are "making a difference". Transmission of the virus within the community is thought to be decreasing, and hospital admission data suggests cases are not rising as fast as anticipated.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announces an arrangement between the government and major UK airlines to fly home tens of thousands of British nationals who are stranded abroad by the coronavirus outbreak.

Dominic Cummings, the Prime Minister's Chief Adviser, is reported to be self-isolating after experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Vehicle owners are granted a six-month exemption from MOT tests, enabling them to continue using their vehicles for essential travel.

All Gatwick Express services are suspended until further notice on the grounds of significantly reduced demand for travel to Gatwick Airport.

31 March - A significant rise in anxiety and depression among the UK population is reported following the lockdown. The study, by researchers from the University of Sheffield and Ulster University, finds that people reporting anxiety increased from 17% to 36%, while those reporting depression increased from 16% to 38%.

The number of people in hospital with COVID-19 passes 10,000.

		The largest UK daily death toll of the outbreak so far is reported, with 381 deaths taking the total to 1,789.
<u>April</u>	<p>Much of April was fine and settled, though with some shorter spells that brought rain. High pressure was located in the vicinity of the UK for much of the time, often to the north, and so easterly winds were a regular feature. Less settled spells came from the 1st to 6th, the 11th to 13th, and most notably a cyclonic spell from the 27th onwards. Plenty of sunshine generally allowed daytime temperatures to rise well above normal on numerous days, whereas minimum temperatures were barely above normal and in fact northern and eastern Scotland had several late frosts. Rainfall was well below normal quite widely, with only central southern counties of England having near-average rain totals.</p> <p>The generally settled weather during much of April means that there were few impacts of note. Lightning caused a roof fire in Lincolnshire on the 12th, together with brief power cuts and surfacewater flooding. During the course of the second half of the month, wild-fires were reported in a few places, until the rain arrived at the end of the month.</p>	<p>1 April - The UK government confirms that a total of 2,000 NHS staff have been tested for coronavirus since the outbreak began, but Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove says a shortage of chemical reagents needed for COVID-19 testing means it is not possible to screen the NHS's 1.2 million workforce.^[150] Gove's statement is contradicted by the Chemical Industries Association, which says there is not a shortage of the relevant chemicals and that at a meeting with a business minister the week before the government had not tried to find out about potential supply problems.^[151] The contactless payment limit for in-store spending is raised from £30 to £45.^[152] Multinational pharmaceutical company Roche denies the existence of a deal to supply Wales with COVID-19 tests after First Minister Mark Drakeford and Health Minister Vaughan Gething blame the collapse of a deal for a shortage of testing kits.</p> <p>2 April - Matt Hancock, who returns to give the daily government briefing after completing his self-isolation, sets a target of carrying out 100,000 tests a day by the end of the month (encompassing both swab tests and blood tests).^[154] The government writes off historical debts totalling £13.4bn of over 100 hospital trusts, an action which had been under consideration since before the onset of the pandemic. At 8pm the UK gives another national round of applause for NHS staff and other key workers.</p> <p>3 April - NHS Nightingale Hospital London, the first temporary hospital to treat COVID-19 patients, opens at the ExCel centre in East London, employing NHS staff and military personnel, with 500 beds and potential capacity for 4,000. It is the first of several such facilities planned across the UK. Figures published by the Cabinet Office indicate UK road traffic levels have fallen by 73% since the lockdown measures were introduced and are at their lowest since 1955. With warm weather forecast for some areas during the upcoming weekend, Matt Hancock warns people to stay at home, telling them this is an instruction "not a request". The Queen holds the first virtual meeting with the Privy Council.</p>

4 April - It is announced that a five-year-old has died from the virus, believed to be the youngest victim to date.

The results of the 2020 Labour Party leadership election and the 2020 Labour Party deputy leadership election are announced, in which Keir Starmer is elected as the leader of the Labour Party, succeeding Jeremy Corbyn, and Angela Rayner is elected as deputy leader of the party. The results are released by email after a public event to announce the results was cancelled due to the pandemic.

5 April - Queen Elizabeth II makes a rare broadcast to the UK and the wider Commonwealth, something she has done on only four previous occasions. In the address she thanks people for following the government's social distancing rules, pays tribute to key workers, and says the UK "will succeed" in its fight against coronavirus but may have "more still to endure".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is admitted to hospital for tests after testing positive for COVID-19 ten days earlier.

Matt Hancock says the goal for the number of ventilators has been reduced to 18,000 and that the NHS has between 9,000 and 10,000 available.^[166]

6 April - The death toll from COVID-19 in the UK exceeds 5,000. The total number of reported cases is nearly 52,000.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is taken into intensive care at St Thomas' Hospital. It is announced that First Secretary of State Dominic Raab will deputise for him. National Express suspends all its long-distance coach services.

7 April - Patrick Vallance, the government's chief scientific adviser, says that the number of cases are not accelerating as had been predicted but that it is too early to tell whether the outbreak is peaking.

8 April - The Resolution Foundation, using figures from the British Chambers of Commerce, reports that more than nine million workers are expected to be furloughed under the government's job retention scheme, with an estimated cost to the taxpayer of between £30 and 40bn.

9 April - Dominic Raab says the UK is "starting to see the impact" of the restrictions but it is "too early" to lift them, and urges people to stay indoors over the upcoming Easter weekend.^[172] With warm weather forecast again for Easter, this message is echoed by police and tourist destinations. Johnson was moved out of intensive care, but remained in hospital.

At 8pm the nation stages a third round of applause for NHS staff and other key workers.

10 April - Jonathan Van-Tam, England's deputy chief medical officer, tells the UK Government's daily briefing the lockdown is "beginning to pay off" but the UK is still in a "dangerous situation", and although cases in London have started to drop they are still rising in Yorkshire and the North East.

Matt Hancock tells the briefing a "Herculean effort" is being made to ensure daily deliveries of personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers, including the establishment of a domestic manufacturing industry to produce the equipment. Fifteen drive-through testing centres have also been opened around the UK to test frontline workers.

11 April - Queen Elizabeth II makes her first ever Easter message to the nation, in which she states "coronavirus will not overcome us" and that "we need Easter as much as ever."

After some NHS workers say they still do not have the correct personal protective equipment to treat patients, Home Secretary Priti Patel tells that day's Downing Street briefing she is "sorry if people feel there have been failings" in providing kit.

The number of people in London hospitals for COVID-19 reaches its peak, according to week-on-week change data; elsewhere in the country, patient numbers continue to increase, although the rate of increase is slowing. Occupancy of critical care beds in England peaks at around 58% of capacity. Occupancy in the month of April for Scotland and Wales will only briefly exceed 40%, while Northern Ireland reported a peak of 51% early in the month.

12 April - Prime Minister Boris Johnson is discharged from hospital after being treated for coronavirus and will continue his recovery at Chequers.

The number of people who died in hospital with COVID-19 in the UK passes 10,000, after a daily rise of 737 to 10,612. Matt Hancock describes it as a "sombre day".

13 April - Dominic Raab tells the Downing Street briefing the government does not expect to make any immediate changes to the lockdown restrictions and that the UK's plan "is working [but] we are still not past the peak of this virus".

14 April - The Office for National Statistics indicates that coronavirus was linked to one in five deaths during the week ending 3 April. More than 16,000 deaths in the UK were recorded for that week, 6,000 higher than would be the average for that time of year.

Several UK charities, including Age UK and the Alzheimer's Society, express their concern that older people are being "airbrushed" out of official figures because they focus on hospital deaths and do not include those in care homes or a person's own home. Responding to these concerns, Therese Coffey, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, says that hospital figures are being used because "it's accurate and quick".

Mobile operators report a further twenty attempted arson attacks on mobile phone masts over the previous weekend.

15 April - Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces new guidelines that will allow close family members to see dying relatives in order to say goodbye to them. Hancock also launches a new network to provide personal protective equipment to care home staff.

The 2020 Love Supreme Jazz Festival, scheduled for July, is cancelled.

16 April - A 99-year-old war veteran, Tom Moore, completes 100 laps of his garden, eventually raising over £25 million for NHS Charities Together, with over a million people donating via his JustGiving page.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announces a three-week extension to the nationwide lockdown measures as the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the UK surpasses 100,000.

The NHS Nightingale Hospital Birmingham, at the National Exhibition Centre, is officially opened by Prince William.

The UK stages a fourth round of applause for NHS staff and key workers at 8pm.

A spokesperson for Princess Beatrice of York and Edoardo Mapelli

Mozzi confirms that their wedding, scheduled for 29 May, will be held on a later date.

17 April - Matt Hancock confirms COVID-19 tests will be rolled out to cover more public service staff such as police officers, firefighters and prison staff.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak extends the subsidised wage scheme for furloughed workers for another month, to the end of June.

Later analysis of death registrations (all causes) in England and Wales by the Office for National Statistics finds the highest total this week, which at 21,805 is 207% of the five-year average for the same week. COVID-19 is mentioned in 8,730 cases.

18 April - Imran Ahmad-Khan, the MP for Wakefield, secures a shipment of 110,000 reusable face masks through his connections with charity Solidarités international and the Vietnamese Government for Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust to help tackle the shortage of PPE.

Unions representing doctors and nurses express their concern at a change in government guidelines advising medics to reuse gowns or wear other kit if stocks run low.

Speaking at the Downing Street daily briefing, Robert Jenrick, the Communities Secretary, says a further 400,000 gowns will be arriving from Turkey the following day. (In the event, the shipment was delayed by several days, and was said on 7 May to be unusable).

Care England, the UK's largest care homes representative body, estimates that as many as 7,500 care home residents may have died because of COVID-19, compared to the official figure of 1,400 released a few days earlier.^[200]

Jenrick announces a further £1.6bn of support for local authorities, on top of £1.6bn that was given to them on 19 March.

Jenrick says that the virus appears to be having a "disproportionate impact" on the Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, while Stephen Powis says he has asked Public Health England to investigate what may be accounting for the increased risk within these groups.

Jenrick says that parks and cemeteries must remain open during the lockdown.

19 April - The number of recorded deaths increases by 596 to 16,060, a lower increase than previous days. Dr Jenny Harries says the lower number of deaths is "very good news" but cautions against drawing conclusions from the figures.

After a Sunday Times article suggests schools could reopen on 11 May, Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education, tells the Downing Street daily briefing he cannot give a date for when this will happen, and that the focus will be on helping children to learn at home, with lessons made available online and free loans of laptops for disadvantaged children.

BBC One airs a UK version of the Together at Home concert, a virtual global concert staged to celebrate healthcare workers and featuring musicians playing from home. The two-hour broadcast includes highlights of the US version and features stories of frontline workers along with extra footage of British artists.

20 April - Online applications for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are opened, with 67,000 claims registered in the first 30 minutes.
NHS Blood and Transplant asks those who have survived COVID-19 to donate blood for trials of a treatment that will involve giving the blood plasma of survivors to patients ill in hospital with the disease.
Prof Dame Angela Maclean, the UK's deputy chief scientific adviser, says the number of confirmed cases is "flattening out". The number of people in hospital for COVID-19 has begun to fall in Scotland, Wales and every region of England, with significant falls in London and the Midlands.

21 April
A further 823 deaths are recorded, taking the total to 17,337, a sharp rise on the previous day, but many of these relate to deaths that occurred in previous days and weeks, and some date back as far as March. Prof Sir David Spiegelhalter, of the University of Cambridge, says the figures suggest the UK is past the peak and in a "steadily" albeit slowly improving position.
Figures released by the Office for National Statistics indicate deaths in England and Wales have reached a twenty year high, with 18,500 deaths from all causes in the week up to 10 April, about 8,000 more than the average for that time of year. The deaths include those in care homes, where the 1,043 year-to-date deaths related to COVID-19 is a jump from the 217 reported a week ago.
Matt Hancock says the government is "throwing everything" at developing a vaccine as he announces £42.5m for clinical trials being conducted by Imperial College London and the University of Oxford.
Parliament reconvenes after the Easter recess with MPs approving a new arrangement with some in the House of Commons chamber and some attending via video link.
Fundraiser Captain Tom Moore is the guest of honour at the opening of NHS Nightingale Hospital Yorkshire and the Humber in Harrogate.

22 April - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 447) come into effect, correcting errors in the original lockdown regulations and allowing some visits to burial grounds and gardens of remembrance.
Figures show that UK inflation fell to 1.5% in March, largely because of falls in the price of clothing and fuel ahead of the lockdown.
Parliament holds the first virtual Prime Minister's Questions with Dominic Raab standing in for Boris Johnson, at which Raab confirms the target of 100,000 tests a day by the end of the month.

In a Commons statement Matt Hancock tells MPs "we are at the peak" of the outbreak but social distancing measures cannot be relaxed until the government's five tests have been met. Professor Chris Whitty, the government's chief medical adviser, tells the Downing Street briefing the UK will have to live with some social distancing measures for at least the rest of the year, and that it is "wholly unrealistic" to expect life to suddenly return to normal in the short term.

23 April - The first human trials of a COVID-19 vaccine in Europe begin in Oxford. A study involving 20,000 households in England, coordinated by the Office for National Statistics, will track the progress of COVID-19 and seek to better understand infection and immunity levels, with volunteers asked to provide nose and throat swabs on a regular basis to determine whether they have the virus.

Matt Hancock states that daily test capacity has reached 51,000 and announces that all key workers and members of their households are now eligible for COVID-19 tests and will be able to book tests through the government website from the following day. Tests will be conducted at drive-through centres or using home testing kits, while mobile testing units operated by the armed forces would increase in number from the present eight to 92, with a further four operated by civilians in Northern Ireland.

Hancock also announces preparations to reactivate contact tracing in a later phase of the outbreak, including the recruitment of 18,000 contact tracers to greatly supplement Public Health England's staff.

DIY chain B&Q confirms it has reopened 155 of its stores following a trial opening of a small number of outlets the previous weekend.

BBC One airs The Big Night In, a first-of-its-kind joint broadcast with Children in Need and Comic Relief, and featuring an evening of music and entertainment. The broadcast celebrates the acts of kindness, humour and the spirit of hope and resilience that is keeping the nation going during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, with viewers given a chance to donate to a fund helping local charities and projects around the country. The event raises £27m for charity, with the government pledging to double that amount.

At 8pm the UK stages a fifth round of applause for NHS staff and key workers.

24 April - The website for key workers to book a coronavirus test temporarily closes after a high demand for the tests; 5,000 test kits are ordered within its first two minutes online. The government says it will make more tests available. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces bilateral discussions with the Irish and French governments to safeguard freight routes, and with the Northern

Ireland Executive regarding support for passenger flights. Funding is to be provided to support ferry routes to Northern Ireland, the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly.

A version of "You'll Never Walk Alone" recorded by Captain Tom Moore and Michael Ball to raise money for the NHS Charities Together fund reaches number one in the UK Singles Chart.

25 April - The number of recorded deaths increases by 813, taking the total past 20,000 to 20,319. Thus the UK becomes the fifth country to pass the 20,000 mark along with the United States, Italy, Spain and France.

After figures show that A&E attendances are half their usual level, the health service urges people to seek healthcare if needed and not be put off by the coronavirus outbreak.

COVID-19 tests for key workers are booked up within an hour.

Guernsey partially lifts its lockdown restrictions, allowing gardeners, mechanics, estate agents and builders to return to work.

26 April - The figure of 413 recorded deaths is the lowest daily total in April. Professor Stephen Powis tells the Downing Street daily briefing the benefit of social distancing is beginning to be felt, with the stabilisation of the number of new cases, and a reduction of the number of people in hospital.

27 April - In his first public statement since returning to work, Boris Johnson says the UK is "at the moment of maximum risk" but "we are now beginning to turn the tide" as he urges people not to lose patience with the restrictions.

The government announces that the families of NHS and care workers who die because of COVID-19 will be entitled to a payment of £60,000.

The number of recorded deaths from COVID-19 rises by 360, taking the total to 21,092. This is the lowest daily rise for four weeks.

28 April - Figures from the Office for National Statistics for the week ending 17 April show 22,351 deaths registered in England and Wales, nearly double the five-year average and the highest weekly total since comparable records began in 1993.

The ONS report indicates a third of coronavirus deaths in England and Wales are occurring in care homes, with 2,000 recorded in the week ending 17 April, and the number of deaths from all causes in care homes is almost three times the number recorded three weeks ago.

Matt Hancock announces that care home figures will be included in the daily death toll from the following day; official figures have previously included only hospital data.

		<p>Testing capacity reaches 73,000 per day, although only 43,000 were carried out the previous day. Matt Hancock announces that testing will be expanded from the following day to include all care home workers, and people (and their family members) with symptoms who must leave home for their job or are aged over 65.</p> <p>At 11am the UK holds a minute's silence to remember key workers who have died from COVID-19.</p> <p>29 April - Speaking to the House of Commons Education Select Committee, Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education says that the reopening of schools will take place in a "phased manner". Official figures begin including deaths in care homes and the community, resulting in the number of recorded deaths increasing by 4,419 to 26,097. Dominic Raab tells the Downing Street daily briefing the figures have been included retrospectively, and account for care home and community deaths between 2 March and 28 April. In the most recent 24-hour period there have been 765 deaths.</p> <p>30 April - Prime Minister Boris Johnson says the UK is "past the peak" of the COVID-19 outbreak but that the country must not "risk a second spike", and announces that he will set out "comprehensive plan" for easing the lockdown "next week". He also stresses the importance of keeping down the reproductive rate, which "is going to be absolutely vital to our recovery". Captain Tom Moore celebrates his 100th birthday, and is made an honorary colonel by the Queen. His appeal to raise money for the NHS reaches £32m.^[254] At 8pm the UK stages its weekly round of applause for NHS staff and key workers.</p> <p>ITV announces plans to resume filming live studio-based shows such as Britain's Got Talent and The Masked Singer, but without the presence of an audience. The British Library is to archive hundreds of essays submitted to BBC Radio 4's PM programme by listeners detailing their coronavirus experiences. The Covid Chronicles, launched in March, has seen listeners submit their accounts of their lives during the lockdown restrictions, some of which have been broadcast.</p>
May	<p>May began with a shallow area of low pressure which brought cool showery weather, but high pressure built from the north-west between the 2nd and 4th, turning the weather more settled. There was plenty of warm sunny weather for most between the 5th and 9th, but showers broke out in places from the 7th onwards. Northerly winds brought a cold snap from</p>	<p>1 May - Matt Hancock confirms the government's target of providing (but not necessarily completing) 100,000 tests a day by the end of April has been met, with 122,347 provided over the previous 24 hours. Hancock announces that fertility clinics will be allowed to open again from 11 May.</p>

the 10th to 15th, with wintry showers for the north and east of Scotland, and some overnight frost. There was a more changeable spell from the 16th to 23rd, but with plenty of warm sunshine at times in the south. High pressure dominated from the 24th bringing generally dry, sunny and warm weather.

The dry weather continued into May and brought reports of wildfires, grass fires and heathland fires from across the United Kingdom. In Scotland there was a large fire along the Errol River in Tayside in the first week of May. On the 4th, strong winds in the south-west resulted in the closure of Torquay's seafront and a few roads were blocked by fallen trees. Scattered showers and thunderstorms broke out on the 9th, and there was some localised flooding, particularly in Carmarthen and Gorseinon. A heathland fire broke out in Brentmoor Common, Surrey

On the 21st and 22nd, strong winds in Northern Ireland resulted in fallen trees impacting the M1 and M2, there was flooding and debris on some coastal roads, and approximately 2,000 people were without power. In Scotland there was ferry disruption, with bridge restrictions and minor road closures due to fallen trees. Fallen trees also affected transport in Manchester and Cardiff, and on the Shrewsbury to Birmingham rail line.

Dry, sunny, settled weather returned during the last week, increasing the risk of fires again. On 31 May, a large grass and gorse fire at Belfast docks brought smoke and reduced visibility across the city, including north, west and central Belfast and Belfast International Airport.

"Times Like These", a charity single by the Live Lounge Allstars released to raise funds for those affected by the pandemic, reaches number one in the UK Singles Chart.

Facebook deletes the account of conspiracy theorist David Icke for posting misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic, including claims it is being spread by the 5G network.

2 May - Robert Jenrick announces £76m of funding to help vulnerable people, including children, victims of domestic violence and modern slavery, who may be "trapped in a nightmare" during the lockdown restrictions.

YouTube becomes the latest social media platform to remove David Icke's official account.

3 May - In an interview with the Sun on Sunday, Boris Johnson speaks about how contingency plans were made for the event of his death while he was in intensive care.

An NHS contact tracing app designed to track and prevent the spread of COVID-19 will be trialled on the Isle of Wight during the forthcoming week.

4 May - Apple and Google approve a test version of the NHS tracing app. Businessman Simon Dolan announces that he will seek a court injunction to lift the lockdown in Britain.

5 May - The number of recorded deaths rises by 693 to 29,427, giving the UK the highest number of COVID-19 related deaths in Europe.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics for the week ending 24 April show 21,997 deaths from all causes registered in England and Wales; this is a decrease of 354 from the previous week but still nearly twice the five-year average for the time of year. Deaths per week in hospital are falling while those in care homes continue to increase, and for the year to 24 April, 5,890 deaths in care homes involved COVID-19.

Trials of the NHS contact-tracing app start on the Isle of Wight with the app being made available to healthcare and council workers.

NHS Nightingale Hospital North East, a temporary critical care hospital built near Sunderland for COVID-19 patients, is officially opened by Health Secretary Matt Hancock. The virtual ceremony features TV celebrities Ant and Dec, football pundit Alan Shearer and cricketer Ben Stokes.

Figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) indicate just 4,321 new cars were registered in April, the lowest monthly number since

1946 and a 97% fall on sales from April 2019; 70% of new cars for the month were company fleet vehicles.

Airline operator Virgin Atlantic announces it has shed more than 3,000 jobs and ended operations at Gatwick Airport as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as withdrawing all their Boeing 747 fleet.

Sir Patrick Vallance tells the House of Commons Health Select Committee earlier testing for COVID-19 would have been "beneficial" but would not have prevented the spread of the virus.

Professor Neil Ferguson, whose advice led the government to implement the lockdown restrictions, resigns from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies after the Daily Telegraph reports a woman named as his "married lover" visited his home during the restrictions.

6 May - At his first Prime Minister's Questions since returning to work Boris Johnson says he "bitterly regrets" the crisis in care homes and is "working very hard" to tackle it. Johnson also pledges to reach a target of 200,000 daily UK coronavirus tests by the end of May.

A further 649 deaths take the number of recorded deaths over 30,000, to 30,076.

John Holland-Kaye, the CEO of Heathrow Airport, tells the Transport Select Committee that the airport is trialling large-scale temperature checks at departure gates.

7 May - The government confirms that 400,000 gowns ordered from Turkey to protect NHS staff from coronavirus have been impounded, after failing to meet the required safety standards.

The Bank of England warns that the economy is on course to shrink by 14% in 2020 because of the impact of COVID-19, pushing the UK into its deepest recession on record.

Baroness Dido Harding, chair of NHS Improvement and former CEO of TalkTalk, is appointed to lead the government's programme of testing and tracing, supported by John Newton of Public Health England. Testing will be led by Sarah-Jane Marsh, chief executive of Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospitals, and tracing will be led by Tom Riordan, chief executive of Leeds City Council.

The UK stages another round of applause for NHS staff and key workers, the seventh to be held on consecutive Thursdays at 8pm.

8 May - The death of a six-week-old baby is reported. With the UK beginning another Bank Holiday weekend, Environment Secretary George Eustice urges the public to abide by the rules of the lockdown restrictions and warns people have to be "realistic" about the loosening of the measures.

9 May - Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces £2bn of investment to improve walking and cycling, describing it as a chance for a "once in a generation change" to the way the public travels.

10 May - The UK government updates its COVID-19 message from "stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives" to "stay alert, control the virus, save lives". The Opposition Labour Party expresses concern the slogan could be confusing, and leaders of the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland say they will keep the original slogan.

A new alert scale system is announced, ranging from green (level one) to red (level five), similar to the UK's Terror Threat Levels.

A recorded address by Boris Johnson is broadcast at 7pm in which he outlines a "conditional plan" to reopen society, but says it is "not the time simply to end the lockdown this week", and describes the plans as "the first careful steps to modify our measures". Those who cannot work from home, such as construction workers and those in manufacturing, are encouraged to return to work from the following day, but to avoid public transport if possible. The guidance on the number of outdoor exercise periods will be lifted from Wednesday 13 May.

Outlining future easing of restrictions, Johnson says "step two" – no sooner than 1 June – would include reopening some shops and the return of primary school pupils, beginning with reception, Year 1 and Year 6; and that secondary pupils facing exams next year would get some time in school before the summer holiday. "Step three" – at the earliest by July – would begin the reopening of the hospitality industry and other public places. Johnson also says that passengers arriving into the UK on international flights (apart from those from the Republic of Ireland) will soon be asked to go into quarantine for fourteen days.

COVID-19 alert level system ^{[293][294]} Level	Meaning
5	As level 4 and there is a material risk of healthcare services being overwhelmed
4	A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation; transmission is high or rising exponentially
3	A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation
2	COVID-19 is present in the UK, but the number of cases and transmission is low
1	COVID-19 no longer present in the UK

11 May - The UK government publishes a 50-page document setting out further details of the phases for lifting the lockdown restrictions. Boris Johnson gives further details as he makes his first statement on the virus to Parliament. Amid concerns about the safety of people returning to work, Johnson tells the Downing Street daily briefing he is not expecting a "sudden big flood" of people returning to work, and that companies will have to prove they have introduced safety measures before they can reopen.

The UK government advises people in England to wear face coverings in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible, such as on public transport and in shops.

Air passengers arriving on flights from France will also be exempt from new quarantine rules.

Sir David Norgrove, chair of the UK Statistics Authority, writes to Matt Hancock seeking clarity on the targets for the number of tests, and the reporting of the number carried out each day.

Teaching unions express their concern at government plans to reopen schools on 1 June, describing them as "reckless" and unsafe.

Fertility clinics can apply to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to re-open.

12 May - Figures released by the Office for National Statistics and the devolved administrations indicate the death toll from COVID-19 exceeds 40,000 – including almost 11,000 care home residents – although week-by-week numbers continue to fall. In care homes in England and Wales, the year-to-date COVID-19 total reaches 8,312 but the weekly number (to 1 May) shows a decrease for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak extends the UK's furlough scheme until October, with employees continuing to receive 80% of their monthly wages up to £2,500. A quarter of the workforce, some 7.5 million people, are now covered by the scheme, costing £14bn a month.

13 May - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020 (SI 500) come into effect, allowing the re-opening of garden centres, sports courts and recycling centres. In addition to outdoor exercise, open-air recreation is also permitted with no more than one member of another household. Government announcements gloss these with the (non-enforceable) requirement that social distancing must be practised. House moves and viewings are also permitted.

After figures indicate the UK economy shrank by 2% in the first three months of 2020 and is shrinking at the fastest rate since the late 2000s global recession, Chancellor Rishi Sunak says it is "very likely" the country is in a "significant recession"

Creamfields, scheduled for 27–30 August, announces the cancellation of the 2020 edition due to the pandemic.

14 May - A total of 126,064 tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in the most recent 24 hour period, the highest number to date.

Figures compiled by NHS England giving a breakdown of underlying health conditions among COVID-19 hospital fatalities between 31 March and 12 May indicate one in four had diabetes. Other common health conditions were dementia (18%), serious breathing problems (15%), chronic kidney disease (14%), and ischaemic heart disease (10%).

The Office for National Statistics publishes results of the early phase of a survey programme in England. From swab tests between 27 April and 10 May, they estimate that 148,000 people, or 0.27% of the population, had COVID-19 at any given time during those two weeks (95% confidence interval: 94,000 to 222,000). This implies roughly 10,000 new cases per day. No significant difference is found between broad age groups. Their estimate for people working in healthcare or social care is higher, at 1.33% (confidence interval:

0.39% to 3.28%). The survey does not include people in hospital or care homes, where rates of infection are likely to be higher still.

Public Health England approves a blood test developed by Roche Diagnostics that can detect COVID-19 antibodies.

The Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts the cost to government of combating the coronavirus pandemic has risen to £123.2bn, with annual borrowing estimated to be 15.2% of the UK economy. This figure is the highest annual borrowing since the end of World War II when it stood at 22.1%.

The BBC announces plans to resume the filming of EastEnders and Top Gear in June, with cast and crew practising social distancing, and doing their own hair and makeup.

The UK stages its eighth Clap for Our Carers event at 8pm.

15 May - Government scientific advice says that the R number has increased slightly from between 0.5 and 0.9 to between 0.7 and 1.0, closer to the rate at which infections could start to exponentially increase. The figures are said to be "consistent with" the fall in cases in the community and the rise of cases in care homes, but are based on data from three weeks previously, so the effect of easing the lockdown measures is unknown

Government scientists and teaching unions hold talks in a bid to safely reopen schools. The British Medical Association voices its support for the unions over their concerns about the safety of resuming classes.

The places of worship task force, a body consisting of leading members of faith groups and government representatives, has its inaugural meeting. The group was established in response to Boris Johnson's 10 May address, in which he said religious buildings could reopen by 4 July, and aims to examine how this can happen safely.

16 May - Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England, urges the government and teaching unions to "stop squabbling and agree a plan" to reopen schools, warning that the closure of schools is negatively affecting disadvantaged children.

Coronavirus protests involving the gathering of people are held at venues around the UK, including Hyde Park in London, and Glasgow Green in Glasgow.

17 May - In an article for The Mail on Sunday, Boris Johnson acknowledges frustrations with the government's "stay alert" message for England, but urges the public to be patient as the lockdown measures are eased.

The number of recorded deaths rises by 170 to 34,636. The daily increase is the lowest since the day after the lockdown restrictions were introduced.

At the Downing Street daily briefing, Business Secretary Alok Sharma announces a further £84m of funding to help mass-produce a COVID-19 vaccine being trialled by the University of Oxford and that should be available by September. He also tells the briefing that Oxford have secured an agreement with pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca to manufacture the vaccine, and distributed it to the UK first.

18 May - Rail operators begin running more train services, while security guards trained in crowd control are placed on duty at some major railway stations. Jury trials resume at a handful of courts in England and Wales, having been suspended since the beginning of the lockdown restrictions. The UK adds loss of smell and loss of taste to the list of COVID-19 symptoms that people should look out for.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that anyone in the UK over the age of five with symptoms can now be tested for COVID-19.

Matt Hancock also confirms that 21,000 contact tracers have been recruited across the UK and are ready to begin work.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab tells the Downing Street daily briefing that it is "not sustainable" to keep the lockdown in place "permanently" but that the Government is monitoring the changes it makes.

19 May - Figures from the Office for National Statistics show the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance increased by 856,500 in April, to 2.1 million. In response to this Chancellor Rishi Sunak says that it will take time for the UK economy to recover and it is "not obvious there will be an immediate bounceback".

As figures show there have been 11,600 deaths in care homes as a result of COVID-19, Professor Martin Green, chair of Care England, criticises the government for the way it handled the outbreak in care homes, and tells MPs they should have been prioritised from the start.

Security researchers identify major security issues with the NHS COVID-19 tracing app being piloted on the Isle of Wight, and call for new legislation to prevent officials using the data collected for purposes other than identifying those at risk from the virus.

Captain Tom Moore, who raised £32m for NHS charities, is to be knighted for his fundraising efforts following a special nomination from Boris Johnson.

20 May - At Prime Minister's Questions, Boris Johnson confirms that a track and trace system will be in place from 1 June.

The Government faces mounting pressure from councils and teaching unions to reconsider its plans to reopen primary schools from 1 June. Robert Buckland, the Secretary of State for Justice, says the Government is taking all concerns "very seriously".

Rolls-Royce announce plans to cut 9,000 jobs as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, and warns that it could take several years for the airline industry to recover.

The number of people in hospital with COVID-19 drops below 10,000 for the first time since March.

People with diabetes are being strongly advised to follow government advice after a study by NHS England found the condition was linked to a third of coronavirus deaths between 1 March and 11 May. Diabetics are not among the people who have been told to shield themselves, but some may be asked to do so if they are deemed to be at high risk because of a combination of health conditions.

At the Downing Street daily briefing, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Oliver Dowden announces the establishment of a task force that will look at how sporting and arts events can resume safely. The task force will include former women's footballer Alex Scott and television executive Michael Grade.

Dowden announces that £150m from dormant bank accounts will be used to help charities and social enterprises.

The 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours is delayed until the autumn in order to recognise the "everyday Covid heroes" who have played a role in supporting and protecting society during the crisis.

Figures released by Public Health England indicate no new coronavirus cases were reported in London over the 24-hour period up to Monday 18 May.

21 May - The NHS Confederation warns that time is running out to finalise a test, track and trace strategy to avoid a possible second surge in coronavirus cases.

Following an agreement between the Government and the Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche, a COVID-19 antibody test is made available through the NHS, with health and care staff to be the first to receive it. The test checks to see if someone has had the virus.

The Government announces that NHS staff and care workers from overseas will be exempt from the immigration health surcharge that usually applies to non-EU migrants.

The Office for National Statistics estimate that 137,000 people in England, or 0.25% of the population, had COVID-19 at any given time between 4 May and 17 May (excluding those in hospitals, care homes or other institutions). This implies around 8,700 new infections per day, compared to the 10,000 estimate made two weeks ago.

ITV announces that its soap Emmerdale has started a "phased return to filming" with six new episodes being recorded at its studios in Leeds.

The UK stages its ninth weekly Clap for Our Carers event at 8pm.

22 May - The Government unveils new quarantine rules for travellers to the UK that will require them to self-isolate for fourteen days from 8 June.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies publishes its evidence on the safety and impact of reopening schools on 1 June. It says the risk to school pupils is "very, very small, but it is not zero", while the risk to teachers is not above average when compared to other occupations.

The Office for National Statistics reports that government borrowing rose to £62bn in April, the highest monthly figure on record, after heavy spending to ease the coronavirus crisis.

Guernsey announces plans to move to Stage Four of its lockdown restrictions from 30 May, six weeks earlier than originally planned. This will allow restaurants and cafes, hairdressers and beauticians, cinemas, gyms and sports venues to reopen. The announcement comes after the island had 22 consecutive days with no new COVID-19 cases. Schools on the island will also reopen for all students on 8 June.

Annemarie Plas, credited as starting the weekly Clap for Our Carers, suggests it should end after its tenth week as the public have shown their appreciation, and should instead become an annual celebration of frontline workers.

23 May - The French Government announces that travellers to France from the UK will have to quarantine for 14 days from 8 June.

The death of a 12-year-old child is reported.

Dominic Cummings, Boris Johnson's chief political adviser, comes under mounting pressure to resign after a joint investigation by the Daily Mirror and The Guardian reported that he travelled 260 miles from London to Durham to self-isolate during lockdown. In response to the story, Downing Street says that Cummings travelled to the north east to be near relatives who could look after his young son if he became ill himself.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces £283m of investment in buses and light rail services in order to help improve safety, but warns capacity will be at a fifth of pre-lockdown levels because of social distancing measures. Extra martial

at stations from 1 June are also announced, as well as permission for ten rail reopening projects to proceed to make business cases under the "reversing the Beeching cuts" initiative.

24 May - After The Observer and the Sunday Mirror print allegations that Dominic Cummings made a second trip to the north east during lockdown, Boris Johnson gives his chief aide his backing at the Downing Street daily briefing, saying that Cummings had "no alternative" but to travel for childcare "when both he and his wife were about to be incapacitated by coronavirus" and has "acted responsibly, legally and with integrity". Johnson describes some of the claims as "palpably false".

Johnson also confirms plans (outlined on 10 May) for the phased reopening of schools in England from 1 June: from that date, they will reopen for early years pupils, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. For the first time he states that from 15 June a quarter of Year 10 and Year 12 students will be allowed "some contact" to help prepare for exams.

25 May - Dominic Cummings says "I don't regret what I did" as he gives a detailed explanation of his actions during lockdown at a press conference in the Downing Street Rose Garden. Education Secretary Gavin Williamson warns the virus "could be with us for a year or more" and children cannot stay off school for "months and months".

26 May - For the first day since 18 March, no new COVID deaths are reported in Northern Ireland. Robin Swann, the Northern Ireland Health Minister, describes it as "a clear sign of progress".

Death registration figures for the week ending 15 May show the lowest number of COVID-19 deaths since the beginning of April.

Remdesivir, a drug that can speed up the recovery time of patients with COVID-19, is made available through the NHS.

Douglas Ross resigns as a junior minister with the Scotland Office over the UK government's defence of Dominic Cummings, while at least 35 Conservative MPs call for Cummings to be removed from his post.

Tate Britain announces that the annual Turner Prize will not be awarded in 2020 because of the upheaval created by the COVID outbreak.

27 May - Boris Johnson states that a test and trace system will be operational in England from the following day.

Johnson appears before the House of Commons Liaison Committee where he rules out holding an inquiry into the actions of Dominic Cummings.

Figures from HM Treasury indicate the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for furloughed workers in the UK now covers 8.4 million people, an increase from 8 million a week earlier.

28 May - Contact tracing systems go live in England and Scotland – NHS Test and Trace in England, and Test and Protect in Scotland. However, Dido Harding tells MPs the system in England will not be "fully operational at a local level" until the end of June.

The weekly household survey by the Office for National Statistics reports that around 133,000 people in England had COVID-19 at any given time during 11–24 May, and estimates the rate of new infections to be around 54,000 per week. Both numbers are similar to the previous estimates, indicating that the number of infections is "relatively stable".

A meeting of the four national Chief Medical Officers decides that the alert level should remain at 4, although Boris Johnson had said the previous day that he hoped it would come down to 3.

Durham Police say that Dominic Cummings may have made a "minor breach" of lockdown rules during his visit to Barnard Castle, but no offence was committed. EasyJet announces plans to cut 4,500 jobs because of the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on business.

The tenth and final Clap for Our Carers event is staged at 8pm.

29 May - Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will end at the end of October. Before then, employers must pay National Insurance and pension contributions from August, then 10% of pay from September, increasing to 20% in October. Self-employed people whose work has been affected by the outbreak will receive a "second and final" government grant in August.

30 May - Some government scientific advisers warn of the risk associated with lifting lockdown restrictions in England too early, citing the still high number of cases and deaths. In response the government says it is following the data and evidence when making its decisions about the restrictions. Professor Jonathan Van-Tam tells the Downing Street briefing that Britain is at a "dangerous moment" and people must be "sensible and proportionate".

At the Downing Street daily briefing Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announces that competitive sport will be allowed in England behind closed doors from 1 June, with individual sporting bodies left to decide when to restart. Horse racing will be one of the first sporting activities to resume.

		<p>Conservative MPs urge Boris Johnson to revise the 2 metre social distancing rule to 1.5 metres amid concerns for the hospitality industry.</p> <p>31 May - The UK exceeds its target to increase testing capacity to 200,000 tests a day by the end of May, with 205,634 available for 30 May.</p>
<p><u>June</u></p>	<p>The very sunny and warm weather of late May continued into the start of June, but a cool northerly type became established from the 3rd to 7th, bringing showers and some longer spells of rain. After a brief settled interlude, it turned wet almost everywhere by the 10th. Around mid-month there was a spell of warm, humid, showery weather with thunderstorms especially in central, western and southern areas, and persistent low cloud along the northeast coast. There was a hot sunny spell especially over England from the 23rd to 25th, which triggered a thundery breakdown in places. The last few days were cloudy and windy with showers and longer spells of rain, with especially persistent and heavy rain in parts of Cumbria.</p> <p>The first week of June was quiet, but showers and longer spells of rain led to minor flooding problems on the A96 and the A947 in Aberdeen on the 5th, and in parts of the M65 on the 6th. Wet weather associated with low pressure brought impacts from the 10th to 12th. There was localised flooding in Goresinon, Swansea, on the 10th. Flooding and fallen trees caused travel disruption in south-west England on the 11th and flooding caused travel disruption in Durham and Middlesbrough on the 12th.</p> <p>Around midmonth, heavy, thundery showers caused disruption in some parts of the country. On the 15th, there was flooding in Altrincham and Hale town centres, and the M25 was flooded between junctions 10 and 9. On the 16th, 17th and 18th, flooding affected many parts of Wales, the south-west, Liverpool, Manchester, the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire, west Norfolk, Kent, coastal Ayrshire and Northern Ireland, leading to blocked roads and transport disruption. The M60, M56, A56 and M62 were all blocked for a time. On the 17th, around 100 properties in Pentre, Rhonda Valley were flooded during a torrential thunderstorm. In Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, there was a roof collapse at a Specsavers store and flooding at the Royal Mail depot in Beeston. There was property flooding in the Downham Market, Outwell. There was also flooding of premises in Nailsworth town centre, Chippenham and</p>	<p>1 June - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2020 (SI 558) come into effect, again without prior parliamentary scrutiny. Car and caravan showrooms, outdoor sports amenities and outdoor non-food markets may reopen. The prohibitions on leaving home are replaced by a prohibition on staying overnight away from home, with certain specific exceptions. Gatherings of people from more than one household are limited to six people outdoors and are prohibited entirely indoors, with exceptions including education. There are further exemptions for elite athletes.</p> <p>2 June - Figures from the Office for National Statistics show the number of COVID-19 deaths to be at their lowest since March, with 2,872 death certificates mentioning the condition during the week up to 22 May. The Guardian has calculated the UK death toll from COVID-19 is 50,032. Meanwhile, Reuters give the figure as 49,646. David Norgrove, chair of the UK Statistics Authority, rebukes Matt Hancock in an escalation of his 11 May criticism of the government's handling of testing data, saying the figures are "still far from complete and comprehensible" and appear to be aimed at showing "the largest possible number of tests, even at the expense of understanding".</p> <p>MPs vote to end the practice of voting from home, but some politicians criticise the move for excluding those unable to attend Parliament due to age or health reasons. In response, Jacob Rees-Mogg, the Leader of the House, says he will schedule a motion for the following day that will enable them to question the government but not to vote.</p> <p>Water companies urge people to conserve water during the lockdown restrictions by not using sprinklers and hosepipes, or filling paddling pools. The advice follows a record dry spring coupled with more people spending time at home.</p> <p>The Royal Shakespeare Company announces it has called off performances planned for the summer, autumn and winter because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The England and Wales Cricket Board confirms England will play three test matches against the West Indies starting on 8 July.</p>

Millbrook. There were also scattered reports of lightning damage to properties.

From the 25th to 27th, there were further thunderstorms in places. In Scotland, a landslip between Lochailort and Glenfinnan impacted on rail travel. There was also flooding on the M8. There was further lightning damage in places, and in the south-west, fallen trees disrupted travel along the A384.

The UK government is to scale back its daily Downing Street briefings to weekdays only, citing low viewing figures at weekends. Boris Johnson will also commit to leading one briefing per week.

3 June- Home Secretary Priti Patel confirms plans to introduce a 14-day quarantine for new arrivals into the UK. Those who break the quarantine conditions in England will face fines of £1,000 and potential prosecution. Business Secretary Alok Sharma is tested for COVID-19 and self-isolates at home after looking visibly ill during a House of Commons debate.^[401] He subsequently tests negative for the virus.

As the UK begins a period of wetter weather, Boris Johnson urges people not to move gatherings indoors if it rains.

4 June- Debenhams announces plans to reopen three stores in Northern Ireland from 8 June, followed by 50 in England a week later.

Research by King's College London has suggested that half the UK population has struggled with sleep during lockdown.

5 June - The number of recorded deaths passes 40,000 after rising by 357 to 40,261.

The British Medical Association urge the UK government to extend the rules regarding the wearing of face covering to all situations where social distancing is not possible.

Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK's Government Chief Scientific Adviser, says the R number is between 0.7 and 0.9, but could be as high as 1 in some areas of England. His comments come after figures from the Office for National Statistics suggest the reproductive rate is between 0.7 and 1 for England.

The weekly household survey by the Office for National Statistics reports that around 53,000 people (95% confidence: 25,000 to 99,000) in England had COVID-19 at any given time during 17–30 May, and estimates the rate of new infections to be around 39,000 per week, down from 54,000 the previous week. Their estimates are based on small numbers: 21 positive results from just under 20,000 swab tests.

The UK government's ban on tenant evictions in England and Wales is extended by two months to 23 August.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock urges people not to breach lockdown rules by attending protests planned for the forthcoming weekend. Several are planned by the organisation Black Lives Matter following the killing of George Floyd in the United States.

6 June - Anti-racism demonstrations are held in cities across the UK; attendees are reported to be in the thousands.

Robert Jenrick announces that places of worship will be allowed to open for individual prayer on 15 June.

7 June - No new deaths are recorded for Scotland or Northern Ireland over the most recent 24 hour period; it is the first time Scotland has recorded no new deaths since lockdown began in March.

Thousands of protesters take part in a second day of anti-racism demonstrations in cities across the UK.

Professor John Edmunds, one of the scientists advising the UK government, says he wishes the lockdown had been implemented earlier as the delay "cost a lot of lives", but adds that data was "really quite poor", making it "very hard" to do act earlier. Responding to the comments, Health Secretary Matt Hancock says the government "took the right decision at the right time".

8 June - Rules requiring travellers arriving into the UK to quarantine for 14 days come into force.

The number of recorded deaths rises by 55 to 40,597, the lowest daily number since lockdown was introduced on 23 March; no deaths are reported in Scotland for a second consecutive day, and there are no new deaths in London hospitals. BP announces plans to shed 10,000 jobs amid a global drop in demand for oil.

9 June - Business Secretary Alok Sharma confirms that all non-essential retailers in England can reopen from Monday 15 June providing they follow safety guidelines. However, pubs, bars, restaurants and hairdressers must wait until 4 July "at the earliest" to reopen. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that zoos and safari parks will also reopen on 15 June.

Figures released by the Treasury show that 8.9 million workers are now covered by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, a quarter of the UK workforce, with it having cost £19.6bn to date.

Thirty medical organisations that represent black, Asian and minority ethnic doctors and nurses write to Health Secretary Matt Hancock and Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch expressing their concern at a government review that found black, Asian and ethnic minority people are twice as likely to die from COVID-19.

10 June - Professor Neil Ferguson, the government scientist whose advice was crucial in persuading the government to implement the lockdown measures,

says that half of the lives lost to COVID-19 could have been saved if the measures had been introduced a week earlier.

11 June - Health Secretary Matt Hancock describes participation with the Test and Trace programme as a "civic duty".
Figures from the Office for National Statistics indicate those under the age of 30 have been hardest hit by a fall in income during the COVID-19 outbreak.

12 June - Figures released by the Office for National Statistics show that the UK economy shrunk by 20.4% in April, the largest monthly contraction on record. Further ONS figures indicate deprived areas have been hit twice as hard by the COVID-19 epidemic when compared to more affluent areas. The impact has also been greater in urban areas compared to rural areas, with London experiencing the highest number of deaths per 100,000.
The weekly ONS household survey finds that around 33,000 people in England had COVID-19 at any given time between 25 May and 7 June, and estimates the rate of new infections to be around 31,600 per week, down from 39,000 the previous week.

13 June - Parts of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2020 (SI 588) come into effect. In England and Northern Ireland, households with one adult may now become linked with one other household of any size, allowing them to be treated as one for the purpose of permitted gatherings. This also allows the members of one household to stay overnight at the home of the other. The government refers to this as a "support bubble". The rules on gatherings are also relaxed to allow medical appointments and births to be accompanied, and to permit some visits to people in hospital, hospices and care homes.

The Welsh Guard performs a unique socially distanced military ceremony at Windsor Castle to mark the Queen's Official Birthday. The ceremony is held in place of the cancelled Trooping of the Colour, and sees the Queen's first public appearance since lockdown began.

15 June - The remainder of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2020 (SI 588) comes into effect, allowing the general re-opening of English retail shops and public-facing businesses apart from those that are on a list of specific exclusions such as restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs, most cinemas, theatres, museums, hairdressers, indoor sports and leisure facilities. Outdoor animal-related attractions such as farms, zoos and safari parks may open. Places of worship may

again be used for private prayer (but not for communal worship). English libraries still have to remain closed.

The Isle of Man lifts restrictions on social distancing except in health and care environments.

Wearing a face covering becomes mandatory on public transport.

16 June - The low-dose steroid treatment dexamethasone, which has been part of clinical trials for existing drugs that could be used to treat patients with COVID-19, is heralded as a major breakthrough after it was found to cut the number of deaths. Experts estimate up to 5,000 lives may have been saved in the UK had the treatment been used from the outset. Prime Minister Boris Johnson describes the news as a genuine cause to celebrate "a remarkable British scientific achievement". Dexamethasone will be made available through the NHS, which has a stockpile of 200,000 doses.

Office for National Statistics figures suggest more than 600,000 people have lost their jobs between March and May because of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

A report published by National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) suggests that 90% of teachers say their pupils are doing less work than would be the usual case for the time of year, while headteachers say a third of pupils are not engaging with the work set for them by their teachers.

17 June - Speaking to the Science and Technology Committee, Lord Bethell, the Minister for Innovation at the Department of Health and Social Care, says the contact tracing app is "not a priority" and may not be ready until the winter. Health Secretary Matt Hancock is pictured slapping a colleague on the back as they arrived at the House of Commons for Prime Minister's Questions, apparently forgetting social distancing measures.

18 June - The Bank of England announces plans to inject an extra £100bn into the UK economy to help fight downturn precipitated by the pandemic. The UK delays the launch of the contact tracing app, and changes its original format in favour of a model based on technology designed by Apple and Google. Compatibility issues were found between the app's and Apple's software, but unlike Apple's model the UK app is able to better measure distance, so the plan is to combine aspects of both into a single app. The Apple-Google model is also less centralised but more secure.

The weekly ONS household survey estimates that around 33,000 people in England had COVID-19 at any given time between 31 May and 13 June,

unchanged from the previous week. Antibodies were found in 5.4% of 1,757 people who gave blood samples since 26 April.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and Oxford University have reached a deal to begin the manufacture of a potential vaccine, even though it has yet to receive clinical approval. The plan is to stockpile the vaccine ready for its approval. Those over the age of 50 and with certain underlying health conditions will then be prioritised for the vaccine once launched.

Office for National Statistics data for the two weeks up to 10 June indicates that of the 14,000 names passed to NHS Test and Trace for follow up, 10,200 had been contacted.

19 June - UK's COVID-19 Alert Levels (introduced in May 2020)

The UK's COVID-19 Alert Level is lowered from Level 4 (severe risk, high transmission) to Level 3 (substantial risk, general circulation), following the agreement of all four Chief Medical Officers. Health Secretary Matt Hancock describes the change as "a big moment for the country".

Figures from the Treasury show that UK debt stands at £1.95trn and is larger than the economy for the first time in 50 years following a record amount of borrowing in May. The amount borrowed in May was £55.2bn, nine times higher than borrowing for May 2019, and the highest monthly amount since records began

20 June - Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden and Chancellor Rishi Sunak confirm that the review into the 2m social distancing rule in England will conclude within the coming days.

Spain's foreign affairs minister Arancha González Laya announces that UK tourists will be able to visit Spain without the need for quarantine from the following day.

Guernsey lifts the majority of its lockdown restrictions, meaning social distancing measures are no longer required and pubs, restaurants and other businesses can operate at normal capacity. But border controls remain in place.

Northern Ireland records one death in the most recent 24 hour period, but no new cases of COVID-19 for the first time since March.

21 June - No new COVID-19 deaths are recorded for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

22 June - A new coronavirus saliva test is trialed in the UK.
The UK records its lowest number of new COVID-19 cases since the beginning of lockdown with 958 people having tested positive for the virus, the first time the figure has dropped below 1,000; the number of deaths recorded for the previous day stands at 15, the lowest figure since 15 March.
The energy regulator Ofgem gives energy companies permission to follow up unpaid bills, but warns them not to be aggressive in their pursuit of unpaid debts.

23 June - Boris Johnson leads the UK government's final Downing Street daily briefing. From now on press briefings will be held whenever there is a significant announcement.
Doctors have expressed concern that a significant number of COVID-19 patients may be left with the permanent lung condition pulmonary fibrosis as a result of the virus, and will need to be monitored for signs of the condition.

24 June - Scientists at Imperial College London begin human trials of a COVID-19 vaccine after tests on animals indicate an effective immune response; 300 volunteers will take part in the programme.
The British Medical Journal publishes an open letter from health leaders in which they call on the government to launch an urgent review to determine whether the UK is prepared for what they describe as the "real risk" of a second wave of COVID-19.
The UK government publishes new advice for businesses on how to safely reopen their premises on 4 July.

25 June - In a letter to the British Medical Journal, a group of senior health academics expresses their concern that COVID-19 antibody tests for NHS and care staff are being rolled out without "adequate assessment" and will place the health service under unnecessary strain.
As the UK experiences a short heatwave, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council declares a major incident after as many as half a million people travel to the Dorset coast. Professor Chris Whitty, the UK's chief medical officer, warns people to respect social distancing guidelines while enjoying the weather or the number of COVID-19 cases "will rise again".
The weekly ONS household survey for 8–21 June estimates that new infections were occurring at a rate of 22,000 per week and notes that the decline seen between mid-May and early June has "levelled off".
The UK government announces plans to relax rules for England and Wales allowing pubs and restaurants to utilise outdoor spaces such as terraces,

pavements and car parks, while outdoor markets and fetes will no longer need planning permission.

26 June - Prime Minister Boris Johnson warns that the UK could be set back if people continue to ignore social distancing rules as those who visited the south coast the previous day have done.

Professor Neil Ferguson, a former government scientific adviser, says he does not believe a second national lockdown would be necessary, but instead would expect to see "targeted" measures to deal with outbreaks.

Research published by the University of Oxford's Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine shows that the proportion of COVID hospital patients dying each day in England has fallen from 6% to 1% between April and June. In terms of numbers, 15,468 people were in hospital in England of which 899 died (6%) on 8 April, compared to 2,698 hospital patients on 21 June, 30 of which died (1%).

Intu Properties, owner of many of the UK's largest shopping centres, goes into administration because of the financial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The UK government confirms that people returning from certain countries will not be required to quarantine for 14 days when returning to the UK from 6 July.

A traffic lights system will be established allocating colours depending on a country's risk level, with a list of countries to be confirmed at a later date.

27 June - Travel companies report that holiday bookings have "exploded" since the UK government announced plans to ease quarantine restrictions on travel abroad. But Scotland says it is yet to decide on the matter. Although the UK government has authority over border control, the Scottish government must be consulted on quarantine in Scotland because health matters in Scotland are devolved to the Scottish government.

The Red Arrows perform a fly-past over Scarborough for Armed Forces Day; a celebration in the town for the occasion was cancelled because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

28 June - Home Secretary Priti Patel confirms a Sunday Times report that the government is considering imposing a local lockdown on Leicester, which has seen a spike in COVID-19 cases. Of the 2,494 cases reported in the city, 658 of them (around 25%) occurred in the two weeks preceding 16 June.

29 June



Leicester and the extent of UK's first local-lockdown

Following a spike in COVID-19 cases in Leicester, Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces the reintroduction of stricter lockdown measures for the city, including the closure of non-essential retailers from the following day, and the closure of schools from 2 July. People in Leicester are advised to stay at home as much as possible, while it is recommended that all but essential travel to, from and within the city should be avoided. Of the 2,987 positive cases in Leicester since the pandemic began, 866 (29%) were reported in the two weeks preceding 23 June, while Hancock says Leicester accounted for "10% of all positive cases in the country over the past week". Sir Peter Soulsby, the Mayor of Leicester has criticised a lack of communication between the UK government and Leicester City Council which he describes as "intensely frustrating". The UK government announces that mandatory MOT tests will be reintroduced from 1 August.

Analysis produced by the BBC indicated that the UK has been the worst hit of the G7 countries in terms of COVID-19, while England is the worst hit nation of Europe, just ahead of Spain.

The Greek Government extends its ban on flights from the UK until 15 July.

The England and Wales Cricket Board confirms that the 2020 County Championship season will begin on 1 August.

		<p>30 June - As Leicester begins at least two weeks of re-tightened lockdown restrictions, a list of other areas where COVID-19 cases are rising is published, though the increases are much smaller than Leicester.</p> <p>Prime Minister Boris Johnson sets out a £5bn post-coronavirus recovery plan for the UK that will see home building and improvements to infrastructure, describing it as a "new deal".</p> <p>Figures from the Office for National Statistics have indicated the number of deaths in the week up to 19 June fell below the five year average for the first time since March.</p> <p>Rented motorized scooters are to be permitted on UK roads from 4 July in a bid to ease pressure on public transport.</p> <p>EasyJet begins the consultation process for plans to close three of its UK bases.</p>
<p><u>July</u></p>	<p>July began with low pressure dominating, giving mainly cloudy weather with showers and longer spells of rain. It continued unsettled and mostly cloudy until the 9th. Between the 10th and 22nd, high pressure often ridged into southern parts of the UK, bringing dry sunny weather to southern England, and from the 10th to 12th and 19th to 21st, the high moved further north bringing more widespread fine weather, but central and northern counties otherwise remained unsettled and often cloudy. It was generally changeable from the 23rd to 29th, but a brief hot southerly incursion on the 30th and 31st brought unusually high temperatures to many parts of the UK, locally reaching 37.8 °C (100 °F) in the southeast</p> <p>Persistent heavy rain and strong winds caused some impacts on the 4th and 5th. There were localised reports of flooding in Wales and in Cumbria. Fallen trees caused power outages in Cumbria and disruption to rail travel around Leeds and Halifax, between Carnforth and Hellifield, between Guildford and Clandon and in Tower Hamlets.</p> <p>The following three weeks saw no substantial impacts, but on the evening of the 25th a tornado in Northampton caused some damage to property. On the 27th, flooding at the Linwood Toll roundabout in Ferguslie resulted in road closures, and the B724 between Dumfries and Annan was also closed due to flooding. A brief hot spell on the 31st triggered thunderstorms, and a house in Haxby, North Yorkshire, was destroyed by fire after being struck by lightning.</p>	<p>1 July - Over two days, 12,000 job losses have been announced in the retail and aviation industry as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Conservative MP Giles Watling warned of the impact on theatres if they have to cancel the pantomime season; his comments come after several theatres announced plans to cancel pantomimes over the coming winter season.</p> <p>2 July - Casual Dining Group, the owner of Café Rouge and Bella Italia, goes into administration with the loss of 1,900 of the 6,000 staff employed by the outlets, while Airbus announces the loss of 2,730 jobs at two UK factories. The weekly ONS household survey for 14–27 June estimates that new infections were occurring in England at a rate of 25,000 per week, a slight increase on their previous report. Blood samples show around 6% of people have antibodies.</p> <p>3 July - The UK government published a list of 59 countries for which quarantine will not apply when arriving back in England as from 10 July. They include Greece, France, Belgium and Spain, but Portugal and the United States are among those not on the list. These changes do not apply to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, where quarantine restrictions remain in place for all arrivals from outside the UK.</p> <p>The UK government rushed The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020 through parliament to give police the powers to enforce lockdown restrictions in Leicester as from 4 July.</p>

4 July - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force in England, replacing and relaxing the previous Lockdown Regulations (SI 350), and giving the Secretary of State powers to make declarations restricting access to public outdoor places. Leicester was excluded from the relaxations due to its high rate of COVID-19, with more stringent regulations in force.

The COVID Symptom Study reports that the two-week average number of new daily cases for the two weeks to 4 July 2020 was no lower than for the previous week; rates of new COVID cases were no longer declining.

After Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage posted a picture of himself in a pub on Twitter a fortnight after attending a rally in support of US President Donald Trump in the United States, Ed Davey, the acting leader of the Liberal Democrats, wrote to Kent Police asking them to investigate whether Farage had breached lockdown restrictions. On the same day, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's father, Stanley, had to defend a trip to Greece which critics say broke restrictions.

Augusto Santos Silva, the Foreign minister of Portugal, criticised the UK's decision to exclude his country from the list of countries from where travellers do not have to quarantine when returning to the UK as "absurd".

The National Gallery, set to be the first museum to reopen to the public on 8 July, gave a preview to the media of its new safety measures.

The UK held a minute's silence to remember those who had died of COVID-19.

5 July - The UK stages a national round of applause to mark the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the National Health Service; a Supermarine Spitfire flypast over several hospitals in the east of England also takes place to mark the occasion.

6 July - The UK government announces grants and loans of £1.57bn to support theatres, galleries, museums and other cultural venues affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

As concerns about increasing unemployment grow, the UK government announces a £111m scheme to help firms in England provide an extra 30,000 trainee places; £21m will be provided to fund similar schemes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Sandwich retailer Pret a Manger announces plans to close 30 outlets with the loss of 1,000 jobs.

The BBC's Panorama programme reports that scientific research has suggested the COVID-19 outbreak could result in several thousand extra cancer deaths due

to delayed diagnosis and treatment, with estimates being between 7,000 and 35,000.

No new deaths are reported for Wales for the most recent 24-hour period.

7 July - Figures from the Office for National Statistics indicate only 22% of people testing positive for COVID-19 had symptoms on the day they were tested. Downing Street rejects calls for Boris Johnson to issue an apology after comments the previous day that "too many care homes didn't really follow procedures" over COVID-19, but says what he was saying was that not enough was known about the virus in its early stages.

Circus performers call on the UK government to include their industry in the arts rescue package unveiled the previous day.

8 July - Chancellor Rishi Sunak unveils a £30bn spending package aimed at mitigating the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including a temporary reduction in VAT for the hospitality sector, a scheme to pay firms £1,000 for each employee brought back from furlough, a scheme to get young people into employment, and a temporary rise in the stamp duty threshold. McDonald's resumes serving breakfast at most of its sites. The annual McDonald's Monopoly campaign is postponed to 2021 for the first time in 15 years.

9 July - Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, announces that gyms, indoor pools and leisure centres can reopen from 25th July

High street retailers Boots and John Lewis announce job losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with Boots cutting 4,000 positions, and John Lewis closing eight stores with the loss of 1,300 posts.

Two sets of data are released that show the number of cases of COVID-19 are falling in England; Office for National Statistics figures estimate one in 3,900 people have the virus, down from one in 2,200 the previous week, while Public Health England figures indicate that cases fell by 25% in the week to 5 July.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies warns that taxes will have to rise to pay off the support measures put in place by the government.

Northern Ireland lifts quarantine regulations on arrivals from 50 countries, including France, Italy, Germany and Spain, effective from 10 July.

The BBC confirms it will go ahead with plans to end free TV licences for over-75s from 1 August, except for those on pension credit, a measure it postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

10 July - Quarantine rules are relaxed for people arriving into the UK from 75 countries and overseas territories.

Figures released by the National Police Chiefs' Council show that no fines were issued in England and Wales for breach of quarantine rules during the first two weeks after their introduction, while ten people were fined for not wearing face coverings on public transport in the two weeks preceding 22 June.

As the wearing of face coverings becomes mandatory in shops in Scotland, the UK Government considers whether to introduce the same rule for shops in England, while Prime Minister Boris Johnson is seen in public wearing one.

Bosses at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, one of the UK's leading production theatres, warn the theatre is at risk of losing 47 of its staff members (about 40% of its workforce), and is in danger of closing because of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

11 July - Parts of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 come into effect, allowing outdoor swimming pools and water parks to re-open. Operators of outdoor swimming pools, many of them community groups and charities, criticise the UK government's timing, citing a lack of preparation time that has made a short summer season "unviable".

Belgium includes Leicester on its "red zone" list, meaning anyone who has recently visited the city will be required to quarantine for 14 days on arrival in Belgium.

12 July - High Street fashion retailer Primark says it will not take advantage of the Jobs Retention Bonus announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak. The company placed 30,000 of its employees on furlough during the pandemic, but has since brought them all back to work, and would have been entitled to £30m under the scheme.

13 July - The remainder of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 comes into effect, allowing the re-opening of nail bars and salons, tanning booths and salons, spas and beauty salons, massage parlours, tattoo parlours, and body and skin piercing services.

14 July - A report commissioned by the UK's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, produces estimates for potential COVID-19 deaths in a deadly second wave scenario over the coming winter, with best and worst case outcomes depending on the level of action taken to control the virus. The report forecasts a figure of between 24,500 and 251,000 hospital deaths, with a peak in January

and February 2021, but stresses the figures are forecasts and not predictions, and do not take factors such as the development of a vaccine into account. The UK government announces that the wearing of face coverings will become compulsory in shops and supermarkets in England from 24 July. Those who fail to do so will face a fine of up to £100. Health Secretary Matt Hancock says the move will "give people more confidence to shop safely and enhance protections for those who work in shops".

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that UK economic recovery was at 1.8% in May 2020 when compared to the previous month, a smaller amount than was expected.

15 July - Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirms an independent inquiry will be held into the handling of the pandemic, but says it would not be right to devote "huge amounts of official time" to an inquiry while the pandemic is ongoing. A temporary cut in Value-added tax worth £4bn comes into force until 12 January 2021 as a means of helping the food and hospitality industries. Nando's, Pret a Manger, KFC and McDonald's are among the firms to announce price reductions as a result.

Online retailer ASOS says it will repay furlough cash it received from the UK government after sales increased by 10% to £1bn in the four months up to 30 June.

16 July - The National Cyber Security Centre accuses Russian spies of targeting organisations developing COVID-19 vaccines in the United Kingdom, United States and Canada in order to steal information relating to their work. Figures released by the UK government show the number of workers on UK payrolls fell by 649,000 from March to June, but unemployment did not increase as much as feared because many companies took advantage of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Speaking to the House of Commons Scientific Advisory Committee, the UK's Chief Medical Officer Sir Patrick Vallance says there is "absolutely no reason" to change the advice about working from home, and that it remains a "perfectly good option" for many.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that the Leicester local lockdown is to be extended. The boundaries are redrawn so that only the Leicester unitary authority plus the borough of Oadby and Wigston are now included in the travel and business restrictions, with the other areas of Leicestershire being released. Review of the situation was set for 1 August.

17 July - Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces a further easing of lockdown restrictions for England, with plans for a "significant return to normality" by Christmas. The new rules allow people to use public transport for non-essential journeys with immediate effect, while employers will have more discretion over their work places from 1 August. From 18 July, local authorities will have the power to enforce local shutdowns.

Johnson announces an extra £3bn for the NHS in England to help prepare for a possible second wave of COVID-19 over the coming winter.

Johnson announces a pilot scheme for a return to spectator sports, with a view to a full return by 1 October. The 2020 World Snooker Championship and the Glorious Goodwood Festival are among the first two sporting events to be part of the pilot. A pilot scheme is also announced for a return to indoor performances with socially distanced audiences at theatres, music and performance venues, with a view to a full return in August.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock calls for a review of the way COVID-19 deaths are recorded in England after Public Health England confirms it records deaths as COVID related even if the death occurs several months after someone has tested positive for the virus; the other Home Nations do not record a death as COVID related if it occurs more than 28 days after a positive test.

Rochdale introduces extra social distancing precautions to avoid full lockdown following a rise in COVID-19 cases in the area.

Princess Beatrice marries Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi at Windsor Castle in a private ceremony attended by the Queen and close family, the wedding having been postponed from 29 May due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Captain Sir Tom Moore is knighted by the Queen in a ceremony at Windsor Castle.

British Airways announces plans to retire its entire fleet of Boeing 747s four years ahead of schedule following a downturn in travel precipitated by the COVID-19 outbreak.

18 July - Andrei Kelin, Russia's ambassador to the UK, rejects allegations that Russian intelligence agents tried to steal coronavirus vaccine research information.

Local authorities in England get new powers to close shops and outdoor public spaces, and to cancel events in order to control COVID-19.

19 July - Prime Minister Boris Johnson tells The Sunday Telegraph he does not believe it will be necessary to impose a second nationwide lockdown in the event of a spike in COVID-19 cases, comparing the option to a "nuclear deterrent".

Robert Buckland, the Secretary of State for Justice, announces the creation of ten temporary courts in England and Wales to deal with a backlog of legal cases brought about by the pandemic.

20 July - The UK has signed a deal for 90 million doses of promising vaccines being developed jointly by the pharmaceutical companies BioNtech and Pfizer, and by Valneva. This is in addition to the 100 million doses being developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca.

Preliminary results of clinical trials of a drug developed by Southampton-based biotech firm Synairgen, that uses the protein interferon beta, have shown promising signs. The treatment involves a patient inhaling the protein, produced by the body to fight viral infections, into the lungs using a nebuliser in order to encourage an immune response.

Clinical trials of the vaccine being developed by the University of Oxford on 1,077 patients show that it appears to be safe, and trains the immune system to produce COVID-19 antibodies.

Boris Johnson says he is confident but not "100% confident" a vaccine will be available in 2020.

The UK Government is investing £14m in two factories at Port Talbot, South Wales, and Blackburn, Lancashire to produce a million high quality face coverings per week.

High Street retailer Marks & Spencer announces 950 job losses as a result of the continuing economic impact from the pandemic.

21 July - Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces that 900,000 public sector workers, including doctors and teachers, will get an above-inflation pay rise of 3.1% in acknowledgement of the important role they have played during the pandemic. Health experts, including Wellcome Trust director Professor Sir Jeremy Farrar, tell the House of Commons Health Committee that even with a vaccine the UK is likely to be living with COVID-19 for many years.

22 July - Figures released by the Home Office reveal that a backlog of 400,000 passport applications have accumulated due to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

An Office for National Statistics report has concluded that a majority of children have struggled with learning at home during the lockdown.

Fitness coach Joe Wicks presents his final online PE with Joe exercise class after leading the daily sessions for the past 18 weeks.

23 July - During a visit to Scotland to mark the first year of taking office as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson says that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic proves the "sheer might" and "merits of the union".

A report published by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee criticises the UK government for its "astonishing" failure to plan for the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The House of Commons Culture Select Committee criticises the government for being too slow to respond to what it describes as the "existential threat" faced by live theatre, music and other culture because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vacuum cleaner manufacturer Dyson announces the loss of 900 jobs, 600 of them in the UK, as a result of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Northern Ireland's Department of Health confirms the release of Northern Ireland's contact-tracing app, StopCOVID NI, for as early as 29 July. Northern Ireland is the first part of the UK to launch a contact-tracing app.

24 July - In an interview with BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says that the UK government did not understand the nature of coronavirus at the beginning of the pandemic, and could have done things differently. He also says there are "open questions" about whether lockdown was implemented too late.

Face coverings become compulsory in shops and most other enclosed public places in England.

The list of countries from where travellers do not have to quarantine when arriving in England is updated, adding Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia and St Vincent and the Grenadines; travellers from Portugal must still isolate for 14 days.

Office for National Statistics figures show that retail sales increased almost to pre-lockdown levels in June, having risen 13.9% compared to May.

25 July - Gyms, indoor swimming pools and leisure centres reopen

Public Health England warns that being obese and overweight puts people at greater risk of severe illness or death as a result of COVID-19.

Share prices in Synairgen are reported to have increased by 540% after news of the successful interferon-beta based drug trial.

Following a rise in COVID-19 cases in Spain, and concerns of a second wave, the UK Government confirms travellers returning to England from Spain will be required to quarantine for 14 days from 26 July.

26 July - Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab says it was right to act quickly, following criticism of the government's short-notice decision to reimpose quarantine rules on travellers arriving from Spain.
The UK's largest tour operator, Tui, cancels all flights from the UK to mainland Spain until 9 August.
Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, who flew out to Spain for a holiday the previous day, is caught by the change of quarantine rules.

27 July - The first confirmed case of an animal infection with SARS-CoV-2 in the UK is reported, having been detected in a pet cat.
Analysis from the economic forecasting group the EY Item Club suggests it will take until 2024 for the UK economy to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown.
The UK changes its advice on travel to Spain, advising against all non-essential travel to mainland Spain, the Balearic and Canary Islands.
Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces plans to travel home early from a family holiday in Spain due to quarantine rules.
Travel operator Jet2 cancels all flights to mainland Spain from 28 July to 17 August.
The number of people having tested positive for COVID-19 in the UK passes 300,000 after a further 685 positive tests bring the total number of cases to 300,111; seven deaths are also reported, the lowest daily number since 12 March, and taking the total to 45,759.

28 July - Amid criticism that the decision to impose quarantine restrictions on people arriving from Spain is unjust, Prime Minister Boris Johnson defends the government's decision, saying further action will be taken if necessary.^[105]
Johnson also warns that there are signs of a European second wave of the virus.
The Andrew Lloyd Webber musical The Phantom of the Opera ends its 33-year run in the West End as a result of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

29 July - Leading figures in the airline and travel industries are urging the UK government to end blanket quarantine rules which are impacting on their sectors, and instead to introduce regional restrictions allowing unrestricted travel to areas of a country without significant COVID-19 outbreaks.
The UK government announces a £500m scheme to help film and television with the costs of projects delayed or abandoned because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Trust announces plans for 1,200 redundancies in order to save £100m; the organisation estimates it has lost £200m because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

30 July - In a bid to avoid a resurgence of COVID-19, the period for which someone testing positive for, or showing signs of, the virus is required to self-isolate is extended from seven to ten days.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson warns the UK is "not out of the woods" as he warns of the danger of a resurgence.

Restrictions are placed on Greater Manchester, and parts of East Lancashire and Yorkshire prohibiting separate households from meeting indoors following an "increasing rate of transmission" in those areas caused by people failing to adhere to social distancing rules. The restrictions take effect from midnight.

Luxembourg is taken off the UK quarantine exemption list following a rise in COVID-19 cases.

Office for National Statistics figures indicate England had the highest number of excess deaths in Europe between the end of February and mid-June, and had the second highest peak of deaths behind Spain.

The Together campaign, which includes the NHS, charities, media groups and employers, launches a consultation on how to avoid community divisions in the months ahead. The organisation has noted that the sense of community spirit fostered during lockdown is beginning to fragment.

Cinema chain Vue announces plans to reopen some of its venues from 7 August

The Office for Statistics Regulation criticises First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon for comments she made in which she claimed COVID-19 rates were five times higher in England than Scotland.

Northern Ireland's contact tracing app StopCOVID NI is launched.^[118]

Jet2 tells customers in the Balearic and Canary Islands to end their holidays early.

Tui announces the closure of 166 of its high street outlets in the UK and Ireland, affecting 900 jobs.

		<p>31 July - Prime Minister Boris Johnson postpones some lockdown easing measures scheduled to begin in England on 1 August for two weeks amid concerns about rising COVID-19 cases. Bowling alleys and casinos will remain closed until 15 August, while wedding receptions of up to 30 people are also moved back to that date. Trials of spectator sporting events are also paused. From 8 August the wearing of face coverings in more indoor settings, such as cinemas and places of worship will become mandatory.</p> <p>The ONS household survey indicates COVID-19 cases in England are rising again, with an increase from 2,800 to 4,200 daily cases in the week of 20–26 July. The delayed 2020 British Academy Television Awards are held as a virtual ceremony.</p> <p>Northern Ireland pauses its shielding programme.</p>
<p><u>August</u></p>	<p>August started off with low pressure and showery, mostly cloudy weather. Between the 6th and 13th the weather turned warm or hot and sunny in most regions, with some thundery outbreaks, and temperatures widely exceeded 30 °C in the south and locally 35 °C in the south-east. The weather turned more unsettled mid-month with showers and longer spells of rain. From the 19th to 28th the weather was often wet and windy with depressions heading in from the west, and Storms Ellen and Francis brought especially wet and windy weather to most of the country on the 20th-22nd and 25th. It turned cooler and quieter during the last few days.</p> <p>On the 4th, there were road and rail closures across the Central Belt and evacuations at Garnock Valley and Tillicoultry. A landslip closed the rail line near Helensburgh and another landslip blocked the A83 at the Rest and be Thankful.</p> <p>Thunderstorms caused some impacts between the 7th and 17th. On the 10th, there was flooding in Aberystwyth, Gower and Llandeilo in Wales, the A5 was flooded and there were some localised power shortages in Ceredigion and Gower. On the 11th, lightning damaged the railway signalling system in the Pitlochry area leading to rail disruption, and the A68 was closed due to a landslip.</p> <p>On the 12th in Scotland, thunderstorms led to evacuations at a holiday home park, flooding on roads and rail and school closures, with rail disruption on some Edinburgh and Aberdeen routes. The very heavy rain from the thunderstorms seems likely to have been a factor in the landslip</p>	<p>1 August - The shielding programme is paused for England and Scotland, but will continue for the areas where extra precautions have been introduced. Changes to the furlough scheme come into effect, with firms who have furloughed workers required to contribute to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. They must pay National Insurance and pension contributions until the scheme ends in October.</p> <p>2 August - A major incident is declared in Greater Manchester after rises in coronavirus infection rates.</p> <p>3 August - The month-long "Eat Out to Help Out" scheme begins, offering a 50% discount on meals at indoor venues, three <i>days</i> per week, with the remainder of the cost picked up by the government. Restaurants, pubs and hairdressers in Leicester are allowed to reopen as lockdown restrictions are eased in the city.</p> <p>4 August - Scientists warn that test and trace provisions are inadequate to prevent a second wave of COVID-19 once schools reopen in September.</p> <p>5 August - A report by the Home Affairs committee concludes that the spread of COVID-19 could have been slowed by an earlier implementation of quarantine restrictions on people arriving into the UK. Bank of Ireland announces plans for 1,400 job losses collectively from its UK and Ireland operations.</p>

that caused a train derailment near Stonehaven, which tragically led to three fatalities and a number of casualties. Between the 12th and 17th, in Wales, a landslip blocked the Shrewsbury to Llandrindod Wells line, and there was flooding around Wrexham. There was also flooding in Cumbria, Blackpool and the Midlands. Flooding affected the east and south-east of England too, especially St Albans, Suffolk and the M25.

Between the 19th and 21st, there were impacts from Storm Ellen. In Northern Ireland there was flooding, fallen trees, the Foyle Bridge was closed to high-sided vehicles and several hundred were without power. In Wales, flooding affected the A48, fallen trees blocked the railway between Tywyn and Barmouth, there were restrictions on the A55 and around 200 properties in south Wales lost power. In eastern England fallen trees caused delays on roads and railways and fallen trees on wet roads may have contributed to a number of deaths.

On the 25th there were many impacts associated with Storm Francis, with flooding, fallen trees and power outages. Flooding especially affected Glasgow, the west of Scotland, the M8, Newcastle and Pembrokeshire. There were speed restrictions on the rail network in Wales, fallen trees in Cardiff and over 12000 without power in mid- and north Wales with evacuations in north Wales. A woman was hurt by a fallen tree in the east of England.

On the 27th, rain and localised thunderstorms brought flooding and fallen trees in Northern Ireland, while in Broxburn people had to be rescued from their homes due to flooding. In London, the rail line between West Hampstead Thameslink and St Albans was flooded. Road and rail closures affected south-western routes, especially in Devon and Cornwall, with property flooding in Plymouth.

6 August - Quarantine restrictions are placed on travellers arriving into the UK from Belgium, the Bahamas and Andorra, with the new rules coming into effect from midnight in Wales, and 4am on 8 August in the rest of the UK.

The Bank of England predicts that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be less severe than previously thought, but the economy will take much longer than anticipated to recover.

Organisers of the 2020 London Marathon, scheduled for 4 October, announce it is to be an elite athletes only event due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the race taking place on a bio-secure course

7 August - The R number for the UK rises to between 0.8 and 1.0, up from the previous week's number of 0.8–0.9, but is believed to be above 1.0 in three parts of England – London, the South West and the North West.

ITV confirms that the 2020 series of its reality programme I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here! will be relocated from its usual venue in the Australian jungle to a ruined castle in the UK.

8 August - 750,000 coronavirus test kits manufactured by Randox are being recalled due to safety concerns

The British Antarctic Survey announces it is scaling back its research operations because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The use of face coverings is extended to more indoor venues in England and Scotland.

9 August - The daily figure of confirmed new COVID-19 infections exceeds 1,000 for the first time since June, rising by 1,062 to 310,825, but it is unclear whether the rise is down to a higher infection rate or a greater volume of testing.

Sandwich chain Pret a Manger confirms it has asked thousands of members of its staff to work fewer hours as part of its plans for post-pandemic restructuring.

11 August - Office for National Statistics figures reveal that the number of people in work fell by 220,000 between April and June, the largest drop in employment in a decade. Prime Minister Boris Johnson warns there is a "long, long way to go" before the economy begins to improve.

After the Scottish Government announces upgrades for thousands of Higher results that were marked down to take account of teachers' assessments, the National Union of Students calls for the same rules to be applied to A Level results for the rest of the UK.

12 August - Figures show the UK economy shrunk by 20.4% between April and June when compared to the first quarter of the year, making it the largest slump on record and pushing the country into recession for the first time in eleven years.^[147] Chancellor Rishi Sunak describes the situation as "unprecedented". The Department for Education announces that students' GCSE and A Level results will be no lower than the results of their mock exams, with the introduction of a "triple lock" system whereby the highest grade is awarded from a choice of mock exams, teachers' assessment or exams taken during the autumn term.

Following a review of the way COVID-19 deaths are recorded by Public Health England, the cumulative number for the UK is reduced by 5,377 from 46,706 to 41,329. England has previously been the only part of the UK to record a death as COVID-related no matter how long it occurred after a positive result, whereas the other constituent countries have a 28-day cut-off, which England will also now use.

13 August - A Level grades are published for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. School and college leaders call for an urgent review after 36% of results in England are lower than teachers predicted, while 3% are two grades lower. The Art Fund charity awards £630,000 to eighteen museums around the UK to support projects designed to reach the public during the pandemic. They include a pop-up museum in a shopping centre, actor-guides to control social distancing and exhibit boxes that can be posted to schools.

France, the Netherlands, Monaco, Malta, Turks and Caicos, and Aruba are added to the quarantine list, requiring travellers arriving in the UK from these countries to quarantine for 14 days as of 4.00am on 15 August.

14 August - The UK government signs deals for 90 million doses of potential vaccines being developed by Belgian pharmaceutical company Janssen Pharmaceutica and the US biotech company Novavax.

Extra ferries are laid on between France and the UK as thousands of holidaymakers race to return to the UK from France before quarantine restrictions begin.

The UK records its highest daily rate of new COVID-19 cases since 14 June, with 1,441 new cases taking the total number to 316,367.

15 August - There is confusion as the exam regulator Ofqual publishes guidelines on the criteria constituting grounds for a review of results, then withdraws the advice pending a review.

The Local Government Association urges parents to keep up-to-date with their children's vaccinations in order to ease pressure on the NHS.
Some restaurants and pubs report they have dropped out of the Eat Out to Help Out scheme because of "hostility towards staff".

16 August - The shielding programme ends in Wales; it is the last part of the UK to end its shielding programme.

17 August - As many as three million self-employed people whose trade has been affected by the pandemic become eligible for a second government grant worth £6,570.

Following controversy over A Level grades, it is confirmed that both A Level and GCSE results in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be based on teachers' assessments.

A study from the Institute of Fiscal Studies says that the education gap between wealthy and poor children has widened because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and quotes a headteacher who says it could take up to two years to get children back to their correct level of education.

18 August - Education Secretary Gavin Williamson says he is "incredibly sorry" for the distress caused to students over their grades.

19 August - After France makes the wearing of face coverings compulsory for most work places, Health Secretary Matt Hancock says there are no plans to do the same in the UK.

Pearson Education delays the release of half a million BTEC qualifications, due tomorrow, in order to regrade them.

The UK government announces plans to expand the Office for National Statistics' Infection Survey, which tests people fortnightly for COVID-19; tests will increase from 28,000 people in England to 150,000 by October.

20 August - Portugal is added to the quarantine exemption list, while Croatia, Austria and Trinidad and Tobago are taken off it; Scotland also removes Switzerland from its own quarantine exemption list.

21 August - Booking a driving test resumes in England and Wales, but the website through which bookings are made crashes due to excessive demand. Figures released by the Government Office for Science and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies show the R number to be between 0.9 and 1.1, up from between 0.8 and 1.0 the previous week.

STA Travel, a firm with 50 high street outlets and specialising in trips for students and young people, becomes the latest business to cease trading because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

22 August - Sir Mark Walpole, a member of the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) suggests that COVID-19 will be present "forever in some form or another", and not eliminated by vaccine as in the case of diseases such as smallpox.

23 August - The UK's chief medical officer, Dr Chris Whitty, says that children are more likely to be harmed by not returning to school in September than by contracting COVID-19.

The National Education Union, the UK's largest teaching union, calls for more staff, extra teaching space and greater clarity on how to deal with a spike in COVID-19 cases in order for schools to safely reopen again.

24 August - As schools in Northern Ireland return for the autumn term, Prime Minister Boris Johnson releases a message to parents telling them it is "vitally important" children go back to school, with the life chances of a generation at stake.

A University of Bristol study finds that young teenagers aged 13 and 14 experienced less anxiety during lockdown than they did in October 2019. Tesco announces the creation of 16,000 new jobs following an "exceptional growth" in its online business during lockdown.

25 August - Scientists at the University of Nottingham have identified a 75-year-old woman from Nottinghamshire who they believe to be the first person to catch COVID-19 through transmission within the UK; she tested positive on 21 February.

Virgin Atlantic receives £1.2bn backing from its creditors to keep operating for at least another 18 months, and save 6,500 jobs.

Figures produced by the Treasury show that the Eat Out to Help Out scheme has been used 64 million times during the first three weeks of August.

26 August - A BBC survey of the UK's largest employers identifies fifty that say they have no immediate plans to return all their staff to the office.

Research carried out by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory suggests that insect repellent that contains Citriodiol could be used to kill a strain of coronavirus that triggers COVID-19.

Restaurant chains, including Prezzo, Harvester and Pizza Pilgrims, announce plans to extend the Eat Out to Help Out scheme into September due to its success, saying they will fund it themselves once the government backed scheme ends.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson blames a "mutant algorithm" for the exam grades chaos.

Jonathan Slater, the chief civil servant at the Department of Education, is dismissed from his position over the exams controversy.

27 August - The number of new daily COVID cases rises by 1,522, the highest number since mid-June.

The delayed Liberal Democrats leadership election sees Sir Ed Davey elected to lead the party.

Switzerland, Jamaica and Czech Republic are removed from the quarantine exemption list effective from 4am on 29 August, while Cuba is added to it as a destination from where travellers will not need to quarantine.

Sandwich chain Pret a Manger announces the loss of 3,000 jobs in a bid to save the business.

The Royal Shakespeare Company cancels its theatre productions until 2021 because of the pandemic.

A YouGov poll suggests support for the full-time reopening of schools in England and Wales has risen from 57% to 65% over a three-week period.

28 August - The UK government announces the launch of another drive to encourage people to return to their workplaces, starting in the first week of September.

The BBC Two's current affairs programme Newsnight is given access to a SAGE document that suggests a "reasonable worst case scenario" may be to expect 85,000 COVID deaths over the coming winter.

29 August - The first football match with spectators takes place in Brighton, with 2,500 people allowed in to watch a pre-season friendly between Chelsea and Brighton.

Women's football makes a return for the first time since lockdown, with a Community Shield match between Chelsea and Manchester City, the first Women's Community Shield to be held since 2008.

		<p>30 August - As a million students prepare to go to university, the Universities and Colleges Union urges universities in the UK to delay face-to-face lectures until after Christmas amid concerns students could spark a second wave of the COVID pandemic.</p> <p>Emily Eavis, the co-organiser of the Glastonbury Festival, says the organisers aim to stage Glastonbury 2021 in June 2021 as usual.</p> <p>A further 1,715 cases of COVID-19 are reported, bringing the total so far to 334,467, and representing the largest daily increase since mid-May. A single death brings the total number of fatalities to 41,499.</p> <p>Guernsey's Vale Earth Fair is held as usual at Vale Castle, attended by 3,500 people but with its lineup of performers being entirely from Guernsey.</p> <p>31 August - The Eat Out to Help Out scheme comes to an end. Over 160 million meals were eaten under the scheme, at a cost to the government of about £849 million. A University of Warwick study later concluded that some areas with high scheme uptake had increased new infections after about a week and that 8% to 17% of new infection clusters could be linked to the scheme.</p> <p>Airline operator Tui launches an investigation after sixteen passengers on a flight from Zante to Cardiff subsequently test positive for COVID-19, amid claims safety measures were ignored on the flight.</p> <p>The Reading and Leeds Festivals, cancelled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, announce plans for their 2021 festivals from 27 to 29 August 2021.</p>
<p><u>September</u></p>	<p>September began with a ridge of high pressure, but westerlies dominated from the 2nd until the 12th bringing areas of rain interspersed with brighter showery weather, though high pressure increasingly influenced the south at times. It turned hot in places, especially south-east England, around mid-month, and the 16th to 21st was settled with high pressure and plenty of warm sunshine for most parts of the UK. The weather turned much cooler and more unsettled from the 22nd, and it was very wet and windy in Norfolk on the 25th. With clear skies and slackening northerly winds further west from the 25th to 27th, frost developed overnight in some places.</p> <p>On the 2nd in Scotland, there was flooding on the A75 near Auchenlarie, with ScotRail reporting disruption to services between Glasgow Central and Ardrossan Harbour. Much of the month was then free of significant impacts until the weather turned more unsettled in the last week.</p>	<p>1 September - The majority of schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland reopen for the autumn term.</p> <p>KPMG speculate that the UK economy is unlikely to reach its pre-COVID level until early 2023.</p> <p>Workers on low incomes required to self-isolate in parts of England where COVID-19 rates are high, and who cannot work from home, become entitled to a new payment scheme to top up their existing Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit claims for the duration of their isolation. The scheme will be trialed in Blackburn with Darwen, Pendle and Oldham but will roll-out to other areas with lockdown restrictions if successful.</p> <p>Companies using the UK government's furlough scheme are required to contribute towards employees' wages as the scheme draws nearer to its end.</p> <p>Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford forms a task force with some of the UK's leading food brands aimed at reducing child food poverty.</p> <p>Amid concerns Portugal could be taken off the quarantine exemption list after COVID-19 cases there rise, IAG chief executive Willie Walsh warns that</p>

On the 24th heavy hail showers left up to an inch of hail on the ground in West and North Yorkshire, with flash flooding in Bingley. On the 25th, sand drifts up to 1.5m high were reported in people's gardens in Norfolk with reports of fallen trees, power cuts and flooding across Norfolk. Speed restrictions were imposed on the QE2 Bridge, and the Port of Felixstowe was closed due to high winds. On the railways, trees fell on the track on the Sheringham line, some lines around Norwich, and between Westerfield and Derby Road. Impacts were reported on the roads, with fallen trees blocking the A12 and other Suffolk roads. There were reports of damage to boats and equipment in harbours along the coast. Trees blocked the railway between Skegness and Boston, and there were delays to rail travel due to trees blocking lines in south-east England.

On the 30th, heavy rain caused flooding on the railway near Barrhill on the Stranraer line.

holidaymakers returning from Portugal to the UK would face "chaos and hardship" if quarantine is reimposed.

2 September - Chancellor Rishi Sunak attempts to reassure MPs in the Conservative Party there will not be a "horror show of tax rises with no end in sight" as the Johnson government deals with the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The travel operator Tui cancels all flights to the party resort of Laganas, on the Greek island of Zante from 3 September after some of its customers failed to follow COVID-19 safety regulations.

3 September - Baroness Dido Harding, the head of NHS Test and Trace apologises after it emerges that UK laboratories are struggling to keep up with demand for COVID tests, and some people were asked to travel several hundred miles to get tested for the virus.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces £500m of funding for trials of a 20-minute COVID-19 test.

Scotland and Wales remove Portugal from their quarantine exemption list, but the rules remain unchanged in England and Northern Ireland, leading to confusion for tourists. Although the number of cases in Portugal has passed the level at which the UK government would consider imposing quarantine restrictions, the government says several factors are taken into account when considering the situation, including the level of testing in a particular country.

4 September - Transport Secretary Grant Shapps acknowledges that rules regarding quarantine in the UK are "confusing" after Scotland and Wales impose quarantine regulations on travellers arriving from Portugal. In response, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says that although devolved governments are taking different decisions "overwhelmingly the UK is proceeding as one".

Boris Johnson rules out introducing COVID-19 tests at airports after suggestions they could be used to shorten the length of time people are required to quarantine, saying they give a "false sense of security".

Virgin Atlantic announces the loss of another 1,150 jobs as part of its rescue package.

5 September - Leading epidemiologist Dame Anne Johnson warns the UK faces a "critical moment" in the COVID-19 pandemic, as students prepare to return to universities and cases rise among younger people.

Scientists have warned that the main test used to detect COVID-19 may be wrongly producing a positive result because of fragments of dead material from previous infections.

In a letter sent to the heads of government departments, the UK government has urged them to get civil servants back to their office desks as soon as possible.

Dr Dominic Pimenta, who resigned in protest over Dominic Cummings' trip to Durham, pledges to donate the royalties from a book he has written about his experiences with COVID-19 to NHS charities.

The disability charity Scope expresses its concern that many people with disabilities are being "pushed out" of the post-lockdown world because of anxiety about leaving their homes.

6 September - Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, tells Times Radio he has spoken to the UK government and the NHS about the possibility of daily COVID-19 tests for MPs that may allow them to safely fill the House of Commons chamber, but says he would not "compromise health and safety".

A further 2,988 COVID-19 cases are reported in 24 hours in the UK, the highest number since 22 May. Health Secretary Matt Hancock says he is "concerned" about a rise in cases "predominantly among young people".

7 September - With a third of COVID-19 cases over the preceding week being among those aged 20–29, Health Secretary Matt Hancock warns younger people they risk causing a second wave of the virus if they do not adhere to social distancing rules.

A further 2,948 new cases of COVID-19 are recorded, along with three deaths. The UK government announces the introduction of island travel corridors in place of country-wide quarantine rules. Seven Greek islands are taken off the quarantine exemption list for travellers arriving to England, but Greece remains a quarantine free destination.

Hollyoaks and EastEnders return to screens after their break.

8 September - Health Secretary Matt Hancock tells the House of Commons the "sharp rise" in COVID-19 cases is "concerning", and a sign that the virus "remains a threat". He urges people to adhere to social distancing measures. Later that

day, the government announces that social gatherings of more than six people will be banned in England from Monday 14 September.

Jonathan Van Tam, England's deputy chief medical officer, says the jump in daily cases is of "great concern".

The UK records a further 2,460 new COVID-19 cases, and 30 deaths.

The Royal College of GPs calls for the establishment of a network of clinics to support people who are chronically ill for several months with COVID-19 symptoms.

In an interview with ITV News political editor Robert Peston, Professor John Edmunds of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), warns that COVID-19 cases are "increasing exponentially".

Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber warns that the arts are at the "point of no return" because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supermarket chain Morrisons announce plans to convert thousands of temporary jobs into permanent ones in order to expand its online operations during the pandemic; Iceland says it has also hired thousands of new workers.

9 September - Trials for a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford are paused after a participant in the UK suffers an adverse reaction.

New rules regarding social gatherings in England from 14 September are outlined by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a government press conference, alongside details of new legal requirements for data gathering on behalf of venues, social distancing "martial" to enforce restrictions, and a "moonshot" plan to further control the virus with greatly expanded mass virus testing. The announcement on mass testing quickly attracts scrutiny from scientists and health experts, who voice their doubt as to whether testing several million people daily with a quick turnaround is achievable with existing laboratory capacity.

10 September - Health Secretary Matt Hancock praised Belgium's effort to suppress the virus as he "sought to justify strict new" regulations on this basis. He modelled UK restrictions, such as the new "rule of six", on the Sophie Wilmes experiment.

Sister Bliss from the dance act Faithless voices her concern that UK nightclubs are being "left to rot in a corner" because of lack of support for the sector.

Captain Sir Tom Moore carries out his first duty as an honorary colonel, with an inspection of junior soldiers at a graduation ceremony at Harrogate's Army Foundation College.

A paper published by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies suggests Operation Moonshot could lead to 41 per cent of the UK population having to self-isolate needlessly within six months due to the generation of false positives, and warns of potential school closures and workers' losing their wages through incorrect test results.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health warns that the pandemic has made a "difficult situation even worse" with regard to women obtaining contraception services.

11 September - The R number is raised to between 1.0 and 1.2 for the first time since March.

A launch date of 24 September is confirmed for an NHS contact-tracing app covering England and Wales, which will rely on users to scan a QR Code whenever they visit hospitality businesses.

12 September - The Police Federation warns the UK against enjoying a "party weekend" ahead of new restrictions on socialising.

The joint AstraZeneca–Oxford University vaccine project is resumed after it was deemed safe to continue.

Former chief scientific adviser Sir Mark Walport warns that the UK is "on the edge of losing control" of COVID-19 as recorded cases exceed 3,000 for the second day in a row.

13 September - Nearly 17,000 people from 57 countries take part in a virtual Great North Run after the official event was cancelled.

Food outlets, including Deliveroo, write to the government requesting an extension to the moratorium on commercial evictions for non-payment of rent, which is due to end on 30 September.

14 September - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 came into force at 12.01 a.m. Unless one of the exceptions applies, the statutory instrument provides authority to limit the number of persons in a gathering to no more than six; hence the rule of six. Equivalent rules also begin in Wales and Scotland with some differences including exemptions for children beneath the ages of 11 and 12 respectively.

Kit Malthouse, the Minister for Crime and Policing, suggests people should report their neighbours to the authorities for any breach of the "rule of six" restrictions.

The Labour Party confirms that their leader, Sir Keir Starmer, is self-isolating after a member of his household "showed possible symptoms of the coronavirus".

A new laboratory-made COVID-19 antibody treatment using monoclonal antibodies is to be trialled in UK hospitals, with 2,000 patients initially receiving the treatment.

Chief scientific adviser Sir Patrick Vallance says that he was rebuked by officials for favouring a lockdown early on in the pandemic.

15 September - Unemployment figures show that UK unemployment rose to 4.1% in the three months to July, up from 3.9% on the previous quarter. Chancellor Rishi Sunak says looking for new ways to protect jobs is his "number one priority" while Labour calls for the furlough scheme to be extended.

Home Secretary Priti Patel suggests that families stopping to talk to each other in the street would be in breach of the "rule of six" law.

Office for National Statistics figures show that weekly COVID-19 related deaths in England and Wales fell below 100 for the first time since March during the week ending 28 August, with 78 deaths registered that week; the drop is partly due to the August Bank Holiday weekend, over which fewer deaths were registered.

16 September - Appearing before a committee of MPs, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says that a second national lockdown would have "disastrous" financial consequences for the UK, and that the government is doing "everything in our power" to avoid that scenario.

Following an investigation by the Competition Commission, travel operator Tui says it will clear a backlog of refunds by the end of September.

Figures reveal that the UK's inflation rate fell to 0.2% in August, from 1% in July. The fall is partly due to cheaper restaurant meals through the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, which saw prices rise at their slowest rate in five years.

Álex Cruz, CEO of British Airways says a "fire and rehire" scheme to move cabin crew onto inferior contracts as part of cost-cutting measures is "off the table". His comments come after criticism from unions and MPs.

17 September - Baroness Dido Harding, the chief executive of NHS Test and Trace tells a committee of MPs that demand for COVID-19 testing is "significantly outstripping the capacity we have", but that she is "very confident" daily testing capacity can be raised to 500,000 by the end of October. John Lewis & Partners announces it won't pay its staff a bonus for the first time since 1953, having been financially affected by the lockdown closures; the firm posted a pre-tax loss of £635m for the first six months of 2020. The Office for National Statistics reports that 62% of workers travelled to work during the previous week.

18 September - The R number rises to between 1.1 and 1.4 as government scientists warn the virus is widespread across the country and there are "far worse things to come". Prime Minister Boris Johnson says a second wave of COVID-19 infections is coming to the UK, and that he doesn't "want to go into bigger lockdown measures", but further restrictions with regard to social distancing may be necessary. A study by Imperial College London of a "lab-on-a-chip" device shows it can give an accurate COVID-19 result in 90 minutes; the device is already being used by eight NHS hospitals. Office for National Statistics figures show that retail sales are 4% higher than in March, largely because of an increase in sales of DIY and household goods, but sales of clothes have dropped. Sir Van Morrison releases three lockdown protest songs, in which he accuses the government of "taking our freedom". Animal welfare charities are warning of the dangers of puppy farming, smuggling and dog theft after the price of puppies rose on average to £1,900 during the COVID-19 pandemic. London cancels the annual New Year's Eve fireworks display.

19 September - Nicola Sturgeon, Mark Drakeford and Arlene Foster, the respective first ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, call for "urgent" government intervention from the UK government to help the aerospace sector, which is struggling because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the aviation industry. The UK government announces the levy of a fine of up to £10,000 for people in England who refuse to self-isolate. The new law, enforceable from 28 September, will apply to anyone testing positive for COVID-19, or a person ordered to self-isolate through contact-tracing. A one-off £500 payment can be

given to the less well-off, while fines for employers who penalise employees for self-isolating will also be introduced.

Robert Dingwall, Professor of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University, suggests there is growing public support for a complete re-evaluation of the government's strategy for dealing with COVID-19 as scientific knowledge of the virus develops.

20 September - The Sunday Telegraph reports that Sir Graham Brady, chair of the 1922 Committee of backbench Conservative MPs, plans to amend the legislation that gives ministers emergency powers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Coronavirus Act 2020, due for its six-month review later in the month, comes up for renewal against a backdrop of frustration among backbench MPs over the government's handling of the pandemic. The Telegraph report suggests the amendment would require a Parliamentary vote each time new emergency powers are used, or fresh restrictions are introduced. It is reported that 1,000 jobs at Butlins are at risk when the furlough scheme comes to an end.

Westminster Abbey holds a service to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the first service to be held there since March, although with greatly reduced attendance.

21 September - At a Downing Street press conference, Dr Patrick Vallance, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, says that there could be as many as 50,000 COVID-19 cases per day by mid-October if no further action is taken, and this "would be expected to lead to about 200 deaths per day".

The UK coronavirus alert level is upgraded to level 4, meaning transmission is "high or rising exponentially".

The government scraps rail franchising, and announces plans to extend financial support for rail companies by another 18 months; passenger numbers have increased since the beginning of the pandemic, but are still less than half their pre-pandemic volume.

Anneliese Dodds, the Shadow Chancellor, accuses the government of mispending billions of pounds in response to the pandemic.

Sir Graham Brady tells the BBC that ministers have "got into the habit of ruling by decree" and warns that public opinion is "moving", and that parliament must therefore approve any further COVID-19 restrictions.

The FTSE 100 share index falls by more than 3% amid concerns a fresh wave of COVID-19 cases will impinge upon the economy, with shares in airlines, travel firms, hotel groups and pubs contributing to the fall.

22 September - Prime Minister Boris Johnson tells the House of Commons the United Kingdom has reached "a perilous turning point" as he announces new restrictions for England that could last for as long as six months. These include a requirement that all shop staff wear face coverings, and a limit on weddings to fifteen people. Initial fines for rule breaking are increased from £100 to £200. Similar measures are announced for other parts of the UK by the leaders of the devolved governments.

In a televised address to the nation, Johnson calls for people to exercise resolve and discipline to combat the virus, but warns further measures may be required if they do not adhere to the restrictions.

Andrew Bailey, the Governor of the Bank of England, calls on the government to "stop and rethink" the furlough scheme, which is scheduled to finish at the end of October.

23 September - 6,178 new COVID-19 cases are recorded, the highest daily number recorded since 1 May.

The UK government scraps plans for an Autumn budget because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces he will make a statement to the House of Commons the following day on what happens after the furlough scheme finishes after the UK government comes under mounting pressure from opposition politicians to decide on a replacement.

The UK government confirms that food outlets without an alcohol licence, such as McDonald's and Pret a Manger will not need to serve customers at tables.^[303]

Sir John Stevens, a former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police expresses concern at plans for military involvement in the enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions, describing it as "tantamount to martial law" and "dangerous".^[304]

Supermarket retailer Asda announces it will introduce tougher measures to enforce the wearing of face coverings by its customers.

24 September - New regulations (SI 1029) come into force, in part, at 5 am in England, prohibiting certain 'restricted businesses' and 'restricted services' from carrying on that business or providing that service between the hours of 22:00 and 05:00. The regulations affect a wide range of establishments, including restaurants, bars, public houses, social clubs, casinos, bingo halls, bowling alleys, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, amusement arcades, funfairs (indoors or outdoors), theme parks and adventure parks. The protected area of Bolton is excluded from the scope of this legislation as additional restrictions apply.

The second version of the NHS contact-tracing app is made available for download by everyone aged 16 or over in England and Wales.

In a statement to the House of Commons, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces the Job Support Scheme as a replacement to the furlough scheme, beginning on 1 November. Under the scheme, people who work reduced hours will receive government help to top up their wages to two-thirds of their full pay. The Chancellor also announces extension (at a reduced level) of help for self-employed people, longer repayment periods for business loans, and an extension to the temporary reduction in VAT for hospitality and tourism companies.

The UK records a further 6,634 cases, the largest daily increase since mass testing began.

Denmark, Slovakia, Iceland and Curaçao are removed from the quarantine exemption list, requiring travellers arriving from there after 4:00am on 26 September to self-isolate for two weeks; no countries are added to the exemption list.

The Telegraph reports that more than 40 backbench Conservative MPs have backed the Brady Amendment, requiring the UK Government to seek a parliamentary vote for any further lockdown restrictions.

The Financial Times reports that the UK could be the first country in the world to conduct "challenge trials", in which healthy people are infected with COVID-19 to test possible vaccines, with London suggested as a possible area where this could happen.

25 September - The R number rises from 1.1–1.4 to 1.2–1.5.

Trials by Novavax of a COVID-19 vaccine that trains the immune system to produce antibodies begin in the UK with 10,000 participants expected to take part.

Senior Conservative MP and former minister Caroline Nokes urges the government to provide more support for women dealing with the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jo Grady of the University and College Union voices concern that students are being used as scapegoats for COVID-19 outbreaks, and says this should not happen.

1,700 students at Manchester Metropolitan University student halls were told to isolate for 14 days after 127 students tested positive.

Figures from British Transport Police indicate that of the 14,726 people stopped for not wearing face coverings on trains between 15 July and 15 August, 14 were issued with a fixed penalty notice, fewer than 0.1%.

26 September - The consumer group Which? estimates that shoppers have lost as much as £100m in unused vouchers because of lockdown. A glitch with the NHS COVID-19 app left users are unable to input the results of a negative test if the test was not booked through the app has been fixed, the Department of Health and Social Care confirms. A spokeswoman for the Department says that "everyone who receives a positive test result can log their result on the app".

Thousands of protesters gather in Trafalgar Square, London for an anti-COVID restrictions protest, but the demonstration is closed down by police because those present do not comply with social distancing regulations.

Mark Drakeford, the First Minister of Wales, criticises Prime Minister Boris Johnson for not meeting regularly enough with the UK's devolved leaders over the COVID-19 pandemic.

With as many as 3,000 students locked down in their accommodation around the UK, Robert Halfon, chairman of the House of Commons Education Select Committee, urges the UK government to update their guidance for students, and to reassure students and their families. He also describes the situation of having students in lockdown for Christmas as something that would cause "huge anguish".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledges £500m to a global vaccine sharing scheme. The COVAX aims to give poor countries access to a COVID-19 vaccine.

27 September - The Labour Party urges the government to pause the return of university students as thousands self-isolate due to COVID-19 outbreaks, but the return is defended by Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, who says clear guidelines are in place for universities.

David Lammy, the Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, expresses concern that 10pm pub curfews have led to drinkers continuing to socialise afterwards, with them "hanging around towns" and "potentially spreading the virus"

Lammy says that Labour are "very sympathetic" to a bid by backbench Conservatives for greater parliamentary scrutiny of COVID-19 rules.

28 September - The remainder of regulations (SI 1029) come into force in England, reducing the maximum number who can attend weddings and civil partnership ceremonies and any associated receptions from 30 to 15. Increased fines come into force for those who fail to self-isolate following receipt of a positive COVID-19 test, with fines of up to £10,000 for those failing to comply.

COVID-19 cases have so far been confirmed at 40 universities around the UK. Health Minister Helen Whately describes the situation as "really tough" for students, but says outbreaks must be brought "under control".

The Houses of Parliament announces it will stop serving alcohol on its premises after 10pm, despite not being subject to England's COVID-19 laws.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) confirms officers are being told not to install the NHS COVID-19 contact-tracing app to their work smartphones, while some officers have been told they may not need to follow self-isolation alerts if they have the app on their personal phones.

29 September - A survey of 2,000 people aged 16–25 carried out by The Prince's Trust indicates that 44% are less optimistic about their future prospects following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bakery chain Greggs says it is consulting with unions and staff about potential job cuts after the furlough scheme ends as part of cost-cutting measures, because it expects business to "remain below normal for the foreseeable future".

The UK records 7,143 new COVID-19 cases with 71 COVID-related deaths, the highest since 1 July.

After carrying out a technical review of the NHS COVID-19 app, the National Police Chiefs' Council says it will now recommend that officers can download it to their personal phones and use it at work.

The world's longest-running play, the Agatha Christie murder mystery *The Mousetrap*, postpones plans to resume because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The play had been scheduled to return on 23 October as one of the first West End theatre performances to recommence.

30 September - The charity Breast Cancer Now estimates that as many as a million women have missed breast screening appointments because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that around 8,600 may have undetected breast cancer. Charities, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, call on the Chancellor to make a temporary £20 rise in Universal Credit permanent amid poverty concerns; the rise is due to expire in April 2021.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, rebukes the government for treating parliament with "contempt" by introducing new COVID measures without debate, but stops short of allowing time for the Brady Amendment to be debated, saying it is not a decision he has "taken lightly". Health Secretary Matt Hancock subsequently says that MPs will be allowed to vote on measures "whenever possible".

		<p>At Prime Minister's Questions, Boris Johnson defends the use of local lockdown measures, saying that "strong local action" is needed in response to "a serious and growing" virus resurgence.</p> <p>Johnson holds a briefing at Downing Street, where he says measures introduced two weeks previously "will take time to feed through", that the UK is at a "critical moment" and the rising number of COVID cases and deaths shows "why our plan is so essential".</p>
<p>October</p>	<p>October began very unsettled, with Storm Alex bringing rain and strong winds to much of England and Wales on the 2nd, and a very wet day followed for much of the UK on the 3rd. From the 4th to 13th it remained unsettled with rain or showers, and from the 8th winds changed to a mainly northerly or north-westerly direction. It was more settled from the 14th to 18th with easterly winds, though many places were rather cloudy at times. The weather turned very wet and windy from the 19th onwards, with mainly westerly and southwesterly winds, and rain belts crossed the country at frequent intervals, with some brighter showery weather in between.</p> <p>Storm Alex brought numerous impacts on the 3rd and 4th. A number of A and B roads in northeast Scotland were flooded, with bus services delayed and flooding on a number of rail lines in Aberdeenshire and Grampian; at least two landslips were reported in Fife. Some roads were also flooded in parts of Northern Ireland, with some travel disruption. In Wales trees blocked roads in Monmouthshire, and properties were flooded near Llanfairfechan and Gwynedd. In the West Midlands there were several rescues from vehicles trapped in floodwater and some roads were flooded. Across the East of England widespread flooding was reported with a number of roads impassable; buses were diverted and trains delayed due to flood water. In London 50 people were rescued from their homes in West Drayton. A number of roads were flooded, with a tree blocking the railway at Wembley Central, and fallen trees and flooding disrupted other routes too. In the south-east, a number of rescues took place from vehicles stranded in floodwater, with fallen trees and widespread flooding disrupting road and rail travel. All ferries at Dover port were delayed. The south-west of England also saw rescues, ferry and flight cancellations, flooding on roads and rail lines, as well as debris causing disruption along the sea front in Swanage. The bridges over the Severn Estuary were closed due to high winds.</p>	<p>1 October - A study of COVID cases by Imperial College London, the largest of its type in England to date, suggests the spread of the virus may be slowing. The study also suggests the R number has fallen since measures such as the rule of six were introduced, but warns infections are still high, at an estimated 1 in 200 people.</p> <p>Boris Johnson's father, Stanley Johnson, issues an apology after he was pictured in a shop without a face covering, while former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn also apologises after holding a dinner party attended by more than six people.</p> <p>The Welsh Government gives its permission for filming of the ITV reality show I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here! to go ahead, despite Conwy, the area where it is taking place, being subject to a local lockdown.</p> <p>Scottish National Party MP Margaret Ferrier is suspended from the party after it emerged she travelled by train from her constituency to Westminster while experiencing COVID symptoms; Ferrier says there is "no excuse" for her behaviour.</p> <p>Teaching unions have been angered by government plans to use emergency powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to force schools to offer online lessons as well as face-to-face teaching; one in six secondary schools are closed to some pupils because of COVID-19.</p> <p>A report produced by a group of researchers brought together by the Royal Society concludes that even with a COVID vaccine life would not return to normal until Spring 2021.</p> <p>Turkey, Poland and the Caribbean islands of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba are removed from the UK's quarantine exemption list.</p> <p>BBC News reports that COVID-19 restrictions are to be simplified into a three-tier system following confusion over local rules.</p> <p>2 October - Around a quarter of the population of the United Kingdom, about 16.8 million people, are now in local lockdowns. This includes 23% of people in England, 76% of people in Wales and 32% of people in Scotland.</p>

Frequent heavy showers on the 6th caused some impacts across north-west England. In Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, roads were flooded, resulting in diversions, delays and closures of some lanes on the M60. Northern Rail reported a landslip on the Bolton to Preston line with further flooding impacting lines into Wigan Wallgate and Kirkby. On the 7th and 8th in Wales, there was flooding on the A44 and A487, and on the rail line between Machynlleth and Shrewsbury.

After a quieter spell of weather, Storm Barbara caused some impacts, with flooding on the Glasgow to Ardrossan/Largs railway line on the 19th. Some roads saw flooding on the 21st including the A82, A90 and A96, and six homes were evacuated in the Aberdeen area due to flooding, with railways flooded between Nairn and Elgin and between Portlethen and Aberdeen. Debris poured down the hillside at the Rest and Be Thankful which resulted in the closure of the main road there.

In the London area on the 24th there was flooding on a few roads with one report of a tree blocking a railway line. The A143 between Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds was blocked by a fallen tree. In Kent and Sussex flooding was reported on a number of A roads, with trees blocking the A272, A267 and a number of railway lines, and a power cable was brought down in Littlehampton. Further rain warnings were issued for the 29th onwards as Storm Aiden swept across the country. In Scotland, flooding arose at the Rest and Be Thankful, along the A82 and some local roads. Trees blocked the A9 and some roads in Inverness. In the Central Belt a building collapsed on the A814, and rail travel was disrupted. In Northern Ireland there were numerous flooded roads and fallen trees affecting travel across the country, and a tree on the track delayed the Belfast to Dublin train service. In Wales, some roads were closed due to flooding including the A498 and the rail line between Machynlleth and Shrewsbury was closed by flooding. In Lancashire trains going to and from Chorley, Blackburn and Preston were delayed or cancelled due to flooding on the lines, with flooding on the A586 and A591. The south-west saw delays to flights and cancellations to ferry services connecting the Isles of Scilly to Cornwall, fallen trees blocked roads in Cornwall, as well as some flooding and fallen trees in Devon causing travel disruption. There were also a number of power cuts in the south-west.

As the R number rises to between 1.3 and 1.6, Prime Minister Boris Johnson suggests the rise in COVID cases in the UK is due to "fraying of people's discipline" over the summer.

The Metropolitan Police launches an investigation into the actions of Margaret Ferrier.

Three separate analyses of COVID-19 cases in England and Wales indicate the rate of new infections is slowing; senior scientists urge caution.

The release date of the James Bond film No Time to Die is delayed until 2 April 2021, the second time its release has been postponed because of the pandemic.

The Department of Health says it is fixing a glitch with the NHS COVID-19 app whereby people receive messages that disappear, but warns it could take some time to fix the error. The messages are being generated by the Google and Apple framework rather than by the app itself.

3 October - The number of new daily cases exceeds 10,000, with a further 12,872 cases confirmed, but the government attributes the high number to a technical issue that means previously unreported cases from the previous week are added to the daily total.

Travel company PGL, which specialises in hosting school trips, announces the loss of 670 jobs, a quarter of its workforce.

Addressing the 2020 Conservative Party Conference, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab speaks of his fear for Boris Johnson's life while he was in intensive care with COVID-19.

4 October - A further 22,961 COVID-19 cases are confirmed, taking the total so far to 502,978. This figure includes 15,841 cases confirmed between 25 September and 1 October that were not included previously because of a technical error, thus making the day's total artificially high for both England and the UK.^{[366][367]}

Cinema chain Cineworld announces plans to temporarily close its UK cinemas due to the delay in the release of big budget films because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The company says 5,500 jobs are at risk and will write to Boris Johnson, and Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden to say the industry is now "unviable".

The delayed 2020 London Marathon is held on a specially designed closed loop course because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that the British Army will be called in to help distribute the coronavirus vaccine alongside the NHS as soon as the vaccine is ready to be rolled out.

5 October - Public Health England confirms that all of those involved in the delayed reporting of daily COVID-19 cases have been contacted, but that the delay has meant that their close contacts have not.^[367] An investigation is launched into the error. Health Secretary Matt Hancock says it should not have happened, but the glitch "has not substantially changed" the government's assessment of the epidemic.

In a speech to the Conservative Party Conference, Chancellor Rishi Sunak says he will "always balance the books" despite the increased level of government spending brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following news that Cineworld is to temporarily close its UK and US operations, Prime Minister Boris Johnson urges people to go to the cinema.

Odeon Cinemas announces it will reduce its opening hours to weekends only at some cinemas in the UK and Ireland because of the delay in big film releases.^[373]

Amid concerns of risk to outdoor education, UK Outdoors, the body representing the sector, urges Boris Johnson to act to allow overnight school trips to resume, and thus save the "great British tradition" of outdoor education.

The Welsh Government says it is considering introducing quarantine restrictions for people arriving into Wales from COVID-19 hotspots elsewhere in the UK.

The head of the UK's vaccine taskforce, Kate Bingham, reveals that less than half the country's population could be vaccinated against coronavirus and that people under 18 are not expected to be vaccinated.

6 October - The UK records a further 14,542 COVID-19 cases, and 76 deaths.

Addressing the Conservative Party Conference, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says the COVID-19 pandemic must be a catalyst for change, and that the UK cannot return to "normal" after it.

The Daily Record reports that MP Margaret Ferrier attended mass at a Glasgow church while experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

7 October - A problem with the UK's sole distribution centre for Roche in Sussex has led to a significant decrease in the capacity to process COVID-19 assays, swabs and reagents which has meant that Roche have alerted the NHS of the shortage. According to the pharmaceutical company, it could be two to three weeks before the supply chain issues are resolved.

Pub retailer Greene King announces the loss of 800 jobs, citing the impact of tighter lockdown measures as the reason. The brewer has closed 79 pubs temporarily, a third of which it says will remain shut on a permanent basis.

The UK government announces the establishment of the Global Travel Taskforce to look at introducing a COVID-19 testing system for travellers to the

UK, giving them the chance to spend less time in self-isolation if they receive a negative test.

8 October - Figures released by the Office for National Statistics indicate there were three times more deaths from COVID-19 than from flu and pneumonia in England and Wales between January and August 2020. 48,168 COVID deaths were recorded, compared to 13,600 from pneumonia, and 394 from flu. The National Trust announces the loss of 1,300 jobs, citing the COVID-19 pandemic as the reason for its decision.

A University of Edinburgh study suggests that imposing strict lockdowns and school closures may lead to a greater number of COVID-19 deaths in the long term. The study argues that herd immunity reduces the severity of the second wave, and that lockdowns only work as a short term measure if a vaccine is found quickly.

Strictly Come Dancing's 2021 live arena tour is postponed until 2022 because of COVID-19.

9 October - The ONS reports that coronavirus cases have "increased rapidly", estimating that around 1 in 240 people in England had the virus during the week to 1 October. Scientific advisers say that hospital admissions, which are currently about one fifth the level they were at their peak, are now "very close" to levels seen at the start of the crisis in early March.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak announces an expansion of the Job Support Scheme that will see the Treasury pay two thirds of the wages of employees whose firms are forced to close because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Edinburgh Woollen Mill, owner of the Peacocks and Jaeger clothing brands, announces plans to appoint an administrator after poor retail figures during the COVID-19 pandemic leaves them on the brink of collapse.

Figures show the UK economy grew by 2.1% in August 2020, something aided by the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, but the figures are below expectation.

10 October - The delayed 2020 Birthday Honours are published, with frontline workers and volunteers who contributed to the COVID-19 response honoured. The Prime Minister is to inform the House of Commons on Monday, 12 October, of the anticipated new local measures that are intended to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The doctors trade union the British Medical Association publishes a list of recommendations it says would help to reduce infection rates, including the compulsory wearing of face coverings in all work settings unless someone is

working alone, and in all outdoor settings where two-metre social distancing is not possible.

11 October - Warning that the UK is at a "precarious point" in COVID-19 cases, leading UK scientist Professor Peter Horby says a second national lockdown is a possibility, but something people must do their best to avoid at all costs. UK universities are facing anger from students in self-isolation, critical of the quality and cost of food parcels, which they say often contain "junk" food. In an interview with the Sun on Sunday, Scottish National Party MP Margaret Ferrier says her decision to travel on public transport while experiencing COVID-19 symptoms was a "blip" and that the virus makes people "act out of character".

Vue Cinemas announce plans to close a quarter of their venues for three days a week in order to reduce costs.

Scientists at the University of Exeter are to begin trials of the BCG vaccine, developed in 1921, to see if it is effective against COVID-19.

12 October - Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveils the new three-tier system of restrictions for England, taking effect from 14 October. Areas are grouped into one of three risk categories – medium, high, or very high. Medium areas are subject to the rule of six and the 10pm curfew, high areas have restrictions on indoor meetings but groups of six can continue to meet in outdoor settings, and very high areas will see the closure of businesses such as pubs and casinos, but not restaurants. The Liverpool City Region is the only area to be placed in the very high category.

Newly released papers show that the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) recommended a short "circuit breaker" lockdown for England in September as a way of controlling the virus.

The UK hospitality sector says it will launch legal action against local lockdown rules that could force pubs, bars and restaurants to close.

A BBC Panorama documentary reports on the growing calls for an inquest into the death of rail transport worker Belly Mujinga, who died after reportedly being coughed and spat on by a passenger who claimed to have COVID-19.

13 October - Following the news that SAGE recommended a short period of lockdown as a "circuit breaker", Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer urges the government to impose a two or three week period of lockdown in England so that the country does not "sleepwalk into... a bleak winter".

Figures reveal that UK unemployment has risen to its highest level since 2017, with an increase of 4.5% in the three months up to August 2020.

14 October - The First COVID-19 tier regulations come into force, defining three levels of restrictions to be applied as necessary in geographic areas. These replace and revoke the existing local lockdown regulations. The Liverpool City Region is the first to be assigned to the strictest tier.

The British Medical Journal reports the rare case of a patient who suffered permanent hearing loss following an episode of COVID-19.

NHS Hospital Trusts in Plymouth, Liverpool and Belfast are cancelling planned elective procedures outright or scaling-back surgery due to an upsurge in COVID-19 patients requiring intensive care.

Mark Drakeford, the First Minister of Wales, announces plans to ban visitors to Wales from other parts of the UK with high COVID-19 rates.

15 October - A study by University College London reveals that up to 17 per cent of the population of the UK could refuse to be immunised by a COVID-19 vaccine.

Italy, Vatican City and San Marino are removed from the quarantine exemption list following a rise in COVID-19 cases in Italy

The House of Commons announces plans to stop selling alcohol in its bars and restaurants amid tighter COVID restrictions for London.^[413]

The Metropolitan Police says it will take no further action against MP Margaret Ferrier for her breach of COVID-19 rules.

16 October - The Office for National Statistics estimates there are 27,900 new COVID-19 cases a day in England, a 60% increase on the previous week, while the R number rises to between 1.3 and 1.5.

Wales introduces a travel ban on people from COVID hotspots in other parts of the UK, beginning from 6pm.

17 October - Kate Bingham, chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce, reveals that a COVID-19 vaccine will only protect some people from infection and in the first instance will be limited in supply. The JCVI advises that those in need will be prioritised.

18 October - The British Chambers of Commerce urges the government to provide better financial support to firms in order to avoid the "catastrophic consequences" of COVID restrictions.

Jeremy Farrar, one of the scientists who sits on the SAGE committee, warns that Christmas 2020 will be "tough" and is unlikely to be the "usual celebration" of "families coming together".

		<p>19 October - Yasmin Qureshi, the MP for Bolton South East, is admitted to hospital with pneumonia after testing positive for COVID-19. 18,804 new cases who have tested positive for COVID-19 are reported for the UK as a whole with 80 further fatalities. Figures published by the Office for National Statistics indicate almost 1,000 additional non-COVID deaths at home were recorded every week between March and September 2020, while there were 27 million fewer GP appointments between March and August. Cancer Research UK estimates 350,000 referrals have been missed since March, with thousands of ill patients not receiving treatment.</p> <p>20 October - Passengers flying from Heathrow Airport to Italy and Hong Kong now have the option of buying a rapid turnaround COVID-19 test for £80. Unlike the PCR tests used by the NHS, the LAMP tests used by the Heathrow facility do not need to be processed at a laboratory. The UK announces plans to proceed with "human challenge" trials for a COVID vaccine involving around 90 people, who will be deliberately exposed to the virus in order to determine the level of exposure needed to become infected. 241 COVID-19 related deaths are recorded, the highest daily number for several months.</p> <p>21 October - Trials of a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University are to continue following a review into the death of a volunteer in Brazil. Details of the death have not been disclosed, but Oxford University says a "careful assessment" of the circumstances has revealed no safety concerns. A further 26,688 COVID-19 cases are recorded, the highest daily figure so far. Gaby Appleton, the former Managing Director of Researcher Products at publisher Elsevier, has been appointed as boss of NHS Test and Trace, succeeding Simon Thompson, Sky News reports.</p> <p>22 October - Chancellor Rishi Sunak unveils increased support for jobs and workers affected by COVID restrictions, with employers paying less and employees able to work fewer hours before qualifying for extra financial help. The Canary Islands, the Greek Island of Mykonos, the Maldives and Denmark are added to the quarantine exemption list, effective from 4am on 24 October, while Liechtenstein is removed from it.</p>
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23 October - The Office for National Statistics estimates there to be 35,200 daily COVID cases in England, an increase of 25% on the previous week, with the highest number of cases occurring in northern England.

A warning is issued that bogus "COVID marshals" are visiting people's homes in an attempt to gain entry so they can issue spurious fines or even offer counterfeit tests for COVID-19.

24 October -- An error message when trying to access the NHS COVID-19 app is reported by some users of the newly launched iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro. Shakespeare's Globe, Birmingham Hippodrome, the Old Vic theatre and the English National Ballet are among 35 arts venues to receive financial help from the Culture Recovery Fund.

25 October - The Telegraph suggests the 14-day quarantine period for those who come into contact with a person having tested positive for COVID-19 could be cut to seven days amid ongoing criticism of NHS Test and Trace.

26 October - Pharmacy retailer Boots announces it will make available a COVID test that can give a result in twelve minutes. The test, produced by LumiraDx, will cost £120.

Scientists report that the Oxford University COVID-19 vaccine shows a "strong immune response" among elderly volunteers.

27 October - A study by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI suggests COVID-19 antibodies may last a matter of months, with figures indicating the number of people with antibodies has fallen by 26.5% over three months. The United Kingdom records 367 COVID-19 deaths, the highest number in a single day since May.

Office for National Statistics figures indicate the number of deaths mentioning COVID-19 in England and Wales has risen for the sixth week in a row, with 670 death certificates mentioning the condition in the week up to 19 October, a 53% increase on the previous week.

28 October - A projection published by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) suggests COVID deaths will remain high throughout the coming winter, leading to a greater number of deaths than was seen earlier in the year.

29 October - A study by Imperial College London suggests there are 100,000 new COVID-19 cases in England each day, with the number of cases doubling every nine days.

An updated version of the NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app will issue more self-isolation notices, its new boss, Gaby Appleton, has said.

Cyprus and Lithuania are removed from the quarantine exemption list, the change taking effect from 4am on Sunday 1 November.

Model railway maker Hornby reports a 33% increase in profits during the six months up to September 2020 as more people take up hobbies during lockdown.

Broadcaster Channel 4 announces plans to repay £1.5m in furlough payments to the government after finding itself in a "robust financial position ahead of expectations".

30 October - Documents produced by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies have claimed COVID-19 is spreading "significantly" faster through England than their predicted "worst-case" scenario, with four times as many cases as anticipated.

The Office for National Statistics infection survey in England showed that secondary school children up to age 16 had the fastest rate of increase in COVID-19 incidence of any age range, giving them the second highest average incidence of 2.0% of any measured age range, fifty times higher than when children returned to school after the summer holiday, and just slightly behind the 16 to 24 years old age range.

Mark Drakeford, the First Minister of Wales, says that the UK government is to hold a meeting to discuss a set of UK-wide COVID rules for Christmas.

31 October[edit]

The UK reaches a million COVID-19 cases, as a further 21,915 recorded cases take the total to 1,011,660.

After scientists project that there could be several thousand COVID deaths a day, Prime Minister Boris Johnson holds a Downing Street press conference at which he announces a second lockdown for England, for four weeks from Thursday 5 November to Wednesday 2 December, in order to prevent what he describes as a "medical and moral disaster" for the NHS. England will then revert to the tier system.

The furlough scheme, scheduled to end of 31 October, is extended until December following the announcement of the England-wide lockdown.

The 2020 Six Nations Championship, delayed because of the COVID crisis, comes to a conclusion with England winning the title.

November

November began mild, wet and windy, but briefly turned colder and more settled around the 4th-7th with a ridge of high pressure. Southerly and south-westerly winds blew frequently from the 7th to 18th, bringing mild weather with wet and windy spells. It continued mostly unsettled and mild until the 25th, with a very brief northerly outbreak on the 19th. It turned settled and colder from the 26th to 29th with high pressure and variable amounts of cloud with widespread fog, then further rain spread southwards on the 30th.

On the 1st, rain resulted in road closures in Scotland, notably the A82, and some sporadic power outages. In Wales, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service rescued a motorist stranded in flood water near Corwen, there were reports of some flooding on roads and a number of rail lines, and a small number of fallen trees across the road network, and properties were flooded in North Wales. Some trunk roads were closed in Cumbria. In Yorkshire and Humber a motorist was rescued from a car, and train services near Skipton were impacted by flooding. Strong winds caused impacts in the south-west of England on the 1st and 2nd. The M48 between junctions 1 and 2 was closed temporarily and the Sandbanks Ferry, the St Mawes Ferry and the Tamar Ferry were suspended due to strong winds.

On the 11th there was flooding on roads in south-east Wales and in Swansea. Further wet and windy weather on the 15th resulted in fallen trees in Northern Ireland and flooding on roads in Belfast, Derry City, Omagh, Lisburn and Coleraine, which led to some road closures. On the 17th, in Scotland flooding resulted in road closures on the A82 and the B829 due to flooding. On the 18th, ScotRail reported some cancellations on the Inverness-Elgin-Aberdeen route. On the 24th there were some reports of flooding on the A8 in Scotland and a rail line between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

1 November - Mortgage payment holidays for people financially impacted by the COVID crisis are extended, having been scheduled to expire on 31 October.

2 November - An article produced by the Oxford University-based Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine suggests slides estimating the number of COVID deaths presented at the Downing Street press conference on 31 October are based on models from at least three weeks ago, and are therefore overestimating the number of potential fatalities. A UK study of 100 people who have tested positive for COVID-19 shows they still have T cells six month after infection.

Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage applies to change the name of the party to Reform UK, and says it will fight the government's "woeful" response to COVID-19 and its lockdown strategy that "result in more life-years lost than it hopes to save".

3 November - A further 397 COVID-related deaths take the total number of fatalities to 47,250, the highest daily rise since 27 May.

4 November - MPs vote 516–39 to support the four-week lockdown restrictions for England that come into force from the following day, with 34 Conservative MPs among those to vote against the measures, while a further 19 Conservatives abstain from voting. The UK records a further 492 COVID-related deaths, the highest number since 19 May, and bringing the total to 47,742.

5 November - As England's second lockdown begins, the UK Statistics Authority criticises the government over the way it presented data estimating potential COVID deaths to justify the measures at the 31 October Downing Street press conference, and calls for greater transparency of data and the way projections are made. Chancellor Rishi Sunak extends the furlough scheme to the end of March 2021. Germany and Sweden are removed from the quarantine exemption list with effect from 4am on Saturday 7 November.

6 November - Figures from the Office for National Statistics indicate the rate of growth of COVID-19 cases is slowing; the ONS reports there were around 50,000 in the week ending 30 October, roughly one person in 90. The UK government accepts a mistake was made during the 31 October Downing Street briefing after a graph predicting 1,500 daily COVID deaths by 8

December is revised down to 1,010, but it says the "underlying analysis" of the threat to the NHS is correct.

Denmark is removed from the quarantine exemption list as of 4am after Danish health authorities discover a mutated strain of COVID-19 present in the country's mink population.

7 November - Non-UK nationals are banned from arriving in the UK from Denmark after the discovery of a mutated strain of COVID-19 in the country's mink population that is believed to have spread to humans.

Queen Elizabeth II wears a face covering in public for the first time during a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Westminster Abbey.

The latest tranche of Culture Recovery Fund money is awarded, with £14m awarded to 162 heritage organisations, including St Paul's Cathedral, which is given £2.1m

8 November - Non-UK hauliers are added to the Denmark travel ban.

Scaled back Remembrance Sunday services take place, including at Whitehall which is closed to the public.

9 November - The Pfizer and BioNTech coronavirus vaccine is reported to protect 90% of recipients in initial tests from developing COVID-19.

Responding to news of a potential vaccine, Prime Minister Boris Johnson tells a Downing Street press conference the vaccine has "cleared a significant hurdle", but warns it is "very, very early days" and there are "several more hurdles" ahead.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces the UK is making "good progress" in developing a testing regime to reduce the quarantine period for international arrivals.

10 November - Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that the NHS is ready to begin providing the COVID vaccine "as fast as safely possible".

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show the number of COVID-related deaths has exceeded 1,000 for the first time since June, with 1,379 deaths in the week ending 30 October, accounting for 12.7% of UK deaths in that week.

Figures show that UK unemployment stood at 4.8% in the three months to September 2020, up from 4.5%, as a result of the COVID crisis.

A group of Conservative MPs who voted against England's second lockdown have formed the COVID Recovery Group to argue for a different approach to dealing with the virus once restrictions end on 2 December, one that will enable society to "live with the virus".

11 November - The UK becomes the fifth country to record 50,000 COVID-related deaths after the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico, when a further 595 deaths take the total to 50,365.

A review commissioned by Chancellor Rishi Sunak suggests £1.4bn could be raised by doubling Capital Gains Tax and cutting exemptions, as the government looks for ways of paying off the debt incurred by the COVID crisis.

A virtual meeting between Cabinet Minister Michael Gove and the leaders of the devolved nations has taken place to discuss a strategy for getting students home for Christmas.

12 November- The UK records a further 33,470 COVID-19 cases, the highest daily increase since mass testing began.

The UK economy expanded by 15.5% between July and September 2020 as Britain came out of the recession caused by the first lockdown, the largest growth percentage since figures began in 1955. But the Office for National Statistics indicates that GDP is still below pre-COVID levels.

Travellers arriving into the UK from most of Greece (except Corfu, Crete, Rhodes, Kos and Zakynthos) will be required to quarantine for two weeks, effective from 4am on Saturday 14 November; Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Laos, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahrain, Chile, Iceland and Cambodia are all added to the quarantine exemption list.

Scientists monitoring the ZOE COVID symptom study app suggest the R number may have dropped below 1 in the UK to around 0.9.

Emails seen by the BBC suggest the Health and Safety Executive was pressured by the UK government to declare PPE suits bought in April as safe despite them not having been properly tested.

13 November - The R number has fallen to between 1.2 and 1.0, while the Office for National Statistics reports that overall COVID cases in England slowed in the week ending 6 November.

According to government scientific advisers, the number of children with COVID-19 has increased significantly in comparison to the spring, with children often bringing the virus into households. The National Education Union says it is troubled by the number of children testing positive.

14 November - The opposition Labour Party urges the government to introduce emergency legislation to curb anti-vaccine content online.

Bakery retailer Greggs announces the loss of 820 jobs as a result of a slump in business because of the COVID crisis.

15 November - Professor Ugur Sahin, co-founder of BioNTech, says a COVID vaccine could halve the transmission rate, and enable life to return to normal by winter 2021–22.

Professor John Edmunds, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, calls for a long-term strategy to balance the epidemic and the economy, saying that encouraging people to visit bars and restaurants then closing them because of a surge in cases is not a "sensible way to run the epidemic".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is self-isolating after coming into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

16 November - The Prime Minister, six Conservative MPs and two political aides are now self-isolating after coming into contact with Conservative MP Lee Anderson, who later tested positive for COVID-19. They were all present at a Downing Street breakfast meeting on 12 November, and were later contacted by NHS Test and Trace.

The UK secures a deal to order 5m doses of a vaccine being developed by US biotechnology company Moderna, which has announced tests have shown it to be 95% effective in combating COVID-19.

A technical glitch with the NHS COVID-19 app has prevented a number of iPhone users from being able to launch it. The NHS has published a workaround for the issue but has not disclosed the cause of it.

17 November - Prime Minister Boris Johnson has tested negative for COVID-19. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show there have been 70,830 excess deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, while 2,225 deaths mentioning COVID were recorded in the week up to 6 November.

Police chiefs in England and Wales temporarily suspend £10,000 fines for gatherings of over 30 people following concern over a disparity between those who pay upfront and those who challenge the fines in court. They have instead advised police forces to issue court summonses for those who break COVID restrictions.

Scientists at the University of Cardiff have discovered that mouthwash can destroy COVID-19 under lab conditions within 30 seconds, suggesting it may be a potential way of tackling the virus.

British Airways announces a COVID testing programme in partnership with American Airlines for passengers travelling on some routes between Heathrow and the United States in a bid to have quarantine restrictions lifted by the UK government.

Legal documents filed in the United States have revealed that a Spanish businessman who acted as a go-between to secure PPE for the NHS at the beginning of the pandemic was paid £21m of UK taxpayers' money.

18 November - A report by the National Audit Office has found that suppliers of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with political connections were 10 times more likely to be awarded contracts during the COVID crisis. In response to the report, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he is "proud" of the way the government obtained supplies of PPE.

All four of the Home Nations are reported to be looking at ways of relaxing COVID rules so families from across the UK can spend Christmas together. But SAGE warns that five days of tighter restrictions may be required for every day that regulations are relaxed over the festive period.

Data released concerning the COVID vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech indicate it to be 94% effective in those aged 65 and over, but equally effective in people of all ages and ethnicities.

Data released by the Office for National Statistics indicates that loneliness is at its highest since the beginning of the pandemic, with a quarter of the 4,000 people surveyed saying they felt lonely always, often or sometimes, with the figure rising to 34% among those aged 16–29.

19 November - The Oxford University COVID vaccine is reported to show a strong immune response in those in their 60s and 70s, something researchers have described as "encouraging".

Researchers in the UK and Netherlands have found that tocilizumab, a drug used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, shows promising signs of being able to treat critically ill COVID patients in trials.

Israel, Sri Lanka, Namibia, Rwanda, the US Virgin Islands, Uruguay, Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba and the Northern Mariana Islands are all added to the UK's quarantine exemption list. No countries are removed from the list.

Fashion retailers Peacocks and Jaeger go into administration after their owners, Edinburgh Woollen Mill Group fails to find a buyer, risking 4,700 jobs.

The UK government announces £300m of emergency funding for sports impacted by the absence of spectators.

First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon says that governments across the UK face a "difficult balance" over how to approach Christmas.

20 November - Figures from the Office for National Statistics suggest that COVID-19 cases are beginning to plateau in England and Scotland, but are still increasing in Wales and Northern Ireland.

At a Downing Street briefing, Health Secretary Matt Hancock announces that COVID-19 vaccination centres are to be established throughout the UK in preparation for the rollout of a vaccine. These will be in addition to the vaccine being given by GP's surgeries and hospitals.

A study of healthcare workers at Oxford University Hospitals has suggested that COVID antibodies are still present in the body six months after infection.

21 November - Sources have reported that families will be allowed to form extended bubbles for seven days over the Christmas period to allow them to spend time together over the festive season.

Downing Street confirms plans to introduce a tougher three-tier system of COVID restrictions for England when the lockdown ends on 2 December.

Sources, including BBC News, report that Chancellor Rishi Sunak is to announce a £500m package to support mental health services in England, which have been in greater demand because of the COVID crisis.

22 November The Observer reports that campaigners are taking legal action against the UK government over its appointment of Dido Harding, Kate Bingham and Mike Coupe to key roles in its tackling of COVID-19.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak is to announce an extra £3bn for the NHS in the forthcoming spending review, but warns of an "economic shock laid bare" as the country deals with the COVID crisis

The Home Nations give their backing to plans to allow some household mixing "for a small number of days" over Christmas.

23 November - A large trial of the COVID vaccine being developed by the University of Oxford indicates it to be 70% effective, but scientists believe that figure can rise to 90% by tweaking the dosage.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirms that England's previous three-tier system of COVID regulations will return in a new form once the lockdown expires on 2 December, but with toughened measures for each area. Gyms and non-essential shops will reopen throughout England, while collective worship and weddings will be allowed again, as well as some spectator sport. The second tier status of each region will be reviewed every 14 days, with the regional approach scheduled to last until March 2021.

Following reports over the previous two days that a "freedom pass" could be introduced to allow people who have tested negative for COVID to have greater

freedom of movement, Johnson says there will be "no forced vaccination" in the UK.

An extra £7bn of government funding is announced for NHS Test and Trace, bringing the total spent on the project so far to £22bn.

24 November - The leaders of the UK's four nations agree on plans for Christmas that will allow three households to meet up indoors and outdoors for five days from 23 to 27 December. Northern Ireland will be allowed seven days of relaxed restrictions from 22 to 28 December to accommodate those travelling to or from the mainland.

As much as £1bn in fraudulent benefit claims made by organised gangs of criminals has been prevented from being paid during lockdown.

Analysis of UK death certificates indicates UK deaths to be almost a fifth higher than the five year average.

Professor Andrew Hayward, director of the UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care, and a member of SAGE, warns people to be cautious over Christmas, suggesting the relaxing of rules is tantamount to "throwing fuel on the Covid fire".

25 November - Chancellor Rishi Sunak outlines the Spending Review for how much will be spent on public services, and warns that the "economic emergency" caused by COVID has only just begun. The Review comes as the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that unemployment will reach 7.5% because of the crisis. The UK economy is also predicted to shrink by 11.3%, the biggest decline in 300 years, while debt is forecast to be at its highest outside wartime.^[536]

A further 696 COVID-19 deaths were announced for the UK, the highest daily figure since 5 May 2020.

26 November - England's new tier system is announced, to come into force on 2 December. Most of the country, including London and Liverpool, will be Tier 2, while large parts of the Midlands, North East and North West, including Greater Manchester and Birmingham, will be in Tier 3. Only the Isle of Wight, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be in Tier 1.

Media question the efficiency of the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, since a preliminary report combined results from two trials which used different doses.

27 November - The R number is thought to be between 0.9 and 1.0, the first time it has been below 1 since August.
Retail group Arcadia is reported to be on the brink of collapse, threatening 13,000 jobs. The group has stated that COVID has had a "a material impact on trading across our businesses". Arcadia goes into administration three days later. The UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has issued a document advising people to avoid board games and sleepovers during Christmas, and to involve women in the decision making process for organising Christmas events because they "carry the burden of creating and maintaining family traditions and activities at Christmas".

28 November - Writing in The Times, Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove warns backbench Conservative MPs planning to vote against the new tier system for England that without the measures hospitals throughout the country will become overwhelmed with COVID cases.
Amid anger from backbench Conservatives over the tier system, Prime Minister Boris Johnson writes to rebel MPs offering them a "sunset" of 3 February for the expiration of the regulations.
Nadhim Zahawi is appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment.

29 November - The UK government signs a deal for a further 2 million doses of the Moderna vaccine, bringing the total number of doses secured now to 7 million, sourced from 7 different suppliers.

30 November - Version Four of the NHS COVID-19 app is to include a self-isolation payment feature in a bid to encourage more people to download it and follow its advice, and following earlier concerns over privacy safeguards that had prevented those receiving an automated message from the app from making claims.

London AI laboratory DeepMind is reported to have predicted how a protein folds into a unique three-dimensional shape, work that could provide the answers to a number of human conditions, including COVID-19.
In a bid to persuade backbench MPs to support the new tier regulations for England, the UK government publishes data behind its decision to introduce the measures, stating that it seeks to "balance the many complex impacts" of restrictions and keep them in place "for as short a time as possible", but that allowing COVID to spread "would lead to impacts...considered intolerable for society". In response, senior Conservative MP Mark Harper claims the "wheels are coming off the government's arguments".

		<p>Professor Dame Sally Davies, the former Chief Medical Officer for England, has suggested that a high level of obesity has led to an increased rate in the number of COVID deaths.</p>
<p><u>December</u></p>	<p>The first week of December was unsettled and turned increasingly cold, with low pressure becoming slow-moving and giving spells of rain, with sleet and snow over high ground and locally to low levels. It turned milder from the 8th, while remaining generally wet. A south to south-westerly type dominated from the 13th to 23rd bringing bands of rain interspersed with brighter showery weather, with strong winds at times. It became colder during the last week, with widespread wet and windy weather from Storm Bella on the 26th, and cold and unsettled weather continued during the last few days with lying snow penetrating to low levels in some counties.</p> <p>Snow caused disruption in some places between the 2nd and 5th. On the 2nd there were hazardous driving conditions on the Isle of Lewis, and on the 3rd, bus services in Caithness were delayed due to ice, and there were delays and closures on the M8, A77 and A8. There were delays to rail services in the Carstairs area, on some Edinburgh routes and on the Borders line. A number of schools were closed on the 4th in Highland and South Lanarkshire. Across Yorkshire and the east Midlands snow caused road closures and some school closures on the 4th. On the 4th and 5th a number of roads were flooded in Cambridgeshire and parts of Essex and south Suffolk, with some schools closed due to flooding in Suffolk. There was flooding on the rail line at Polegate and on the A27 in Sussex. On the 8th, persistent rain led to localised travel impacts in Merseyside and five properties were flooded in Liverpool.</p> <p>On the 11th, there was flooding on the rail line and roads around Laurencekirk and on the route between Forres and Elgin. Further rain contributed to flooding across Pembrokeshire on the 13th. There was flooding on the rail lines between Tenby and Pembroke and between Llanelli and Swansea. On the 16th the south-west was hit by flooding, causing disruption, cancellations and closures on the railways and a number of roads. Trains between Newquay and Par were suspended due to flooding, and the A30 was closed near Bodmin due to debris being washed onto the road. On the 18th, further flooding caused disruption across the south-west. There was flooding on the A30, the A388, and minor roads,</p>	<p>1 December - Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove says there are no plans to introduce a "vaccine passport" giving people access to places such as pubs and restaurants once a vaccine becomes available Education watchdog Ofsted reports that education has been "completely disrupted" by COVID-19 absences in some areas, with the West Midlands and North West of England particularly badly affected MPs vote 291–78 in favour of introducing England's tough new COVID tier system, with 55 backbench Conservatives voting against the government, while another 16 abstain.</p> <p>2 December - The UK becomes the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, with vaccinations beginning once supplies arrive the following week Prime Minister Boris Johnson welcomes the vaccine, but warns people should not get "carried away with over optimism".</p> <p>3 December - The number of recorded COVID-related deaths in the UK passes 60,000 after a further 414 deaths take the total to 60,113. Dr Anthony Fauci, the leading infectious disease expert in the United States, criticises the UK's approval process for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, suggesting that it has not been as rigorous as that of the US. In defence the UK says the vaccination is safe and effective. Fauci later retracts his statement and apologises for the comments. England's deputy chief medical officer, Jonathan Van-Tam, says that the first wave of vaccines could cut the number of hospitalisations and deaths in England by 99%. After some ministers suggest that Brexit speeded up the process allowing the UK to get the vaccine first, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson responds by saying that the UK got the vaccine first because it is a "much better country" with superior medical experts. The first batch of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine arrives in the UK, and is stored at an undisclosed location ready for distribution to hospitals vaccination centres around the country. The student travel window opens, allowing them to return home from university for Christmas.</p>

and the Newquay to Par rail line was disrupted again. The Fowey River overtopped its banks. In Wales, on the 18th there were reports of flooding between Aberdare and Fernhill, and along the River Teifi, and a tree blocked the railway line between Pembroke Dock and Tenby.

On the 23rd and 24th flooding caused widespread travel disruption across the Midlands, and the M1, A5 and M50 were closed due to flooding. Between then and the 27th, exacerbated by the passage of Storm Bella, there was considerable disruption in eastern England due to flooding, with evacuation of properties in Wellingborough and in north Bedfordshire. A number of roads were closed in various areas, including the A14, M1, A251 and parts of the A1. Some trains to Ashford and the Spirit of France ferry service were delayed, and strong winds brought down trees blocking roads and rail lines, with the QE2 bridge closed too. There was widespread flooding in Gloucestershire, with a number of properties flooded in the Forest of Dean, Stroud and Turley. Fallen trees and debris across Devon and Cornwall made driving conditions dangerous. On the 27th, parts of the M5 and the M48 Severn Crossing were closed due to strong winds.

Across parts of northern England on the 26th and 27th snow and ice caused a number of road traffic accidents, with power outages due to strong winds. Following this, snow and ice caused some disruption. In the north-west the A537 and the A5209 were blocked due to snow. In Yorkshire and the West Midlands, snow caused disruption to public transport links with some road closures, cars were abandoned in places, and fallen trees blocked roads.

Supermarket retailer ASDA announces plans to repay £340m of business rates relief to the government, joining Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Aldi which have made similar announcements, meaning £1.7bn of rates relief is to be repaid.

4 December- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency says the COVID-19 vaccine will "definitely" be ready to go into care homes within the next two weeks.

The UK is unlikely to get 10 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine by the end of the year after production estimates for 2020 are scaled back. Business Secretary Alok Sharma says the UK government is "absolutely confident" that Britain will have 800,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine by the following week.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics indicate COVID-19 rates are falling in every part of England apart from the North East, with 1 in 105 people having the virus in the week up to 28 November, down from 1 in 85 the week before. The R number falls to between 0.8 and 1.0.

5 December - The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge announce a three-day UK tour aboard the Royal train during which they will meet community and health workers who have played an important role during the COVID crisis. Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer is reported to be self-isolating after a member of his staff tested positive for COVID.

6 December- The Department of Health and Social Care confirms that the UK's vaccination rollout will begin on Tuesday 8 December.

7 December - Sir Simon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, says that the rollout of the vaccine, which begins the next day, could mark a "decisive turning point" in the battle against COVID-19. The UK Government says it expects the "majority" of vulnerable people to receive the vaccine in January and February 2021.

8 December - Margaret Keenan, 90, becomes the first person to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as the rollout of vaccinations begins, William Shakespeare, 81 from Warwickshire becomes the second. Research published in The Lancet has concluded the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID vaccine is safe and effective, giving good protection. The majority of those involved in the research were under-55, but there is evidence it will protect older people too.

9 December - Regulators have urged anyone with a history of allergies not to take the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID vaccine for the time being after two NHS workers vaccinated the previous day had allergic reactions.

A series of reports written for the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) by members of the COG-UK Consortium have attributed the resurgence of COVID cases to people travelling abroad during the summer.

10 December - Saudi Arabia and Botswana are added to the UK's travel corridor as of 4am on Saturday 12 December, while the Canary Islands are removed from it.

Sky News presenter Kay Burley is taken off air for six months after she admitted breaching COVID regulations while celebrating her 60th birthday.

An update to the NHS COVID-19 app is adding a way to apply for a £500 grant if it gives a self-isolation order.

There is a warning that UK residents could be prevented from travelling to the European Union after 1 January 2021 as travel regulations associated with UK–EU travel expire because of Brexit, and because of travel restrictions associated with COVID.

11 December - The period of self-isolation for contacts of someone testing positive for COVID-19, and travellers returning from non-travel corridor countries, is reduced from 14 to 10 days, effective from Monday 14 December. Figures from the Office for National Statistics for the week ending 5 December indicate COVID cases in England are continuing to fall, apart from in London and the East of England.

The R number has risen slightly on the previous week to between 0.9 and 1.0.^[586]

A study published in the scientific journal Nature attempts to identify why some people with COVID do not display symptoms, pinpointing DNA and a shortfall of interferon as contributing factors.

12 December - Professor Linda Bauld, an expert in public health at the University of Edinburgh, describes the relaxation of COVID regulations over Christmas as a "mistake", as people travel from "high to low prevalence areas" to see relatives. In response, Wales's Health Minister, Vaughan Gething, says any change to Christmas rules could present "huge issues about trust" but could happen if cases remain high.

Scientific experts have warned people to rethink their plans for Christmas as COVID cases increase in some areas, and warn the country is heading towards "disaster".

Figures have indicated that the number of outstanding criminal cases in England and Wales has risen from 39,331 in February to 51,595 at the end of October, an increase of 31%, prompting concerns it could lead to the collapse of some cases. Although the UK government has invested in the justice system to increase the number of trials being held, some hearings have been put back to 2023.

13 December - NHS bosses have urged people to think "really carefully" about more social contact over Christmas amid concerns it could lead to an increase in cases of COVID in January after there was an increase in cases in the United States following Thanksgiving.

14 December - Health Secretary Matt Hancock tells MPs that a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 has been identified that is spreading faster in some areas of the country.^[592]The variant, named VUI – 202012/01 and later Variant of Concern 202012/01, showed changes to the spike protein that could make the virus more infectious. As of 13 December, there were 1,108 cases identified. Artist Aliza Nisenbaum has created a series of paintings of NHS workers who have worked on the front line during the pandemic.

15 December - Figures have shown there were 819,000 fewer people on company payrolls at the end of November when compared to March and the start of the first lockdown, with a third of the jobs lost being in the hospitality sector.

Britain's two leading medical journals, the Health Service Journal and British Medical Journal, have described the decision to relax COVID regulations over Christmas as a "rash decision" that could "cost many lives".

Representatives from the four nations of the UK have met to discuss the relaxation of regulations over Christmas, but BBC News reports they are unlikely to change the agreed rules. Instead, advice on celebrating Christmas is expected to be strengthened to suggest people think carefully and remain local if they can. The Test to Release scheme begins in England, allowing travellers to pay privately for a COVID test five days after arrival, and end their quarantine period if they receive a negative test. But the launch is chaotic as the eleven private firms chosen by the government to administer the tests have teething problems.

16 December - London, and parts of Essex and Hertfordshire, are placed into tier three of England's COVID tier system following an increase in case numbers in those areas.

Following a meeting between the leaders of the four nations of the UK, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that COVID regulations will still be relaxed for

five days over the Christmas period, but urges people to think before meeting up with relatives. The three household rule will stay in place, except in Wales where the law is to be changed to specify only two households can meet, while in Scotland people will be urged to meet up on only one of the five days. Nadhim Zahawi, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment, announces that 137,897 people were given their first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine between 8 and 15 December (the first week of the vaccination rollout).

17 December - Figures for England's NHS Test and Trace show it is reaching 92.7% of contacts, up from 85.9% the previous week; the increased success rate is attributed to improvements to the website, a reduction in repeat calls to households and more people making those calls.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak extends the furlough scheme for a further month until the end of April 2021.

Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood apologises after breaching COVID regulations by giving a speech at a dinner in London where 27 people were present.

18 December - Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that UK retail sales fell by 3.8% during November due to lockdown restrictions.

The R number is believed to be above 1 again, and between 1.1 and 1.2.

19 December - With respect to just England, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that London, South East and East of England are to go into new Tier 4 restrictions from the following day. The rules are mostly the same as the national restrictions in November, with non-essential retail, hairdressers and gyms closing.

In England, plans for Christmas bubbles are scrapped completely in Tier 4, while in the rest of England Christmas bubbles are limited to meeting up on Christmas Day.

The total number of COVID-19 cases across the UK exceeds 2 million.

A BBC investigation discovers that fake "COVID-19 immunity boosters" are being sold in shops in London.

20 December - Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada and Belgium halt flights to and from the UK following the emergence of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2. France also halts ferry traffic for 48 hours, and the Port of Dover is closed.

35,928 new cases of COVID are recorded, almost double the number recorded on the same day the previous week.

21 December - More than 40 countries have suspended flights to and from the UK. They include Hong Kong, which suspends all UK flights from the following day, with anyone spending more than two hours in the UK no longer able to fly to Hong Kong. India suspends UK flights until 31 December.

As talks begin between UK and French officials aimed at reopening freight transport links between the two countries, UK supermarkets warn that some fresh produce may run short if the situation is not resolved.

The Northern Ireland Executive votes against proposals to introduce a travel ban between Northern Ireland and the UK mainland.

Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK's chief scientific adviser, suggests that more areas of England will need to go into tier four restrictions to combat the new variant of COVID-19.

22 December - The UK and France reach an agreement to reopen their border the following day. Freight drivers and EU citizens will be among people allowed to travel between the two countries, subject to a recent negative COVID test. NHS Test and Trace staff and the military will also be deployed to help carry out tests.

Tesco reintroduces a purchasing limit on some items, including eggs, rice, soap and toilet roll to ensure there is not a shortage of the products through panic buying.

Scientists have said the new variant of COVID was spotted in the UK because of the surveillance system in place, but that it may or may not originate outside the UK. Ugur Sahin, chief executive of BioNTech, says the vaccine developed by his firm in conjunction with Pfizer will work against the new strain.

23 December - It is announced that a number of areas in England will move up tiers on Boxing Day, including more areas being placed in Tier 4.

UK scientists have detected two cases of a second new strain of COVID-19 that is believed to originate from South Africa. The UK government consequently suspends all flights from South Africa.

France reopens its border to the UK, but there is a backlog of freight to clear.

France's decision to close the border in the first place is criticised by European Commissioner for Transport Adina Valean, who says France went against the EU's recommendations.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair urges the government to give people a single dose of COVID vaccine rather than preserving stocks for a second jab.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor, the Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures, and Rufus Bird, the Surveyor of The Queen's Works of Art, have both left their posts with the

royal household and will not be replaced "for the time being" due to the impact of COVID-19 on royal finances.

The UK government announces £1.1m of emergency funding for the radio industry to help create content to tackle loneliness during the COVID crisis.

24 December - Researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have suggested schools and universities may need to remain closed after Christmas to help control the spread of the new variant of COVID, as well as tougher restrictions.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics indicate 1 in 85 people in England has COVID, with figures for the week to 18 December estimating that almost 650,000 people had the virus, up from 570,000 the previous week. But ONS figures for Scotland indicate a fall in cases over the same period, with 37,100 (one in 140) people having the virus in the week to 18 December, a drop from 52,500 (one in 100) in the week up to 11 December. The new variant of COVID is believed to be responsible for 38% of new cases in the week up to 18 December. Figures for Wales indicate a sharp rise in cases, with an estimated 52,200 people with the virus in the week to 18 December, 18,800 more than the preceding week.

The Christmas Eve Jingle, a doorstep bell-ringing event, is held at 6pm to help combat loneliness over Christmas.

A travel ban from South Africa comes into force at 9am, prohibiting visitors to the UK from that country following the discovery of a new variant of COVID-19. The ban excludes UK and Irish nationals arriving in the UK.

25 December - A further 800 military personnel are sent to Kent to help clear the backlog of lorries waiting to cross the English Channel to France.

The number of recorded COVID-related deaths in the UK passes 70,000 after a further 570 deaths take the total to 70,195.

Queen Elizabeth II delivers her Christmas Message, telling people struggling without friends and family on Christmas Day that they "are not alone".

The United States becomes the latest country to impose travel restrictions on the UK because of the new strain of COVID; any passengers going to the US must produce a negative COVID test before being allowed to travel.

26 December - Following a brief relaxation of rules for Christmas Day, tougher COVID restrictions are imposed on large parts of the UK, with more areas of England entering tier four restrictions, level four measures for mainland Scotland, and lockdowns for Wales and Northern Ireland. The restrictions mean that many shops are forced to remain closed, something that is expected to have a negative impact on the Boxing Day sales

In the first trial of its kind held by University College London Hospitals, ten people who have been in close contact with a person testing positive for COVID-19 have been given antibodies as a form of emergency protection.

27 December - Speaking to The Sunday Times, Pascal Soriot, chief executive of AstraZeneca, says they have found a "winning formula" with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. Sources, including ITV News report that the vaccine will be approved for use in the UK within days.

The B117 strain of COVID, the presence of which was first detected in the UK, has now been identified in a number of other countries, including Australia.

28 December - A further 41,385 COVID cases are recorded in the UK, while officials express concern for the pressure on the health service in England, where 20,426 people are being treated in hospital for the virus.

More than 200 British tourists have fled the Swiss ski resort of Verbier after Switzerland imposed a retrospective ten day quarantine backdated to 14 December because of the B117 strain of COVID.

29 December - A further 53,135 new COVID-19 cases are confirmed, the largest daily number so far as the figures catch up with data that went unreported over Christmas.

Margaret Keenan, who was the first person in the UK to receive a dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, returns to hospital for her follow-up injection, meaning she has completed the vaccination process.

30 December - The regulator (MHRA) is the first to approve the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, meaning it is the second vaccine to enter the national rollout.

Tier four measures are extended to more parts of England from midnight, with the Midlands, North East, parts of the North West and South West joining London and the South East in the toughest restrictions.

The 2021 New Year Honours are published, recognising several hundred people for their work during the COVID crisis.

		<p>31 December - A further 55,892 new COVID-19 cases are confirmed, the largest daily number so far.</p> <p>As more areas of England enter tier four restrictions, a total of 44 million people are now living under the toughest measures.</p> <p>Health Secretary Matt Hancock warns people not to gather for New Year's Eve celebrations.</p> <p>The British Medical Association criticises the decision to change the length of time between the first and second shots of COVID vaccines from three to twelve weeks. The decision is defended by the UK's chief medical officers, who argue it "is much more preferable" to vaccinate a greater number of people with the first dose, which will give them protection against the virus.</p> <p>Analysts say that 2020 has been the worst year for high street retailers for more than 25 years, with 180.000 jobs lost in the sector.</p>
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Data sources:

GBTS/IPS 2020

ONS

Met Office monthly summary reports

News sites including BBC/Guardian