Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK: 31 December 2021

The latest data from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection survey, containing high level estimatesforEngland,Wales, Northern IrelandandScotland.This survey is being delivered in partnership with the University of Oxford, University of Manchester, UK Health Security Agency andWellcomeTrust. This study is jointly led by the ONS and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) working with the University of Oxford and Lighthouse laboratory to collect and test samples.

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Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. Main points

2. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey data

3. Glossary

4. Measuring the data

5. Related links

1 . Main points

To provide estimates of coronavirus (COVID-19) positivity over the Christmas period, we have published headline results in a shortened version of our usual release.

Today, we have published new data that show in the week ending 23 December 2021:

- In England, the percentage of people testing positive continued to increase; we estimate that 2,024,700 people in England had coronavirus (COVID-19) (95% credible interval: 1,951,200 to 2,096,300), equating to around 1 in 25 people.
- In Wales, the percentage of people testing positive continued to increase; we estimate that 76,500 people in Wales had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 65,100 to 89,200), equating to around 1 in 40 people.
- In Northern Ireland, the percentage of people testing positive increased; we estimate that 47,500 people in Northern Ireland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 37,800 to 58,600), equating to around 1 in 40 people.
- In Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive continued to increase; we estimate that 135,400 people in Scotland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 117,400 to 154,800), equating to around 1 in 40 people.
- In England, COVID-19 infections increased across all age groups and were highest among those aged two years to school Year 6 and those aged 25 to 34 years; the high infections for those aged two years to school Year 6 are more likely to be compatible with the Delta variant, whereas the high infections for those aged 25 to 34 years are more likely to be compatible with the Omicron variant, as shown by separate analysis.
- COVID-19 infections increased across all regions of England, with the highest infection levels seen in London (1 in 15) and the lowest in the North East of England (1 in 45).
- COVID-19 infections compatible with the Omicron variant continued to increase rapidly across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, and Omicron is now the most common variant in England and Scotland.

Figure 1: COVID-19 infections compatible with the Omicron variant continued to increase rapidly across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland in the week ending 23 December 2021

Modelled percentage of positive cases compatible with the Delta variant, and compatible with the Omicron variant, based on nose and throat swabs, daily, 12 November to 23 December 2021, UK

Notes:

1. All results are provisional and subject to revision.
2. These statistics refer to infections occurring in private households, and exclude infections reported in hospitals, care homes and/or other communal establishments.
3. Omicron variant-compatible positives are defined as those that are positive on the ORF1ab-gene and N-gene, but not the S-gene. Delta variant-compatible positives are defined as those that are positive on the ORF1ab, N-gene and S-gene, as well as gene patterns N+S and ORF1ab+S.
4. Data should be treated with caution. Not all cases positive on the S-gene will be the Delta variant, but some cases with pattern ORF1ab+N will also be the Delta variant where the S-gene was not detected for other reasons, such as low viral load.

Download the data

2 . Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey data

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey headline results, UK
Dataset | Released 31 December 2021
Headline estimates from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

3 . Glossary

Credible interval

A credible interval gives an indication of the uncertainty of an estimate from data analysis. The 95% credible intervals are calculated so that there is a 95% probability of the true value lying in the interval.

4 . Measuring the data

Reference dates

This week, the reference week is 17 to 23 December 2021 and the reference day is Monday 20 December 2021. More information on reference weeks and days can be found in the Measuring the data section of our Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK: 23 December 2021 bulletin.

Data for a longer time series

A longer time series from earlier data can be found in our usual weekly Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey datasets for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Survey fieldwork

Survey fieldwork for the pilot study began in England on 26 April 2020. Fieldwork began on 29 June 2020 in Wales, 26 July 2020 in Northern Ireland, and 21 September 2020 in Scotland.

Other Coronavirus Infection Survey (CIS) analysis and studies

This study is one of a number of studies that look to provide information around the coronavirus pandemic within the UK. For information on other studies seeSection 11: Measuring the datain our previous bulletin, published 30 April 2021.

Quality

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our methods article and the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey QMI.

5 . Related links

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey: characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19 in countries of the UK
Bulletin| Updated fortnightly
The characteristics of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) from the COVID-19 Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with the University of Oxford, the University of Manchester, UK Health Security Agency and Wellcome Trust.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey: antibody and vaccination data for the UK
Bulletin | Updated fortnightly
Antibody and vaccination data by UK country and English regions from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with the University of Oxford, University of Manchester, UK Health Security Agency and Wellcome Trust.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest insights
Interactive tool | Updated as and when data become available
The latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other official sources.

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional
Bulletin | Updated weekly
Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK: 23 December 2021
Bulletin | Released 23 December 2021
Estimates forEngland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.This survey is being delivered in partnership with University of Oxford, University of Manchester, UK Health Security Agency andWellcomeTrust. This study is jointly led by the ONS and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) working with the University of Oxford and Lighthouse laboratory to collect and test samples.