

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

14th Mar 2022

Lockdown Exit

Australia's vaccine diplomacy in Pacific islands wards off Beijing, prime minister says

Australia has been able to stop an "incursion" by Beijing into the Pacific islands by talking with leaders there weekly and offering vaccine aid, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Sunday. Concern over China's military ambitions for the region, after it provided police and riot equipment to the Solomon Islands, prompted U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to last month announce Washington would open a Solomon Islands embassy. Morrison said China had been "very clear" about aspirations to build a military base in the Pacific islands, but this had not occurred.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-vaccine-diplomacy-pacific-islands-wards-off-beijing-pm-morrison-2022-03-13/>

Dismay as funding for UK's 'world-beating' Covid trackers is axed

If anything about the UK's response to Covid-19 was world-beating, it was our surveillance system. From the World Health Organization to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), public health teams around the world have praised the UK's infection-tracking capability, and used our data to plan their own pandemic measures. Despite this health ministers have cancelled future funding for the React-1 study and other research projects. The decision has been met with dismay among leading scientists and researchers worldwide, who have questioned the UK's ability to respond to future Covid threats.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/12/dismay-as-funding-for-uks-world-beating-covid-trackers-is-axed>

Kenya lifts remaining COVID restrictions

Kenya lifted its remaining COVID-19 restrictions on Friday, including a ban on large indoor gatherings such as religious services and a requirement to present a negative COVID-19 test for arriving air passengers. Though Kenyans should continue heeding public health measures such as handwashing and social distancing, face masks are no longer mandatory in public and all quarantine measures for confirmed COVID-19 cases are halted with immediate effect, Health Minister Mutahi Kagwe told a news conference.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/kenya-lifts-remaining-covid-restrictions%ef%bf%bc/>

98% of U.S. population can ditch masks as COVID eases -CDC

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said some 98% of the U.S. population live in locations where COVID-19 levels are low enough that people do not need to wear masks indoors. The CDC on Feb. 25 dramatically eased its COVID-19 guidelines for when Americans should wear masks indoors, saying they could drop them in counties experiencing what it described as low or medium COVID-19 levels

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/98-us-population-can-ditch-masks-covid-eases-cdc-2022-03-10/>

Swiss secure COVID-19 vaccines for 2023

Switzerland has secured at least 14 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines for 2023, the government said on Friday. "For 2023, in addition to the seven million doses of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine already purchased, the Federal Council has decided to also procure seven million doses from Moderna. At the same time, Switzerland has options - to be exercised only if needed - to procure a further seven million vaccine doses from each provider," it said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/swiss-secure-covid-19-vaccines-2023-2022-03-11/>

COVID-19: Official pandemic inquiry's public hearings set to begin in 2023

Public hearings for the inquiry into the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic are not set to begin until next year, raising the possibility that its findings won't be published before the next election. The revelation came in an open letter to the public from Baroness Hallett, the chair of the inquiry. She said representatives of the inquiry will visit towns and cities across the UK over the next few weeks to meet with people affected by COVID-19.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-official-pandemic-inquiry-public-hearings-set-to-begin-in-2023-12563133>

Britain outlines terms of COVID-19 inquiry

Britain on Thursday outlined the terms of reference of its planned inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic, looking into the preparedness of the country as well as the public health and economic response to the coronavirus. Britain has recorded 19.3 million COVID-19 infections and 162,000 deaths - the seventh highest fatality total globally - and Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been criticised for mishandling England's three national lockdowns. He has promised an inquiry into the pandemic, chaired by judge Heather Hallett.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-outlines-terms-covid-19-inquiry-2022-03-10/>

Call to offer more people fourth jab as Covid rises in England

Ministers should consider extending the plan to give a fourth dose of Covid vaccines to older people because of evidence of waning immunity, scientists say. The number of people being admitted to hospital with Covid began rising last week, and on 9 March 1,521 were admitted in England - the highest number since the end of January. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that one in 25 people, or 3.8% of England's population, was infected on 5 March, and research by the React-1 study indicated that cases are rising in those aged 55 and over.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/12/call-to-offer-more-people-fourth-jab-as-covid-rises-in-england>

Yellen: COVID-19 aid funds will help U.S. withstand Ukraine war economic turmoil

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Friday the U.S. economy is better prepared to weather economic turbulence from Russia's invasion of Ukraine because of the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 aid package passed a year ago. Yellen, speaking at a Denver social services agency on the first anniversary of the American Rescue Plan, (ARP) said the United States is now much better able to withstand unforeseen crises -- such as the war in Ukraine -- than it was a year ago.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/yellen-covid-19-aid-funds-will-help-us-withstand-ukraine-war-economic-turmoil-2022-03-11/>

China approves five COVID-19 antigen kits for self-testing - CCTV

China has granted approval to five COVID-19 antigen kits made by local companies to be used for self-testing, state broadcaster CCTV said on Saturday, as it tweaks its testing regime that has been pressured by Omicron. China's National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) published a notice saying Beijing Huaketai Biotechnology had been allowed to make changes to its COVID-19 antigen test kit's device certificate. It published a similar approval for four other companies, Nanjing Vazyme Biotech, Guangzhou Wondfo Biotech, Beijing Jinwofu Bioengineering Technology and a BGI Genomics subsidiary, Shenzhen Huada Yinyuan Pharmaceutical Technology, on Saturday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-approves-five-covid-19-antigen-kits-self-testing-cctv-2022-03-12/>

Hong Kong leader Lam says city not yet past COVID peak

Hong Kong reported 27,647 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, with city leader Carrie Lam saying the outbreak was not yet past its peak despite recent daily case numbers slightly levelling off. Health authorities reported 27,647 new positive cases in Hong Kong on Saturday, versus 29,381 new infections on Friday and 31,402 new cases on Thursday. 198 new deaths were also reported in the past 24 hours.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-leader-says-city-is-not-yet-past-covid-peak-2022-03-12/>

Exit Strategies

Two years on, complacency still plagues global COVID-19 response

On March 11 2020, the director general of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned of “alarming levels of inaction” from governments as he declared that the COVID-19 outbreak had become a pandemic. Two years on, with a number of highly effective vaccines, we have the tools needed to end this pandemic. But the complacency of some governments has only become worse. Politicians in rich countries are trying to “move on” from the pandemic; to manipulate the emotional fatigue of the public and tell them what they want to hear: that this pandemic is over. They want to pretend that COVID-19 is a problem of the past – a problem for poorer countries. That notion is as reckless as it is false.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/11/two-years-on-complacency-still-plagues-global-covid-19-response>

Former U.S. President Obama tests positive for COVID-19

Article reports that former U.S. President Barack Obama said on Sunday he had tested positive for COVID-19 and was feeling fine other than a scratchy throat. "I've had a scratchy throat for a couple days, but am feeling fine otherwise," Obama wrote on Twitter. "Michelle and I are grateful to be vaccinated and boosted, and she has tested negative."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/former-us-president-obama-tests-positive-covid-19-2022-03-13/>

China imposes new curbs amid worst COVID outbreak in two years

China has placed about 17 million residents under lockdown, as virus cases doubled nationwide to nearly 3,400 and anxiety mounted over the resilience of its ‘zero-Covid’ approach in the face of the worst outbreak in two years. The southern tech hub of Shenzhen – home to about 13 million people – told all residents to stay at home as it struggles to eradicate an Omicron flare-up linked to the neighbouring virus-ravaged city of Hong Kong. The lockdown and a suspension of public transport will last until March 20, a city government notice said, adding that it would launch three rounds of mass testing. A nationwide surge in cases has seen authorities close schools in Shanghai, China’s biggest city, and lock down northeastern cities, as almost 18 provinces battle clusters of the Omicron and Delta variants. The city of Jilin – centre of the outbreak in the northeast – was partially locked down on Saturday, while residents of Yanji, an urban area of nearly 700,000 bordering North Korea, were confined to their homes on Sunday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/13/china-announces-new-curbs-amid-worst-covid-outbreak-in-two-years>

Philippines approves emergency use of Pfizer's COVID-19 drug Paxlovid

The Philippines has approved the emergency use of Paxlovid, Pfizer's COVID-19 drug, the country's food and drug agency said on Friday. It is the third COVID-19 drug approved by the agency for emergency use, after Roche's antibody cocktail and Merck's treatment pill. Paxlovid can be used to treat adult patients who do not require supplemental oxygen and who are at increased risk for severe infection, the agency said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/philippines-approves-emergency-use-pfizers-covid-19-drug-paxlovid-2022-03-11/>

Japan considers offering fourth COVID vaccine shot - Yomiuri

Japan is considering offering a fourth coronavirus vaccine shot later this year, a newspaper reported on Friday, while a government spokesman said a decision would be made based on the severity of the pandemic. The Yomiuri daily said if a decision was made to give a fourth shot they would likely be vaccines supplied by Pfizer and Moderna, and they could be offered this summer.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-considers-offering-4th-covid-vaccine-shot-summer-yomiuri-2022-03-11/>

France to launch fourth COVID shot for over-80s, PM says

France is to start offering a fourth COVID-19 vaccination shot to people over 80 years old who had their previous booster dose more than three months ago, French Prime Minister Jean Castex told daily Le Parisien in an interview published on Saturday. The prime minister had said in January that France was ready to launch a campaign for fourth vaccine shots, or second booster, as soon as health authorities gave the green light.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/france-launch-fourth-covid-shot-over-80s-pm-says-2022-03-12/>

UK economy bounces back from Omicron as more people dine out

Britain's economy bounced back from the effects of the Omicron Covid variant at a faster pace than expected during January, as consumers returned to eating and drinking out in pubs and restaurants. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said all sectors of the economy returned to growth, helping to lift gross domestic product by 0.8% in January from a month earlier, fuelled by a rise in consumer-facing services. GDP was estimated to be 0.8% above its pre-pandemic level, reflecting a weaker impact on the economy than expected after the emergence of the Omicron variant led to a sharp rise in coronavirus infections. City economists had forecast a slower growth rate of 0.2%.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/mar/11/uk-economy-bounces-back-from-omicron-as-more-people-dine-out-gdp>

China daily local COVID cases hit two-year high of over 1500

Mainland China reported more than 1,500 new local COVID-19 infections on Saturday, the most since the first nationwide outbreak in early 2020, as the Omicron variant prompted Beijing to introduce self-testing kits for the first time. China's current case count is far fewer than those of many other countries, but the growing number could complicate Beijing's "dynamic-clearance" ambition to suppress contagion as quickly as possible. Beijing has ordered its localities to stick to the "dynamic clearing" policy and to prevent a large-scale rebound, prompting several cities to take measures such as cancelling group events, launching rounds of mass testing and cutting face-to-face classes in school.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-daily-local-covid-cases-hit-two-year-high-over-1500-2022-03-12/>

Top China Covid Fighter Is Woman Who Hit Party's Glass Ceiling

Among the resources President Xi Jinping has deployed to arrest surging Covid deaths in Hong Kong is the Communist Party's pandemic fighter: a 71-year-old woman whose career at the near-top illuminates the glass ceiling in the world's most populous country. Sun Chunlan is the only female vice premier in China's entrenched patriarchy, the sole woman on its powerful 25-member Politburo and, more recently, the top official overseeing its pandemic control. Now, she's been marshaled to help across the Hong Kong border, local media including the South China Morning Post have reported. Unlike the "nice guy" cadres Xi derides for failing to act, Sun's pandemic response has been portrayed in state media as decisive. After Xi'an hospitals left non-Covid patients to die during a lockdown this year, she ordered medics on the ground to "not turn away patients under any excuse." When Covid-19 emerged in Wuhan, the septuagenarian spent almost 100 days there without vaccines helping authorities isolate each case, a strategy pivotal to Beijing's unparalleled success in holding back the virus.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-11/top-china-covid-fighter-is-woman-who-hit-party-s-glass-ceiling?utm_source=google&utm_medium=bd&cmpid=google

Partisan Exits

Covid in Kent: Cases rising again across county

Over the space of seven days they have increased 42.9%, with 7,752 new cases recorded. About one in 10 cases are among people who have been reinfected, according to government stats, as health chiefs say there is an "increasing presence" of a sub-variant of Omicron. The biggest rise in

infections has occurred in Swale, up 70.7%. There has also been a 60% spike in Dartford and a rise of 55% in Ashford. But weekly case numbers are still much lower than when the Omicron variant peaked in Kent in late December, when 18,330 infections were recorded.

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/the-kent-district-where-covid-cases-are-up-70-in-a-week-263841/>

Prince Harry and Meghan slam UK over 'immoral' approach to vaccines

Prince Harry and Meghan have lambasted the UK and other wealthy countries for not lifting intellectual property rules so more Covid vaccines can be distributed. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex signed an open letter labelling the world's approach to the pandemic as 'immoral, entirely self-defeating and also an ethical, economic and epidemiological failure'. The letter, coordinated by the People's Vaccine, had over 130 influential signatures, including former UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon, actor Charlize Theron and former Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko. The coalition works to make coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments 'freely available to everyone, everywhere'.

<https://metro.co.uk/2022/03/12/prince-harry-and-meghan-slam-uk-over-immoral-approach-to-vaccines-16262762/>

Australia nears living with COVID like flu - PM Morrison

Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the nation's political leaders want to move to a new phase of living with COVID-19 as though it were the flu, but would consult health experts. A day after meeting with the national cabinet of state and federal leaders, Morrison told reporters on Saturday morning they had discussed moving to "Phase D" of the national pandemic response plan. "Our airports are open again, international arrivals can come, there are waivers now on quarantine for people returning, so we are pretty much in Phase D," he said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-nears-living-with-covid-like-flu-pm-morrison-2022-03-12/>

Scientific Viewpoint

What is Deltacron? Everything you need to know about the new Covid-19 variant

A fresh reminder that the pandemic is not yet over comes as new Covid-19 variant Deltacron is officially identified with cases confirmed in France and the US. Here is everything you need to know about the new Covid variant. What is Deltacron? Deltacron is a Covid variant that is made up of elements from both Delta and Omicron. It contains genes from both of these previous variants, which makes it a recombinant virus. This is when the genetic material from more than one origin is combined- in other words, when someone is infected with two variants at the same time and their cells then replicate together.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/deltacron-covid-variant-pandemic-b2034386.html>

GeoVax vaccine targeting virus in two places shows promise; virus may become resistant to antibody drugs

An experimental vaccine developed by GeoVax Labs Inc succeeded in promoting development of antibodies that target two different sites on the virus in a small pilot study and has been advanced to mid-stage clinical trials, researchers reported. Like currently available COVID-19 vaccines, GeoVax's GEO-CM04S1 induces immune responses that target the spike protein on the surface of the virus. But it also targets the "nucleocapsid," or body, of the virus. In the study reported on Wednesday in *The Lancet Microbe*, 56 volunteers received the vaccine, which uses a modified version of a harmless virus to deliver instructions to the immune system. Overall, 94% developed antibodies against the spike and the nucleocapsid protein, according to the research team from City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, California.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/geovax-vaccine-targeting-virus-two-places-shows-promise-virus-may-become-2022-03-11/>

Valneva now expects recommendation on COVID-19 vaccine by April

Valneva now expects a positive recommendation from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in April for its VLA2001 COVID-19 candidate vaccine, the French vaccine maker said on Friday, compared to an earlier target for the end of March. "Following such conditional approval, the company would expect to start delivering planned doses of VLA2001 to European countries in the second quarter of 2022," said Valneva. It cited a "a small set of additional questions" from the EMA as reason for the delay, adding it was set to respond within days.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/valneva-now-expects-recommendation-covid-19-vaccine-by-april-2022-03-11/>

Omega Diagnostics' COVID test rejected for sale in UK; shares fall

Omega Diagnostics Group Plc said on Friday its COVID-19 antigen test kit had not been approved by the UK health security agency and the product would not be available for sale in the country, sending its shares tumbling more than 20%. Late last year, a new review system came into force under which COVID-19 test suppliers had to submit information on comparator tests for their products for a "desktop review" if they wished to remain on sale in Britain. Omega said some data submitted before the new review had to be excluded in the latest evaluation, as they did not meet the sensitivity requirements, leading to insufficient data for an approval. It added that no further tests were planned at this time.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/omega-diagnostics-covid-test-rejected-sale-uk-shares-fall-2022-03-11/>

England's COVID R number rises, cases could be growing

The estimated range of England's COVID-19 reproduction "R" number is between 0.8 and 1.1, the UK Health Security Agency said on Friday, adding that daily cases could be growing each day. An R number between 0.8 and 1.1 means that for every 10 people infected, they will on average infect between 8 and 11 other people. The previous week's range was 0.8 to 1.0. The daily growth of infections was -2% to +2%, compared to an estimated range of between -4% to -1% last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/englands-covid-r-number-rises-cases-could-be-growing-2022-03-11/>

Japan's Fujifilm to halt enrollment in Avigan trial for COVID-19

A drug once hailed as Japan's biggest contribution in the global fight against COVID-19 suffered another setback on Friday, as Fujifilm Holdings Corp said it was halting enrolment in a clinical trial of the pill, Avigan. The emergence of the Omicron variant of coronavirus, which usually causes milder infections, made it tough to determine the drug's effectiveness in preventing severe symptoms, the company said in a statement. Clinical data from patients already enrolled in the trial will continue to be analysed, it said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japans-fujifilm-says-terminate-enrollment-avigan-trial-covid-19-2022-03-11/>

What is the Deltacron variant of Covid and where has it been found?

Gisaid says the variant has been identified in several regions of France and appears to have been circulating since the start of the year. "Genomes with a similar profile have been also identified in Denmark and the Netherlands," Gisaid says. There have also been reports of Deltacron being detected in the US, and about 30 cases have been detected in the UK, according to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). The i newspaper said the first cases of person-to-person transmission of Deltacron in the UK were expected to be confirmed this week. Dr Etienne Simon-Loriere of the Institut Pasteur cautioned that there could be several different recombinant viruses formed from Delta and Omicron.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/11/what-is-deltacron-covid-variant-uk>

Two years of COVID: The battle to accept airborne transmission

For Catherine Noakes, a scientist who studies how pathogens move in the built environment, the

first few months of the coronavirus pandemic were punctuated with a foreboding sense of frustration. That frustration was rooted in the readily accepted assumption that COVID-19 was not spreading through the air via microscopic particles called aerosols, but predominantly through larger respiratory droplets expelled among people in close proximity and falling quickly on nearby surfaces. The World Health Organization (WHO) — which sets the tone for many nations — early on denied COVID-19 was spreading through these tiny aerosols suspended in air. As evidence mounted, alongside pressure from scientists like Noakes, the agency eventually acknowledged the possibility of airborne transmission — but continued to downplay its significance in favour of droplets, placing a heavy emphasis on handwashing and disinfecting surfaces instead of more stringent measures. Then as evidence suggesting the virus behind COVID-19 was primarily airborne grew to be overwhelming, the agency finally admitted in December 2021 that the virus could indeed be spreading via aerosols.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/3/11/two-years-of-covid-the-battle-to-accept-airborne-transmission>

Covid treatment sotrovimab can cause drug-resistant mutation, study finds

Australian virologists have uncovered a drug-resistant mutation in the Covid-19 virus associated with the drug sotrovimab and say without the monitoring of patients given the treatment the mutated virus could spread in the community. The world-first findings, published in the New England Journal of Medicine on Thursday, are the result of an analysis of the first 100 patients in western Sydney during the Delta outbreak in 2021 to be given sotrovimab. Sotrovimab is a monoclonal antibody that is available in many countries to treat vulnerable patients who are at risk of severe disease and death due to Covid-19 infection. Sotrovimab must be administered via infusion within the first five days of Covid-19 infection, and prevents Covid-19 symptoms from becoming severe. It is one of the few human-engineered monoclonal antibodies that can target Omicron.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/10/covid-treatment-sotrovimab-can-cause-drug-resistant-mutation-study-finds>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Coronavirus: New Zealand COVID death toll spikes to 105 as 'people losing years of a potential healthy life'

The number of people with COVID-19 who have died in New Zealand has now reached 105, with 14 deaths reported in the past two days. There are more than 206,000 active cases of COVID-19 in the community,

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2022/03/coronavirus-new-zealand-covid-death-toll-spikes-to-105-as-people-losing-years-of-a-potential-healthy-life.html>

Western Australia records 4,300 COVID-19 cases, with 103 people in hospital

Western Australia has recorded another 4,300 COVID-19 cases, with 103 people in hospital. WA Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson said five people were in ICU on Friday night, but three had since been released. Of the positive cases, 2,339 were detected with PCR tests and 1,961 were the result of self-reported positive RATs. The number of active cases in the state has risen to 22,757.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-12/wa-records-4300-new-covid-19-cases/100905374>

Asia's COVID deaths surpass 1 million - Reuters tally

Asia passed the grim milestone of 1 million coronavirus-linked deaths on Friday, a Reuters tally showed, as a spike in Omicron variant infections spreads across the region after starting in nations such as Japan and South Korea.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/asias-covid-deaths-surpass-1-million-reuters-tally-2022-03-11/>

South Korea reports record high 383665 new COVID-19 cases - KDCA

South Korea reported a new record daily high of 383,665 COVID-19 cases, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said on Saturday, amid a surge of Omicron infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-reports-record-high-383665-new-covid-19-cases-kdca-2022-03-12/>

Hong Kong reports 29381 new COVID cases on Friday

Hong Kong health authorities reported 29,381 new COVID-19 infections on Friday, of which 10,493 were confirmed via a self-reporting platform where people can register positive results of rapid antigen tests.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/hong-kong-reports-29381-new-covid-cases-friday-2022-03-11/>

French COVID-19 infections again up 25% week-on-week, trend upward again

New COVID-19 infections in France rose by more than 25% on Friday compared to a week ago after rising more than 24% on Thursday, as a downward trend that had started late January reversed. The health ministry registered 72,399 new infections on Friday, while the seven-day moving average of new infections also rose, for the fourth day in a row, by nearly 16% to more than 60,000. New hospitalisations with COVID-19 - which tend to lag new cases by about two weeks - continued falling, by 7% to just over 21,000.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-covid-19-infections-again-up-25-week-on-week-trend-upward-again-2022-03-11/>

England's COVID-19 prevalence rises - ONS

England's COVID-19 prevalence rose to 1 in 25 in the week ending March 5, Britain's Office for National Statistics (ONS) said on Friday, up from 1 in 30 recorded the previous week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/englands-covid-19-prevalence-rises-ons-2022-03-11/>

Age groups being hardest hit by Covid in York revealed

As the Covid rate soars in York, the age groups being most affected by the coronavirus have been revealed. City of York Council's latest Covid data tracker report says people aged between 30 and 49 are currently experiencing the highest Covid infection rate. It says people aged 40 to 44 had the highest rate of new cases in the week to March 5, with a rate of 801 per 100,000 population. The next hardest hit groups were people aged 45-49, who had a rate of 655, people aged 35-39, with a rate of 561 and people aged 30-34, with a rate of 547. The rate for people aged 60+ was 392.7. The council ward with the highest rate was Wheldrake, with a rate of 695.8 per 100,000, and the lowest rate was 257.5 in Clifton.

<https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/19988625.age-groups-hardest-hit-covid-york-revealed/>

Covid infections rising again across UK - ONS

Covid infections are increasing across the UK with about one in 25 people infected, according to the latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In Scotland, 300,000 people - one in 18 - have coronavirus, the highest level recorded during the pandemic. A sub-variant of Omicron, called BA.2, is now thought to be the most common strain in most of the UK. The ONS says it's too early to say what's behind the rise in cases. But some scientists believe the BA.2 variant's increased transmissibility, recent easing of restrictions and waning immunity from the vaccines could all be factors.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-60709712>

Covid cases and hospital admissions rising in England, data suggests

One in 25 people in England had Covid last week, figures show, causing a rise in the rates of hospital admissions. The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics, based on swabs from randomly selected households, reveal an estimated 2,073,900 people in the community in England had Covid

in the week ending 5 March, equating to 3.8% of the population or about one in 25 people. The week before, the figure was about one in 30. In Scotland, the latest ONS figures suggest about one in 18 had Covid in the most recent week – continuing a rise in prevalence – while in Northern Ireland and Wales it was one in 13 and one in 30 respectively, suggesting infection levels are increasing in all countries in the UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/11/covid-cases-england-omicron-levels-ons-data>

New Lockdown

COVID-19: Chinese city of Shenzhen goes into lockdown after surge in Hong Kong coronavirus cases

A city of 17.5 million people in China has gone into lockdown after a spike in coronavirus cases in neighbouring Hong Kong. Everyone in the business centre of Shenzhen will undergo three rounds of COVID-19 testing after 60 new cases were reported on Sunday. All businesses except those providing essential goods such as food and fuel have been ordered to shut or operate from home.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-chinese-city-of-shenzhen-goes-into-lockdown-after-surge-in-hong-kong-coronavirus-cases-12565314>