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[Home](#) > [Infectious diseases](#)

Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): latest information and advice

Information for the public on the outbreak of coronavirus, including the current situation in the UK and information about the virus and its symptoms.

Published 24 January 2020

Last updated 7 March 2020 — [see all updates](#)

From: [Department of Health and Social Care](#) and [Public Health England](#)

Contents

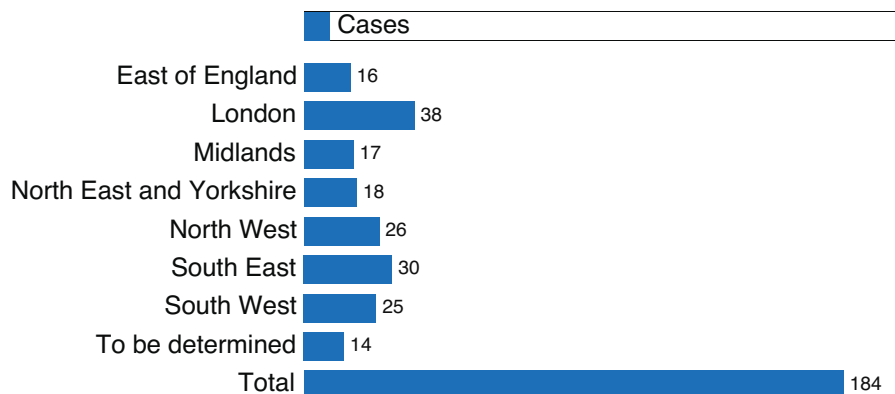
- [Number of cases](#)
- [Risk level](#)
- [Returning travellers](#)
- [Information about the virus](#)
- [Recent government action](#)
- [Diagnosis and analysis](#)
- [Further information](#)

Go to [NHS.UK/coronavirus](#) for information about the virus and how to protect yourself.

Number of cases

As of 7am on 7 March 2020, 21,460 people have been tested in the UK, of which 21,254 were confirmed negative and 206 were confirmed as positive. Two patients who tested positive for COVID-19 have died.

Cases identified in England



[Confirmed cases in each local authority](#) are published by Public Health England (PHE).

Risk level

Based on the World Health Organization's declaration that this is a public health emergency of international concern, the [UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the UK from low to moderate](#)

Returning travellers

Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people if you've travelled to the UK from the following places in the last 14 days, even if you do not have symptoms:

- Iran
- Hubei province in China
- [lockdown areas in northern Italy](#)
- [special care zones in South Korea](#)

Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people if you've travelled to the UK from the following places in the last 14 days and have a cough, high temperature or shortness of breath, even if your symptoms are mild:

- mainland China outside of Hubei province
- Italy outside of the [lockdown areas](#)
- South Korea outside of the [special care zones](#)
- Cambodia
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Laos
- Macau
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Singapore
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Use the [111 online coronavirus service](#) to find out what to do next.

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

In Scotland call your GP or NHS 24 on 111 out of hours.

In Wales call 111 (if available in your area) or 0845 46 47.

In Northern Ireland call 111.

Lockdown areas in northern Italy:

- in Lombardy: Codogno, Castiglione d'Adda, Casalpusterlengo, Fombio, Maleo, Somaglia, Bertonico, Terranova dei Passerini, Castelgerundo and San Fiorano
- in Veneto: Vo' Euganeo

Special care zones in South Korea:

- Daegu
- Cheongdo

See [maps of the specified areas](#).

This guidance is based on the recommendations of the UK Chief Medical officers. These areas have been identified because of the volume of air travel from affected areas, understanding of other travel routes and number of reported cases. This list will be kept under review.

For areas with direct flights to the UK we are carrying out enhanced monitoring. Passengers will be told how to report any symptoms they develop during the flight, at the time of arrival, or after leaving the airport.

Read more about what you should do if you're asked to [self-isolate](#).

Information about the virus

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China.

The [NHS website](#) has more information about how coronavirus is spread and answers [common questions about the virus](#).

Recent government action

The government published its [coronavirus action plan](#) on 3 March.

On 10 February, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, announced [strengthened legal powers to protect public health](#).

[The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#) have been put in place to reduce the risk of further human-to-human transmission in this country by keeping individuals in isolation where public health professionals believe there is a reasonable risk an individual may have the virus.

Diagnosis and analysis

The UK is one of the first countries outside China to have a prototype specific laboratory test for this new disease. Healthcare professionals who are contacted by a patient with symptoms following travel to an affected area have been advised to submit samples to PHE for testing. Individuals should be treated in isolation.

After the experience of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, PHE developed a series of diagnostic tests to detect any member of the family of coronaviruses. These have been used for several years, and were able to detect the first UK case of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in 2012.

With the first reported publication of the genome sequence of a 2019 novel coronavirus, PHE was able to rapidly develop further specific tests for this virus, working with WHO and global network of laboratories.

When a clinician suspects novel coronavirus (COVID-19), they take samples from the nose, throat and deeper respiratory samples, package and send them safely to PHE Colindale. PHE can provide a laboratory result from this specific virus on the same working day.

PHE also has the capability to sequence the viral genome and compare this to published sequences from China, if a case occurs. This will provide valuable information on any mutations in the virus over time and allow an improved understanding of how it spreads.

Further information

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): UK government response](#)

[Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice](#)

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