

# UK records over 10,000 virus cases for first time since Feb

June 17 2021, by Pan Pylas

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People sit at outdoor tables at a restaurant in Soho, in London, Monday, June 14, 2021. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to confirm Monday that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed as a result of the spread of the delta variant first identified in India. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali

The U.K.'s latest surge in coronavirus infections gathered pace Thursday with new confirmed cases rising above 10,000 for the first time in nearly four months as a result of the spread of the more contagious delta variant.

Government figures showed another 11,007 cases were reported. That's the highest daily number since Feb. 19, when 12,027 cases were recorded, and cements talk that the country with Europe's highest virus-related [death](#) toll is in the midst of a third wave of the pandemic.

The government's chief medical adviser, Professor Chris Whitty, said the height of the current surge is "still uncertain" but that it "will definitely translate into further hospitalizations and, unfortunately, it will undoubtedly translate into further deaths."

Daily cases have risen fairly sharply over the past few weeks after fluctuating around the 2,000 mark earlier. The delta variant, which was first identified in India and is considered by government scientists to be between 40% to 80% more transmissible than the previous dominant strain, accounts for around 95% of all new cases in the U.K.

Most of the new confirmed cases are among younger age groups which have not yet gotten COVID-19 vaccines. The U.K.'s widely praised rollout of vaccines is being extended to all adults over the age of 18 starting Friday, Health Secretary Matt Hancock confirmed.



People walk in Piccadilly Circus, in London, Monday, June 14, 2021. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to confirm Monday that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed as a result of the spread of the delta variant first identified in India. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali

The spread of the variant upended government plans to lift all remaining restrictions on social contact in England starting next week. On Monday, Prime Minister Boris Johnson delayed the move until July 19, saying now was the "time to ease off the accelerator" so more people could get vaccinated and prevent thousands more deaths.

Johnson laid out his hope that by July 19, two-thirds of the U.K.'s [adult population](#) will have been offered two [vaccine](#) shots, including everyone



over 50.

The government's figures Thursday showed that another 19 people died after testing positive for the virus, the highest daily death toll reported since May 11. It takes the U.K.'s total deaths in the pandemic to 127,945, the most in Europe.

In addition to warning about further deaths in the near-term, Whitty, the government's chief medical adviser, said the country should brace itself for further waves of the virus to come.



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson attends a media briefing in Downing Street, London, Monday, June 14, 2021. Johnson has confirmed that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed by four weeks until July 19 as a result of the spread of the delta variant. In a press

briefing Monday, Johnson said he is "confident that we won't need more than four weeks" as millions more people get fully vaccinated against the virus, which could save thousands of lives. Credit: Jonathan Buckmaster/Pool Photo via AP



People sit at outdoor tables at a restaurant in Soho, in London, Monday, June 14, 2021. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to confirm Monday that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed as a result of the spread of the delta variant first identified in India. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali



A man wears a mask reading 'End the lockdown' outside the Palace of Westminster, to protest against the delay of the planned relaxation of lockdown measures, in London, Monday, June 14, 2021. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to confirm Monday that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed as a result of the spread of the delta variant first identified in India. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali





People sit at outdoor tables at a restaurant in Soho, in London, Monday, June 14, 2021. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to confirm Monday that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed as a result of the spread of the delta variant first identified in India. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali



People sit at outdoor tables in Carnaby Street, in London, Monday, June 14, 2021. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to confirm Monday that the next planned relaxation of coronavirus restrictions in England will be delayed as a result of the spread of the delta variant first identified in India. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali

"In terms of the medium-term, my expectation is that we will get a further winter surge, late autumn/winter surge, and that is because we know that winter and autumn favor respiratory viruses, and therefore it'd be very surprising if this particular highly transmissible respiratory virus was not also favored," he said in a speech to [health professionals](#).

Many blame the Conservative government for the spike in infections, saying it acted too slowly to impose the strictest quarantine requirements



on everyone arriving from India, which has endured a catastrophic resurgence of the virus.

The hope is that the rollout of vaccines will turn the latest spike around and allow the next easing in the lockdown to take place. As of Thursday, around 63% of the British population had received at least one dose of vaccine, while around 46% has received two.

An analysis on Monday from Public Health England showed that two doses of the main vaccines the U.K. is using are highly effective against hospitalization from the delta variant—96% in the case of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 92% for the AstraZeneca jab.

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Citation: UK records over 10,000 virus cases for first time since Feb (2021, June 17) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-uk-virus-cases-feb.html>

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