

## COVID-19 – Weekly Round-up

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### Friday 16 July 2021

Heart of London Business Alliance is committed to ensuring our members receive the support they need while the situation in relation to COVID-19 is fast-changing. Our Daily Bulletin provides you with an update on the important announcements and guidance from the Government. In addition, it is recommended that our members monitor the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website for guidance regarding COVID-19.

Together with our local Member of Parliament, Nickie Aiken, Heart of London will continue to lobby Government for support for our members and your employees during this difficult time.

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### Prime Minister confirms end to restrictions on 19th July

**12th July:** The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, held an evening [press conference](#) to confirm that step 4 of the lockdown roadmap would go ahead as planned on Monday 19th July. Alongside the Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Advisor Sir Patrick Vallance, the Prime Minister urged caution, warning that the pandemic is not over and that further deaths are expected. The UK Government believe that while there will be more hospitalisations and deaths as a result of unlocking, it is better to have a new wave of infections now, alongside the natural firebreak of the school holidays, rather than in the autumn. By next Monday, two thirds of adults will have received their second dose and every adult will have been offered their first dose, and it is believed that as a result, infection rates will not risk a surge in hospitalisations that would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

### Event organisers advised to ask for proof of vaccination

**13th July:** The Health Secretary, Sajid Javid, [advised](#) nightclubs and other event organisers to ask guests for evidence of double vaccination or a negative Covid-19 test as a condition of entry. The guidance is not mandatory, but the UK Government said it “reserves the right” to force venues to comply with the guidance at a future date. An NHS Covid Pass can be requested via the NHS website or the NHS smartphone app by anyone who received their second dose of a Covid-19 vaccine more than two weeks ago. The move was poorly received by the hospitality industry, but follows U-turns on the easing of restrictions in other European nations. The Dutch government re-imposed restrictions on nightclubs, music festivals and restaurants last week following a surge in

infections linked to the Delta variant, with the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, [telling](#) reporters: “*What we thought was possible in practice turned out to be wrong after all, we made an error of judgment there, we regret that and apologize for that*”.

## New megalab opens to bolster fight against variants

**13th July:** The UK’s first testing megalab, the Rosalind Franklin laboratory in Royal Leamington Spa, has [opened](#) as part of the UK’s NHS Test and Trace network. The laboratory is the biggest of its kind in the UK and will use cutting-edge technology to process even more tests and adopt the pioneering new genotype assay testing to quickly identify variants of concern and new mutations. This will help the UK’s disease detectives take action to suppress outbreaks as society reopens, using tools such as surge testing. The Health Secretary, Sajid Javid, said: “*This laboratory will be one of the centrepieces of our efforts to manage this virus in the future, processing hundreds of thousands of positive COVID-19 tests a day to help us stop cases becoming outbreaks.*”

## Over 500,000 people ‘pinged’ by NHS Covid-19 App last week

**16th July:** Senior NHS figures warned that instructions to self-isolate delivered by the NHS Track and Trace app are “*impacting on their ability to deliver care*”, after the NHS app sent 520,194 alerts last week, a record high, advising those receiving the alerts to isolate for up to ten days. The app uses Bluetooth signals to determine how close someone is to another person and considers proximity of two metres or less for more than 15 minutes an infection risk. UK Government Ministers are [reportedly](#) considering exempting frontline NHS staff from having to isolate after close contact with Covid-19 patients, but have not yet made a decision.

## Other news

- **13th July:** Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has announced that Scotland will [move](#) to level 0 of Covid-19 restrictions on Monday 19th July. This means Holyrood will be taking Scotland out of the most onerous restrictions at the same time as England, however, unlike England, Scotland will continue with restrictions around physical distancing, numbers meeting indoors and outdoors, and the mandatory use of face masks. The First Minister said: “*lifting all restrictions and mitigations right now would put all of us at greater risk – but in particular it would make it much more difficult for the most clinically vulnerable to go about their normal lives.*”
- **14th July:** The Welsh Government [confirmed](#) on Wednesday that people in Wales would still be advised to work from home, even when Wales enters level 0 of Covid-19 restrictions. When people do have to go into

work, "employers must: continue to carry out a specific coronavirus risk assessment and take all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus". The Welsh Government has also said it will explore whether giving employees a right work from home could be "enshrined in reserved employment law".

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