



Sheffield

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## Covid-19: Parts of England see hospital admissions more than double in two weeks

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Some areas of England have seen the number of patients in hospital who have tested positive for covid-19 more than double in the past two weeks, latest figures show.

Overall, the number of people in hospital with covid rose by 86% in a fortnight—from 6177 on 22 June to 11 465 on 6 July.

But over this period, the south west region reported that the number of covid patients currently in hospital increased from 464 to 1024, while in the Midlands numbers rose from 1115 to 2239. The south east saw an increase from 812 to 1652, the figures showed. The lowest rise was seen in London with a 64% increase from 1163 to 1907.

In the north east and Yorkshire and the north west regions, rates among patients in hospital rose 76% and 72% respectively, with an 85% rise in the east of England.

The seven day running tally of admissions in England stands at 11 028.

Similar rises have been seen in Scotland which reported a 40% increase in patients in hospital with covid in the fortnight up to 6 July, with Wales reporting an 86% increase.

It comes as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported a rise of infections in the UK of 32% in a week, with an estimated 2.3 million people currently infected.<sup>1</sup> Rates are rising across all four countries, likely as a result of the growth of the BA.4 and BA.5 omicron subvariants, the ONS said.

Many NHS organisations have been prompted to return to mandatory mask wearing, with the NHS England Midlands regional team sending out a letter to medical directors to advise a review of local guidance.<sup>2</sup>

In a House of Lords debate on 11 July, Syed Kamall, the parliamentary undersecretary of state for technology, innovation, and life sciences, was asked what assessment the government had made about rising covid cases and hospital admissions.

He said, “We continue to see covid-19 case rates and hospital admissions rise in all age groups, with the largest increase in those aged 75 and older.” But he said this reflected rising rates in the community rather than the disease becoming more severe.

Kamall told the house that the UK Health Security Agency was continuing to monitor the situation and that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation were expected to confirm later this week who would be eligible for the autumn booster.

“When we announced the living with covid strategy, we were always ready to stand up measures should the case rates rise so much that our health system was under pressure, but also what we’ve managed to do is break the link between infection and hospital admissions, hospital admissions and deaths. If that gets out of control then we will stand up the measures that we have previously.”

<sup>1</sup> Wise J. Covid-19: Sharp rise in infections seen across the UK. *BMJ* 2022;378. doi: 10.1136/bmj.o1638 pmid: 35787528

<sup>2</sup> Wilkinson E. Covid-19: Hospitals and GP clinics return to universal mask wearing as rates rise. *BMJ* 2022;378. doi: 10.1136/bmj.o1712 pmid: 35817443