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'Safe and effective' vaccine could be ready by the end of November

Luke May

34-44 minutes

A 'safe and effective,' Covid-19 vaccine could be ready by the end of November according to senior Trump adviser Dr Anthony Fauci as the UK Government accelerates its own timetable for a mass roll-out of the jab for NHS workers to ensure they're treated before Christmas.

An email sent by an NHS Trust chief revealed the Health Service has been told to have a staff vaccine scheme ready to go by early December.

Speaking on the Andrew Marr Show, Dr Anthony Fauci confirmed a claim from US President Donald Trump that a vaccine could be ready to go.

The United States has donated \$1bn toward the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine, securing 400million doses, as human trials of the vaccine started in the States last month.

The UK Government has pre-ordered 100million doses of the trial's vaccine, should it be safe to use.

Dr Fauci told the BBC's Andrew Marr show on Sunday: 'We will know whether a vaccine is safe and effective by the end of November, the beginning of December.'

'But the question is, once you have a safe and effective vaccine, or more than one, how can you get it to the people who need it as quickly as possible?

'The amount of doses that will be available in December will not certainly be enough to vaccinate everybody, you'll have to wait several months into 2021.'

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NHS staff could be the first to receive a Covid-19 vaccine, with the possibility of a scheme being launched in early December, according to a memo from a health trust's chief executive. Dr Anthony Fauci said the public could know if Oxford's vaccine trial is 'safe and effective,' in a matter of weeks

Dr Fauci predicts vaccine rollout to healthcare workers in December

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Dr Fauci's comments come after it was revealed that the Government has introduced new laws that would allow the UK to bypass the EU approval process if a safe and effective jab is ready before the end of the post-Brexit transition period on December 31.

The move will boost optimism that a 'game-changing' vaccine will soon allow [Boris Johnson](#) to relax the social restrictions which have crippled the country since March.

A memo from Glen Burley, chief executive of George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust in Warwickshire, suggested NHS staff would be receiving a vaccine before Christmas. In a memo to staff, he wrote: 'Our Trust, alongside NHS organisations nationally, has been told to be prepared to start a Covid-19 staff vaccine programme in early December.'

'The latest intelligence states a coronavirus vaccine should be available this year with NHS staff prioritised prior to Christmas.'

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Speaking on BBC's Andrew Marr Show on Sunday morning, Dr Fauci said a vaccine could be ready by the end of the year, but most of the public would not have access to it until late 2021

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Plans are being drawn up for frontline NHS staff to receive a coronavirus vaccine within weeks, as the Government moves to accelerate the timetable for a mass roll-out. An email sent by an NHS Trust chief to his staff, seen by The Mail on Sunday, reveals the Health Service is preparing for a national vaccination programme before Christmas. (Above, the memo, sent by Glen Burley, chief executive of George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust in Warwickshire)

He said healthcare workers will likely be prioritised first for any vaccine, as well as people considered at increased risk of complications.

Dr Fauci was asked for his thoughts after Donald Trump, speaking at a US presidential debate earlier this week, Mr Trump said a vaccine would be ready 'by the end of the year'.

Dr Fauci said most Brits would not receive a vaccine until later in 2021.

He said: 'That could start by the end of this year, the beginning of January, February, March of next year.'

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Dr Fauci's comments came after it was revealed that the Government has introduced new laws that would allow the UK to bypass the EU approval process if a safe and effective jab is ready before the end of the post-Brexit transition period on December 31

'When you talk about vaccinating a substantial proportion of the population, so that you can have a significant impact on the dynamics of the outbreak, that very likely will not be in to the second or third quarter.'

Mr Burley added that the vaccine was 'expected to be given in two doses, 28 days apart' and urged his colleagues to have had their flu shot by the end of November so they can qualify for a Covid-19 jab.

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Trust, told a recent hospital board meeting: 'I'm hoping for a Covid-19 vaccine to be available to healthcare providers some time in December. It has not been confirmed yet but I'm hoping to be able to offer a Covid-19 vaccine to our staff.'

In other developments related to Covid:

- Elderly Covid patients were denied intensive care during the height of the pandemic. It's been revealed a triage tool drawn up at the request of England's chief medical officer stopped over 80s from receiving potentially life-saving treatment in a bid to try and stop the NHS from being overrun;
- Welsh ministers have admitted a ban on shops selling non-essential items is not working, while threatening to impose another 'firebreak' lockdown after Christmas;
- Professor Neil Ferguson, the controversial academic whose

modelling heavily influenced the national lockdown in March, was accused of scaremongering after saying that people 'will catch Covid-19 and die' if families are allowed to mix on Christmas Day;

- As 1.4 million people across South Yorkshire were plunged into the highest Tier 3 restrictions, another 174 deaths and 23,012 new confirmed cases were announced yesterday;
- Hotel tycoon Sir Rocco Forte called for Matt Hancock to be sacked for his 'shambolic' handling of the crisis as a poll found 49 per cent of people think the Health Secretary breached a drinks curfew in a Commons bar, compared with just nine per cent who thought he did not;
- Rishi Sunak has asked Treasury officials to find ways of illustrating the crippling financial toll of the pandemic and is pushing to publish it alongside the statistics for cases and deaths;
- Banks faced fury as it emerged Barclays has set aside £745 million for bonuses, more than last year, and Lloyds will let most of its 65,000 employees work from home until at least next spring;
- Psychologists said Covid-19 may cause birth rates to fall, people to stay single for longer and for women to become more promiscuous;
- The global death toll exceeded 1,147,000, while police fought with young protesters angry at restrictions in the Italian city of Naples and the Polish president Andrzej Duda revealed that he had tested positive for the virus.

Despite facing continued criticism, Mr Hancock has pushed through new laws to strip the European Medicines Agency of

the power to approve the vaccine if it is ready before the end of December. Instead, British watchdogs will be able to fast-track its production.

A health official said: 'Although we still think it most likely that the vaccine will be ready early next year, Matt wants the freedom to operate if it all moves more quickly.'

The official added that under changes to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, which took effect on October 16, the UK was 'no longer beholden to the EU process if a vaccine is developed before 2021 and has strong evidence proving it is safe, high quality and effective'.

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Despite facing continued criticism, Mr Hancock has pushed through new laws to strip the European Medicines Agency of the power to approve the vaccine if it is ready before the end of December. Instead, British watchdogs will be able to fast-track its production. (File image of an experimental Covid medicine being tested)

They added: 'Should a vaccine be available before the end of the year, we have put in place robust measures to allow the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to authorise the vaccine for UK patients. This will only happen if there is a strong public health justification and the EU process is

taking too long.'

The regulator will have autonomy to approve vaccines for the UK from 2021 in any case.

A senior Government source said: 'We have made sure that if a vaccine is proven safe and effective we won't be held back from deploying it by the need for approval from Brussels.'

NHS staff are most likely to receive the vaccine being developed by Oxford University and pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, which is in the final stages of trials.

The Government has already bought 100 million doses of the drug, which is administered in two doses. Under Government plans, frontline NHS staff and care home workers will be vaccinated first, followed by those aged over 80.

Human trials of the Oxford vaccine have been under way since April, involving about 20,000 volunteers worldwide. Scientists have reported a 'robust immune response' and no serious side-effects.

Last night, David Eltringham, managing director at George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust, said: 'We don't have a definite date for delivery of the vaccine, but we are making ready to deploy the vaccine from the beginning of December.'

Oxford's Covid jab 'has only been tested on 500 over-70s'

By STEPHEN ADAMS for the Mail On Sunday

Britain's front-running Covid vaccine has only been tested on about 500 elderly people in this country, raising questions about how effective it might be for a vital section of the population.

There are high hopes for Oxford University's 'ChAdOx' jab but only 1,000 or so of the 10,000 people recruited to the UK arm of

Oxford's trial are aged 70 or over. Half of them have been given the vaccine and half have had a placebo.

Last night, former immunisation 'tsar' Professor David Salisbury said the relatively small numbers might not be enough to generate a meaningful result.

'Clearly, if you've just got 500 vaccinated and you've given 500 the placebo and you are looking to see a significant difference in protection between the two... you may not get much out, in terms of data,' he said.

However, he added that early results appeared to show that older people given Covid vaccines developed good immune responses, so he was hopeful they would work well in the elderly.

The issue is critical because the virus is much more deadly in older people. An 80-year-old is about 1,000 times more likely to die of the virus than a 20-year-old, while five out of every six Covid-related deaths have been in the over-70s.

Earlier this month, Kate Bingham, head of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce, gave a clear signal that Covid vaccination is to be aimed at older people, even though vaccines are often less effective in that group as their immune systems tend to respond less strongly.

For example, the flu vaccine given in 2016-17 was completely ineffective in the over-65s, according to data from Public Health England. It did, however, work well in younger people.

As Oxford's Covid vaccine works in a different way, there is no specific reason to believe it will be a dud in the elderly but all the leading jab contenders are acutely aware of the issue.

Oxford has launched parallel trials in Brazil, South Africa and

the US – but only the American 'arm' is enrolling over-65s. AstraZeneca, which is handling the US trial enquiries, refused to say how many over-65s have been recruited there so far.

Britain's BLEAK mid-winter: UK records 23,012 more Covid cases - up 2,482 from yesterday - as 'Professor Lockdown' warns 'people WILL catch virus and die' if they are allowed to mix on Christmas Day

By KATIE WESTON for MailOnline

Britain has recorded 23,012 more Covid-19 cases, up 2,482 from yesterday, as Professor Neil Ferguson warns people 'will catch the virus and die' if they are allowed to mix on Christmas Day.

There were 174 deaths within 28 days of a positive test, down from 224 on Friday, including 33 deaths in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and 141 fatalities in England.

Meanwhile Professor Ferguson, whose modelling led to the original lockdown in March, said earlier today that schools may have to be closed to older pupils if restrictions on households mixing fail to stem the rise of infections, and that it will be a 'political judgement' as to whether regulations are relaxed over the festive season.

He told [BBC](#) Radio 4's Today Programme: 'It risks some transmission and there will be consequences of that. Some people will die because of getting infected on that day.

'But if it is only one or two days the impact is likely to be limited. So that is really a political judgment about the cost versus the benefits.'

It follows the prospects for a family Christmas descending into further confusion yesterday, as Downing Street insisted that

relatives should be able to gather - but a minister warned it will not be 'normal'.

Professor Ferguson added: 'That (banning households mixing) should have a significant effect but as yet we have been unable to see it definitively.

'If we go beyond that there is a limit to what we can do in terms of reducing contacts, short of starting to target, for instance, the older years in schools and sixth form colleges where we know older teenagers are able to transmit as adults.

'Of course nobody wants to start moving to virtual education and closing schools even partially. The challenge may be that we are not able to get on top of the transmission otherwise.'

Yesterday the UK announced 20,530 infections and the deaths of 224 people. Last Saturday the Department of Health recorded 150 coronavirus victims, with another 16,171 cases.

Figures tend to be lower over the weekend due to a delay in processing the tests at laboratories.

Prof: Families 'will catch Covid and die' if they mix at Christmas

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Meanwhile Dr Nick Scriven, former president of the Society for

Acute Medicine, warned last night that cancellations would be 'inevitable' across large areas of the health service.

He said: 'I feel it is unrealistic to expect trusts across the country to meet the set elective targets in the current climate.'

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The scientist (above), whose modelling led to the original lockdown in March, said of regulations being relaxed: 'Some people will die because of getting infected on that day'

NHS trusts in Chesterfield, Northampton, Newcastle and Nottingham confirmed yesterday that they were postponing at least some non-urgent activity, while Rotherham, Liverpool, Bradford and Plymouth have announced similar actions in the last week.

Dr Rob Harwood, the chair of the British Medical Association's (BMA) hospital consultants committee, said trusts will have 'no choice' but to limit planned treatments for patients.

He told [The Guardian](#): 'As we approach winter, it's likely that many trusts will have no choice but to continue to restrict their elective care services, which is incredibly worrying for both staff and patients, as backlogs increase and health conditions potentially worsen.'

Speaking on operations being cancelled, Dr Nick Scriven, the former president of the Society for Acute Medicine and a

consultant physician, added: 'I think this is going to be inevitable across large areas of the health service as the pandemic and winter coincide.

'We know bed numbers are low compared with other countries and with the necessary infection control processes the 'functioning' of what we have is slowed down across the board.'

Emily Robertshaw spoke about the difficulties her 14-year-old son will have to face after his life-changing cochlear implant surgery was delayed.

The mother told Channel 4 News: 'I have yet to actually to break the news to him and he's back later, and it's going to be really difficult. He's had to have a lot of support building up to the operation.

'He's got significant learning disabilities so the preparation has been huge.'

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Emily Robertshaw pictured with her 14-year-old son, whose life-changing cochlear implant surgery was delayed. The mother earlier said: 'I have yet to actually to break the news to him and he's back later, and it's going to be really difficult'

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Professor Ferguson said schools may have to be closed to older pupils if restrictions on households mixing fail to stem the rise of coronavirus infections (pictured: an empty classroom at Manor Park School and Nursery in Cheshire)

Mother's 'difficulties' after son's life-changing surgery cancelled

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Normal Christmas is 'wishful thinking', says SAGE adviser

The idea that 'we can carry on as we are' and have a normal Christmas 'is wishful thinking in the extreme', a Government scientific adviser has said.

Professor John Edmunds, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), said 'radical action' would be needed to stem the rise in coronavirus cases, particularly in regions with high incidence of the virus.

Prof Edmunds, who told MPs on Wednesday that tens of

thousands of deaths could occur during this wave of the pandemic, said further measures are needed to bring cases down.

He said that a circuit-breaker is needed across the whole country or at least in areas where incidence is high.

'The only way that we can have a relatively safe and normal Christmas is if we take radical action now to reduce incidence – at the very least in high incidence areas – and keep the incidence low across the country by implementing a package of measures to reduce social contacts,' he said.

'The notion that we can carry on as we are and have a Christmas that we can celebrate normally with friends and family is wishful thinking in the extreme.'

Professor Ferguson also warned that the NHS will be unable to cope if coronavirus cases continue to increase at the present rate, saying that while infections among 18 to 21-year-olds were falling, they were continuing to rise in other age groups.

He explained: 'Unfortunately, in every other age group case numbers continue to rise at about the same rate they were.'

'There are little hints of slowing, for instance in the North East of England, but we are not seeing the sort of slowing that we really need to to get on top of this.'

'It is a worrying situation. We now have 8,000 people in hospital with Covid. That is about a third of the level we were at the peak of the pandemic in March.'

'If the rate of growth continues as it is, it means that in a month's time we will be above that peak level in March and that is probably unsustainable.'

'We are in a critical time right now. The health system will not be

able to cope with this rate of growth for much longer.'

Professor John Edmunds, a member of the Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) and from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, has said his own group was looking at how interventions might work over the winter, but these had not been requested by the Government.

Of Sage, he said: 'We haven't specifically been asked to look at different policies quite honestly, so nobody's asking us to say 'well what should we do here?'

'So these are things that we've really taken on ourselves and decided to look at ourselves.'

Sage documents revealed yesterday that only one in ten of people stay at home for two weeks when they are told to self-isolate.

Out of those who were told they had been in close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 case, just 10.9 per cent isolated for the following 14 days.

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Government scientists claimed the crucial R rate has dropped slightly and an array of statistics revealed cases are no longer growing as quickly as they once were, although the epidemic is still growing (pictured: Boris Johnson in London yesterday)

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Britain's chief scientific adviser Sir Patrick Vallance, Mr Johnson and Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak take part in a coronavirus briefing on Thursday. The UK yesterday announced 20,530 more coronavirus cases

Christmas chaos as No10 says families CAN gather this year but minister warns it won't be 'normal'

The prospects for a family [Christmas](#) descended further into confusion yesterday as [Downing Street](#) insisted families should be able to gather - but a minister warned it will not be 'normal'.

The mixed messages came as politicians desperately try to get a grip on a surge in [coronavirus](#) cases - with lockdowns tightening in many areas.

There are tough restrictions on people meeting indoors across much of the UK, but asked whether families should abandon hope of meeting up, a No10 spokesman said: 'The PM has been clear previously that he is hopeful that in many ways we could be able to get some aspects of our lives back to normal by Christmas.

'As I say, we've been clear about the ambition to ensure that people may celebrate Christmas as a family this year.'

The comments contrasted with the stance taken by Treasury

Chief Secretary Steve Barclay in a round of interviews yesterday morning.

He said: 'I think few people expect it to be exactly as it would normally because we will be living with this virus for some time.'

The study, carried out by King's College London, was discussed at their meeting in September.

Researchers collected data from a sample of 31,000 people between March 2 and August 5.

Based on answers to an online questionnaire, the team found that only one in ten said they had isolated for two weeks when told to by the Test and Trace scheme.

This is much lower than the 65 per cent who said they intended to quarantine if they received the alert.

There are tough restrictions on people meeting indoors across much of the UK, but asked whether families should abandon hope of meeting up, a No10 spokesman previously said: 'The PM has been clear previously that he is hopeful that in many ways we could be able to get some aspects of our lives back to normal by Christmas.

'As I say, we've been clear about the ambition to ensure that people may celebrate Christmas as a family this year.'

The comments contrasted with the stance taken by Treasury Chief Secretary Steve Barclay in a round of interviews on Friday morning.

He said: 'I think few people expect it to be exactly as it would normally because we will be living with this virus for some time.

'And the chief medical officer and the chief scientific adviser have been very clear on that.

'But, your point really was about the ability of families to spend Christmas together – that is something we all hope to be in a position to do.'

A Government scientific adviser has said the idea that 'we can carry on as we are' and have a normal Christmas 'is wishful thinking in the extreme'.

Professor John Edmunds, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), said 'radical action' would be needed to stem the rise in coronavirus cases, particularly in regions with high incidence of the virus.

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Data reveals hospitalised Covid-19 patients are dying quicker than they were before - in a week, rather than two. Pictured is a timescale of when men aged between 40-49 (top) 50-59 (middle) and 60-69 (bottom) die after symptoms start (bottom axis is days since symptoms started). The orange is the first wave, and the blue is the second wave

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- PHE data shows the number of cases per 100,000 people in the worst hit regions appeared to turn and start falling in the week up to October 11 after at least five weeks of continuous increases. London has had considerably lower infection rates

Second Tory MP stokes free school meals fury

Two Tory MPs have landed themselves in hot water after controversial remarks about free school meals.

Selaine Saxby hinted in a Facebook post hospitality firms dishing out food should not get government help despite being battered by the pandemic.

Meanwhile Ben Bradley was accused of a 'stigmatisation of working class families' in an incendiary tweet that suggested cash went to 'crack dens and brothels'.

Both MPs have been roundly criticised, with Mr Bradley called to apologise while some said Ms Saxby should resign.

It comes as civil society minister Baroness Barran defended the decision not to extend free school meals through the school holidays.

In a show of unity, hospitality businesses and councils turned their backs on the government and said they will provide free meal vouchers through the break.

The move followed a high-profile campaign by Manchester United and England footballer Marcus Rashford, who was made an MBE for his efforts earlier this month.

Prof Edmunds, who told MPs on Wednesday that tens of thousands of deaths could occur during this wave of the pandemic, said further measures are needed to bring cases

down.

He said that a circuit-breaker is needed across the whole country or at least in areas where incidence is high.

'The only way that we can have a relatively safe and normal Christmas is if we take radical action now to reduce incidence – at the very least in high incidence areas – and keep the incidence low across the country by implementing a package of measures to reduce social contacts,' he said.

'The notion that we can carry on as we are and have a Christmas that we can celebrate normally with friends and family is wishful thinking in the extreme.'

Shadow chancellor Anneliese Dodds has said the only way to save the festive season was to impose a 'circuit breaker' lockdown now - something Labour has been demanding.

She told BBC Breakfast: 'The tier system so far has not worked to reduce infections.

'What we are looking at unfortunately – given the Government doesn't seem to be willing to shift on this when half-term holidays are coming up – what we are looking up to Christmas is an increasingly difficult situation in lots of parts of the country.'

Meanwhile, two Tory MPs have landed themselves in hot water after controversial remarks about free school meals.

Selaine Saxby hinted in a Facebook post hospitality firms dishing out food should not get government help despite being battered by the pandemic.

Ben Bradley was accused of a 'stigmatisation of working class families' in an incendiary tweet that suggested cash went to 'crack dens and brothels'.

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Selaine Saxby (left) hinted in a Facebook post hospitality firms dishing out food should not get government help despite being battered by the pandemic. Ben Bradley (right) was accused of a 'stigmatisation of working class families' in an incendiary tweet that suggested cash went to 'crack dens and brothels'

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Cafes, pubs and restaurants are offering free school meals for local children during half term after MPs rejected Marcus Rashford's campaign (pictured at FareShare in Manchester)

Only one in ten stay at home for two weeks when told to self isolate, Sage documents reveal

Only one in ten stay at home for two weeks after being told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, Sage documents have revealed.

Of those who were told they had been in close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 case, just 10.9 per cent isolated for the following 14 days.

The alarming figures undermine the premise of the Test and Trace system, which aims to prevent the spread of the virus.

The main reasons people gave for not properly quarantining were not developing symptoms, not thinking it was necessary to stay away from those outside the household, or popping to the shops for food.

The figures were revealed in documents by Sage – the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies.

The study, carried out by King's College London, was discussed at their meeting in September.

Researchers collected data from a sample of 31,000 people between March 2 and August 5.

Based on answers to an online questionnaire, the team found that only one in ten said they had isolated for two weeks when told to by the Test and Trace scheme.

This is much lower than the 65 per cent who said they intended to quarantine if they received the alert.

Both MPs have been roundly criticised, with Mr Bradley called to apologise while some said Ms Saxby should resign.

It comes as civil society minister Baroness Barran defended the

decision not to extend free school meals through the school holidays.

In a show of unity, hospitality businesses and councils turned their backs on the government and said they will provide free meal vouchers through the break.

The move followed a high-profile campaign by Manchester United and England footballer Marcus Rashford, who was made an MBE for his efforts earlier this month.

Greater Manchester moved into the highest alert level, Tier 3, on Friday morning, and Wales introduced its two-week 'firebreak' lockdown at 6pm last night.

Coventry, Stoke and Slough entered Tier 2 today, while talks between Westminster and civic leaders in Nottingham over possible Tier 3 restrictions were continuing yesterday.

The UK yesterday announced 20,530 more coronavirus cases and the deaths of 224 people but official data suggests the country's outbreak may finally be slowing down.

Positive tests are up 31 per cent on last Friday, when there were 15,650, and deaths have surged by 65 per cent in a week.

But Government scientists claimed the crucial R rate has dropped slightly and an array of statistics revealed cases are no longer growing as quickly as they once were, although the epidemic is still growing.

SAGE estimates the reproduction rate for the UK has fallen for the first time in a month, from between 1.3-1.5 to 1.2-1.4. The number - the key measure at the heart of Number 10's plan to control the virus - must stay below one, or the outbreak will continue to grow.

Scientific advisers have also been warned that the coronavirus

is mutating and could become more infectious, according to SAGE papers.

The New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) said the UK did not have the capability to research these mutations in depth and whether they would be harmful.

It's one of a number of papers released by the Government yesterday that give an insight into how scientists are steering the pandemic.

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Only one in ten stay at home for two weeks after being told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, Sage documents have revealed. The alarming figures undermine the premise of the Test and Trace system (file photo)

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The main reasons people gave for not properly quarantining were not developing symptoms, not thinking it was necessary to

stay away from those outside the household, or popping to the shops for food (file photo)

The SAGE files: Papers presented to Government claim Covid-19 is mutating

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The idea was explored in a scientific report handed to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), which then presents the findings to the Government to help inform public health policy.

Another document shows how scientists have found that London has so far avoided a 'second wave' on the scale of those happening in other major cities in England, such as Liverpool and Manchester.

Experts speculate this is because more of the capital's population has some form of immunity to the coronavirus after having it already, compared to the North West, which did not have infections as high as London in the first wave.

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Experts speculate this is because more of the capital's population has some form of immunity to the coronavirus after having it already, compared to the North West, which did not have infections as high as London in the first wave.

Government research, supported by Imperial College London, reveals that in the capital, there are twice the number of people with antibodies than the national average (13 per cent), while the South West has the lowest (three per cent).

This has given them some form of immunity to catching the coronavirus again, or at least being protected from anything other than mild disease, it is thought.

The number of people admitted to hospital in London over the last week was 464 — roughly twice as high as at the beginning of the month. But this is well behind the peak of the first wave, when 883 people were admitted to hospital in a single day in March, analysis by the Evening Standard revealed.

In a meeting on September 10, before the rule of six or tiered lockdown was implemented to control the rapid increase in cases, scientists discussed the current state of the crisis.

The minutes read: 'Major cities, excluding London, appear to be experiencing faster increases in transmission than other areas.

'Though there remains variability between areas, it is almost certain that R is greater than 1 across large parts of England.

'This suggests that the epidemic is moving from being concentrated in local outbreaks to more widespread transmission.'

MANCHESTER TO REOPEN NIGHTINGALE HOSPITAL

The NHS Nightingale Hospital in Manchester will reopen in the next week as the city heads into a local lockdown.

A local NHS boss today announced the temporary hospital, set up in the Manchester Central Conference Centre, will be brought back into use before the end of next week. It will become the first one in England to reopen.

It had closed in June when the first wave of the UK's outbreak burned out, but there are now fears that local hospitals will be inundated with Covid patients again.

The Nightingale will not be used to treat people seriously ill with coronavirus but instead opened to add capacity for 'additional rehabilitation'.

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The NHS Nightingale for the North West was mothballed in June when the last coronavirus patient from the UK's first wave was discharged. Local health bosses say it will reopen by the end of next week

The city is entering Tier Three lockdown rules from midnight on

Friday after a week of wrangling between the Government and the mayor, Andy Burnham, because the city has one of the highest infection rates in England.

In an announcement this morning, Professor Jane Eddleston, the boss of the Manchester University NHS Trust, confirmed the Nightingale would reopen.

'We will be opening the Nightingale, we expect that to be towards the end of next week,' she said.

'The Nightingale will not be used as a critical care facility and neither was it in the first phase, it will be used as a facility for patients to have additional rehabilitation.'

Professor Eddleston said there are around 95 people in intensive care beds with Covid-19 in the city, which is slightly more than a third of the 260 at the peak of the epidemic in April.

Despite decreases in coronavirus case numbers the NHS has had to provide beds for patients with the disease throughout the summer, she said. The health service in the area has set up Covid-free zones so it can carry on treating other patients.

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People are pictured leaving Cardiff city centre as the pubs close before Wales entered a two-week 'firebreak' lockdown at 6pm

on Friday

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Revellers in Sheffield are out on the town for one last night tonight before their city is placed under the strictest lockdown measures, tier three