

COVID-19 PANDEMIC TIMELINE

December 2019

'Patient Zero' is recorded suffering from symptoms of an illness later to be identified as Covid-19. Patient Zero is the term used to refer to the first documented patient in an epidemic. The man lived in Wuhan, China.



15th/16th December 2019

The first recorded hospital admission with Covid-19 in Wuhan, China.

31st December 2019

China informs the World Health Organisation about a cluster of cases of 'pneumonia with an unknown cause'.

3rd January 2020

China formally notifies US of outbreak.

7th January 2020

Chinese authorities identify the pneumonia outbreak to be caused by a novel type of coronavirus.

9th January 2020

First reported death from coronavirus in China.

23 January 2020

Lockdown begins - Wuhan is locked down in an attempt to halt the spread of the disease.

30 January 2020

The WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declares the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.

31st January 2020

UK confirms its first coronavirus infections.

4th February 2020

British-registered Diamond Princess is the first cruise ship to have a major outbreak on board, with the ship quarantined at Yokohama from 4 February 2020 for approximately one month. Over 700 people become infected, and 12 people die.



10th February 2020

The UK Government declares Corona Virus an 'imminent threat' to public health, giving public health officials the power to quarantine people with symptoms.

11th February 2020

WHO announces "COVID-19" to be the name of the new disease



13th February 2020

The first case of Coronavirus in London is confirmed, bringing the total number to 9



14th February 2020

First death in Europe is recorded in France.

23rd February 2020

Italy has a major surge in cases and many towns are locked down. This symbolises the first major outbreak in Europe.



5th March 2020

First death in the UK from Coronavirus (although later reports claim the first death may have been earlier, on 27th February)

11th March 2020

Covid-19 is declared a world pandemic by WHO.

15th March 2020

Infected cases in the UK hit 1372 and 35 people have died.

16th March 2020

UK Government introduces social distancing measures which include -

- Avoiding contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
- Avoiding non-essential use of public transport.
- Working from home where possible.
- Avoiding gatherings with friends and family.
- Using telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential service.

16th March 2020

Boris Johnson begins daily press conferences.

19th March 2020

English Government announces schools to close, except for children of key workers and those at risk.

20th March 2020

The UK Government orders all pubs, restaurants, gyms and other social venues to close. The Government announces it will pay 80% of salary for staff who are kept on by their employer, up to £2,500 a month in a bid to stop workers being laid off due to the crisis.

23rd March 2020

The UK is put into lockdown. Only essential travel and one form of exercise a day are permitted.



24th March 2020

UK death toll reaches 422.

25th March 2020

Prince Charles tests positive for coronavirus.



26th March 2020

The UK 'claps for carers' for the first time. This becomes a weekly tradition at 8pm on Thursdays to show support for frontline workers.

The national 'Light it Blue' campaign begins, with many of the country's major landmarks illuminated in blue, including the Gateshead Millennium Bridge.



27th March 2020

Prime minister Boris Johnson and health and social care secretary Matt Hancock begin self-isolating after developing mild symptoms and testing positive for COVID-19.

2nd April 2020

The number of coronavirus infections worldwide surpasses 1 million with the disease causing more than 51,000 deaths. Just one week earlier the total number had been 500,000.



3rd April 2020

The Prince of Wales opens the new NHS Nightingale hospital at the ExCeL centre in London via a video link from his Scottish residence at Birkhall. It will treat up to 4,000 coronavirus patients at a time.

5th April 2020

Queen Elizabeth addresses the nation, ending by echoing the words of the Vera Lynn wartime song, "We will meet again".

6th April 2020

Boris Johnson, who has been admitted to St Thomas's Hospital with persistent symptoms of coronavirus, is moved to Intensive Care. He is not put on a ventilator but later speaks of needing 'litres of oxygen'.

9th April 2020

The number of people who have died from complications of COVID-19 in the UK increases by 938 in 24 hours - the largest daily increase since the outbreak. 60,733 people have now tested positive for the virus in the UK and 7,097 of those hospitalised have died.

10th April 2020

World-wide deaths reach 100,000 having doubled in a week.

12th April 2020

Boris Johnson is released from hospital to continue his recovery at Chequers.

13th April 2020

UK cases increase to 84,279 and 10,621 people are confirmed to have died.

13th- 15th April 2020

Some countries in Europe ease lock down. Austria plans to open some DIY stores. Italy plans to reopen some shops and Spain gets ready to allow some construction and factory employees to go back to work.

16th April 2020

UK Ministers extend lockdown for a further 3 weeks.



19th April 2020

Online concert – ‘One World: Together at Home’ with performances from artists including The Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, Taylor Swift and Billie Eilish.

20th April 2020

UK cases increase to 124,743 and 16,509 people are confirmed to have died.

22nd April 2020

Trials start for a vaccine.



24th April 2020

Tests become available for front line workers, key workers and health care staff and their families to see if they currently have the virus.

27th April 2020

Coronavirus UK death toll surpasses 21,000 in hospitals, but the country sees the smallest daily increase since March.

28th April 2020

A minute’s silence is held at 11am to remember key workers who have lost their lives.



29th April 2020

Boris Johnson announces birth of Baby Boy later named Wilfred Lawrie Nicholas Johnson. Nicholas is a tribute to Dr Nick Price and Dr Nick Hart - the two doctors credited with saving Boris' life.

30th April 2020

Captain Tom Moore, who has raised over £1 million for the NHS by walking laps of his garden, turns 100. He has become a National Hero and is promoted to Colonel to honour his efforts.

30th April 2020

Boris Johnson returns to the daily briefings after recovering from Covid-19. He delivers the news that the UK has now reached the peak and cases are decreasing. However, he warns that we need to tread very carefully so as not to undo all the good work and cause a second peak. Boris explains that coming out of lockdown needs to be handled very carefully to avoid a second wave.

30th April 2020

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge is illuminated green and blue, to continue the tradition of the 'Light it Blue' campaign to thank the NHS plus to show support for social care workers.

NHS staff gather in the street during the weekly 'Clap for Carers' in tribute to Sunderland nurse Fiona Anderson, who lost her life to covid-19 on 26th April. Fiona was a community staff nurse at the Grindon Lane Primary Care Centre.

5th May 2020

The UK now has the highest number of coronavirus deaths in Europe with 29,427 deaths. The latest total for Italy, previously the highest in Europe, stands at 29,315. We have the second highest death toll from coronavirus world-wide.

8th May 2020

Many celebrated the 75th anniversary of VE Day at home, with garden parties and socially distanced street parties. A 2 minute silence was observed at 11am, a Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War 2 at 3pm, and at 9pm the Queen's message was followed by a rendition of 'We'll Meet Again.' The Gateshead Millennium Bridge was illuminated red, white and blue.



10th May 2020

Boris Johnson sets out a three step plan to ease lockdown in the UK.

Step 1 - Those who can't work from home are encouraged to go back to work. We can all take more, even unlimited, exercise.

Step 2 - at the earliest by 1 June (after half term) the Government intends to introduce a phased reopening of shops and primary schools. The first to go back will be early years settings, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Step 3 – at the earliest by July – the Government hopes to reopen at least some of the hospitality industry as long as they're safe and enforce social distancing.

16th May 2020

The joint funeral of a South Shields nurse and his parents was held, with NHS staff and emergency workers lining the streets in tribute on John Reid Road outside South Tyneside Hospital. Staff nurse Keith Dunnington worked at the QE Gateshead and lost his life to covid-19 on 19th April, followed by both of his parents who contracted the virus.

19th May 2020

Gateshead Council advises residents to continue to stay at home as much as possible, due to the North East's high rate of infection 'R'. The Government's centralised approach to easing lockdown restrictions is criticised as reckless for not taking into account regional variations.