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Covid live: percentage testing positive increases across most of England; Pfizer says jab shows 91% efficacy in children

Covid в прямому ефірі: відсоток позитивних тестів зріс на більшій частині території Англії; Pfizer каже, що джеб демонструє 91% ефективність у дітей

Сплеск Covid в Україні продовжується, оскільки країна знову встановила рекорди за щоденною кількістю смертей і випадків захворювання: (на 21.10.) 23 785 випадків та 614 смертей. Україна перейшла до того, щоб тестування та вакцинація на Covid була доступною на основних залізничних вокзалах по всій Україні, включаючи Київ, Львів, Харків, Одесу та Дніпро. Подібні заклади відкрили в торгових центрах. Міністерство охорони здоров'я України повідомило, що 95% тих, кого госпіталізовано з Covid-19 минулого тижня, не були щеплені. В Україні 6,7 мільйона людей повністю вакциновані, а 8,3 мільйона отримали одну дозу.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2021/oct/22/covid-live-news-up-to-18000-healthcare-workers-killed-by-virus-who-says-melbourne-emerges-from-long-lockdown?page=with:block-6172619d8f08ba99659de532

One thing regular readers will have noted is that I occasionally pop in this map that seems to indicate the extent to which the UK's caseload is an outlier in the western end of Europe, while also showing the surge that is building up towards the east of the continent. It can sometimes be quite the cognitive dissonance for a journalist to be reporting that Russia – with a much larger population and a much lower caseload than the UK – is going into a week of work-free lockdown to try and break transmission, while members of the UK government are failing to follow their own public health advice over face mask wearing, even as daily Covid cases top 50,000.I noted this piece from Politico by Ashleigh Furlong late yesterday afternoon, which neatly summed up one view of what the UK is doing wrong from abroad:*"The UK is an outlier, because it does have quite high coverage of vaccination — and is still having 45,000 cases per day," said Quique Bassat, a pediatrician at the Barcelona Institute for Global health.Yet after Britain marked "freedom day" in July, it was to be expected that there would be a "persistence of transmission as opposed to other countries which have maintained much more stringent preventive measures," said Bassat."In two or three weeks, [Spain] got about 70 percent of the teenagers vaccinated and that dramatically decreased transmission of the fifth wave precisely because it was affecting mostly the younger people," said the Barcelona Institute for Global Health's Bassat. The UK has been much slower, with the jab only being widely offered to teens from mid-September.* Read more here: **Politico – Britain's skyrocketing coronavirus cases make it an outlier in Western Europe**

6h ago07:56

On a policy front, one things that did emerge in the UK from government care minister **Gillian Keegan**'s Sky News interview is that she confirmed that any decision to cut the period of time people have to wait to be eligible for a booster jab – that is currently six months – would

depend on medical advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). She said:*They've advised us six months. Of course they continually look at the data but they are the only people who can really answer this question. If they advise us, our job then would be to get ready to do whatever they say. But at the moment it is six months. It is not unknown, the JCVI have changed over periods of time and we have reacted.*

6h ago 07:48

Hong Kong authorities prevented a Royal Caribbean cruise ship from departing the city's terminal late on Thursday as a crew member was suspected to have Covid-19 after routine testing, the government and the cruise operator said. Reuters report that the Spectrum of the Seas ship was scheduled to begin a "cruise to nowhere" journey in nearby waters, restricted to half capacity and only for fully vaccinated residents who tested negative for the virus 48 hours prior to the trip.Reuters report that about 1,000 passengers out of a total of 1,200 had already boarded the ship before the four-night trip was cancelled. All have to undergo compulsory testing but were allowed to leave the ship as they did not have direct contact with the crew member."In a routine Covid-19 test on crew members today, we identified one crew member who tested indeterminate. Following secondary sample testing, the test resulted preliminary positive for Covid-19," Royal Caribbean said in a statement on Facebook.

6h ago 07:45

UK minister: we should not make wearing face masks 'this sign of virtue'

In the UK, government care minister **Gillian Keegan** has been on Sky News. She was given an absolutely torrid time by Kay Burley over the situation where health secretary Sajid Javid had given a press conference this week saying MPs had a role to play in setting an example over the use of face masks, and then has been roundly ignored by his fellow Conservative MPs who continue to attend parliament maskless, even though it is an enclosed indoor space filled with a lot of people. She said of mask wearing:*It's a personal choice, but most of us are wearing masks. I mean, on the tube, most of us are wearing masks. I don't know if you've seen that. And I think as more and more it gets into winter, I've had a cough, so I've been wearing a mask, and having a cough is socially unacceptable now, you know you feel terrible. So I think it is a personal choiceMany, many people do wear masks, and many people, when you go out into meetings – I was in care homes yesterday – everybody was wearing masks. But it's about personal choice, you know, we're not the sort of country that tells you what you need to wear, you know, it is about personal choice. We all know the pros and cons of this. We've spent 18-19 months educating ourselves. So we all know what to do, and you know it's not for the government really to mandate it.*There may be a few Londoners, like myself, having a little puzzled look to themselves at the idea that most people on the tube continue to wear masks – certainly if you have to travel later in the evening that is anecdotally very much not the case.In the interview, Burley then reminded Keegan that in fact in Scotland and Wales it is mandatory to wear masks on public transport and in certain indoor settings, asking the minister: "In Scotland, it's mandatory to wear a mask on public transport and also within shops. It is also the case in Wales. So they're wrong to do that?"Keegan then tried to change the subject back to the booster jab programme. She was then asked about the comments of leader of the house Jacob Rees-Mogg that Conservative MPs don't need masks because of the convivial and fraternal atmosphere. She was asked: "Does that mean if you are convivial and fraternal you don't get Covid?"Her reply: "No, you know, everybody knows that you can get Covid from anybody."Asked

"So you are not setting an example?" she said*No, and to be honest, we didn't throughout much of the summer. Not many of us have had masks on. I mean, I had a mask on yesterday just because again I was coughing and Theresa May has had one all along because she's diabetic. There's actually a number of people who have health concerns. If I sit next to anybody who has a mask on, I always put a mask on, because obviously they're concerned about themselves, but you'll find more and more as we go into winter, people will be wearing masks, but we shouldn't make it this sign of virtue.*The minister also complained that "it's not very comfortable sitting there for hours either in a mask" which will not come as news to any of the many people in the UK who have been wearing face masks to help protect their colleagues from exposure to Covid for many, many months now. We reported yesterday that **China** had taken action yesterday suspending flights and imposing other restrictions after an outbreak of Covid which authorities said had been caused by an elderly couple of tourists travelling through the country.Today, Reuters report that China's authorities have confirmed 43 new Covid cases, up slightly from 41 the day before.The National Health Commission said 28 were locally transmitted cases compared with 13 a day earlier, and the new local cases were reported in the provinces of Gansu, Shaanxi, Guizhou and Qinghai, the autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia and Ningxia and the city of Beijing.Officially the country recorded no new Covid deaths in the last 24 hours, leaving China, with a total population of 1.4 billion, and the first place that Covid-19 was detected, with an official death toll of 4.636.

7h ago07:22

Nearly one-third of refugees at Melbourne detention hotel test positive for Covid

Nearly one-third of refugees and asylum seekers detained by the government at Melbourne's Park hotel have tested positive for Covid-19, amid claims in court an ambulance was turned away from the hotel without being allowed to see a patient. With the outbreak affecting 15 of 46 men, and expected to grow further still, at least one refugee has been taken to hospital by ambulance.An urgent hearing in the federal circuit court was convened on Thursday after a Covid-positive refugee – known in court documents as FGS20 – sought orders allowing him to be assessed by ambulance paramedics. The court heard a dispute over whether an ambulance was turned away from the hotel without being granted access, and FGS20 told "never to call an ambulance again".Evidence put to the court stated that FGS20 had an ambulance called for him by a friend after concerns about his deteriorating condition, including falling blood-oxygen levels, and difficulty breathing and speaking."He was very distressed, very unwell," the friend's statement to the court said. "I called the ambulance. They attended the hotel but were not permitted to enter. He was told by the nurse never to call the ambulance again."This was contested by the government, which told the court, while several ambulances had been called for those detained, and had examined them, the ambulance for FGS20 had not yet arrived and he had not yet been assessed.**Read more of Ben Doherty's report here: Nearly one-third of refugees at Melbourne detention hotel test positive for Covid and one hospitalised**

7h ago07:16

Cancer patients in UK face 'perfect storm' as Covid piles pressure on NHS

Progress in clearing the NHS cancer treatment backlog in England has gone into reverse amid high Covid cases and staff shortages, analysis suggests. With rising coronavirus hospitalisations also now piling pressure on the health service, experts have warned patients

should brace themselves for worse to come as a "perfect storm" looms in cancer care.The NHS has been striving to catch up with the pandemic backlog of cancer care but the analysis by Macmillan Cancer Support of official data suggests the drive has recently suffered a setback, with growing numbers of potential cancer diagnoses missed.Four key cancer measures have fallen back, with two dropping to their worst ever recorded level.Figures published by NHS England, and analysed by Macmillan for the Guardian, show the number of patients starting treatment in August following a decision to treat fell to 25,800. The figure was above 27,000 in June and July. The proportion of patients who began treatment within one month of the decision to treat fell to 93.7% – the lowest percentage ever recorded.Data published last week also shows that in August there was a record-high number of patients forced to wait for more than two months after an urgent referral from their GP before they started cancer treatment. According to Macmillan, 4,075 patients only began treatment two months after being referred, the highest figure recorded.**Read more of our health editor Andrew Gregory's report here: Cancer patients face 'perfect storm' as Covid piles pressure on NHSCancer patients face 'perfect storm' as Covid piles pressure on NHS**

7h ago07:13

Hi, it is Martin Belam here in London. The government's care minister Gillian Keegan is getting lambasted on Sky News about Conservative MPs failing to wear masks in parliament. I'll have some choice quotes from that in a moment.

7h ago07:09

Ukraine sets new daily records for deaths and cases

The Covid surge in Ukraine continues as the country again set records for the daily number of deaths and cases: 23,785 cases and 614 deaths. It was the second successive day the country had set records. The country has moved to make Covid testing and vaccinations available at major train stations around Ukraine including Kyiv, Lviv, Kjarkiv, Odesa and Dnipro. They have also opened similar facilities in shopping malls. A Ukrainian health ministry on Facebook yesterday stated that 95% of those hospitalized with Covid-19 last week were not vaccinated. Ukraine has a population of 44 million, of which 6.7 million are fully vaccinated and 8.3 million have received at least one dose.

7h ago06:51

Hi and welcome back to today's Covid blog where we will bring you all the significant new developments as they happen.I'm Samantha Lock reporting from Sydney, Australia, and I'll be with you for the next hour or so.Once deemed the world's most liveable city seven times in a row, Melbourne, Australia, found itself in what many believe to be the world's longest lockdown.After six seperate stretches totalling 262 days of stay-at-home orders, the city has finally surged back to life after restrictions were lifted today and bars, pubs, cafes and restaurants opened their doors once again.**New Zealand** sets new 90% vaccination target as prime minister Jacinda Ardern vows to only life most restrictions when country reaches the milestone.**UK** prime minister Boris Johnson resists calls to activate 'plan B' as daily Covid cases top 50,000. "The numbers of infections are high but we are within the parameters of what the predictions were, what Spi-M [modelling group] and the others said we would be at this stage given the steps we are taking. We are sticking with our plan," Johnson told reporters.Infections in UK at highest level since July with 52,009 new coronavirus cases. That is the highest daily

total on this measure, and the first time the daily tally has topped 50,000, for more than three months.Jeremy Hunt has called for the government to cut the time required between Covid vaccine doses to allow more booster jabs to be given. Relaxing six-month gap between second and third doses would speed up rollout, the former health secretary said.**Melbourne, Australia**, ends its sixth lockdown today after spending 267 days following stay-at-home orders, thought to be the longest lockdown in the world. **Moscow** announces a one-week nationwide lockdown as Russia Covid deaths rise. The country registered its highest daily number of coronavirus deaths and infections since the start of the pandemic.UK's neighbours criticise British Covid policies as cases begin to surge across EU.Only 14% of promised Covid vaccine doses reach poorest nations, a report has revealed. Of 1.8bn doses pledged by wealthy nations, just 261m (14%) have arrived in low-income countries, according to the analysis by the People's Vaccine alliance, a coalition of groups that includes Oxfam, ActionAid and Amnesty International.**WHO** estimates up to 180,000 health workers may have died from Covid in the period between January 2020 to May 2021, while calling for more health workers to be fully vaccinated.