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**I. SUMMARY**

**EUROPEAN UNION**



**Population:** 514,503,016 (including the UK)

**Number of cases:** 1,820,986 (including the UK)

**Number of deaths:** 183,848

- The European Commission has [indicated](#) that preliminary talks for a prospective contract to purchase 300 million doses of a future COVID-19 vaccine from Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) are being held.
- The exploratory talks that concluded today (10 August) are intended to result in an Advance Purchase Agreement to be financed with the Emergency Support Instrument.
- On 6 August, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [published](#) a technical report on COVID-19 in children and the role of school settings in COVID-19 transmission. Evidence suggests that reopening schools has not been associated with significant increases in community transmission.
- The Joint Staff Working Document on the Report on the implementation of the 2016 Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats, and the 2018 Joint Communication on increasing

resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats, has been [published](#) by the European Commission.

- The report shows good progress in EU-level coordination on countering hybrid threats, and good progress in supporting Member States' efforts to counter hybrid threats.
- The Joint Staff Working Document on Mapping of measures related to enhancing resilience and countering hybrid threats was [published](#) by the European Commission.
- The objective of the present mapping is to provide a comprehensive inventory of countering hybrid threats-related measures at EU level and to list the corresponding policy and legal documents.

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## FRANCE

**Population:** 67,063,703

**Number of cases:** 197,921

**Number of deaths:** 30,324 (*including retirement homes*)

- The General Directorate for Health (DGS) has reminded people to limit the use of cooling fans in shared spaces amid the ongoing, strong heatwave, in light of the role fans can play in spreading the airborne virus.
- Following a call of the European Commission, a special procedure to allow the reunion of binational couples separated by the health crisis will soon be put in place in France.
- The Paris region is following the initiative of the Lille metropolitan area in mandating the donning of face masks in all public areas, both indoors and outside.
- The decision to scale up public health measures was taken in light of the fact the rate of positive tests reaching 2.4 percent in the Ile-de-France region, with the national average marginally lower, at 1.6 percent.
- The latest version of the back-to-school health protocol applicable in schools and educational establishments was put online by the Ministry of National Education on (Friday 7 August).

- Physical distancing will no longer be compulsory when it is not physically possible, or does not allow for the accommodation of all pupils. Moreover, the limitation on mixing between groups and classes of pupils is no longer compulsory.

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## GERMANY



<b>Population:</b>	83,042,200
<b>Number of cases:</b>	216,327
<b>Number of deaths:</b>	9,197

- The President of the Federal Institute for Vaccines, Klaus Cichutek, has indicated he is optimistic about the rapid development of a COVID-19 vaccine. In an interview with the German news channel ZDF, Cichutek highlighted the positive results from the initial phases of clinical trials, further noting several ongoing clinical trials have induced a specific immune response against COVID-19 in the human body.
- On Saturday (8 August), Germany introduced mandatory COVID-19 tests for travellers returning from high-risk countries. Returnees are obliged to submit proof of a negative test result issued in the preceding 48 hours. Otherwise, they are required to take a free COVID-19 test at the airport, train station or border region within 72 hours after arrival. Returnees who refuse to take a test receive a fine of up to €25,000.
- On Thursday (6 August), Germany reported more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases. The threshold of 1,000 new infections per day was last exceeded in May. Over the last month, the number of cases in Germany had been declining until three weeks ago, when the number of COVID-19 began to increase again.

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## ITALY



**Population:** 60,453,573

**Number of cases:** 250,566

**Number of deaths:** 35,205

- Italian authorities have warned citizens to remain cautious as the number of COVID-19 infections has gone up over the last few weeks.
- On Friday (7 August), the Council of Ministers approved the Government's new 'August-decree', which features a range of measures to help struggling businesses and allocating new funds to the health sector, schools, and local authorities.
- Last Monday (3 August), the Italian Ministry of Health and the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) presented the first results of the seroprevalence survey. According to the results, 2.5 percent of the Italian population has come into contact with the virus and may have developed antibodies, amounting to around 1,482,000 Italians. The results suggest that six times more Italians have come into contact with the virus than the number of confirmed cases identified so far suggests.
- The governor of the region of Lazio, Nicola Zingaretti, on Friday indicated the first human trials of a vaccine developed by an Italian research team will start in the Rome region. The trials will take place at the Rome Spallanzani hospital for infectious diseases, and will proceed later this month. The test is funded by the Lazio region, with an investment of €5 million, together with the Italian Ministry for Research.
- According to official numbers from the Italian National Institute of Statistics, foreign trade bounced back in June 2020. Imports increased by 16.1 percent, and exports by 14.4 percent, relative to May 2020. Compared with June last year, however, foreign trade remains much more limited.

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## SPAIN



<b>Population:</b>	47,329,981
<b>Number of cases:</b>	314,362 (PCR-based test)
<b>Number of deaths:</b>	28,503

- Last Monday (3 August), the Government of Spain [signed an agreement](#) with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces ([FEMP](#)) to promote the role of municipalities in the social and economic recovery from the pandemic. The agreement includes a broad set of measures aiming at strengthening the local autonomy of city councils.
- On Tuesday, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced a shock plan to achieve the full economic recovery of Spain. According to economic forecasts outlined by the Government, the plan will be completed by 2023. In connection with the plan, a state-level plan for research, development and innovation, and a Spanish strategy for science, technology and innovation to run from 2021 through 2027, will be approved.
- The regional Health Ministry of Catalonia will undertake a mass screening programme across three municipalities. The programme will be the first one to be carried out in Spain and will be completed using PCR tests.
- On Thursday (6 August), the Basque country confirmed the second wave of COVID-19 in the region, following a significant rise in cases. On the same date, a further town in Castilla y León was placed in confinement due to a surge in infections. The lockdown went into effect on Friday and introduced measures similar to Phase 1 of the [national de-escalation plan](#).
- Epidemiologists and public health experts published [a letter in The Lancet](#) on Thursday calling for independent review of the Covid-19 response in Spain, in light of the new tide of cases again making Spain one of the world's hardest-hit countries.
- A COVID-19 tracing app will start to run in several regions from today (10 August), after carrying out a 30-day pilot programme in La Gomera, Canary Islands. This app is set to be used in regions where an increasing number of cases are reported and where the flow of tourists is greater.

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## UNITED KINGDOM



**Population:** 66,796,807

**Number of cases:** 310,825

**Number of deaths:** 46,574

- Face coverings have been mandated in museums, places of worship and aquariums in both England and Scotland, while people in Northern Ireland are from today (10 August) required to don face coverings in all public enclosed spaces.
- The UK Government has introduced optional badges for vulnerable groups to indicate the wearer may have difficulties or concerns in maintaining social distancing, to enable such groups to access public spaces and transport.
- Local lockdown measures have been introduced in the English city of Preston. Households are now banned from meeting one another in private settings, and are banned from mixing in pubs.
- Similar measures have been introduced in the Scottish city of Aberdeen, though the Scottish Government has opted to close bars, restaurants and cafes in the city after an outbreak was linked to the night-time economy, in a stricter move than corresponding lockdowns south of the border.
- The UK Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has recommended that contact tracing contracts with private firms should be cancelled, and contracts shifted to recruitment on a local authority level.
- Prior to SAGE's call, local authorities including the cities of Blackburn and Bradford have led moves to instigate local contact tracing programmes, which will initially supplement the national tracing programme.
- A two-week quarantine has been mandated across the UK for all new arrivals from Belgium, Andorra and the Bahamas, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak has signalled the Government is ready to add more countries to the quarantine list.

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## II. EUROPEAN UNION

- The European Commission has published a [press release](#) stating that preliminary talks for a planned contract to purchase 300 million doses of a future COVID-19 vaccine from Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) are being held. A [framework](#) agreement would mean the Commission would pay part of the company's development costs, in return receiving the right to purchase the doses on behalf of all EU Member States.
- Sanofi and GSK have indicated they seek to apply for approval for their vaccine candidate in June 2021, according to current planning. The exploratory talks concluding today are intended to result in an Advance Purchase Agreement to be financed with the Emergency Support Instrument.
- On Thursday (6 August), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [published](#) a technical report on COVID-19 in children, and the role of school settings in COVID-19 transmission. The report includes epidemiological and disease characteristics and outlines the conflicting evidence outlined in papers published on the impact of school closures and reopening on community transmission levels, though the report does suggest the evidence broadly indicates that the reopening of schools has not been associated with significant increases in community transmission.
- The Joint Staff Working Document on the Report on the implementation of the 2016 Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats, and the 2018 Joint Communication on increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats, has been [published](#) by the European Commission. The report shows good progress on both EU-level coordination and EU support to Member States' efforts on countering hybrid threats.
- The Joint Staff Working Document on the mapping of measures related to enhancing resilience and countering hybrid threats has been [published](#) by the European Commission. The objective of the present mapping is to provide a comprehensive inventory of measures related to the countering of hybrid threats at the EU level, and to list the corresponding policy and legal documents.

## III. FRANCE

- Despite the fact that nine departments, including Paris, were placed on the red heatwave alert, and 53 on orange alert, on Friday (7 August), the Directorate General for Health (DGS) reminded people to avoid using collective cooling fans in view of their contribution to the circulation of the virus.
- These recommendations are being made in the midst of a resurgence of the epidemic, particularly for people aged 20-30, where the detection of the virus is made difficult by the frequent absence of symptoms: In the space of 24 hours between Thursday 8 August and Friday 9 August, 2,288 new

COVID-19 contaminations were recorded in France. This is a marked acceleration compared with the previous day, when the country counted 1,604 new cases.

- A special procedure to allow the reunion of binational couples separated by the health crisis will soon be put in place in France, as announced by the Secretary of State for Tourism, Jean-Baptiste Lemoigne, on Friday. This decision was taken following the European Commission's call on Friday for all Member States to allow the entry into the EU of unmarried partners of European citizens and residents, as an exception to the travel restrictions on third-party countries.
- The Paris region is following the initiative of the Lille metropolitan area in making the wearing of face masks compulsory in all public areas, both indoors and outside. Thus, from today (10 August), the wearing of masks has been made compulsory in touristic areas, open markets or busy shopping streets in an attempt to temper the rising tide of COVID-19 cases. This decision was taken with the rate of positive tests reaching 2.4 percent in the Ile-de-France region, while national average is marginally lower, at 1.6 percent.
- The latest version of the back-to-school health protocol, applicable in schools and educational establishments, was put online by the Ministry of National Education on Friday. The seven-page document, which has not been the subject of any official communication to the general public, was sent to academy rectors on 20 July. Unless there is a sudden change in the epidemic situation, this version should be the final iteration ahead of the start of the new school year.
- The Ministry has decided that physical distancing will no longer be compulsory when it is not physically possible or does not allow for the accommodation of all pupils. Moreover, the limitation of mixing between groups and classes of pupils is similarly no longer compulsory.

## IV. ITALY

- Italian authorities have warned citizens to remain cautious as the number of COVID-19 infections has [gone up over the last weeks](#). “Widespread transmission of the virus persists and if the conditions are favourable, can lead to significant outbreaks”, said the Italian Ministry of Health. The rise is partly due to increased screening and detection, and to travellers coming from abroad, according to authorities.
- On Friday (7 August), the Council of Ministers approved the [Government's new 'August-decree'](#) featuring a range of measures to help struggling businesses and to allocate new funds to the health sector, schools, and local authorities. The new emergency decree amounts to €25 billion, increasing the total resources put in place to respond to the emergency to €100 billion, equal to six percent of GDP.



- The new decree includes new measures such as consumer spending bonuses, social distancing incentives for hiring new employees, financial support for returning to work, and support for employees continuing with ‘smart working’. The temporary layoff scheme has been extended, requiring companies to retain jobs in order to qualify for state aid. Several taxes will also remain suspended.
- The decree also includes public health measures to continue the fight against the spread of the virus. Face masks are to remain compulsory in public spaces, shops and public transport, and trains and buses will continue to be required to operate at less than half their maximum capacity. The new decree also includes additional funding to the national health service to pay for overtime and make it possible for personnel to catch up on the operations that were postponed because of the virus. Investments will also be made into developing an Italian COVID-19 vaccine.
- Last Monday (3 August), the Italian Ministry of Health and the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) [presented the first results of the seroprevalence survey](#). The survey was initiated to understand how many Italians have developed antibodies against the virus, even in the absence of symptoms. In all, 64,660 seroprevalence tests have been carried out since May. 2.5 percent of the Italian population was found to have come into contact with the virus, potentially developing antibodies, amounting to around 1,482,000 Italians. This suggests that six times more Italians have come into contact with the virus than the number of confirmed cases identified so far suggests.
- The results also vary by region. Lombardy ranks first with a seroprevalence rate of 7.5 percent, while most southern regions remain below 1 percent. 50 percent of Italians that have developed antibodies are from the Lombardy region. The presence of asymptomatic patients was also high, at around 27.3 percent of patients nationwide. The Ministry noted that the precaution and containment measures adopted have limited the spread of the contagion, though Health Minister Roberto Speranza noted that “even if we are out of the storm, we are not yet in a safe harbour.”
- The [governor of the region of Lazio, Nicola Zingaretti, indicated on 7 August](#) that the first human trials of a vaccine developed by an Italian research team will start in the Rome region. The trials will take place at the Rome Spallanzani hospital for infectious diseases, and will start later this month. The test is funded by the Lazio region, with an investment of €5 million, together with the Italian Ministry for Research. It will be administered to 90 volunteers.
- According to official numbers from the Italian National Institute of Statistics, [foreign trade bounced back](#) in June 2020. Imports have increased again by 16.1 percent, and exports by 14.4 percent, with respect to May 2020. Compared with June last year, however, foreign trade remains much more limited, falling by 12 percent for exports and by 15.6 percent for imports. This may indicate a slow restart of the economy.

## V. GERMANY

- After the end of the summer break last week, two schools in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern closed again after a teacher and a child tested positive for COVID-19. The state governor, Manuela Schwesig, from the Social Democratic Party (SPD), defended the state's school opening initiative, which does not include a state-wide school closure. Schwesig explained that local health departments will close schools with little notice if COVID-19 cases are recorded to temper the spread of COVID-19.
- The President of the Federal Institute for Vaccines (the Paul Ehrlich Institute), Klaus Cichutek, and Health Minister Jens Spahn (Christian Democratic Union (CDU)), are optimistic about the rapid development of a COVID-19 vaccine. In an interview with the news channel ZDF, Cichutek highlighted positive results from the first stages of clinical trials of a vaccine. Cichutek noted several of the 150 ongoing COVID-19 vaccine projects have induced a specific immune response against COVID-19 in the human body, and that an approval of a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021 is likely.
- On Saturday, Germany introduced mandatory COVID-19 tests for travellers returning from high-risk countries. Upon entering the country, returnees are obliged to submit proof of a negative test result that was issued within the preceding 48 hours, with results in either German or English.
- Otherwise, travellers must take a free COVID-19 test at the airport, train station or border region within 72 hours after arrival. Flight passengers must submit their contact information at the airport and report where they came from. The information will be forwarded to the respective local health department for contact tracing. Returnees who refuse to take a test may receive a fine of up to €25,000.
- Given the rising tide of new COVID-19 infections in Germany, the Economic Council of the CDU – an association that is linked to the CDU but not a part of the party – has recommended introducing a travel ban to high risk regions. Secretary General Wolfgang Steiger argued that the freedom of travelling should not outweigh the rights of millions of Germans that might face another lockdown.
- Representatives from the SPD and the Liberal Party (FDP) criticized the demands of the association, claiming that a travel ban would be useless and disproportionate. SPD Party Leader Norbert Walter-Borjans criticized Health Minister Jens Spahn for his handling of COVID-19 testing regulations. Walter-Borjans claimed that test capacities are limited, and that the return of results takes too long. Moreover, he believes it is a mistake to limit mandatory testing to returnees from high-risk regions.
- The State Secretary for Internal Affairs, Günter Krings (CDU), proposed the launch of mandatory notifications for travellers who plan a trip to a high-risk region. That way, local health departments

benefit from the early detection and tracking of returnees, and whether they adhere to the testing and quarantine regulations.

- On Thursday, Germany reported more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases. The threshold of 1,000 new infections per day was last exceeded in May. Prior to then, the number of cases in Germany declined until three weeks ago, when the numbers increased again.
- The Health Ministry explained that the recent developments are not the result of local hotspots, but rather the result of smaller social events and more tests taken by returning travellers. In light of these figures, Health Minister Jens Spahn reminded the population that the pandemic is still ongoing and that they should not loosen public health regulations.
- After the end of the school summer break last week, two schools in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern closed again after a teacher and a child tested positive for COVID-19. The state governor, Manuela Schwesig from the SPD, defended the state's plan for the reopening of schools that does not include a mandate for a state-wide school closure. Schwesig explained that the local health departments will close schools with short notice if COVID-19 cases occur.

## VI. SPAIN

- On 3 August, the Government of Spain [signed an agreement](#) with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces ([FEMP](#)) to promote the role of municipalities in the social and economic reconstruction of Spain. The agreement includes a broad set of measures aiming at strengthening the local autonomy of city councils, allowing them to play a decisive role in the reconstruction strategy.
- The Government will mobilise a fund of €5 billion for the municipalities, which may be used for programmes of proximity care, mobility, housing, sustainable development and the promotion of cultural activity. Through the broad set of measures included in the agreement, the Government reaffirms its determined promotion of the role of municipalities, as well as its intention to turn city councils into essential actors within the strategy for the social and economic recovery of the country.
- On Tuesday (4 August), Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced a shock plan to achieve the full economic recovery of the country by 2023. The plan will promote the national railway network, public rents, a new taxation for food and the use of the temporary labour force to avoid layoffs, to drive the economic recovery to start this year and conclude in 2023.
- Sanchez explained that the government agenda will be launched in the coming months, giving preferential attention to the measures contemplated in the [coalition agreement](#) with Unidas Podemos to promote the creation of quality employment. Likewise, during the announcement,

Sanchez indicated that a State plan for research, development and innovation, and the Spanish strategy for science, technology and innovation 2021-2027, will be approved.

- On Wednesday, following the spike of COVID-19 cases in Catalonia, the regional Health Ministry started a mass screening programme amongst 9,000 people across three municipalities – Terrassa, Sabadell and Ripollet. The programme is the first one to be carried out in Spain and will be completed using PCR tests in the three territories where the basic reproduction number is above the natural perpetuation rate of 1.
- On Thursday, the Basque government confirmed that the region is experiencing a second wave of COVID-19, following a significant rise in recorded cases. The Health Chief Nekane Murga noted that, although fewer fatalities are being reported than at the peak of the first wave in March, nobody should underestimate the ability of COVID-19 to infect people, or its effects on public health.
- On Thursday, a judge authorised a request from the regional government of Castilla y León to confine the 32,000 residents of Aranda de Duero, in Burgos province, due to a surge in cases. The lockdown went into effect on Friday and introduced measures similar to Phase 1 of the [national de-escalation plan](#) that ended on 21 June.
- Residents of the confined city are able to come and go within the city limits, but entering and leaving Aranda is only permitted for work or health reasons, to return to one's regular place of residence, to care for the elderly, or for other reasons considered to be *force majeure*. On 2 August, two other municipalities in Valladolid province – Íscar and Pedrajas de San Esteban – were confined following a rise in the cases, affecting around 11,000 people.
- On 6 August, a group of 20 Spanish epidemiologists and public health experts published a [letter](#) in the scientific journal *The Lancet* asking for an independent review of the COVID-19 response in Spain, where COVID-19 cases are rapidly rising, compounding the far-reaching effects of the first wave of the virus. The letter notes the updated case numbers in Spain, highlighting the fact that more than 50,000 healthcare workers have been infected, and nearly 20,000 deaths have occurred in care homes; the letter states that with a population of 47 million, these data place Spain among the worst-affected countries by population.
- As Spain is reported to have one of the best performing health systems in the world and ranks 15th in the Global Health Security index, experts are questioning Spain's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. At the end of the letter, there is a message specifically for the executive of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, encouraging the Government to treat the evaluation as an opportunity to improve pandemic preparedness, prevent premature deaths and build a resilient health system.
- The experts who signed the letter include leading researchers such as Margarita del Val, a virologist at the Severo Ochoa Cell Biology Center; Manuel Franco, a researcher at Johns Hopkins



University; Daniel Prieto-Alhambra, a pharmaco-epidemiologist at Oxford University; Rafael Bengoa, who served as an advisor for Barack Obama's health reform; Carme Borrell, a manager at the Barcelona Public Health Agency, and Carles Muntaner, a professor of public health at Toronto University. Following the publication of this letter, numerous NGOs and medical societies expressed their support to the independent revision of the COVID-19 response in Spain.

- A COVID-19 tracing app will launch in several regions of the country today (10 August), after carrying out a 30-day pilot programme in La Gomera, Canary Islands. Although the app will not be available to the whole territory until mid-September, in the meantime it is set to be used in regions where a significant number of cases are reported, and where the flow of tourists is greater. The app is free of charge and works with Bluetooth and not geolocation. To achieve efficacy, 60 percent of the population should be using it as a complement to other compulsory security measures.

## VII. UNITED KINGDOM

- Amid reports of a steady increase in COVID-19 infections in England, with a six-week high of 1,062 cases recorded on Sunday (9 August), face coverings have been mandated in expanded settings across the UK. Coverings are now required in museums, places of worship and aquariums in both England and Scotland, while people in Scotland will be required to wear coverings in venues including banks and beauty salons, and people in England will be required to don coverings in cinemas and funeral homes. Northern Ireland has opted for stricter measures, mandating face coverings in all public enclosed spaces from today.
- Vulnerable groups will not be required to wear face coverings, and the Government last week introduced optional badges for such groups to show the carrier may have difficulties or concerns in maintaining social distancing. The badges, part of the Distance Aware initiative, will help to ensure vulnerable groups have access to public spaces and transport previously constricted by shielding advice, which concluded last week.
- Further public health measures, including the closure of pubs in hotspots, are being considered by the UK Government ahead of the planned, comprehensive reopening of schools for all students in September. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has reaffirmed the Government's commitment to reopening schools, as evidence released from schools that remained open for the children of key workers through lockdown has demonstrated a low risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools. England's Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield has nonetheless called for regular testing of both teachers and pupils, expanding on a call from the Association of School and College Leaders for 'week on, week off' testing if there is a resurgence of COVID-19.
- Lockdown measures were reintroduced in the city of Preston over the weekend as the UK Government continues to focus on local lockdowns to control new COVID-19 outbreaks. Separate

households are now banned from meeting one another in homes or private gardens, and are banned from mixing in pubs and restaurants, though hospitality venues remain accessible to mixing households. After a review on Saturday, lockdown rules in Leicester will remain in place for another week.

- Despite the pandemic broadly having been less acute in Scotland over the last few months, local restrictions were reintroduced in the Scottish city of Aberdeen on Wednesday (5 August). Like Preston, people in Aberdeen have been asked not to meet other households indoors and to remain in a defined geographical region for recreational purposes. In a stricter move than those south of the border, bars, restaurants, cafes and pubs in the city have been required to close.
- Upon implementing the new measures, 54 cases of COVID-19 had been identified as linked to an outbreak in a bar in the city, and the outbreak has been strongly linked to the night-time economy. The Scottish Test and Protect programme had traced 191 close contacts of infected people within a day of the measures being mandated.
- Fears persist around the UK governments' abilities to contain significant new outbreaks without reverting to lockdown measures, and scrutiny has focussed on the NHS Test and Trace system. The overall number of contacts reached by operators in the programme fell from 51 percent to 46 percent last week, soon after a *Lancet* study found the figure should be at least 68 percent before further lockdown easing is implemented to avoid a significant second wave of infections in the winter.
- The 10,000 tracers employed by the firm SERCO have reached an average of only 2.4 people each, and the firm has been the subject of considerable criticism. The Government's expert Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) today recommended that contracts with firms such as SERCO should be cancelled, and privatised call centres should be scrapped, to recruit contact tracers on a local authority level.
- Former UK government Chief Scientific Adviser Sir David King has stressed the test and trace system will not survive without local leadership, and the cities of Blackburn and Bradford, and Calderdale council, in the COVID-19-hit region of West Yorkshire, have led local efforts in launching or seeking to launch their own contact tracing programmes. Bradford's Director of Public Health Dr Sarah Muckle has indicated the local scheme would support the national NHS programme, and work in a broadly similar fashion, using phone or text to alert contacts of COVID-19-positive people.
- Even as the domestic COVID-19 fight becomes increasingly localised, the devolved governments have continued the COVID-19 fight on the international front, last week implementing a mandatory two-week quarantine for all new arrivals from further countries. Anyone arriving in the UK from Belgium, Andorra and the Bahamas will now have to self-isolate for two weeks, and Chancellor Rishi Sunak has signalled the UK is ready to add more countries to the quarantine list, and may soon add France, after a surge in cases there over the last couple weeks.