

COVID-19 in Herefordshire

Weekly intelligence summary

Public Health & Intelligence Unit

18th November 2020

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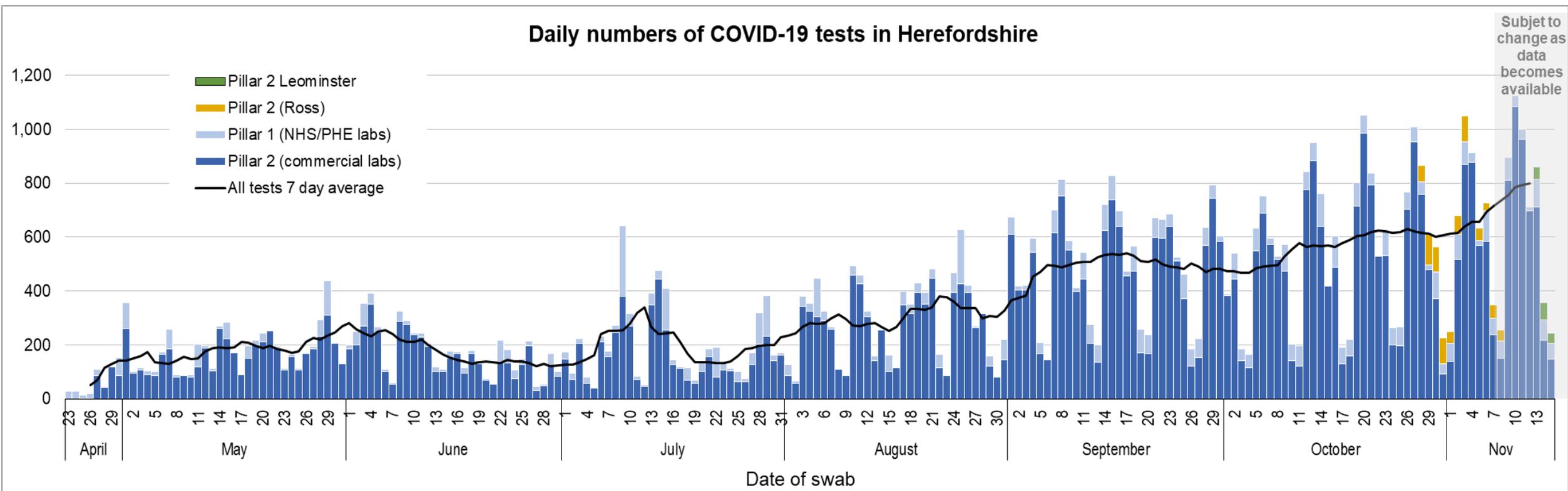
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Key messages

- This week's summary comes halfway through the latest English national 'lockdown' restrictions, planned for four weeks from 5 November to 3 December.
- Cases in Herefordshire have risen rapidly in November, and there is currently no indication that this trend is slowing:
 - The total number of **lab-confirmed cases** throughout the course of the pandemic is now 2,137 (18 November). This is 380 more than we reported last week – the highest rise yet (75% more than last week's increase)
 - The latest 7-day rate per 100,000 population has doubled in the last week, to 180: still lower than the national and regional figures, but the gap is narrowing
 - Although cases are increasing across the county, south Hereford is of particular concern. These areas, which include some of the most deprived neighbourhoods, have rates above the national average and accounted for almost a quarter of all cases reported for the county in the week ending 12 November.
- Rates of lab-confirmed cases are still highest amongst 18 to 59 year-olds, but the numbers aged 65+ continue to gradually increase. Whilst increases have been seen in all **age groups**, cases amongst older people are of particular concern as they are more likely to become acutely unwell and require hospitalisation.
- Over the last few weeks, **clusters/outbreaks** have increased across all settings. Fourteen clusters/outbreaks in social care providers have been identified through mass swabbing of staff and residents since the end of August, eight of which are currently ongoing.
- There was one further **death of a Herefordshire resident** involving COVID-19 included in the latest published ONS data (occurring by 6 November and registered by 14 November), taking the total to 136 over the course of the pandemic. There has been an increase during the autumn, with eight recorded in the seven weeks since the last week of September, but overall deaths currently remain around average levels.

COVID-19 testing

- The graph gives a complete picture of testing of Herefordshire residents throughout the period for which community testing has been available (i.e. since late April): all tested residents, regardless of where; all care home testing; and testing of patients and staff by Wye Valley Trust.
- Testing rates have been rising since late July, reflecting the national drive to increase capacity. The number of tests has risen further this month, and is now averaging 800 a day. Unpublished data indicates that Herefordshire's testing rates are comparable to regional and national levels.
- To increase capacity in local areas and improve access to testing for residents, two testing units have been set up in the last few weeks: in Ross-on-Wye on 28 October and Leominster on 13 November. Both have carried out an average of 60 tests a day.

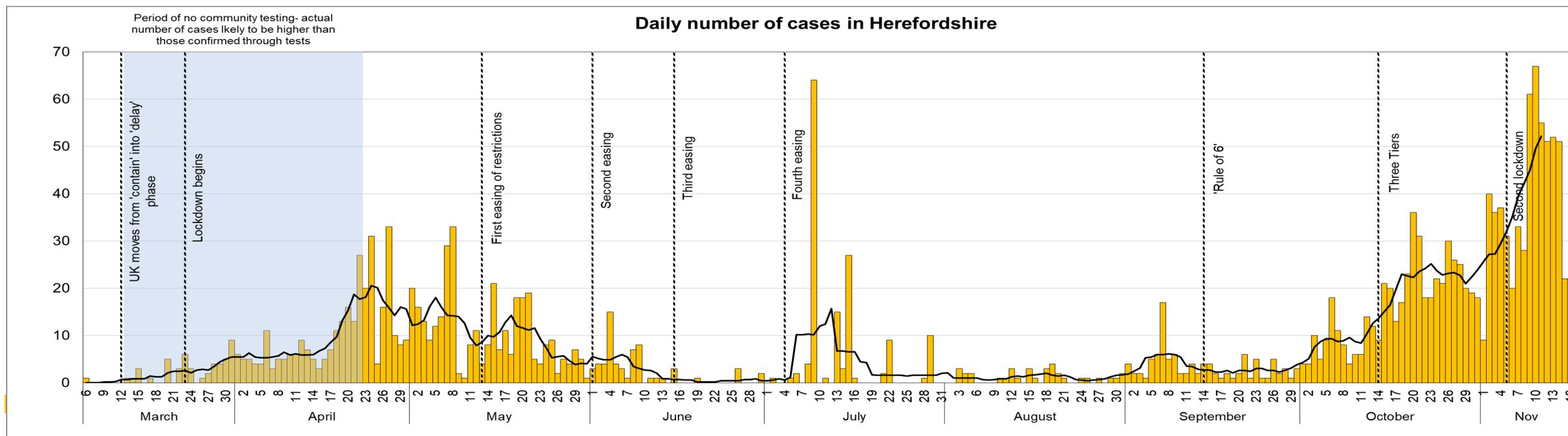


Where can I find out more? Local level testing data isn't published, but see details of national reporting at

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

Lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in Herefordshire

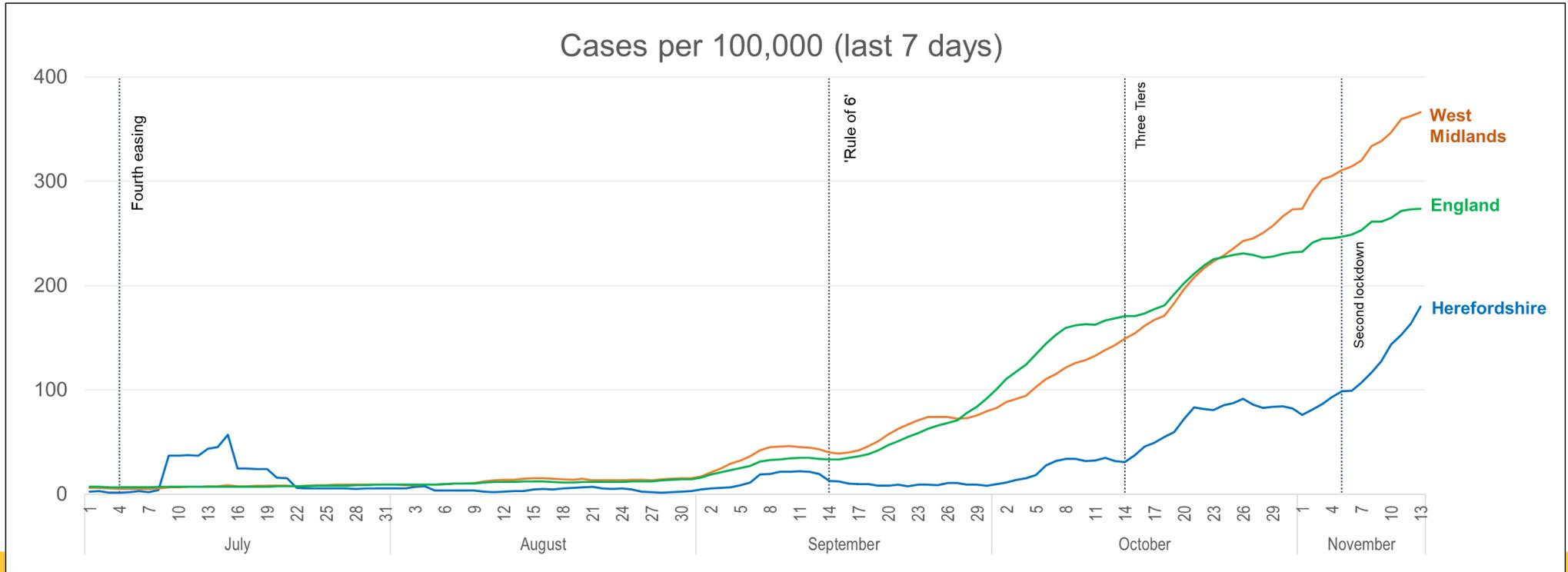
- Lab-confirmed cases are the official count of people who live in Herefordshire and have tested positive for COVID-19. Numbers of confirmed cases are linked to the availability of testing, so the cases chart highlights key dates in testing policy.
- The total lab-confirmed cases over the course of the epidemic is now 2,137 (18 Nov). This is 380 more than this time last week, all from swabs taken between 9 and 16 November (note that reporting lags mean daily numbers can change). This increase is higher than for any week during the pandemic: 75% higher than the increase seen the week before (214), which itself was the highest to that point.
- The rapid growth in cases is clear from the average daily number of cases (the line on the chart): by the 10th it was 50 a day, double the figure at the end of October, and more than 10 times higher than in September. It's not possible to compare these figures to the first wave because tests are much more widely available to people with symptoms: four times as many are being carried out a week as in May.
- Note that the reporting methodology has changed this week so that students are counted at their term-time address, and this has been backdated to 1 September. This has resulted in 44 cases previously included in Herefordshire figures being removed. However, our local intelligence suggests that this adjustment has not removed all such out of county cases.



Where can I find out more? Confirmed cases are updated daily by PHE at <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>. These are used in tools such as the LG Inform Tracker and The Guardian's mapping tool.

Lab-confirmed cases: comparisons

- The chart shows the recent trend in cases per 100,000 resident population for 7-day periods (the latest one ending 5 days ago to allow for lags in the results of tests). This rate is now commonly quoted in national reporting, often in relation to whether an area should move between the different local Alert levels (tiers)
- Herefordshire's rate of cases per 100,000 population has been rising sharply since the beginning of November, and has almost doubled in the last week. As of 13 November it was 180 per 100,000
- Although the local rate is still a third lower than for England as a whole, and half that of the West Midlands, it currently seems to be increasing more rapidly than both



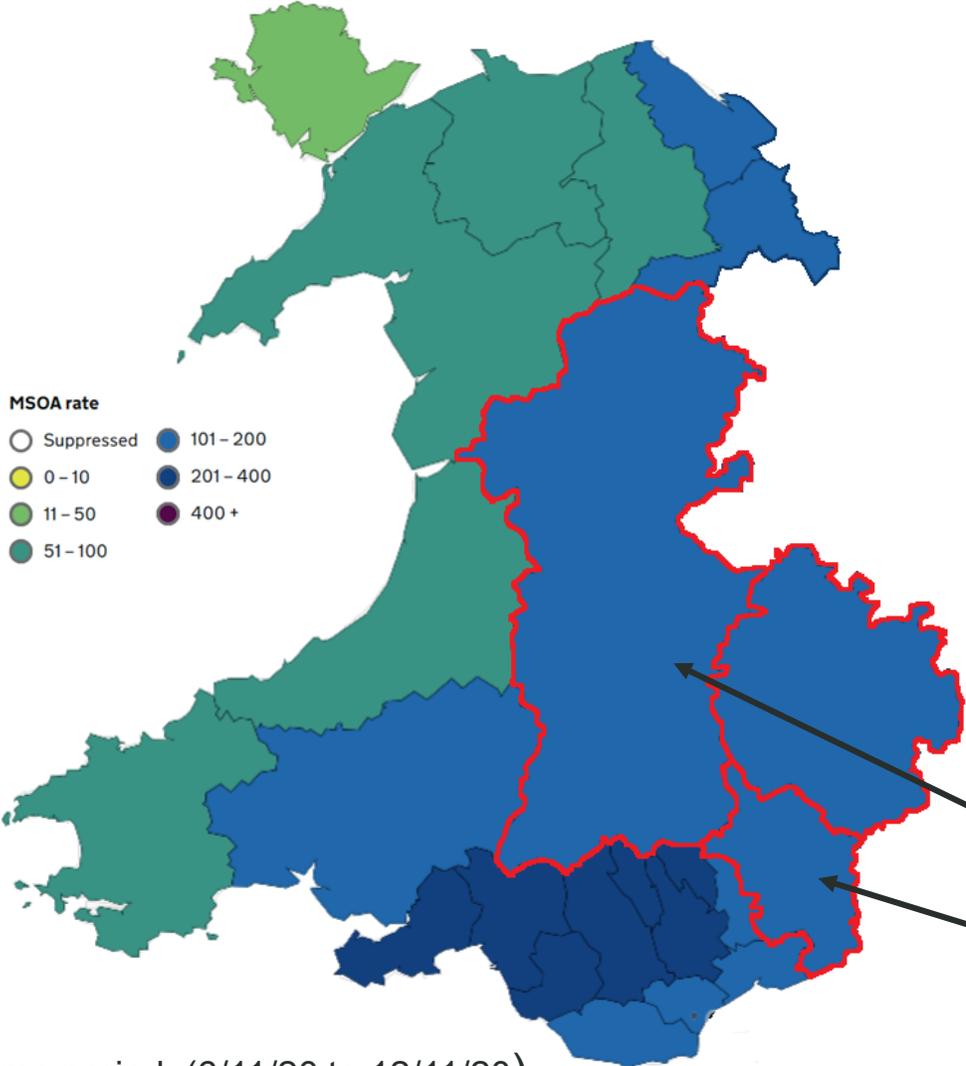
! Be aware !

- Rates per 100,000 resident population give a fairer comparison of the number of cases in each area but they do not take account of the different rates of testing or differences in the age and sex of the local populations.
- With one of the smallest 'upper tier' local authority populations (193,200), Herefordshire's rate can be dramatically affected by relatively small changes in numbers of cases. An average of 28 cases a day in a week would result in a rate of 100 per 100,000.
- These are not rates of infection amongst the population: they can only reflect those who have been tested, so numbers are highly dependent on the availability of tests.



Lab-confirmed cases: comparison with Welsh neighbouring authorities

- Wales ended a “firebreak” lockdown on 9 November with restrictions being replaced by a new set of national measures.
- Since the end of the “firebreak” the rates in both Powys and Monmouthshire have fallen marginally although they both remain higher than in the week prior to the “firebreak”.
- However, whereas in previous weeks the Herefordshire rate was lower than those reported for both these Welsh authorities, in the week ending 12 November the local figure (163 per 100,000) was now the higher of the three.

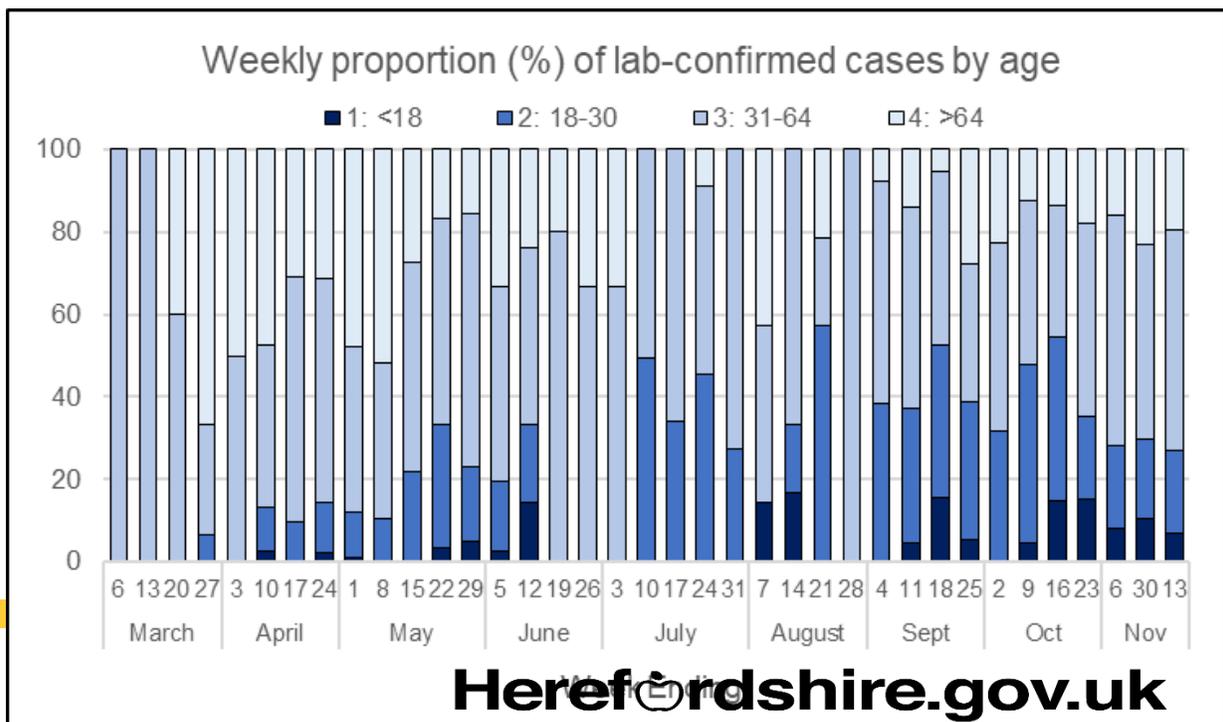
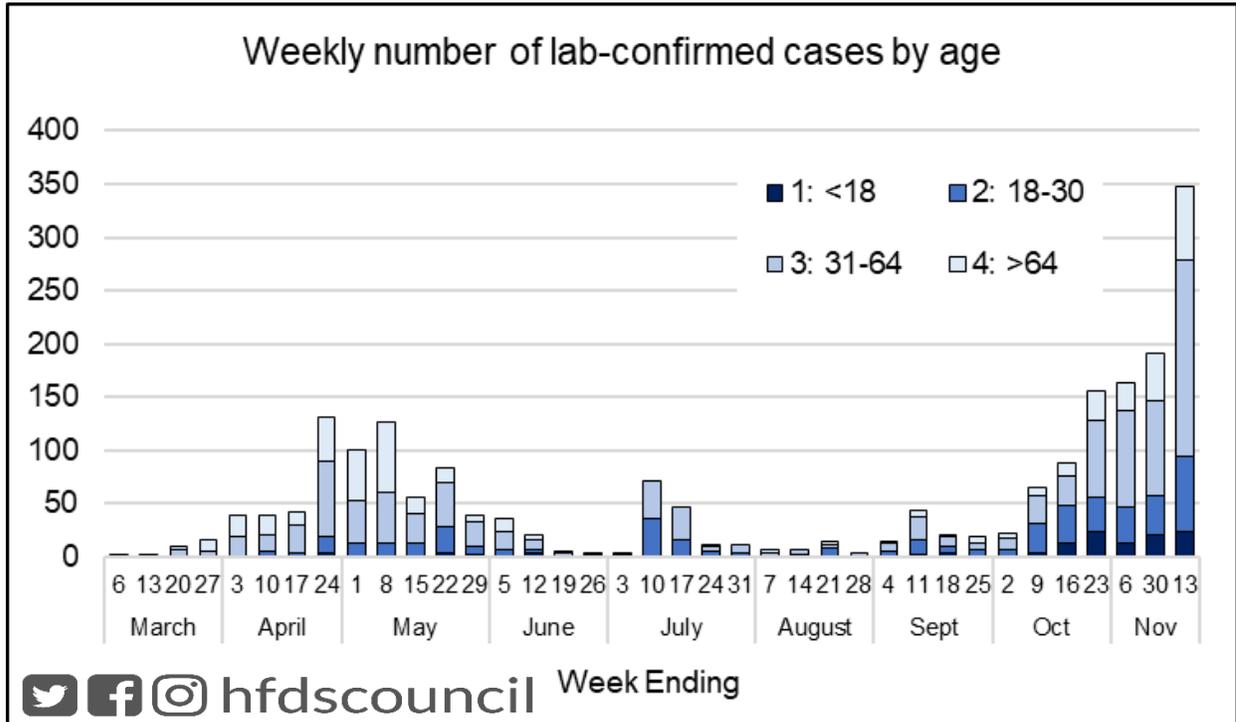


Welsh Authority	7-day cases per 100k
Powys	106 (148 cases)
Monmouthshire	128 (121 cases)

Time period: (6/11/20 to 12/11/20)

Demographics of COVID-19 cases in Herefordshire: numbers of cases

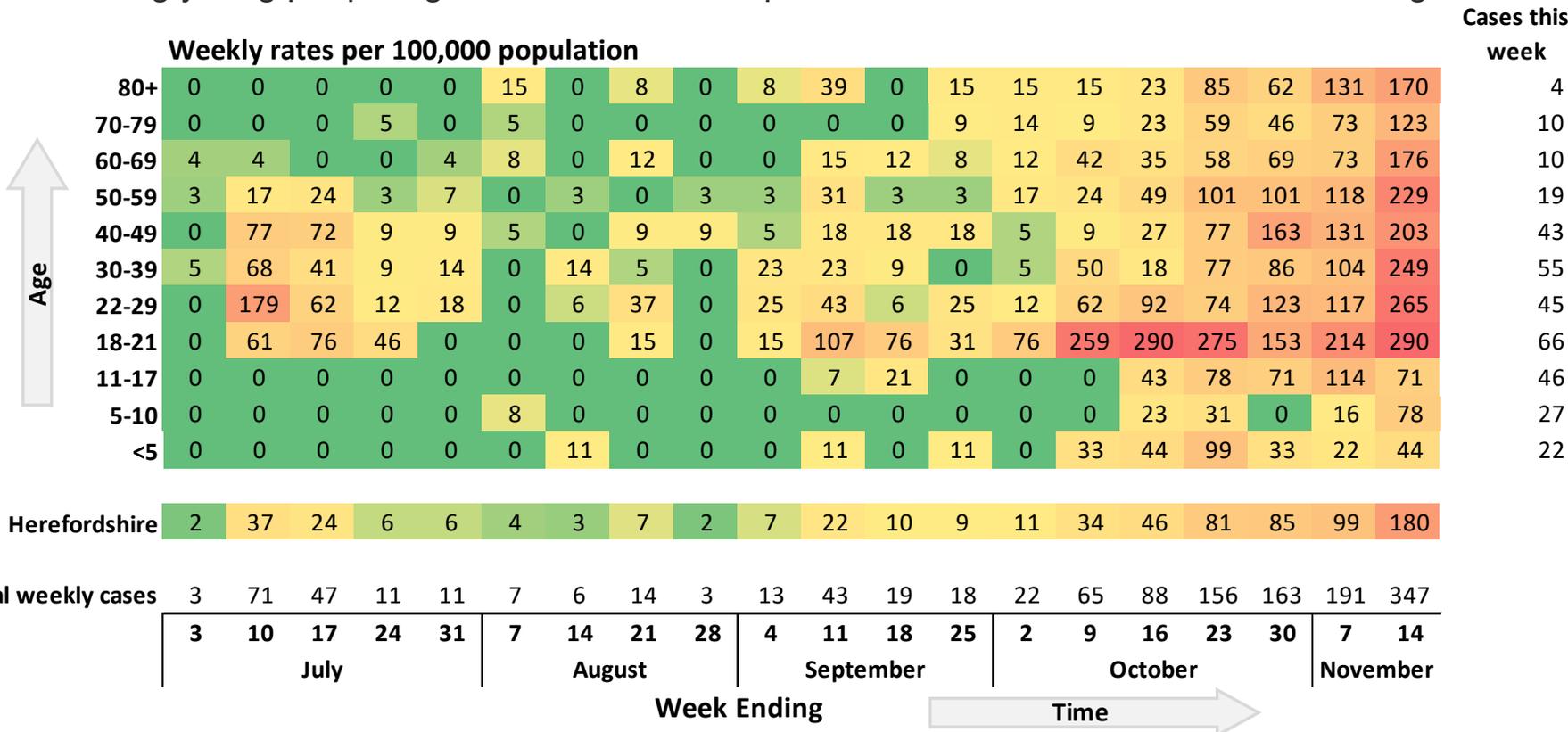
- These charts show the age profile of lab-confirmed cases for each week since March: the left-hand one shows absolute numbers of cases and the right-hand one shows age-groups as a percentage of all cases that week
- The age profile has been much younger throughout the autumn compared to the peak of the first wave in April and May: since cases started rising again in September, 33% have been under 30 compared to 16% in the first wave. This is likely to be related to increased availability of testing compared to the spring.
- However, recent weeks have shown increasing numbers and proportions of cases amongst older people. Of the 347 new cases in the two weeks to 13th November, 68 (21% - compared to 16% in the previous two weeks) were aged 65+ and over. Whilst increases in numbers have been seen in all age groups since early October, cases amongst older people are of particular concern as they are more likely to become acutely unwell and require hospitalisation.



Demographics of COVID-19: rates per 100,000 by age over time

- This “heat map” shows how the 7-day rates per 100,000 for specific age groups have changed each week from July. Each row represents an age group. As rates increase, the chart colours change from green, to amber, and then to red.
- it is important to note that rates per 100,000 can be significantly affected by relatively small numbers of cases in a population as small as Herefordshire, even more so when broken down into age-groups. The absolute number of cases are shown as context.
- The farm outbreak stands out in July, when rates were otherwise low (green) for all ages for most of the summer; the majority of cases were aged 20 to 50.
- Since early September rates have risen in all age groups – most notably 18 to 21 year-olds (note reporting methods have changed and Herefordshire students away at university should no longer be included in Herefordshire numbers). During October and the first two weeks of November there were 106 cases among young people aged 18 to 22 which represents 10% of all cases recorded during that period.

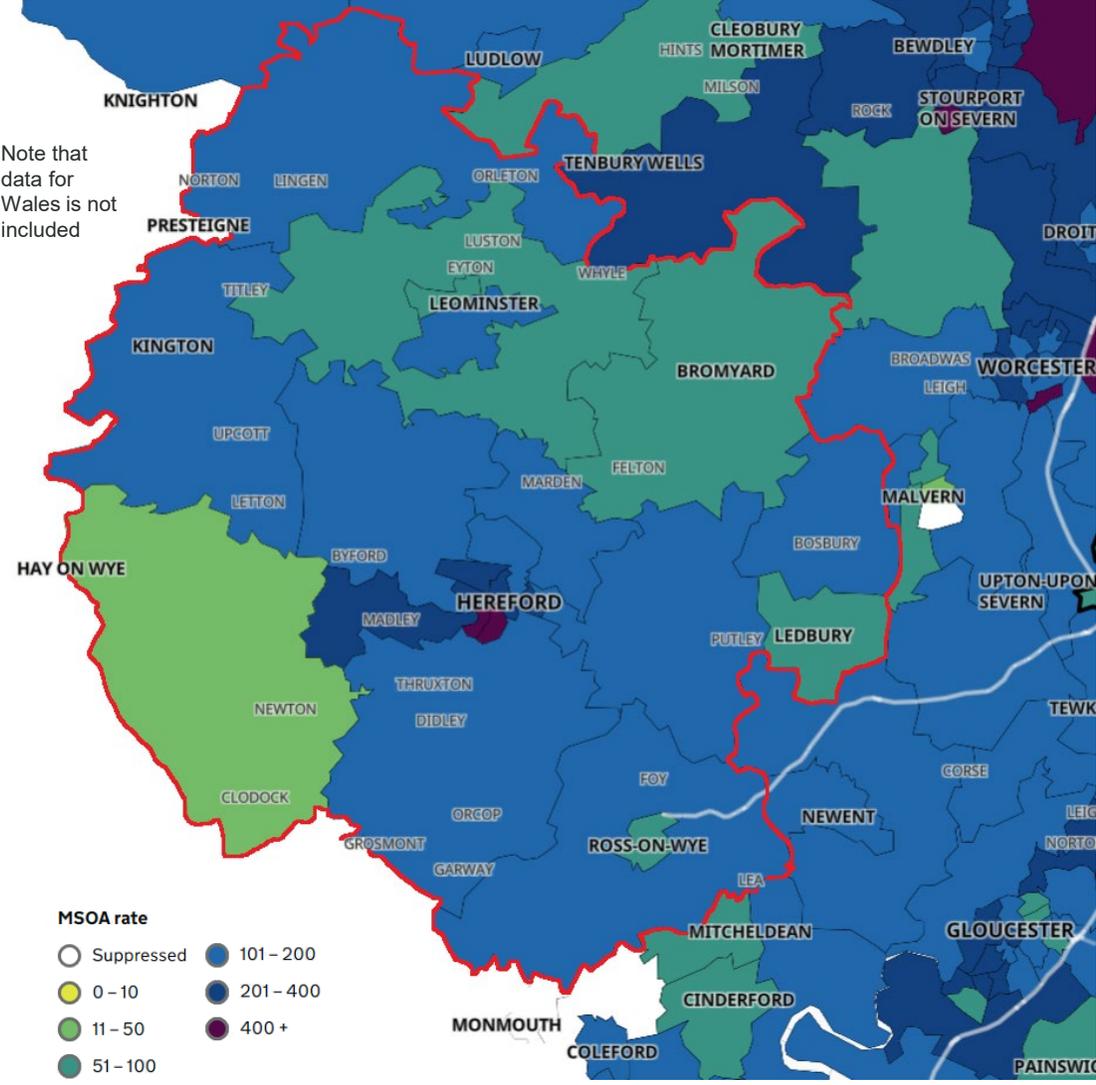
In the second week of November the highest rates were still amongst 18 to 59 year-olds. However, case rates are also rising in those aged 60 and over, which is cause for concern, as this age group are more likely to require hospital care.



Lab-confirmed cases around the county

Positive cases from samples taken in the 7 day period ending 12/11/20*

- The map shows the latest 7-day rates of new cases per 100,000 population, as published by Public Health England: the darker the shading, the higher the rate (unshaded areas have had fewer than 3 cases in the last 7 days).
 - It's important to note that these rates are very sensitive to small changes for small areas like MSOAs. For instance, an increase of 1 case from 9 to 10 cases in an area of 10,000 people (about the size of Ledbury), would increase the rate from 90 to 100 per 100,000.*
- All of Herefordshire's 23 MSOAs had 3 or more cases in the week to 12 November*.
 - The highest in terms of both numbers and rates were in 'Hereford South' (52 cases, 532 per 100,000), 'Hereford South West' (33 cases, 399 per 100,000) and 'Hereford East' (30 cases, 351 per 100,000)
 - Twelve other areas had between 10 and 21 cases
 - The two highest rates correspond to some of the most deprived areas of the county and represent almost a quarter of all cases reported for the county in the week ending 12 November.
- While rates in all areas of Hereford are higher than the average for all English single tier and county authorities, in all other areas of the county rates were lower than this national figure.



* Note that the slight time-lag in this data reflects that test results are incomplete for the most recent few days
 Note that the geographical size of MSOAs in Herefordshire tend to be bigger because they are designed to have equal population size.

Where can I find out more? This map of weekly confirmed cases by middle super output area (MSOA) in England are included in the [PHE dashboard](#), which is now updated daily.

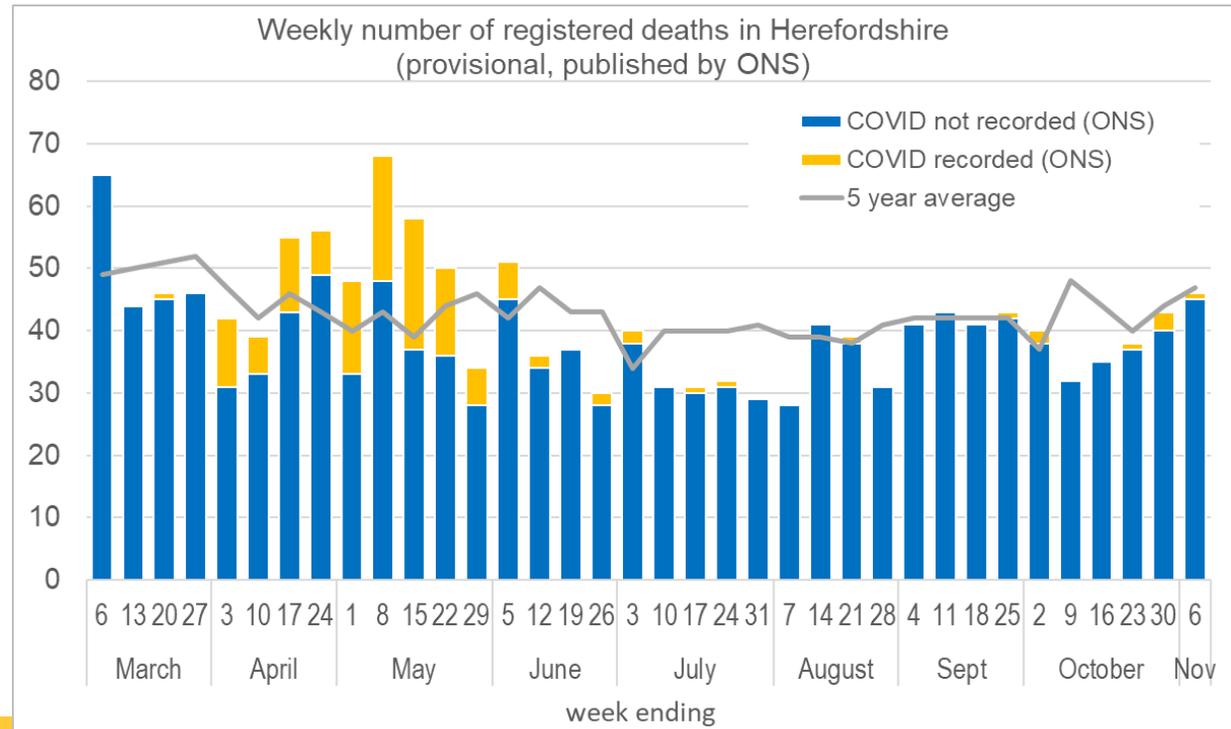
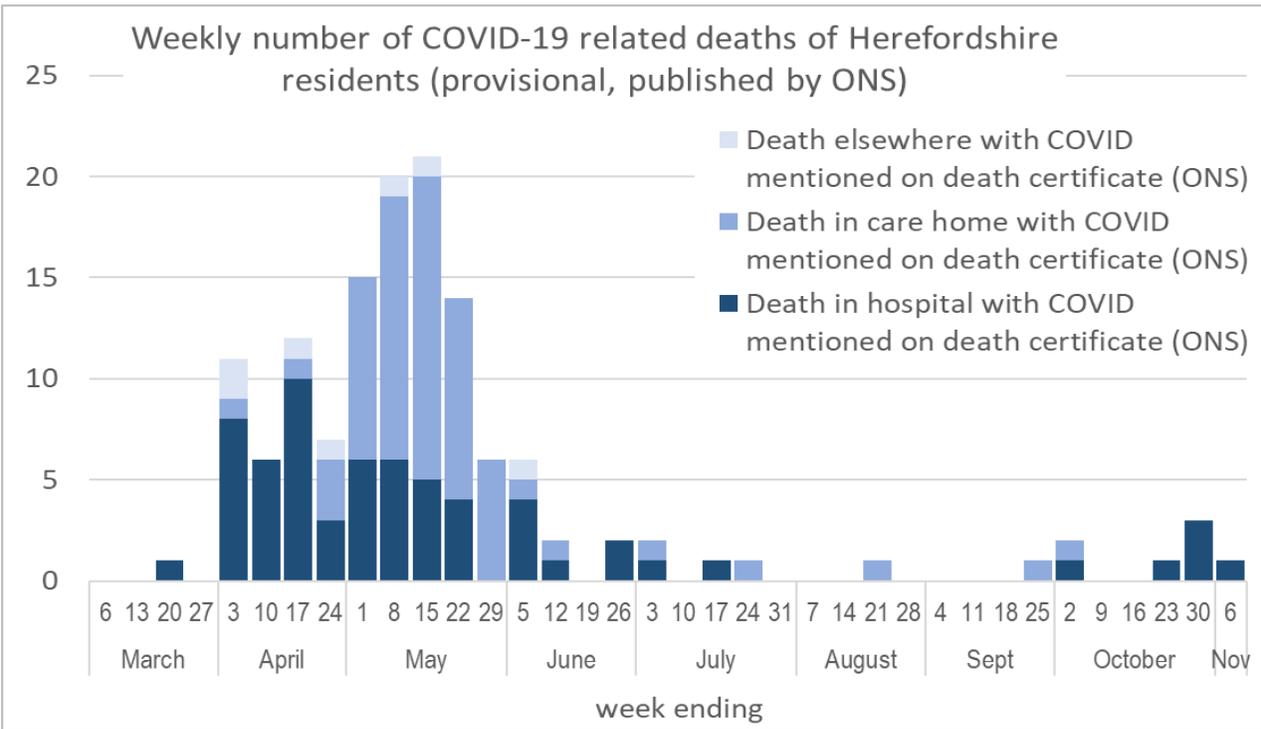
Demographics of COVID-19: rates per 100,000 by MSOA

- Whilst the previous slide shows cases in the last 7 days, this “heat map” shows how the 7-day rates per 100,000 have changed in each MSOA from August. MSOAs are ranked by rate recorded in the last week with highest at the top.
- It shows how cases have generally been scattered across the whole county and were low (green) throughout late summer, but have risen during the autumn.
- The latest week clearly shows how much higher the rates currently are in the MSOAs of Hereford and neighbouring Belmont, Madley and Clehonger.
- These patterns are of concern as they indicate a general circulation of the virus throughout the county with increasing levels of transmission within the community.

MSOA	Weekly rates per 100,000 population														Cases this week	MSOA Population	
	Aug 1	Aug 2	Aug 3	Aug 4	Aug 5	Aug 6	Aug 7	Aug 8	Aug 9	Aug 10	Aug 11	Aug 12	Aug 13	Aug 14			
Hereford South	10	0	10	10	0	10	10	10	0	31	31	72	133	194	532	52	9,800
Hereford South West	0	0	0	0	0	12	24	12	0	0	0	73	97	242	399	33	8,300
Hereford East	17	0	0	0	0	17	0	17	0	33	100	100	50	134	351	21	6,000
Hereford Central	0	0	30	0	0	20	0	20	10	70	50	89	99	79	298	30	10,100
Hereford West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	42	42	84	84	265	19	7,200
Belmont, Madley & Clehonger	0	0	0	15	15	30	0	0	0	15	44	89	118	118	251	17	6,800
Hereford North West	0	11	11	0	0	22	32	0	32	22	32	32	151	118	215	20	9,300
Credenhill, Weobley & Wellington	0	0	0	0	31	31	10	0	10	42	21	31	42	31	177	17	9,600
Colwall, Cradley & Wellington Heath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	17	34	69	103	137	17	172	10	5,800
Kingstone & Kingsthorpe	0	0	18	0	9	9	0	0	18	9	80	62	98	53	160	18	11,300
South Leominster	0	0	16	0	16	95	16	0	16	16	64	95	0	64	159	10	6,300
Lugwardine, Withington and Moreton on Lugg	13	0	0	0	0	39	13	26	13	39	13	91	91	78	156	12	7,700
Kington Eardisley & Staunton	0	0	12	0	0	24	0	12	0	24	12	49	49	243	146	12	8,200
Penyard, Llangarron & Goodrich	0	25	17	0	17	0	17	8	0	41	108	116	83	83	133	16	12,100
Hereford North East	0	0	0	0	13	77	13	0	0	39	65	168	129	129	129	10	7,800
Fownhope, Tarrington & Marcle	0	0	0	0	15	44	44	0	15	58	58	102	58	29	117	8	6,900
Wigmore, Orleton and Brimfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	93	0	15	93	124	108	7	6,500
North Leominster	0	0	16	0	0	49	16	16	33	16	0	16	33	66	98	6	6,100
Bromyard & Bishop's Frome	9	9	9	0	28	37	19	9	9	9	65	74	93	56	84	9	10,800
Shobdon, Luston & Bodenham	11	11	0	0	0	11	0	0	11	22	11	78	45	157	67	6	8,900
Ross-on-Wye	18	0	9	0	0	0	9	0	18	71	62	141	71	44	53	6	11,300
Ledbury	0	0	0	10	0	20	0	10	30	10	50	80	90	80	50	5	10,100
Golden Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	64	32	128	64	64	48	3	6,200
Herefordshire	4	3	7	2	7	22	10	9	11	34	46	81	85	99	180		
Total weekly cases	7	6	14	3	13	43	19	18	22	65	88	156	163	191	347		
	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	7	14		
	August				September				October				November				
	Week Ending																
	Time →																

Profile of deaths: published data

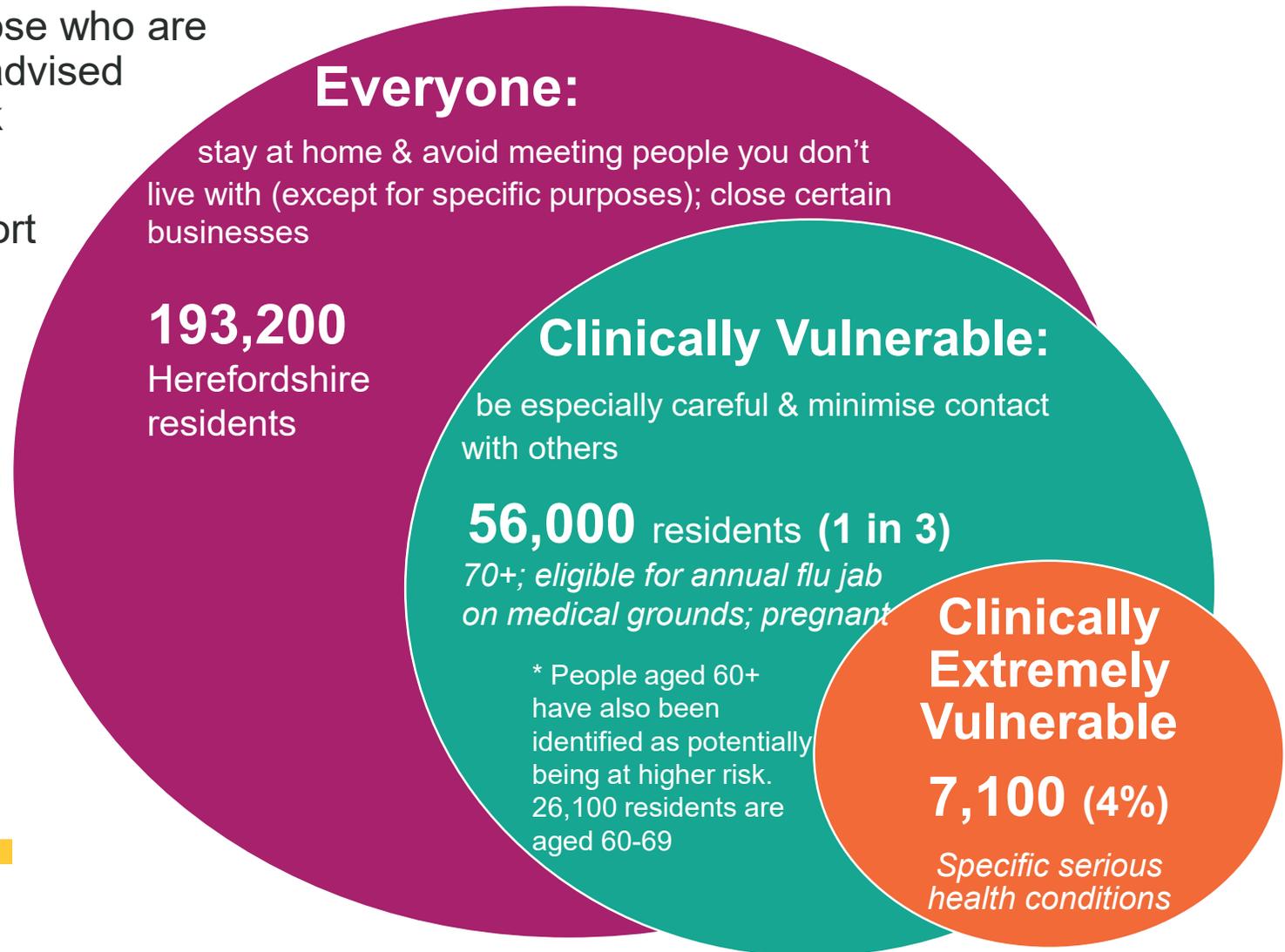
- One further death involving COVID-19 was recorded in this week's published ONS data (occurring by 6th and registered by 14th Nov), taking the total amongst Herefordshire residents to 136.
- Numbers of COVID related deaths have increased during the autumn: eight in the 7 weeks for which data has been published since the last week of September, compared to five in the previous 12 weeks. Six were in hospital, and two in hospital. Despite this, the overall number of deaths remain around average levels (between 40 and 50 a week).
- Of the 136: 65 have occurred in care homes, 64 in hospital (some of whom will have been care home residents), 4 at home and 3 in a hospice.



 **Where can I find out more?** ONS publish [provisional data on weekly numbers of registered deaths](#) by usual residence for local authorities every Tuesday, with an 11 day lag. Deaths recorded as COVID-19 include deaths where possible or confirmed COVID-19 is mentioned as any cause of death. Their [interactive map](#) is updated less regularly, and currently includes deaths occurring up to the end of June, registered by 11th July.

Wider impacts: new national restrictions from 5th November

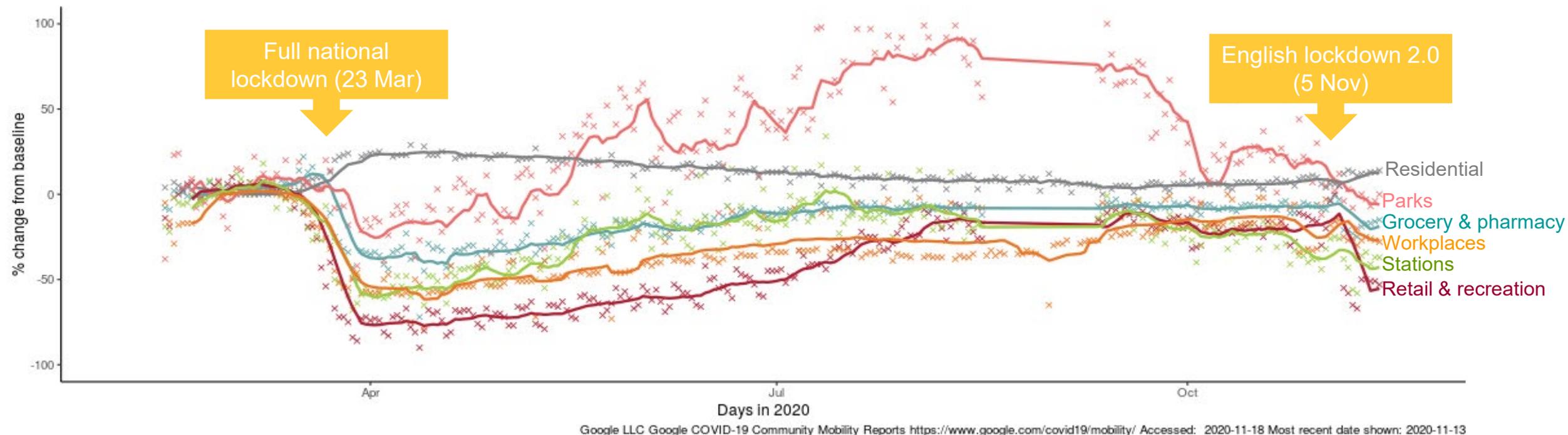
- New national restrictions on leaving home, meeting other people and closing certain businesses come into effect on 5th November for four weeks
- No-one is being advised to 'shield', but those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are advised not to go to work if they aren't able to work from home
- Re-introduction of local and national support systems similar to those set up during the spring lockdown



Effects of lockdown on population movement

- This chart shows average visits to different categories of places, using location data of Google users, compared to the beginning of 2020.
- Visits to all categories except residential seem to have fallen in November during the current English national restrictions (“Lockdown 2.0”), but not to the levels seen at the end of March.
- Unsurprisingly, ‘retail and recreation’ – places like restaurants, cafés, shopping centres, museums, libraries and cinemas which have had to close – have seen the sharpest drop, and are currently (13 Nov) 53% below the baseline.
- Only visits to ‘parks’ have exceeded their baseline level since the full lockdown, but this may be a seasonal effect (comparable data for last summer is not available). The other categories saw gradual increases, but never returned to their baseline levels.

Changing visits in Herefordshire to...

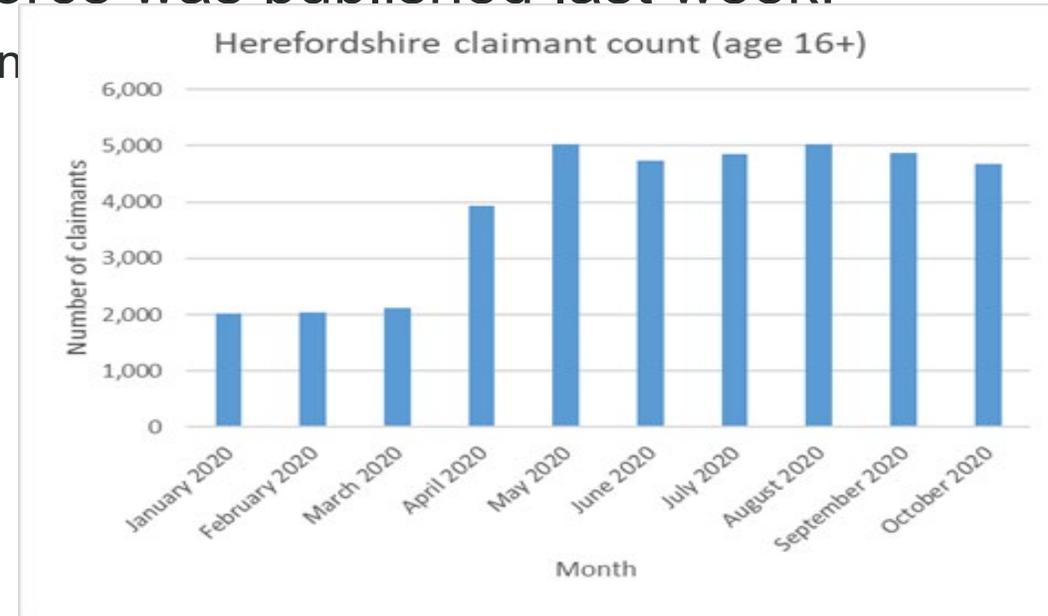


Where can I find out more? This chart is updated daily on the [Data Orchard website](https://www.data-orchard.com/), using data published by Google at www.google.com/covid19/mobility/. The baseline is the median value, for the corresponding day of the week, during the five weeks 3 Jan–6 Feb 2020. Note that the data is based on movements of those who have opted to turn on location history in their Google accounts on their mobile devices.

Wider impacts: the economy

Latest data on the impact on Herefordshire's workforce was published last week:

- 4,700 people aged 16+ claiming **unemployment** related benefits in October:
 - 200 (4%) fewer than in September, but still at a similar level to the numbers seen since May; the highest since modern records began
 - 1,700 more claimants than at the peak related to the 2008-09 recession
 - More than double the number in March 2020 (+122%)
- 935 of them were aged 18-24, a figure which has risen in line with the overall increase locally.
- Both have risen slightly more than the national increase, although started from a much lower base.
- Take-up of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (**furlough**) and **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme** has been similar in Herefordshire to nationally.
 - By the end of July, a total of 24,800 (31%) of eligible employments had been furloughed and 9,300 self-employment claims (72% of eligible) had been made since these schemes began
 - The government announced at the beginning of November that these schemes would be extended until March 2021, but it is not yet clear what data will be available
- 4,950 local businesses had received a **small business support grant** by the end of August, with payments made totaling £56.8 million - 98% of eligible hereditaments (compared to 93% nationally).



GP update

- Numbers have continued to rise. As a result of this, the Hospital have faced increasing pressures. The surgery that had to close due to an outbreak is now re-opening. We hope that we will have access to tests we can carry out at home soon to minimise the risk of having to close surgeries. At the moment Practices are not in the first wave of test provision.
- General Practice will continue to: care for the unwell, patients with symptoms that could represent a cancer, patients experiencing pain, those experiencing difficulties with their mental health and critical preventative services such as immunisations, cancer screening and monitoring and management of chronic health conditions. Many Practices have First Contact Physiotherapists starting who can take initial calls and give advice regarding joint and muscle problems.
- If there is exponential growth in Covid numbers with widespread illness the services listed above will need to be prioritised. If needed General Practice can work 'at scale' moving from individual Surgery based service to Primary Care Network level where multiple practices share clinical care for their population. We may be
- The Covid Vaccine preparations continue with a potential start to the programme by December. You will have read in the media that we are 'scaling down'. As stated above we will have to continue to care for our patients and carry on essential duties. Staff will be working evenings and weekends and so this will be a challenge for us all. **Vaccines will not be available at individual surgeries so please do not call us for information or to book a vaccine.**
- Testing capacity remains good and patients should contact 119 for tests. It is vitally important that the person **isolate** while **awaiting** the test **and** result. It is crucially important that workers who have a role working directly with the clinically vulnerable **do not work** if they are not well even if they do not have the classic symptoms of fever, cough and loss of taste/smell.
- The Covid Management Service is in place whereby patients with Covid symptoms or a positive test can be supported and monitored. The Service is also there for Care Homes which was crucial in the first wave. The CMS operating times have been increased to help support covid patients.
- In order to protect everyone's health we all need to think wisely about the activities we undertake and the risks that we are exposed to as a result of those activities. Despite the National Lockdown, we are entering a very difficult phase and whether we enter a point of crisis or head in a better direction will depend on how well the population adheres to guidance. We can look forward to the Spring but we cannot let down our guard yet.



Other resources

- Wider vulnerabilities
 - A factsheet of the numbers of people in Herefordshire likely to be affected by different aspects of the virus and the measures taken to control its spread can be downloaded from the [Understanding Herefordshire website](#) (produced March 2020)
 - A monthly monitor of key economic recovery indicators: contact the [intelligence unit](#)
- New research and open access analytical tools are continually emerging. As well as the sources linked to throughout these slides, you may be interested in:
 - [The Office for National Statistics' daily coronavirus roundup](#): the latest research into the effects on the economy and society
 - [The Health Foundation - COVID-19 policy tracker](#): an interactive timeline of key events and government policy announcements related to coronavirus
 - An [LG Inform dashboard](#) tailored to Herefordshire & Worcestershire, showing daily updates in cases and comparisons with other areas.
 - A [Herefordshire Council dashboard](#) provides up to date information on cases in the county and provides links to other useful information.