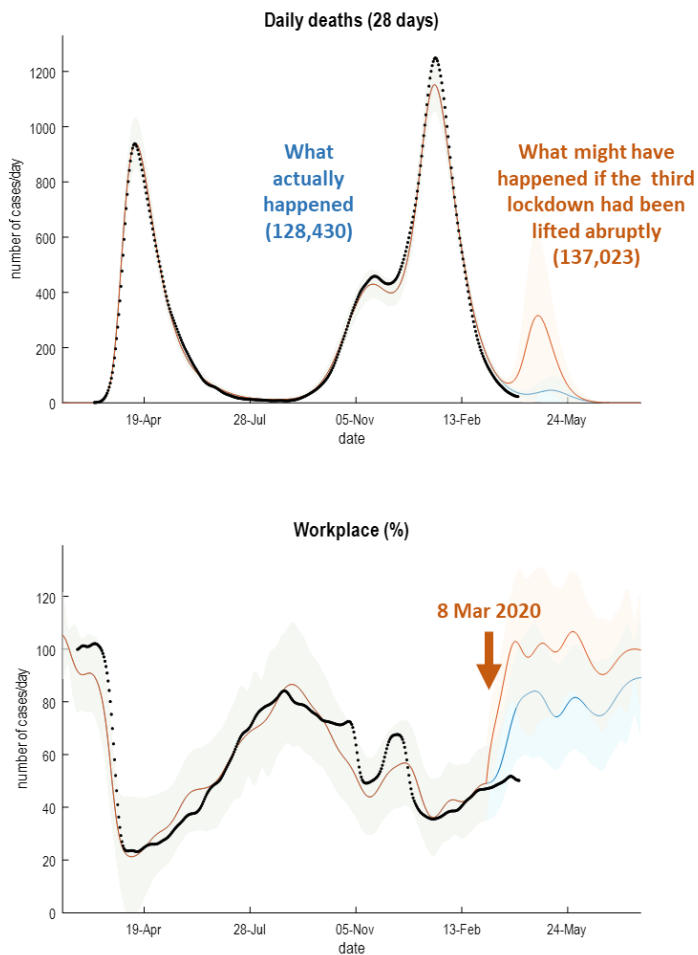


On **March 8 2021** the government started to unlock and we should, if the roadmap continues as at planned, be completely unlocked on June 21. **But what would have happened if we had unlocked completely on March 8—instead of June 21?—** rather like we did on “[Super Saturday](#)” (4 Jul 2020), when lockdown restrictions were relaxed together

This can be estimated—using counterfactual scenario modelling—by increasing the rate at which people return to a normal contact rate on 8 Mar 2021.



This figure reports estimates based upon the parameters of a [dynamic causal model](#) based on data covering the entire pandemic until 10 Apr 2021. The lines correspond to expected deaths per day (upper panel) and mobility (lower panel), while the shaded areas correspond to 90% confidence intervals. The [blue lines](#) are the most likely estimate of deaths and mobility, while the black dots correspond to (smoothed) data from the [ONS](#) and [Google](#). The [red lines](#) show what might have happened if the third lockdown had been lifted completely (modelled by increasing the rate at which people return to a normal contact rate). The numbers in brackets are the predicted cumulative deaths on 1 Aug 2021.

Under this scenario modelling, **between 6,000 and 18,500 lives might have been lost** (90% credible interval, to the nearest hundred). This is largely attributable to a fourth wave peaking in April. This wave reflects what might have happened before the vaccination programme was able to establish sufficient levels of population immunity to attenuate viral spread.

In short, the cautious (prevalence-dependent) rate of unlocking is licensed by the rate of vaccination and other epidemiological time constants.