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THE PRIME MINISTER

9 September 2020

Dear colleague,

Today I announced a number of new measures in response to the increase in cases we have seen in recent days. These measures apply in England only.

The most important thing every one of us must do is remember the basics: wash our hands, wear face coverings, keep two metres apart (or one metre with extra precautions) and get a test in response to symptoms. It is vital people do not slip back into old habits.

In response to feedback from members of the public, and police officers about what they need for an effective enforcement regime, we are now simplifying and strengthening the rules, making them easier for people to understand and for the police to enforce. Everyone should limit social contact as much as possible and minimise interactions with other households. It is safer to meet outdoors and people should keep their distance from anyone they do not live with, even if they are close friends or family.

In England, from Monday, people must no longer meet socially in groups of more than 6. If they do, they will be breaking the law. This will apply in any setting, indoors or outdoors, at home or in the pub. The ban will be set out in law and enforced by the police; anyone breaking the rules risks being dispersed, fined and possibly arrested. This measure replaces both the existing ban on gatherings of more than 30 and the current guidance on allowing 2 households to meet indoors. There will be some limited exemptions; for example, if a single household or support bubble is larger than 6, they can still gather.

COVID-19 Secure venues like places of worship, gyms, restaurants and hospitality venues can still hold more than 6 people in total, however within those venues, there must not be individual groups larger than 6, and groups must not mix socially or form larger groups. Education and work settings are unaffected. COVID-19 Secure weddings and funerals can go ahead, up to a limit of 30 people, and organised sport will still be able to proceed.

The Government - and the public - wants to see stronger enforcement of the rules which are already in place. The Cabinet has been tasked with increasing enforcement and I would like to thank the police and other authorities for the work they are doing to keep us all safe.

In future:

- Premises and venues where people meet socially will be legally required to request the contact details of a member of every party, record and retain these details for 21 days, and provide them to NHS Test & Trace without delay when required.
- The Government will support local authorities to make further and faster use of their powers to close venues that are breaking the rules and pose a risk to public health.
- Fines will be levied against hospitality venues that fail to ensure their premises remain COVID-19 Secure.
- The Government will boost the enforcement capacity of Local Authorities by introducing COVID-19 Secure Marshalls to help ensure social distancing in town and city centres, and by setting up a register of Environmental Health Officers that Local Authorities can draw upon for support.
- The Government will simplify the Passenger Locator Form needed for travelling to the UK, and take measures to ensure these are completed and checked before departure.
- Border Force will step up their enforcement efforts at the border to ensure arrivals are complying with the quarantine rules.
- The Government will restrict the opening hours of premises, initially in some local areas.
- The Government will revise plans to pilot larger audiences in venues later this month and review our intention to return audiences to stadiums and conference centres from 1 October. We will provide further information on this shortly.

Bearing down on social contact and improving enforcement will enable us to keep schools and businesses open, in the knowledge they are COVID-19 Secure. Schools and colleges should only be shut as a last resort. With university terms beginning soon, the Government is publishing updated guidance for universities on how they can operate in a COVID-19 Secure way, including a clear request not to send students home in the event of an outbreak, so as to avoid spreading the virus across the country.

These measures will help us control the virus but will not, on their own, be enough to allow a more significant return to normality. The Government is still hopeful of a successful vaccine, but there are no guarantees. In the meantime, we are ramping up our efforts to deliver an alternative plan in the form of mass testing. NHS Test & Trace will continue to use testing to identify people who are positive. It is also working hard to increase testing capacity to test and confirm negative cases in the future, in order to enable people to lead more normal lives, without the need for social distancing.

This plan – the moonshot – will require a giant, collaborative effort from government, business, public health professionals, scientists, logistics experts and many more. Work is underway – and we will carry on until we get there. We are hopeful this approach will be widespread by the spring and, if everything comes together, it may be possible even for challenging sectors like theatres to get closer to normal before Christmas. But as I have said before, all this progress is contingent on continued scientific advances that we cannot 100% guarantee.

That is why it is so important that we take these tough measures now. We must work together and follow the rules: meet in groups of no more than six, wash our hands, wear face coverings, and keep our distance.



To all Members of Parliament and Peers

## 9 September PM announcement on Covid-19

### CORE SCRIPT

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- **The Government's strategy remains to control the virus and keep the economy and society open.** We have brought the number of infections down significantly from its peak, and enabled the return of more normality to our lives. In recent days however, the UK has seen a rise in cases.
- On 3 September, the average number of cases across the UK was just under 20 per 100k (up from just over 12 per 100k the week before). 29 lower tier local authorities have more than 40 cases per 100k (28th August to 3rd September), up from 12 the week before (21st August to 27th August). **With cases increasing in the UK, we all - businesses, individuals, and government - need to take action to suppress the virus.**
- **The UK Government is consequently introducing a number of measures to simplify and strengthen our communications and social contact rules.** The new rules apply across England. Where there is a local outbreak the Government, working with local leaders, will respond with additional, local measures. Different rules may also apply in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The measures announced are as follows:
  - **From Monday 14 September, people must not meet in groups of more than 6.** This change will simplify and clarify the rules on social gatherings, so they are easier to understand and easier for the police to enforce. It will apply indoors and outdoors, including in private homes. This limit will be enforceable in law from Monday, and the current guidance and law applies until then. Education and work settings are unaffected, and there will be a limited number of exemptions, such as weddings, funerals and organised team sport. Places of worship will remain open for services (and to host larger numbers) but individual groups from more than one household will be restricted to 6.
  - From Friday 18 September, **it will be mandatory in law for certain businesses to have a system to collect NHS Test and Trace data**, and keep this for 21 days. Core COVID-19 Secure requirements will be mandated for hospitality businesses, and egregious breaches enforced. The Government will also publish simplified COVID-19 Secure guidance to make obligations easier to follow.

- **The Government will support Local Authorities and police forces to respond to breaches of COVID-19 Secure guidelines.** We will launch a register of newly qualified and recently retired Environmental Health Officers with the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health Officers, so that Local Authorities can recruit more quickly and fill any gaps. In addition, we will introduce COVID-19 Secure Marshals to support social distancing in busy areas.
- **The Government will take steps to improve compliance with border requirements.** We will simplify the Passenger Locator Form and take measures to ensure passengers have filled out their form before departure. Border Force will step up and target their enforcement efforts at the border to ensure arrivals are complying with the rules.
- **Planned sports pilot events** will be limited to smaller, safer numbers, with strict conditions to ensure social distancing, and will not take place in areas where incidence is high. The UK Government will review its intention to return audiences to stadia and conference centres from 1 October.
- While the UK Government remains hopeful of a successful vaccine, it is also developing an alternative plan to enable a significant return to normality which involves ramping up efforts to deliver **mass testing**. While testing those with symptoms remains the priority, we will develop plans to identify people who are negative, to enable people to lead more normal lives. This approach will be piloted in Salford from next month and we are hopeful that it will be widespread by the spring.