

# Johnson announces end of UK's lockdown

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On Tuesday, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the de facto end of what little remains of the lockdown he reluctantly and belatedly imposed in response to public demands to prevent the spread of COVID-19

The bulk of the UK economy, barring “close proximity” venues such as nightclubs, soft-play areas, indoor gyms, swimming pools and spas, will reopen July 4. All schools will reopen in September.

Johnson told MPs, “Today we can say that our long national hibernation is beginning to come to an end and life is returning to our streets and shops.”

Social distancing was effectively ditched by Johnson. If people were unable to be two metres apart, “we will advise people to keep a social distance of ‘one metre plus’.” The “advice” is meaningless. Everyone knows that social distancing is now over, as far as the government is concerned.

The economy is being flung open, with millions being exposed to a still active and widespread virus. Wearing face masks is not being made mandatory, except on public transport.

There is no scientific basis to any of this, with the pandemic still raging in Britain and claiming hundreds of lives every week. Johnson announced the end of lockdown on the day the UK recorded another 280 COVID-19 deaths and 921 fresh cases. On Wednesday, a further 154 deaths were announced.

The real daily infection rate is many multiples higher than the 1,000 or so officially cited. Yesterday, Professor Anthony Costello, a critic of the government's homicidal herd immunity policy, tweeted, “Leaked [Public Health England] document suggests 7000 new infections per day and R value possibly above 1.”

*HuffPost UK* exposed “classified daily document released by Public Health England to health professionals across the UK.” It wrote, “The

government is not certain that the coronavirus R [Reproduction] rate is below 1 in England, meaning the disease may not be under control even as lockdown restrictions are being lifted.”

For weeks, the government has claimed that the UK's R rate is between 0.7 and 0.9. Last Friday, the UK's COVID-19 alert level was downgraded from 4 to 3, meaning that the virus is no longer judged to be “high or exponentially rising.” *HuffPost* noted “that there is ‘uncertainty’ around the figure published by the government, which has been used to justify the lowering of the UK's ‘alert level’...a copy of last Thursday's document, titled ‘COVID-19 Situation Report’ and marked ‘OFFICIAL SENSITIVE’, states that because of uncertainty in how accurate the figure is ‘we cannot preclude R being above 1’ in England.”

The leaked PHE document states “that the rate is believed to have risen recently, and explains: ‘We believe that this is likely to be due to increasing mobility and mixing between households and in public and workplace settings’”

Exposing government lies that the virus is on a “downward curve,” *HuffPost* reveals, “The report also includes other data that have not been made public—most notably that the daily estimate of the number of daily new infections last Thursday stood at 7,000. This is in contrast to the figure of actual positive tests reported for the same day, which was 1,346.”

Johnson announced the latest reopening measures even as he declared that further outbreaks of the deadly disease are a certainty, telling parliament that “as we have seen in other countries, there will be flare-ups for which local measures will be needed and we will not hesitate to apply the brakes and re-introduce restrictions even at national level—if required.”

No such local lockdowns have been imposed as vast sections of the economy were reopened in recent weeks. This was despite the R value officially going

above 1 in two regions of the country—with a population of over 12 million. Outbreaks affecting hundreds of people have been recorded in recent days at food processing and meatpacking plants and in schools (see: “Unite union facilitates cover-up of COVID-19 outbreak in UK meat processing plants”).

Johnson proceeded despite warnings from scientists that the full reopening of the economy risks a “second wave” of the pandemic. Moreover, the entire world, the UK included, is still being menaced by the first coronavirus wave, with fresh outbreaks everywhere and record daily increases worldwide. On Tuesday, more than 36,000 new cases were recorded in the US, the third highest number since May 1. In Brazil, there were nearly 30,000 new cases reported June 21, up 30 percent from two weeks ago.

Speaking to *Sky News* Wednesday, Professor David King, who leads Independent Sage—made up of scientists concerned at the government’s political misuse of scientific research—said, “If we move too quickly, which is what I think is being proposed here, the risk of running into a second wave becomes very significant. ... I don’t think there’s anyone who can believe from the scientific point of view that this a wise move.”

On Wednesday, the presidents of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons, Nursing, Physicians and GPs signed an open letter in the *British Medical Journal* stating that “the available evidence indicates that local flare-ups are increasingly likely and a second wave a real risk.”

The ruling elite across the UK’s constituent nations are united in their determination to end the lockdown. Johnson’s statement was followed Wednesday by Scottish National Party First Minister Nicola Sturgeon who said Scotland’s lockdown will end with moves to reopen the rest of the economy between July 3 and July 15. From July 15, all holiday accommodation will open, along with indoor areas of pubs and restaurants and hairdressers and barbers. All museums, galleries, cinemas and libraries can open.

Johnson’s move was hailed in the media, with the *Mail* headlining, “July 4 will be OUR Independence Day.” The *Daily Telegraph* noted that some MPs had already dubbed the date “Super Saturday,” as “restaurants, hotels, pubs and hairdressers will also be allowed to reopen, and ‘air bridges’ established to save the summer holidays.” The *Sun*, *Daily Express* and

*Metro* all had front pages hailing the opening of pubs and photos of people carrying heavy trays of drinks. The ostensibly liberal *Guardian* editorialised that “the direction of travel is welcome...” and “Mr Johnson is justified in saying that the pandemic now appears to be under control.”

The Johnson government declared at the outset of the pandemic it was in favour of the infection of tens of millions of people to reach “herd immunity.” It was only prevented from carrying this out to due to public revulsion, with scientists insisting that it would lead to hundreds of thousands of deaths.

The government imposed a lockdown, but this was months too late. As a result, this week the *Financial Times* gave a “cautious estimate” of 65,700 “excess UK deaths” due to COVID-19 up to June 22. This almost matches the 67,100 UK civilian deaths in World War II. Even the government’s own highly manipulated figures record over 43,000 dead—the third highest death rate in the world behind the United States and Brazil.

Johnson has only been able to survive in power and continue to recklessly endanger lives due to the unqualified support he receives from the Labour Party, which operates as a de facto national coalition.

Responding to Johnson in parliament, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer did not even mention the horrific death toll and herd immunity policy, while reassuring Johnson, “When I was elected leader of the Labour Party, I said that I would offer ‘constructive opposition, with the courage to support the Government’ where they are doing the right thing.” Therefore, “overall I welcome the Prime Minister’s statement. I believe that the Government are trying to do the right thing, and in that we will support them.”

Johnson could do nothing but reply that he was “grateful” for the “spirit, the manner and the constructive way in which he [Starmer] has responded.”



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