

UK Conservative government moves to end national lockdown with Labour Party backing

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government is ending the national lockdown and will vote today to re-introduce the Tier system that will be in place over the Christmas period.

The government is ending a lockdown that, despite its partial character and schools and workplaces remaining open, has cut coronavirus infections cases by a third and under conditions in which infections are still high.

The *R* (Reproduction) level of the virus has fallen below 1 (to an estimated 0.88) for the first time since August. But any progress made is to be torn up so that corporations can reap profits in the run-up to Christmas, with millions of people being allowed to meet together in family groups over a five day period. In a politically criminal decision that will lead to countless deaths, the government announced that all shops will be allowed to open for 24 hours for the entirety of December and January.

This is happening even as Imperial College's monthly React survey of 105,000 people between November 13 and 24 found that are still 72,000 infections per day--down from around 100,000 per day at the end of October.

Hundreds of deaths are still being reported daily, with the 205 announced Monday taking the total to almost 60,000. The government tally is manipulated, with a host of other estimates from reliable sources estimating the true number of fatalities at well above 70,000.

According to the government's own figures nearly 16,000 hospital beds are filled with COVID-19 patients, not far off the peak in April of almost 20,000. Nearly a third of England's hospital trusts have exceeded their first-wave peak of Covid patients undergoing treatment, according to analysis published by the *Guardian*. National Health Service (NHS) trusts in South Somerset and Devon "treated more than twice

as many Covid patients on at least one day last week as they did at the peak of the first wave in spring."

Any new surge in infections, the only possible result of ending the national lockdown, threatens to quickly overwhelm the NHS.

That is why the government is doing everything to claim that the NHS is able to cope and has plenty of spare capacity. On Sunday Tory MP John Redwood tweeted, "Why not open and staff all the Nightingale hospital capacity they need for CV 19 cases and get the rest of the NHS back to full capacity for everything else? No need to scare us with the idea the NHS will not cope."

His tweet was met with a barrage of denunciations from the public, pointing out that there are not enough staff to run the NHS at full capacity, let alone the seven Nightingale field hospitals if they were reopened. *Sky News* journalist Mark Austin felt compelled to reply, "Staffed by who exactly? Last I heard there are 28,000 NHS staff off with Covid, isolating or off because children sent back from school. Where are the highly trained ICU nurses going to come from?"

The crisis at just one NHS trust over the weekend exposes the government as liars. On Saturday, the critical care unit at Royal Stoke University Hospital was forced to increase its alert level, as 38 of its 322 Covid patients were placed on ventilators—meaning that it had just seven spares. The hospital was forced to reach an agreement with NHS trusts in Birmingham and Coventry and Warwickshire to transfer critically-ill patients and the situation is being reviewed daily. Stoke had warned before declaring the major incident that it was already facing "unprecedented pressures" as Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire reported a further 374 infections in the 24 hours before the crisis.

The biggest refutation of government justifications to

end lockdown is the fact that 99 percent of the UK's population are to be placed into the top two "High" and "Very High" tiers, with 55 million people remain banned from mixing with other households indoors until the five day Christmas exemption. Around 23 million people across 21 local authorities, including substantial parts of the north of England and the Midlands, are in tier three. Most of the population, including London, and the Liverpool city region will be in tier two. Only largely rural Cornwall and low population areas of the Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly will be under Tier 1.

That the virus is still a major threat is entirely the result of the government homicidal herd immunity policy. As a result of the spring national lockdown, including schools being closed for months, before everything was disastrously reopened allowing the virus to again spread out of control, the number of patients being treated in hospital for COVID-19 fell to as low as 740 *nationally* on September 11.

A substantial section of Tory MPs in the 70 plus strong COVID Recovery Group (CRG) oppose further Tier restrictions and have threatened to vote against new measures today, unless substantial concessions are given them by Johnson. The CRG said up to 100 of the Tories overall 364 MPs could rebel.

In response, over the weekend the prime minister sent the CRG a letter insisting that the new measures had a "sunset" expiry date of February 3. Johnson also pledged that all tier allocations would be reviewed on December 16. The government plans that a Cabinet Office committee chaired by Johnson will "take the final decision on tier allocations". These will be announced on Dec 17 and come into force on Dec 19.

A separate letter was sent to reassure CRG leaders Mark Harper and Steve Baker.

MPs would be given a further vote on whether restrictions could be extended in January. Sections of the CRG are insisting that a vote on whether to renew must come soon after Christmas, with one Tory MP, Nus Ghani, telling the *Sun* newspaper, "These restrictions must only last for four weeks. There must be another vote in early January because I refuse to lock my constituency into such severe restrictions and throw away the key for two whole months."

The CRG demanded that Johnson publish assessments of the health, economic and societal

impacts of the virus, which the government agreed to.

The right-wing *Daily Mail* editorialised Monday, "End tyranny of tiers", declaring, "These blanket restrictions have pushed the whole economy to the edge of an abyss. To drag it back... Johnson must loosen the shackles now. Fine words must be followed by radical action."

The profit lust of the ruling elite was summed up in the pro-Labour Party *Daily Mirror's* banner headline Monday, "Go shop for Britain".

The article cited the British Independent Retailers Association declaring, "It's the most important December ever for retailers." Representatives of big business spoke out to denounce further Tier restrictions, as the Centre for Economics and Business Research claimed it would cost the economy £900 million a day. Pizza Express chairman Luke Johnson asked on the BBC's *Newsnight*, "Where is the cost-benefit analysis of the lockdowns? ... A lot of these businesses are hanging by a thread. Pubs didn't even shut during the blitz in the second world war. And yet we are destroying the industry, with thousands of jobs."

With a Tory rebellion likely whatever concessions Johnson makes, the government is reliant on the support of the Labour Party to get its agenda through. Tory Environment Secretary George Eustice said that the situation was a "national emergency" and "Like all these things, it will depend on what other parties do, yes. It will depend on what the Labour party choose to do... it's not the time really for any political party to play political games." Labour said Monday evening that it will not oppose Johnson "in the national interest" and will abstain in the vote.

Labour's collusion in this crime extended to the demand that the government should suspend peak rail fares over the Christmas period in anticipation of a surge in demand, as people travel to see families and friends.



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