Amid warnings of 4,800 daily hospitalisations: UK prime minister Johnson green lights July 19 lifting of all COVID-19 restrictions

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12 July 2021

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has confirmed that all coronavirus restrictions in England will be removed on July 19.

Social distancing, already reduced to 1 metre plus, is being ditched and mask wearing will be voluntary.

This takes place as 218,503 new COVID-19 cases have been recorded in the last seven days, up from 170,856 the previous week. 203 lives were lost to COVID-19 in the last week, a 66 percent increase on 122 the week prior.

What is being enforced is an upscaling of the social murder carried out by the Conservative government, which has already taken the lives of over 152,000 people. New modelling released yesterday from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine estimates that an 80 reduction in all protective measures, including mask-wearing and social distancing, could lead to 46,000 deaths by the end of the year.

Authorising the end of safety controls, under conditions in which the virus is surging in Britain, Johnson told a Downing Street press conference that "it is absolutely vital that we proceed now with caution, and I cannot say this powerfully or emphatically enough—this pandemic is not over."

People should be cautious and not "tear the pants out of it" on July 19, and he would "expect and recommend" people still wear masks in crowded indoor spaces. Ending legal coronavirus restrictions "should not be taken as an invitation by everybody simply to have a great jubilee and freedom from any kind of caution or restraint."

Nothing could be more grotesque than Johnson's pose of restraint. He was speaking the day after his government authorised the largest super spreader event held anywhere in the world since the onset of the pandemic. Tens of millions were given the go-ahead to freely mix to watch the European Championship football final between England and Italy. Well over 60,000 mainly unmasked people were in Wembley Stadium in London. Thousands massed around the stadium and hundreds broke down security fences and forced entry into the stadium. Many thousands more filled the capital's main squares and other city centre "fan zones", and pubs, while millions gathered in homes.

Johnson's reopening announcement was planned to coincide with the Euro Championships. He attended the England-Denmark semi-final game at Wembley last week, celebrating without wearing a mask. With England progressing to their first major final in 55 years, Johnson intended to use the event as a celebration of "national unity" and a demonstration of how joyous ending restrictions would be. This was even talk of him announcing a public holiday in the event of England's victory.

With the match ending in debacle for England, including racist attacks on social media against three black England players who missed penalties—and the inevitable autopsy as to why England are unable to win soccer tournaments—Johnson's pitch was queered. But the outcome would not be allowed to divert from his mission of ending all remaining containment measures amid a surge in infections, propelled by the reopening of most of the economy nearly two months ago on May 17.

As the final between Italy and England ended, the World Health Organization's Covid-19 technical lead,

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Maria Van Kerkhove, gave a brutal summation of the shocking events she had witnessed: “Am I supposed to be enjoying watching transmission happening in front of my eyes? The #COVID19 pandemic is not taking a break tonight… #SARSCoV2 #DeltaVariant will take advantage of unvaccinated people, in crowded settings, unmasked, screaming/shouting/singing. Devastating.”

Johnson spoke as UK daily cases reached more than 30,000 for the sixth consecutive day. Newly released papers from the government’s own Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) estimate that between 1,000 and 2,000 COVID-19 patients a day could be admitted to hospital in England, with between 100 to 200 daily deaths, at the peak of the wave now underway. In a worst-case scenario daily hospitalisations would reach 4,800, topping the January 2021 pandemic peak of 4,000 and giving the lie to the endlessly repeated claim that vaccination has broken the link between infection, hospitalisation and death.

The prime minister spoke after Health Secretary Sajid Javid told parliament July 19 would take “us another step closer to the lives we used to lead.”

“This is the right time to get our nation closer to normal life,” he boasted, “To those who say ‘why take this step now’ I say ‘if not now, when?’ There will never be a perfect time to take this step.’”

Javid said bluntly, “The case numbers will get a lot worse before they get better… But we do not believe that infection rates will put unsustainable pressure on the NHS [National Health Service].”

The claim that the NHS can cope with thousands of COVID-19 hospitalisations is a lie. Several hospitals have already declared emergency situations in the last weeks. Two weeks ago, Manchester’s Royal Infirmary declared a major incident as pressure increased on its emergency department amid a shortage of staff and beds. Last Wednesday, three hospitals in Scotland, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin, Moray, and Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, postponed non-urgent elective operations due to the soaring number of COVID-19 patients and declared “Code black” status, having reached full capacity.

Javid himself told the *Sunday Telegraph* 24 hours earlier that NHS waiting lists, already at record level of over 5 million due to the hundreds of thousands treated in hospital with COVID-19 during the pandemic, could reach 13 million in months. Such a level of infection would prevent people seeking treatment for a raft of debilitating and dangerous conditions and see many thousands go on to suffer the terrible impact of Long Covid.

The homicidal move to junk all restrictions in pursuit of corporate profit is proceeding in the face of warnings from Dr Mike Ryan, the World Health Organisation director of health emergencies, and 122 scientists who published a letter in premiere medical journal, the *Lancet*, last week. The lifting of restrictions on July 19 was 'a dangerous and unethical experiment,' the scientists warned.

The government knows this all very well. Conservative MP Dan Poulter, a vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on coronavirus, told the *Guardian* that “challenging mutations” of the virus would probably emerge and set back a “return to normality” until at least 2022. The highly transmissible and deadly Delta variant became dominant in a matter of weeks in Britain. Poulter warned that a “greater pool of the virus” meant “a higher chance of mutation occurring”. The greatest danger is that a variant could emerge able to evade current vaccines.

The majority of the population oppose lifting restrictions. An *Observer* newspaper commissioned poll found that nearly 73 percent of respondents supported continuing wearing masks on public transport. Fifty percent, in the face of a barrage of right-wing propaganda, still said lifting restrictions should be delayed.

Johnson and his band of criminals can only proceed to give the green light to further death and social misery because they face no opposition from within the political establishment. Labour Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth’s responded to Javid by declaring, “We want to see the economy reopen in a balanced, safe and sustainable way.” But he suggested only that mask wearing continue to be mandatory, and asked whether “it would be more sensible to have regular review dates in place through the summer as we deal with this third wave?”

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