

GOVERNMENT

Prime Minister Boris Johnson puts United Kingdom under complete lockdown for 3 weeks

March 24, 2020



Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressing the nation March 23 evening as he ordered a national lockdown of the United Kingdom to curb the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Image credit: U.K. Prime Minister's Office

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

The United Kingdom has followed Italy, France and parts of the United States in implementing a complete national lockdown to curb the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

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The immediate impact of this decision will be felt by the millions of employees working in retail, as well as the hundreds of thousands of personnel working across different luxury sectors.

"Without a huge national effort to halt the growth of this virus, there will come a moment when no health service in the world could possibly cope; because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses," U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in an address to the nation last night.

Mr. Johnson's office issued three new measures: requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes; closing non-essential shops and community spaces; and stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public.

These measures go into effect immediately.

All luxury stores and factories will have to close, although the official guidance does state that people can travel to and from work, "but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home."

The U.K. is home to British luxury brands such as Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Bentley Motors, Range Rover, Aston Martin, Burberry, Turnbull & Asser, Alexander McQueen, Stella McCartney, Holland & Holland, Purdey, Smythson, Claridge's and scores of names in fashion, leather goods, accessories, footwear, hospitality, wines and spirits, and automotive.

Here is the speech of Prime Minister Boris Johnson:

Good Evening,

The coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced for decades and this country is not alone.

All over the world we are seeing the devastating impact of this invisible killer.

And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking to fight the disease and what you can do to help.

And I want to begin by reminding you why the U.K. has been taking the approach that we have.

Without a huge national effort to halt the growth of this virus, there will come a moment when no health service in the world could possibly cope; because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses.

And as we have seen elsewhere, in other countries that also have fantastic health care systems, that is the moment of real danger.

To put it simply, if too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to handle it - meaning more people are likely to die, not just from coronavirus but from other illnesses as well.

So it's vital to slow the spread of the disease.

Because that is the way we reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment at any one time, so we can protect the NHS's ability to cope - and save more lives.

And that's why we have been asking people to stay at home during this pandemic.

And though huge numbers are complying - and I thank you all - the time has now come for us all to do more.

From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home.

Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households.

That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- one form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and
- traveling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

That's all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home.

You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No.

You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home.

You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine - and you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can.

If you don't follow the rules the police will have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

To ensure compliance with the Government's instruction to stay at home, we will immediately:

- close all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship;
- we will stop all gatherings of more than two people in public excluding people you live with;
- and we'll stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals.

Parks will remain open for exercise but gatherings will be dispersed.

No Prime Minister wants to enact measures like this.

I know the damage that this disruption is doing and will do to people's lives, to their businesses and to their jobs.

And that's why we have produced a huge and unprecedented program of support both for workers and for business.

And I can assure you that we will keep these restrictions under constant review. We will look again in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows we are able to.

But at present there are just no easy options. The way ahead is hard, and it is still true that many lives will sadly be lost.

And yet it is also true that there is a clear way through.

Day by day we are strengthening our amazing NHS with 7500 former clinicians now coming back to the service.

With the time you buy - by simply staying at home - we are increasing our stocks of equipment.

We are accelerating our search for treatments.

We are pioneering work on a vaccine.

And we are buying millions of testing kits that will enable us to turn the tide on this invisible killer.

I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to beat the virus.

Everyone from the supermarket staff to the transport workers to the carers to the nurses and doctors on the frontline.

But in this fight we can be in no doubt that each and every one of us is directly enlisted.

Each and every one of us is now obliged to join together.

To halt the spread of this disease.

To protect our NHS and to save many many thousands of lives.

And I know that as they have in the past so many times.

The people of this country will rise to that challenge.

And we will come through it stronger than ever.

We will beat the coronavirus and we will beat it together.

And therefore I urge you at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.

Thank you.

Published March 23

Below is the detailed guidance issued by the U.K. government on staying at home

NEW RULES ON STAYING AT HOME AND AWAY FROM OTHERS

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is now (23 March 2020) introducing three new measures.

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

These measures are effective immediately. The government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

1. STAYING AT HOME

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons.

- Shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
- Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- Traveling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimizing time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 meters apart from anyone outside of your household.

These measures must be followed by everyone. Separate advice is available for individuals or households who are isolating, and for the most vulnerable who need to be shielded.

If you work in a critical sector outlined in this guidance, or your child has been identified as vulnerable, you can continue to take your children to school.

2. CLOSING NON-ESSENTIAL SHOPS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Last week, the government ordered certain businesses - including pubs, cinemas and theatres - to close.

The government is now extending this requirement to a further set of businesses and other venues, including:

- all non-essential retail stores - this will include clothing and electronics stores; hair, beauty and nail salons; and outdoor and indoor markets, excluding food markets.
- libraries, community centers, and youth centers.
- indoor and outdoor leisure facilities such as bowling alleys, arcades and soft play facilities.
- communal places within parks, such as playgrounds, sports courts and outdoor gyms.
- places of worship, except for funerals attended by immediate families.
- hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, caravan parks, and boarding houses for commercial/leisure use (excluding permanent residents and key workers).

3. STOPPING PUBLIC GATHERINGS

To make sure people are staying at home and apart from each other, the Government is also stopping all public gatherings of more than two people.

There are only two exceptions to this rule:

- where the gathering is of a group of people who live together - this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no option to leave them at home.
- where the gathering is essential for work purposes - but workers should be trying to minimize all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace.

In addition, the government is stopping social events, including weddings, baptisms and other religious ceremonies. This will exclude funerals, which can be attended by immediate family.

DELIVERING THESE NEW MEASURES

These measures will reduce our day to day contact with other people. They are a vital part of our efforts to reduce the rate of transmission of coronavirus.

Every citizen is instructed to comply with these new measures.

The government will therefore be ensuring the police and other relevant authorities have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings where people do not comply.

They will initially last for the three weeks from 23 March, at which point the government will look at them again and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

PM [@BorisJohnson](#) gives an important update on [#coronavirus](#) [#StayHomeSaveLives](#)
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UK Prime Minister (@10DowningStreet) [March 23, 2020](#)