

GOVERNMENT

UK returns to strict lockdown as COVID-19 infections rise

January 4, 2021



Harrods Knightsbridge London store. Image credit: Harrods

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The United Kingdom is entering a strict lockdown for at least six weeks, as the country tries to keep the latest wave of COVID-19 infections from overwhelming the healthcare system.

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson made the announcement on Jan. 4, placing the entirety of the U.K. under the strictest restrictions since spring 2020. The lockdown is the latest indication that COVID-19 will continue to impact the global economy, including the luxury sector, well into 2021.

Hunkering down

Under the nationwide "level 5" restrictions, residents are only permitted to leave their homes for activities such as work, education, exercise, medical attention or essential shopping.

Wales, Northern Ireland and specific regions of England were already under full lockdown prior to the announcement, which now impacts the whole U.K. Effective on Jan. 6, the expanded restrictions are expected to be in place at least through mid-February.

UK COVID-19 Alert Level 5: A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation; transmission is high or rising exponentially and there is a material risk of healthcare services being overwhelmed. (5/5) <https://t.co/u6xj05MQgt> pic.twitter.com/3NKA3zpAfm

UK Prime Minister (@10DowningStreet) **January 4, 2021**

Twitter post about COVID-19 alerts in the U.K.

Non-essential retail is required to close, including clothing stores and vehicle showrooms, with the exception of car rentals. Restaurants and pubs, with the exception of delivery and takeout, and entertainment venues must also close.

Hotels and similar accommodations may only remain open for specific circumstances, such as properties that function as main residences.

The restrictions come as cases and deaths climb in the U.K. A more infectious variant of COVID-19 is spreading quickly in the country, including London, leading to a growing number of travel restrictions ([see story](#)).

Elsewhere in Europe, the *Financial Times* reports that other nations are considering expanding lockdowns or other restrictions even as coronavirus vaccinations are underway.

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