

New hard-hitting national TV ad urges the nation to stay at home

- New emotive TV ad challenges the public to think about the impact their actions might have by asking: “Can you look them in the eyes and tell them you’re helping by staying at home?”
- The TV advert will launch on ITV and Channel 4 this evening and further advertising will run across radio, out of home, digital and across social media from Saturday evening
- Someone is admitted to hospital every 30 seconds with the virus, and a quarter of those are under the age of 55

There are currently over 38,000 beds taken up in England by COVID-19 patients.

Everyone across the UK is being asked “Can you look them in the eyes and tell them you’re helping by staying at home?” in a new government advertising campaign which will act as a stark reminder to the public of the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the extreme pressures facing frontline workers.

The powerful new campaign will run across TV, radio, press, digital, out-of-home advertising and social media, looking into the eyes of NHS staff and COVID-19 patients and documenting their emotions. It will air for the first time on Friday evening (22 January 2021) on ITV and Channel 4.

With a shift in tone to previous adverts, the new campaign features raw footage and testimonials from patients who have COVID-19, as well as the NHS staff who are working around the clock to look after them at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital.

The impact of the second wave is still being seen in hospitals across the country with someone admitted every 30 seconds with the virus, and a quarter of those are under the age of 55. There are currently over 38,000 beds taken up in England by COVID-19 patients.

The adverts are designed to remind everyone, including those who have had the vaccine, of the ongoing need for caution when on public transport, or shopping, and to make sure they only use these services when it is essential to do so and to adhere to the principles of hands, face and space. The campaign challenges the public to question their actions, and asks if they can look frontline workers in the eyes and tell them they are helping to stop the spread by following the rules and staying at home.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

The NHS is under intense pressure. They are relying on all of us to follow the rules.

I know how long the last few months have felt, and I know the vast majority of people are following the rules, but we have come too far to let up now.

Every day we are closer to beating this virus, and already over 5 million people across the UK have been vaccinated. But right now more than ever we need to stick together to protect our NHS and to keep saving lives.

The message couldn't be clearer – stay at home.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, said:

The impact of the current wave is still putting significant pressure on hospitals across the country and many patients are very sick.

Vaccines give clear hope for the future, but for now we must all continue to play our part in protecting the NHS and saving lives.

Latest COVID-19 stats show the UK has seen the highest number of deaths recorded from COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, with over 1,000 people dying per day for the last 10 days.

The vast majority of people are staying at home and, as a result, the number of COVID-19 cases has reduced, but infections remain high and there are signs of a plateau. Everyone must continue to play their part to ensure rates reduce even further.

The new strain of the virus is around 50% to 70% more transmissible than the strain circulating in 2020. Additionally, it is now estimated around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms and are spreading it without knowing. The actions of a few people who are ignoring or bending the rules are putting everyone at risk and placing further pressure on doctors, nurses and NHS staff across the country.

The government guidance remains clear – stay at home unless absolutely essential.

To support the message, an additional short film has been developed featuring one-on-one interviews with the hospital staff from Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital. and patients from both Basingstoke and St George's hospital in London who feature in the new advertising campaign. Within the interviews you hear about the daily lives of these hospital staff and the impact COVID-19 has had on them and calls on the public to take the message seriously and stay at home to help stop the spread.

Alex Whitfield, Chief Executive of Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, whose hospital the advert and film was created in, said:

We are going through the biggest national health emergency that many of us will see during our lifetime. COVID-19 is serious, lives are at risk and the pressure the NHS is under to provide care is real. Our staff, and other NHS staff across the country are working around the clock to provide vital care for those with COVID-19 and other health conditions.

We are pleading with the public to stay at home in order to look after each other and support our NHS staff so we can ultimately all play a part in saving lives. We hope that by having a film crew in here to hear how much pressure our hospital and staff are under, the public will get an understanding of what happens here every day. The threat is very real to us all.

Dr Emeka Okorochoa, Accident and Emergency Doctor, East London Hospitals, comments:

The past year has been tough on everyone and I know that lockdown has been so frustrating for so many of us. However, life is really tough on the frontline at the moment, so ask yourself, is it worth breaking the rules to go and meet friends?

Lives are being lost and the strain on my colleagues is clear. We're all exhausted but we are still here fighting the good fight against this horrible disease. We are asking everyone to stay safe, protect themselves and help us out by just staying at home and following the government guidelines – it is the easiest way that you can help.

[View the TV advert](#)

[View the PR short film](#)