

New TV advert urges public to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives

New TV ad fronted by the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty urges people to stay at home in the face of rapidly rising rate of coronavirus infections and pressures facing the NHS

Massive public information campaign will run across TV, radio, out of home and on social media from tonight Everyone in England is being urged to stay at home and “act like you’ve got it” as part of a major advertising campaign encouraging the public to control the spread of the virus and protect the NHS and save lives. Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 don’t have any symptoms and can pass it on without realising, which is why it’s essential everyone stays at home and remembers Hands, Face, Space.

‘Stay at home, save lives’ will run across TV, radio, out of home advertising and on social media, and will include a new advert fronted by the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty which will be aired for the first time on ITV at 7.15pm on Friday 8 January 2021.

The campaign recognises the overwhelming pressure facing the NHS and urges people to stay at home. It comes as current data shows COVID-19 cases and deaths are at an all-time high and NHS hospitals and staff are under huge pressure, with some hospitals in the South East at extreme capacity.

On 1 September, there were under 500 COVID-19 inpatients in hospitals in England. On 1 November this increased to approximately 9,000. On Christmas Day, it was just below the last peak at 17,701 and on 7 January there were 28,246 – that is an increase of more than 11,000 in under two weeks.

Today’s stark data (8 January) shows the UK recorded 68,053 new coronavirus cases – the highest daily total of the pandemic so far, as well as the highest ever daily COVID-19 deaths with 1,325 fatalities.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Our hospitals are under more pressure than at any other time since the start of the pandemic, and infection rates across the entire country continue to soar at an alarming rate.

The vaccine has given us renewed hope in our fight against the virus but we must not be complacent. The NHS is under severe strain and we must take action to protect it, both so our doctors and nurses can continue to save lives and so they can vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as we can.

I know the last year has taken its toll – but your compliance is now more vital than ever. So once again, I must urge everyone to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

Our NHS is facing a huge challenge – it is under immense pressure and it's imperative now more than ever we all play our part.

I know how much we have all sacrificed already, but the new variant has significantly changed the current landscape and we absolutely cannot let up now.

There is light at the end of the tunnel – the vaccine will provide a way out of this and over 1.5 million people across the UK have now been vaccinated.

Every day we are closer to beating this virus, but right now, we need to pull together for one final push and I'm urging you to continue to do your bit by staying at home to save lives and protect the NHS.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, said:

Covid-19, especially the new variant, is spreading quickly across the country. This puts many people at risk of serious disease and is placing a lot of pressure on our NHS.

Once more, we must all stay at home. If it's essential to go out, remember: wash your hands, cover your face indoors and keep your distance from others.

Vaccines give clear hope for the future, but for now we must all stay home, protect the NHS and save lives.

The adverts remind the public the new Covid-19 variant is spreading fast. Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 don't have any symptoms, but can still pass it on, putting people at risk and a renewed pressure on our NHS.

It reiterates everyone must stay at home. If it's essential to go out, it reminds people to wash their hands, cover their face and make space.

In the meantime, NHS Test and Trace is successfully reaching more people than ever before, with 96.8% of contacts reached within 24 hours and more than five million people being reached in total. As of 30 December, more than 54 million tests have been processed in the UK in total since testing began – more than any other comparable European country.

Over 1.5 million people across the UK have now been vaccinated – more than the whole of Europe. But the Government is urging people to continue to do their bit and further prevent the spread of Covid-19.