

PM statement at coronavirus press conference: 10 May 2021

Good afternoon,

I want to begin by thanking everyone again for your patience

and for the sacrifices you've been making –

businesses, pubs and restaurants that have been waiting to welcome customers back through their doors

grandparents who have gone for months without seeing their grandchildren,

weddings postponed,

funerals sadly constrained,

and religious festivals – such as Eid – yet again facing restrictions.

And I want to thank you because your efforts have so visibly paid off

giving us the time to vaccinate more than two thirds of all adults across the UK

with more than one third – nearly 18 million people – also receiving their second dose –

and thereby unquestionably saving many lives.

So it is precisely because of your efforts, that I can confirm today we have met our four tests for further easing the lockdown in England.

Chris will run through the details in a minute,

but with deaths and hospitalisations at their lowest levels since last July,

and the UK's four Chief Medical Officers today agreeing a reduction in the alert level,

the data now support moving to step 3 in England from next Monday 17th May.

This means the Rule of Six or two households that has applied outdoors, will now apply indoors

and the limit for outdoor meetings will increase to 30.

From next Monday you will be able to sit inside a pub and inside a restaurant.

You'll be able to go to the cinema and children will be able to use indoor

play areas.

We're re-opening hostels, hotels, and B&Bs.

We'll re-open the doors of our theatres, concert halls and business conference centres

and unlock the turnstiles of our sports stadia,

subject to capacity limits.

And from next week everyone will be able to travel within Britain and stay overnight,

meaning schools will also be able to organise trips with overnight stays.

We will no longer require face coverings in classrooms – or for students in communal areas in secondary schools and colleges.

All remaining University students will be able to return to in-person teaching, where they should be tested twice a week.

We will increase the number of named visitors for those in care homes from two to five,

and residents will have greater freedoms to leave their home without having to isolate on their return.

This unlocking amounts to a very considerable step on the road back to normality

and I am confident we will be able to go further.

Subject to the impact of step 3 on the data, we remain on track to move to step 4 on 21st June

and to give businesses more time to prepare,

we'll be saying more later this month about exactly what the world will look like and what role there could be – if any – for certification and social distancing.

And today we are taking a step towards that moment when we learn to live responsibly with Covid –

when we cease eventually to rely on detailed government edicts,

and make our own decisions – based on the best scientific advice – about how to protect our families and those around us.

So from next Monday we are updating the guidance on close contact between friends and family,

setting out the risks for everyone to make their own choices.

This does not mean we can suddenly throw caution to the winds.

In fact, more than a year into this pandemic, we all know that close contact, such as hugging, is a direct way of transmitting this disease.

So I urge you to think about the vulnerability of your loved ones –

whether they have had a vaccine, one or two doses, and whether there has been time for that vaccine to take effect.

Remember outdoors is always safer than indoors. And if you are meeting indoors, remember to open a window and let in the fresh air.

Keep getting tested regularly, even if you don't have symptoms, so you don't spread the virus without knowing it.

And whatever you decide, I must ask that you continue to follow social distancing when not with friends and family

including in workplaces, shops, pubs, restaurants and other settings.

We only have to look at the very sad situation in other countries to see the lethal potential of this virus

and we must continue to fight the spread of variants here in the UK.

While we have no evidence yet to believe these variants are completely vaccine resistant, we must remain vigilant.

So please remember hands, face, space and fresh air.

And as we mark Mental Health Awareness week,

perhaps also take a moment to check in on friends and family and see how they are doing after all that we have been through together,

or if you are struggling yourself, get the support you need.

Today we are announcing the single biggest step on our roadmap

and it will allow us to do many of the things we've yearned to do for a long time.

So let's protect these gains by continuing to exercise caution and common sense.