

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 12 October 2020

Good evening everyone.

We are entering a new and crucial phase of our fight against Coronavirus.

Because the number of cases has gone up four times in four weeks

and it is once again spreading among the elderly and vulnerable.

There are already more Covid patients in UK hospitals today than there were on 23 March when the whole country went into lockdown

and deaths, alas, are also rising once again.

These figures are flashing at us like dashboard warnings in a passenger jet.

And we must act now.

So we are giving local authorities across England around a billion pounds so they can protect vital services as they fight the virus.

Nightingale Hospitals across the North of England are being prepared for service.

And so we can squash this virus wherever it appears

we are today simplifying, standardising and in some places toughening local rules in England by introducing three levels of Covid Alert.

Medium, with existing national measures such as the Rule of Six and the closure of hospitality at 10pm.

High, with extra measures including a ban on indoor social mixing between households or support bubbles.

And Very High, for places where, without further action, the NHS will swiftly be under intolerable pressure.

Areas within the Very High Alert category will be reviewed every four weeks and nowhere will be shut down indefinitely.

And the exact restrictions at this level, Very High, will be worked out with local leaders, along with tailored packages of support.

But at a minimum they will, sadly, include a ban on all social mixing between households in private places, including gardens

and pubs and bars must close unless they can operate solely as a restaurant, serving alcohol only as part of a main meal.

We will also ask people not to travel into and out of Very High alert level areas.

Nobody affected by this will be left to fend for themselves.

And we will expand our unprecedented economic support to assist those affected by these decisions,

extending our Job Support Scheme to cover two-thirds of the wages of those in any business that is required to close,

and providing those businesses with a cash grant of up to £3,000 a month, instead of £1500 every three weeks,

and extra funding too for those in the Very High category for local test and trace and enforcement.

You will shortly be able to type in your postcode into Gov.UK and see exactly what restrictions apply where you live.

The majority of the country will, for now, be at medium.

Most areas currently under local intervention will be at High,

and Nottinghamshire, including Nottingham itself, East and West Cheshire and a small area of High Peak will also move to this level.

Over the weekend we have been working with local leaders in areas where the data are most worrying.

And from Wednesday, local authorities in the Liverpool City Region will move to the Very High alert level.

In addition to pubs and bars we have agreed with Liverpool City mayor Steve Rotherham that gyms, leisure centres, betting shops, adult gaming centres and casinos will close.

We are still working with other local leaders to determine how best to tackle the resurgence of the virus in their areas.

But tackle it we will.

No one, least of all me, wants to impose these kinds of erosions of our personal liberty,

but I am as convinced as I have ever been that the British people have the resolve to beat this virus

and that, together, we will do just that.

With that I'll hand over to the Chancellor, who has some more details on how

we'll be supporting these businesses, employees and areas affected by today's changes.