

# PM statement on coronavirus: 22 March 2020

Good afternoon everyone

Thank you for coming, and thank you to Robert Jenrick, the Communities Secretary, and Dr Jenny Harries, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

I want again to thank everyone in the country today for the huge effort that we are collectively making.

I want to thank the amazing workers in the NHS, everybody working in social care, in every sector, in food distribution, transport, you name it – absolutely everyone who is keeping this country going today.

And I want to thank everyone who is being forced to do something differently today.

Everyone who didn't visit their mum for Mother's Day but Facetimed them, Skyped them, rang them instead.

Thank you for your restraint and for what you did.

Everyone who was forced to close a pub or a restaurant or a gym or any other business that could have done fantastic businesses on a great day like this.

Thank you for your sacrifice, I know how tough it must be.

And I can tell you again that this government will be standing behind you – behind British business, behind British workers, employees, self-employed – throughout this crisis.

And the reason we are taking these unprecedented steps to prop up businesses, support businesses and support our economy and these preventative measures is because we have to slow the spread of the disease and to save thousands of lives.

Today we have come to the stage of our plan that I advertised at the outset, when we first set out the plan of the UK government.

When we have to take special steps to protect the particularly vulnerable.

I said the moment would come where we needed to shield those with serious conditions. There are probably about 1.5 million in all.

And in a minute Robert Jenrick will set out the plan in detail.

But this shielding will do more than any other single measure that we are setting out to save life. That is what we want to do.

Also to reduce infection and to slow the spread of the disease.

We have to do more to make sure that the existing measures that we are taking are having the effect that we want.

So it is crucial that people understand tomorrow that the schools are closed.

And tomorrow you should not send your child to school unless you have been identified as a key worker.

And more generally in the view of the way people have responded over the last few days to the measures we have set out I want to say a bit more about how we interact outdoors.

Of course I want people to be able to go to the parks and open spaces and to enjoy themselves – it is crucial for health and mental and physical wellbeing.

But please follow the advice and don't think that fresh air in itself automatically provides some immunity.

You have to stay two metres apart; you have to follow the social distancing advice.

And even if you think you are personally invulnerable, there are plenty of people you can infect and whose lives will then be put at risk.

And I say this now – on Sunday evening – take this advice seriously, follow it, because it is absolutely crucial.

And as I have said throughout this process we will keep the implementation of these measures under constant review and, yes of course, we will bring forward further measures if we think that is necessary.

Always remember that in following this advice- and I know how difficult that is – that each and every one of us.

You are doing your bit in following this advice to slow the spread of this disease.

The more we collectively slow the spread, the more time we give the NHS to prepare, the more lives we will save, the faster we will get through this.

And always remember – we will get through this, and we will beat it together.

Next Robert Jenrick to outline the shielding measures.

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## **PM Mother's Day words: 22 March 2020**

Today is Mother's Day. It is a day when we celebrate the sacrifice and the

effort of those who gave us life, and across the country I know that millions of people will have been preparing to do something special; not just a card, not just flowers. I know that everyone's strongest instinct is to go and see their mothers in person, to have a meal together, to show them how much you love them.

But I am afraid that this Mothering Sunday the single best present that we can give – we who owe our mothers so much – is to spare them the risk of catching a very dangerous disease. The sad news is that means staying away. This time the best thing is to ring her, video call her, Skype her, but to avoid any unnecessary physical contact or proximity. And why? Because if your mother is elderly or vulnerable, then I am afraid all the statistics show that she is much more likely to die from coronavirus, or Covid-19. We cannot disguise or sugar coat the threat.

The numbers are very stark, and they are accelerating. We are only a matter of weeks – two or three – behind Italy. The Italians have a superb health care system. And yet their doctors and nurses have been completely overwhelmed by the demand. The Italian death toll is already in the thousands and climbing. Unless we act together, unless we make the heroic and collective national effort to slow the spread – then it is all too likely that our own NHS will be similarly overwhelmed. That is why this country has taken the steps that it has, in imposing restrictions never seen before either in peace or war.

We have closed the schools, the pubs, the bars, the restaurants, the gyms, and we are asking people to stay and work at home if they possibly can. In order to help businesses and workers through the crisis, we have come up with unprecedented packages of support. All of this is putting our country, and our society, under enormous strain. But already this crisis is also bringing out the best in us all – in the army of volunteers that has sprung up to help the vulnerable, in the millions of acts of kindness; in the work of all the people who are continuing to provide essential services, from transport workers to supermarket staff to health and social care workers.

Yes, this disease is forcing us apart – at least physically. But this epidemic is also the crucible in which we are already forging new bonds of togetherness and altruism and sharing. This country will be changed by coronavirus, but there is every reason to think we will come through it stronger and better than ever before. And the more effectively we follow the medical advice, the faster we will bounce back to health – medically and economically.

So this Mothering Sunday let's all do everything we can to show our respect and love to those who gave us life – and minimise the risk to their own lives. Bit by bit, day by day, we are all helping to delay the spread of the disease, and to give our amazing NHS staff the time to prepare for the peak. So let's follow the advice, stay home this Mothering Sunday. Send her your love by phone or skype.

Let's stay at home, protect our NHS, and together we will save literally thousands of lives.

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## Foreign Office statement following North Korea missile tests – 20 March 2020

We are disappointed that North Korea has carried out a short range ballistic missile launch, a clear breach of UN Security Council resolutions and the sixteenth ballistic missile test in the past year. We call for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the DPRK. Until we see credible steps towards this goal, sanctions must continue to be enforced.

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## Major new measures to protect people at highest risk from Coronavirus

- Government urges up to 1.5 million people in England who face the highest risk of being hospitalised by the virus to shield themselves and stay at home
- People with specific underlying health conditions, including some being treated for cancer, will be contacted by the NHS this week
- Plans also unveiled to deliver groceries and medicines for those most at risk from the virus where needed

Up to 1.5 million people in England identified by the NHS as being at higher risk of severe illness if they contract coronavirus should stay at home to protect themselves, the Government urged today (Sunday 22 March).

They will receive communication shortly with detailed advice on behalf of their GP practice or specialist on how best to protect themselves.

A raft of new measures, including a helpline for the most in need of support, have been set out for those considered to be extremely vulnerable due to their medical conditions, so people know exactly how to care for themselves and others in the coming months.

It was also announced that a new Local Support System will make sure those individuals self-isolating at home and who are without a support network of friends and family will receive basic groceries. Community pharmacies will support those who need help getting their medicines delivered.

The Government is working with a partnership of the groceries industry, local government, local resilience and emergency partners, and voluntary groups, to

ensure that essential items can start to be delivered as soon as possible to those who need it. The people identified as the most vulnerable in their communities will be contacted directly – including in person where necessary – as a priority.

Members of the armed forces, already in local communities helping Local Resilience Forums and local councils on their coronavirus response plans, will support this effort and are at the heart of local planning in response to this crisis.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Public safety and making sure that those most at risk from the virus continue to get the support they need throughout this period is the Government's top priority. People should stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.

This will be an especially worrying time for those with serious underlying health conditions and that is why we are urgently acting to ensure extremely vulnerable individuals are taking extra steps to shield themselves, and that the essential items they need are supplied to them.

We will ensure that vulnerable and older people in our society are left in no doubt of their importance to us and our determination to protect them as best we can. More people will be required to be by themselves at home. While they are on their own, let's guarantee that they are never alone.

Up to 1.5 million people in England currently live with conditions, or are taking medication or receiving treatment, which health experts have identified puts them at a much greater risk of developing serious complications if they get the virus, which may mean they need hospital treatment.

This includes, for example, those who have received organ transplants, are living with severe respiratory conditions such as cystic fibrosis and severe chronic bronchitis (COPD) or specific cancers like of the blood or bone marrow. And some – though not all – of those receiving certain types of drug treatments including ones which suppress the immune system – leaving the body less able to fight off the virus.

People identified as belonging to one or more of the at-risk groups will be contacted by their GP practice, specialist or both strongly advising them to stay at home for a period of at least 12 weeks.

In the first instance they will receive a letter this week and, where mobile number is known, the NHS will also send frequent text messages shortly to those in this group, to reach the most at risk as quickly as possible with

advice.

These communications will set out to reassure them that their ongoing medical needs will be met by the NHS, and contain advice and guidance on how to manage their condition while self-isolating, including getting prescriptions delivered and accessing support for daily living.

For the individuals most at risk of the illness, these actions will save lives.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are working incredibly hard, day and night, to protect the nation's public health whilst supporting our NHS so it can continue to look after patients in need of care.

It is vital that we do everything we can to protect ourselves, our families and our friends from being impacted by the virus. But for those who are at the highest risk in our society, we have to do even more to ensure they're kept safe.

Whether it's going shopping for a neighbour in need, or keeping inside if you know you're at risk, we all have a part to play in protecting the welfare of those who are most vulnerable.

Dr Paul Johnstone, Director at Public Health England, said:

The NHS are contacting the people who are most vulnerable to developing a very serious illness as a result of COVID-19 with specific advice to stay at home for at least 12 weeks.

If you receive a letter it is vitally important that you act on it for your own protection, don't attend any gatherings of friends or families and don't go out for shopping, leisure or travel.

Those of us who are less at risk can play our part in protecting other people by following the government's advice on social distancing and volunteering to give extra support to vulnerable people who are staying at home.

The guidance for people at the highest risk is:

- Strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough;
- Do not leave your house for at least 12 weeks starting on Monday 22 March.
- Do not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and

families in private spaces e.g. family homes, weddings, parties and religious services.

- Do not go out for shopping, leisure or travel and, when arranging food or medication deliveries, these should be left at the door to minimise contact.
- Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
- Do use telephone or online services to contact your GP practice or other essential services as and when you need.

## **Further Information**

- A link to the guidance can be found [here](#).
- Full list of those falling into the extremely vulnerable group:
- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers
- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors.
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell disease)
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- Women who are pregnant and who also have significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

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## **[Important information for British Nationals departing Argentina](#)**

On 19 March, Argentina introduced a nationwide quarantine to last from midnight on Thursday 19 March to midnight on Tuesday 31 March. However, flights will continue to depart Argentina and British nationals who have already purchased tickets, and who are showing none of the symptoms of coronavirus, will be able to access the airport to catch their flights.

Once flights have been purchased, travellers should leave plenty of time to

get to the airport. You should make sure you are able to show authorities:

- Proof of a booked flight (a boarding pass if possible);
- Your passport;
- A (printed, if possible) copy of the letter issued by the Ministry of Tourism confirming that foreign nationals are exempt from the quarantine if they are travelling to return to the UK. This letter can be found here: [Ministry note](#) (PDF, 74.1KB, 2 pages).
- A (printed, if possible) letter issued from the British Embassy confirming that you should be allowed to travel. This letter can be found here: [Embassy Note](#) (PDF, 689KB, 1 page).