

Next stage of expanded coronavirus (COVID-19) public information campaign launches

People are being urged to stay at home for seven days if they develop a high temperature or new continuous cough as part of an expanded public awareness campaign in the fight against COVID-19, Health Secretary Matt Hancock has announced today (Sunday 15 March).

For the first time, members of the public will see advice in TV adverts featuring Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty and voiced by actor Mark Strong as part of the government's drive to ensure everyone knows the best way to limit and delay the spread of the COVID-19.

Building on the current campaign, which reinforces the importance of washing your hands more often, the next phase reflects the [government's shift into the 'delay' phase of its action plan](#) to limit the spread of the virus. A key part of this is asking people to self-isolate for seven days if they develop a high temperature or a new continuous cough – however mild.

As well as on TV, people will see and hear the campaign advice in newspapers and magazines, on drive-time radio, online and through social media and on billboards and large digital displays, including at bus stops.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Coronavirus is the biggest public health crisis we have faced in a generation. It continues to spread both in the UK and around the world and we need to accept that sadly, many more of us will become infected.

The government and the NHS are working 24/7 to fight this virus. We must all work together and play our own part in protecting ourselves and each other, as well as our NHS, from this disease. This expanded campaign will focus on ensuring the public knows exactly what they should be doing to keep themselves and others safe.

Washing hands regularly for 20 seconds or more remains the single most important thing an individual can do, but we now also need to ask anyone with a high temperature or new continuous cough – however mild – to isolate yourself and stay at home for seven days. You should continue to follow our online clinical advice and not go to A&E or your GP if you develop mild symptoms.

Combating this virus will require a national effort – we all have a role to play to slow its spread and protect the elderly and the vulnerable.

Dr Yvonne Doyle, Public Health England's Medical Director said:

We know that novel coronavirus affects the most vulnerable the most and so it is absolutely vital that we do everything we can to protect them. This new guidance sets out what we can all do to help save the lives of those most at risk.

This week, the UK's Chief Medical Officers raised the risk to the public from moderate to high. The campaign offers clear, practical advice so the public can play their part in preventing and slowing the spread of the virus.

As per the current advice, the most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.

The next phase of the awareness campaign also reiterates the importance of seeking help online by visiting [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) to check your symptoms and follow the medical advice, rather than visiting your GP. It also urges people with any symptoms to avoid contact with older and more vulnerable people. Where possible, we are urging people to visit the [111 website](https://www.nhs.uk/111) rather than calling, too, to ensure the phone service is readily available to those who need it.

Last week, the Prime Minister published a 'battle plan' for tackling the disease in the UK, which sets out plans for a range of scenarios. This week, the Prime Minister confirmed [the UK has moved into the second stage of this plan](#), the 'delay' phase.

NHS, Public Health England and Local Authority Public Health teams up and down the country are working tirelessly to support everyone in need of advice, testing or treatment.

Since January, public health teams and world leading scientists have been working round the clock on the COVID-19 response, and government has been working with partners across the country to provide tailored advice to the public, travellers coming into the country and those most at risk from COVID-19.

[PM call with President Trump: 14 March 2020](#)

The Prime Minister spoke to President Trump this evening.

They discussed the coronavirus pandemic and the action being taken to stop

the spread of the virus. The Prime Minister set out the science-led approach the UK is taking.

Ahead of a call with G7 leaders on the outbreak the Prime Minister and the President agreed on the importance of international coordination to accelerate progress on the development of a vaccine and to prevent economic disruption for our citizens.

The leaders also paid tribute to the Coalition soldiers who lost their lives in the deplorable attack on the Taji military base last week, including British servicewoman Lance Corporal Brodie Gillon, and committed to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in Iraq to help the country resist the malign activity of terrorists.

[Update from SAGE: Delay phase modelling](#)

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) met yesterday and reviewed the latest numbers of cases in the UK, updated modelling, interventions made by other countries, and proposals for monitoring and modelling the outbreak as it advances.

The two major objectives were reiterated – save lives and reduce the peak of the epidemic to reduce the very considerable pressure on the NHS. This means examining interventions that can flatten the curve and those which ensure those most at risk are shielded.

The review of the new data showed that as anticipated the epidemic is progressing and on that basis SAGE advised the next planned effective interventions (shielding the vulnerable and household isolation) will need to be instituted soon.

SAGE is examining models of further interventions. SAGE also agreed that in line with good scientific practice the modelling and data considered by SAGE in future will be published.

Chief Scientific Adviser Patrick Vallance and Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty said:

We are dealing with a very fast moving epidemic with emerging data from many disciplines and many complex decisions.

Scientists across the world are helping each other, governments and society to deal with this international emergency

Coronavirus testing

As we have moved from 'contain' and into the 'delay' phase of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), PHE, together with NHS England and DHSC, has agreed we will need to prioritise testing for those most at risk of severe illness from the virus. Our aim is to save lives, protect the most vulnerable, and relieve pressure on our NHS.

Those in hospital care for pneumonia or acute respiratory illness will be priority. This will mean those most at risk will be identified as early as possible, speeding up access to the right care and treatment.

People who are in the community with a fever or cough do not usually need testing. Instead, tests will primarily be given to:

- all patients in critical care for pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) or flu like illness
- all other patients requiring admission to hospital for pneumonia, ARDS or flu like illness
- where an outbreak has occurred in a residential or care setting, for example long-term care facility, prisons

All other individuals with a high temperature or new, continuous cough [should stay at home for 7 days](#). People do not need to call NHS111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

PM call with Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison: 14 March 2020

The Prime Minister spoke to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison this morning to discuss the coronavirus pandemic.

The two leaders updated each other on their countries' respective responses to the virus and agreed on the need to take a science based approach to mitigate its impact.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Morrison also agreed on the need for international coordination as the crisis continues, particularly to ensure

countries have access to the healthcare equipment and supplies they need to tackle the outbreak.

Finally they resolved to work closely, including through the G20, on efforts to prevent long term economic damage from coronavirus which would further impact people's lives.