



10 DOWNING STREET  
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THE PRIME MINISTER

10 May 2020

Dear Colleagues

### **OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: THE UK GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 RECOVERY STRATEGY**

For almost two months now the people of this country have lived with restrictions on their freedom of a kind that we have never seen before. This has been an exceptionally difficult time – and we have faced the tragedy of losing so many loved ones to this terrible disease. My thoughts are with all those families suffering through such heart-breaking losses.

It is thanks to the sacrifice and resilience of the British people that we have succeeded in slowing the spread of this disease. The death rate and hospital admissions are coming down, and we have protected the NHS and saved many thousands of lives.

I am clear that we must not relent now – or else there is a very real risk of a second peak of the disease that could overwhelm the NHS and throw away all our achievements to date.

As we all know, beating this virus is coming at an enormous cost to our way of life. Today I am setting out the broad shape of a plan that will give people a sense of the way ahead. I have consulted across all four nations of the UK on this plan, and though different parts of the country are experiencing the pandemic at different rates, and it is right to be flexible in our response, I believe that as Prime Minister of the entire United Kingdom there is a strong resolve to defeat this together.

I have been clear from the beginning that our five tests must be met. We must also get on top of infections in care homes and hospitals, and establish a world-class test and trace system. Today, I have announced a new Covid-19 alert system to help guide us on the level of risk, which will be run by a new Joint Biosecurity Centre we are establishing. This level will be determined primarily by the rate of transmission – R – and the number of cases. In turn, that alert level will tell us how strict we have to be in our social distancing measures. There are five levels, from 1 where the virus is not in the UK, to 5 where it threatens to overwhelm NHS capacity. During the lockdown, we have been at level 4, and thanks to the sacrifice of the British people we are now in a position to move, in stages, to where I hope the Chief Medical Officer and Joint Biosecurity Centre can advise me we are at level 3. This is not the time to end the lockdown. We must keep the measures in place for now, but with some important modifications.

In this first step, we now need to stress that anyone who cannot work from home, for instance those in construction or manufacturing, should be actively encouraged to go to work. People should avoid public transport if at all possible, to maintain social distancing – using cars, or even better by walking or cycling.

From Wednesday we also want to allow people to spend more time outdoors, including unlimited amounts of outdoor exercise. Everyone must still obey the rules on social distancing, and we will increase the fines for those who break them.

And we must ensure all people act in line with new messaging to “stay alert” - staying at home unless exempted, maintaining social distancing whenever leaving the house, and washing hands regularly. If we all stay alert we can control the virus and save lives.

Looking ahead, if we as a nation begin to fulfil the conditions the Government has set out, then in the next few weeks and months we will be able to go further – including phasing the return of some pupils to schools after half term, and the re-opening of some shops in June.

It is vital that Parliament can continue to scrutinise the Government, consider the Government’s ambitious legislative agenda and legislate to support the Covid-19 response. Parliament must set a national example of how business can continue in this new normal; and it must move, in step with public health guidance, to get back to business as part of this next step, including a move towards further physical proceedings in the House of Commons.

Tomorrow the Government will publish a roadmap for how we intend to rebuild the UK, which will also be laid before Parliament. I will come to the House to explain our approach and take questions. I urge you all to share the roadmap widely with your constituents, to help everyone understand what more we must do to stop the spread of this terrible disease.

This strategy does not set out an easy answer, and I must stress that all of this is conditional. Inevitably, parts of the plan will need to adapt as we learn more about the virus and see the effect of the actions everyone is taking, but we will continue to be driven by the science.

This Government, with the support of parliamentary colleagues, will do whatever it takes to get our country through this crisis. Thank you for your efforts so far, and for the part everyone in the UK will play over the months ahead.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boris Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.