

## To: Business & Operational Continuity Committee

Dear All,

The Prime Minister has just delivered a statement to the House of Commons setting out the government's roadmap for lifting covid-19 restrictions in England. An immediate summary of the key announcements can be found below.

In his speech, the Prime Minister emphasised caution as he set out a gradual and phased 'four-part plan' to reopen the economy and society in England. As previously reported, this will begin with the reopening of schools and slight loosening of social restrictions from 8 March, alongside further social relaxations from 29 March. Beyond this, each subsequent 'step' of lifting restrictions will be subject to at least a five-week wait and four conditions being satisfactorily met around continued successful vaccine rollout, vaccine efficacy, numbers of hospitalised covid patients, and threats posed by potential new variants. Notably, a rise in infection levels will not, in itself, be a barrier to easing restrictions further, recognising "there is no credible route to a 'zero covid' world" as the government places greater importance on the success of vaccines. However, taken collectively, it will likely be several months before England fully progresses through the roadmap for lifting restrictions, which the Prime Minister hoped would be 'irreversible'.

Alongside the roadmap, the Prime Minister announced four reviews of covid restrictions, including on how long to maintain social distancing and guidelines. Until this review is complete, the Prime Minister said working from home should continue wherever possible. A review of international travel will also take place, with the review published by 12 April to allow for summer travelling.

Today's plans will require approval from the House of Commons, with a vote expected in the coming weeks. A more detailed paper on the roadmap is due to be published by the government imminently and we will share this round once available. The devolved administrations will be setting out similar plans for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in due course.

If you have any questions, please do let me know.

Kind regards,  
Rogan

### **Prime Minister's Statement on roadmap out of Covid-19 restrictions, House of Commons, 22 February 2021**

**3.37 pm**

**Prime Minister:**

Cannot escape fact that lifting lockdown will result in more cases, more hospitalisations and more deaths.

There is no credible route to a 'zero covid' world and we cannot persist indefinitely with restrictions that debilitate our economy.

That is why it is crucial the roadmap should be cautious but also irreversible.

Journey out of lockdown made possible by pace of vaccination programme. Protections afforded by vaccines will gradually replace restrictions.

Level of infections broadly similar across all areas in England so easing will begin across all England at the same time.

## **Four conditions that must be met before proceeding to each next 'step' out of lockdown**

Data will be driven by data and not dates and subjected to four tests:

1. Covid vaccine programme continues to rollout as planned.
2. Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently reducing the number of people dying with the virus or needing hospital treatment.
3. Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospital admissions putting unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
4. New variants of the virus do not fundamentally change the risk of lifting restrictions.

Before taking each step, will review data against these tests. Because it takes at least four weeks for data to reflect impact of relaxation of restrictions, alongside one week's notice, there will be at least five weeks before each step.

## **Four-part plan to reopen the economy**

### **Step 1: Schools and beginning of social relaxations**

From 8 March, all schools will open with outdoor after-schools sports and activities allowed. Supported by twice weekly testing of secondary school and college pupils with families and care bubbles also encouraged to get tested regularly.

From 8 March, university students requiring specialist facilities or practical teaching will return, with all others required to continue online. Further review of university measures will take place after Easter Holidays.

From 8 March, recreation in a public space – such as a park – will be allowed between two people, meaning they would be allowed to sit down for a coffee, drink or picnic.

Clinically vulnerable still required to isolate until end of March.

Care home visitors allowed to have a named visitor provided they have a test and wear full PPE.

From 29 March, outdoor gatherings of either six people or two households will be allowed. This will include gatherings in private gardens.

From 29 March, outdoor sports facilities, such as tennis or basketball courts will reopen and organised adult and children's sport, such as grassroots football will return.

### **Step 2: Non-essential retail (five weeks later – no earlier than 12 April, with announcement 7 day in advance)**

Non-essential retail will reopen, alongside personal care – including hairdressers and nail salons. Indoor leisure facilities, such as gyms will reopen.

Holiday lets will be allowed, only by use of individuals or household groups.

Pubs and restaurants for outdoor use will reopen, with no curfew or requirement on alcohol to be accompanied by a meal.

Zoos, theme parks and drive-in cinemas will reopen.

### **Step 3: Further social relaxations and leisure and hospitality (no earlier than 17 May, with announcement 7 day in advance)**

Most restrictions on outdoor meetings will be lifted, subject to a limit of 30 people.

Indoor household meetings can take place, subject to rule of six or two households.

Pubs and restaurants to reopen indoors, alongside cinemas, children play areas, hotels, hostels, BnBs, theatres and concert halls.

Sports venues will reopen, subject to capacity limits on the size of the venue.

Permit larger events with enhanced testing.

#### **Step 4: Full reopening of economy (no earlier than 22 June, with announcement 7 day in advance)**

With appropriate mitigations, all legal limits on social contact removed, including for weddings and such events, up to and including nightclubs.

Larger events allowed, above the limits of step 3.

#### **Reviews of covid restrictions**

Journey back to normality subject to resolving key questions. To do this, the government will conduct four reviews:

1. How long to maintain social distancing and guidelines – this will inform guidance on working from home, which should continue until this review is complete.
2. Resumption of international travel – a successor to the Global Travel Taskforce will report by 12 April, so people can plan for summer.
3. Covid status certification in helping venues open safely
4. Safe return of major events.

#### **Covid support measures**

The Chancellor will set out further details in the Budget, but the government will do everything it can to support and protect jobs and livelihoods across the UK.

#### **Updated plan for addressing local outbreaks**

Next month, publishing an updated plan for responding to local outbreaks with a range of measures to address areas of concern, including surge PCR testing and enhanced contact tracing. Can't rule out imposing restrictions at regional and local level to contain spread of the virus.

***ENDS***