

# UK eases more lockdown restrictions to a wary nation

June 1 2020, by Danica Kirka

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Customers stroll through Shepherd's bush market that is allowed to reopen after the COVID-19 lockdown in London, Monday, June 1, 2020. The British government has lifted some lockdown restrictions to restart social life and activate the economy while still endeavouring to limit the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus.(AP Photo/Frank Augstein)

Britain moved to further ease lockdown restrictions on Monday despite warnings from some health officials that the risk of spreading COVID-19 was still too great.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma told the BBC that the government is taking action in phases to ease restrictions first put in place since March 23. But many are worried, as infection rates remain high.

"This is not a dash," Sharma said. "These are very cautious steps that we are taking."

Some schools are reopening in England and some social restrictions have been relaxed, allowing people to have limited contact with family and friends as long as it is done outdoors and with social distancing. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are also easing lockdowns, in slightly different ways.

Restrictions on vulnerable elderly people and those with some underlying health conditions—who have been asked to remain indoors and stay away from other people since March —have also been eased as the government moves to restore some normalcy in daily life and to revive the economy.

But the decision, announced Saturday during a Downing Street briefing, was delivered with so little detail that many people who have not left their homes since March have been left to wonder whether it is really so safe now.



A father walks his twins to the Little Darling Childcare after nurseries and primary schools partly reopened in England after the COVID-19 lockdown, in London, Monday, June 1, 2020. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)

Britain's official coronavirus death toll stands at 38,489, the second-highest in the world after the United States, and about 2,000 new cases of the virus are still being confirmed each day.

Open air markets and car showrooms are among the businesses being allowed to re-open on Monday. Some [sporting events](#) such as [horse racing](#) will be staged behind closed doors.

But some see the moves as being hasty, with very little explanation on

why the public should trust the official advice that it is time to ease restrictions. A debate has raged for weeks as to whether Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government is being guided by science or the expediency to restart the economy.

The Association of Directors of Public Health has warned that the government is moving too fast and that it isn't ready to meet the challenges that will follow with the easing of restrictions.



As greyhound racing is resumed, Im Sophie leads round a bend during the 10:21 race at Perry Barr Greyhound Stadium, near Birmingham, England, Monday June 1, 2020. The British government has lifted some restrictions to restart social life and the economy while still endeavouring to limit the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus. (David Davies / PA via AP)



A father walks his twins to the Little Darling home-based Childcare after nurseries and primary schools partly reopen in England after the COVID-19 lockdown in London, Monday, June 1, 2020. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)



Shop owners prepare to reopen their stores at Shepherd's bush market after the COVID-19 lockdown in London, Monday, June 1, 2020. The British government has lifted some lockdown restrictions to restart social life and activate the economy while still endeavouring to limit the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus.(AP Photo/Frank Augstein)



Children have breakfast at the Little Darling home-based Childcare after nurseries and primary schools partially reopen in England after the COVID-19 lockdown in London, Monday, June 1, 2020. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)

Its president, Dr. Jeanelle de Gruchy, told the BBC that programs meant to vigorously track and trace COVID-19 cases must be up and running at full speed for restrictions to be eased.

"We're not feeling just yet that we're confident enough to meet any potential challenge if the [government](#) goes too quickly on easing lockdown measures," she said.

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