

# UK passes 50,000 coronavirus-related deaths

June 9 2020

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The number of suspected and confirmed deaths from coronavirus in Britain has passed the grim milestone of 50,000, the government said on Tuesday.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma cited analysis from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which said 50,107 people had died in the outbreak.

The ONS assessed all deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned or suspected on the death certificate up to May 29.

Officially, the government only counts the deaths of those who had tested positive for COVID-19.. That figure rose to 40,883 on Tuesday, up 286 on Monday.

On either measure, the toll is Europe's worst and the second highest in the world behind the United States, although each country has different reporting methods and lag times.

The ONS data also showed that deaths in England and Wales exceeded the average of the last five years by 57,961 in the 10-week period since the outbreak took hold in March.

Despite the figures, Sharma said infection and death rates are falling, and the UK lockdown, which has been in force since March, could be eased further.

Sharma said that all non-essential shops in England could re-open from June 15, as long as they comply with health and safety guidelines.

"This is the latest step in the careful restarting of our economy and will enable high streets up and down the country to spring back to life," said Sharma.

He added that the two-metre social distancing rule in place in the UK would remain when shops re-open, despite speculation it may be relaxed.

But he ruled out re-opening pubs and restaurants until July 4 at the earliest.

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