

Britain readies three-tiered COVID curbs next week

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British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected next week to outline a new three-tier lockdown system as rates of coronavirus infection surge particularly in northern England.

Under stinging criticism after media leaks detailed the government's plan

without consultation with local leaders, Johnson will give a statement to parliament on Monday after stepping up contacts with regions affected.

His chief strategic adviser Edward Lister on Friday wrote to MPs representing seats in northern England, following a meeting with regional leaders, to warn them it was "very likely" the region will have to submit to tougher rules.

"The government will discuss a set of measures with local leaders all of which present difficult choices," he wrote, with meetings continuing over the weekend.

Several conurbations in northern England have been hit with a range of curbs on [social life](#) such as a ban on different households mixing, but the south has escaped stricter restrictions for now.

The three-tier system is meant to clarify the patchwork of rules for England that has evolved since infection rates started to climb again in September, according to reports.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own devolved governments and separate health systems. Pubs across central Scotland have closed for just over two weeks to try to cut close-contact transmission.

The new highest level for England, tier three, is expected to go beyond existing restrictions such as a curfew for pubs, and close hospitality venues altogether.

No [social contact](#) would be allowed outside a person's own household, including outdoors.

Following contacts with 10 Downing Street, Liverpool mayor Joe

Anderson told the BBC on Saturday that he expected the northern city to go into a tier-three lockdown from Tuesday.

He said the government had at least given them sort of notice this time.

"But the main point of the imposition of the measures are clearly that: imposition. We have not be consulted."

More than 42,000 people have died in the outbreak in Britain—the worst toll in Europe—and concern is mounting about a potentially deadlier [second wave](#), and its social and economic impact.

The government on Friday said it would pay up to two-thirds of staff monthly wages to firms forced to close over the winter months.

An estimated 224,400 people—or 1 in 240—in England had COVID-19 during the week from September 25 to October 1, according to the Office of National Statistics.

Although young adults are the main drivers of the surge, there has also been an eight-fold increase in infections of those aged over 65 since last month, according to Britain's largest study, by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI.

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