

UK experts warn virus is out of control

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British health experts admitted Wednesday that the coronavirus was out of control as case numbers and hospital admissions rise despite a slew of new restrictions on social gatherings.

"Things are definitely heading in the wrong direction," UK chief scientific adviser Patrick Vallance told a government press conference, as a further 7,108 cases and 71 deaths were reported.

As England's chief medical officer, Chris Whitty, warned that hospitalisations and admissions to [intensive care](#) were also rising, Vallance added: "We don't have this under control at the moment."

More than 42,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Britain, the worst toll in Europe, despite a nationwide stay-at-home imposed in late March.

The lockdown was eased in June but authorities have in recent weeks reimposed restrictions on social gatherings, including a ban on groups of more than six and early closing for pubs.

Standing alongside Vallance and Whitty, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it was "still too early to

tell" if these would have an effect and urged people to follow the rules.

"If we put in the work together now then we give ourselves the best possible chance of avoiding that outcome and avoiding further measures," he said.

Contempt for parliament

Despite the warnings about rising case numbers, many of Johnson's Conservative lawmakers are increasingly angry at the limits imposed on personal freedom.

More than 50 MPs had earlier threatened to support a motion in [parliament](#) demanding more scrutiny of future regulations, accusing ministers of governing "by decree".

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle refused to put the amendment to a vote for procedural reasons, sparing Johnson a rebellion.

But then he himself launched a scathing attack on Johnson's "contempt" for parliament.

Hoyle has repeatedly admonished ministers for announcing virus restrictions to the media before parliament and for not allowing time for debate before they come into force.

Many MPs are still seething after Johnson shut down parliament last year at a crucial point in Britain's tortuous exit from the European Union—a move later declared unlawful by the Supreme Court.

"I now look to the government to rebuild trust with this House and not treat it with the contempt that it has shown," the speaker said.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock later offered to consult parliament and "wherever possible" hold votes before any new national [coronavirus](#) measures came into effect.

However, critics note this does not apply to localised measures, which are now thought to affect some 16 million people, many of them in the north of England.

Manchester mayor Andy Burnham said that if the restrictions continued, and without further support for business, the whole region would suffer.

"If you look back in years to come you'll think COVID-19 did more harm to the north of England than Margaret Thatcher and whatever she did in the 1980s," he said.

The former Conservative prime minister is accused of wiping out Britain's industrial base with her free-market reforms, although supporters say she revived the wider economy.

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