

Coronavirus lockdown: Boris Johnson to take cautious approach amid fears of second peak of Covid-19 infections

Prime Minister is facing splits in his Cabinet over lifting restrictions.

Boris Johnson will take a cautious approach to ease the nationwide lockdown due to fears a second peak of COVID-19 infections could do further damage to the economy.

The Prime Minister is battling to contain splits within his Cabinet over how quickly the Government should lift restrictions placed on the UK to limit the spread of coronavirus.

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Mr. Johnson is receiving daily updates on the work being carried out to battle the pandemic as he continues his recovery from COVID-19 at Chequers.

Hawks and doves

He is facing pressure from more "hawkish" ministers, such as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove and Chancellor Rishi Sunak, as well as his Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill, to loosen the measures more quickly to avoid sustained damage to the economy.

Those more "dovish" ministers in favor of a longer lockdown to protect lives

include the Health Secretary Matt Hancock and the Prime Minister's chief adviser Dominic Cummings, who want to see the transmission of the disease brought to a halt before lifting restrictions.

Downing Street sources said Mr. Johnson was "very concerned" that the country will be hit by a second wave of COVID-19 cases if the measures were relaxed too quickly.

It means the Government is likely to gradually "adjust" the nationwide lockdown rather than lift it entirely when it comes up for review in less than three weeks.



Ministers are taking a cautious approach to easing the nationwide lockdown (Photo: GLYN KIRK/AFP/Getty)

The Prime Minister's spokesman said: "The big concern is a second peak. That is what ultimately will do the most damage to health and the most damage to the economy.

"If you move too quickly, then the virus could begin to spread exponentially again. The public will expect us to do everything we can to stop the spread of the virus and protect life."

His approach appears to be echoed by Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who stressed that she would not "rush" into moves which could lead to a resurgence of the virus.

"To do that would risk overwhelming the National Health Service and it would put many more lives at risk," she said.

U-shaped recovery

Ministers have continued to resist ongoing pressure to detail their plans on exiting the strict measures, with Mr. Sunak using the press conference to reiterate that the Government's focus is to "stick to the guidance" to stay at home.

His comments came after it emerged the Treasury has forecast the economy could suffer lasting damage as a result of the continued lockdown.

While both Mr. Johnson and his Chancellor initially spoke of the economy quickly “bouncing back” from the pandemic, Treasury officials are now modeling a “U-shaped” recovery amid fears there will not be an immediate response once restrictions are removed.

Source:

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-lockdown-uk-latest-boris-johnson-cautious-approach-measures-2544336>

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