

UK to lift Plan B COVID-19 restrictions, PM announces

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed Wednesday that his so-called Plan B sanitary restrictions applied in the Government's fight against COVID-19 will be lifted as of next week.

The appearance and spread of the Omicron wave has led to compulsory COVID passes for large venues no longer be required effective Thursday, Jan. 27 as the rules are set to expire. People will also no longer need to wear masks in shops and on public transport when the regulations expire.

With Omicron, COVID-19 cases have soared to record highs, but hospitalizations and deaths have not risen by the same extent, in part due to Britain's booster rollout and the variant's lesser severity.

"We will continue to suggest the use of face coverings in enclosed or crowded places, particularly where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet," Johnson said.

"But we will trust the judgement of the British people and no longer criminalize anyone who chooses not to wear one." Johnson also pointed out that the Government was no longer asking people to work from home.

The Prime Minister's pledge to avoid lockdowns and live with the virus contrasts with the zero tolerance approach in Asian countries and tougher restrictions in many other European nations. "Many nations across Europe have endured further winter lockdowns... but this government took a different path," Johnson told lawmakers, saying the government had got the toughest decisions right and that numbers going into intensive care were falling.

Face masks are no longer needed in school classrooms and advice for them to be worn in communal areas will be removed "shortly" by the Department for Education.

"Our scientists believe it is likely that the Omicron wave has now peaked nationally because of the extraordinary booster campaign, together with the

way the public have responded to the Plan B measures, we can return to Plan A," Johnson pointed out.

However, scientists have warned that cases could still turn higher again if people's behaviour returned to normal quickly.

Johnson also said he may end the legal requirement for people to self-isolate if they test positive before the regulation lapses in March. "But to make that possible, we must all remain cautious during these last weeks of winter," he said, warning of continued pressure on hospitals.

Source:

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