

CORE MATHS NEWS

Covid: Plan B would be triggered by NHS pressure, Sajid Javid says

By Katie Wright & Becky Morton
BBC News



Pressure on the NHS is the main factor that would lead to tighter Covid restrictions in England, the health secretary has said. Sajid Javid told the BBC there was not a "single trigger" for the government moving to its "Plan B" measures. But he said how the NHS was coping was "the number one issue" to watch.

It comes after government scientists warned there could be a large jump in Covid hospital admissions if restrictions were not tightened. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) said its modelling suggested hospitalisations could reach 2,000 to 7,000 per day next month. Currently there is an average of just over 750 Covid admissions per day in England. The scientists said a "relatively light set of measures" could keep case numbers down if they were brought in early enough.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson hopes to avoid the need for additional restrictions by getting more people vaccinated. As he announced his winter plan for tackling Covid in England on Tuesday, he said some measures would be kept in reserve for if the NHS faced unsustainable pressure - including vaccine passports, mandatory face masks and advising people to work from home.

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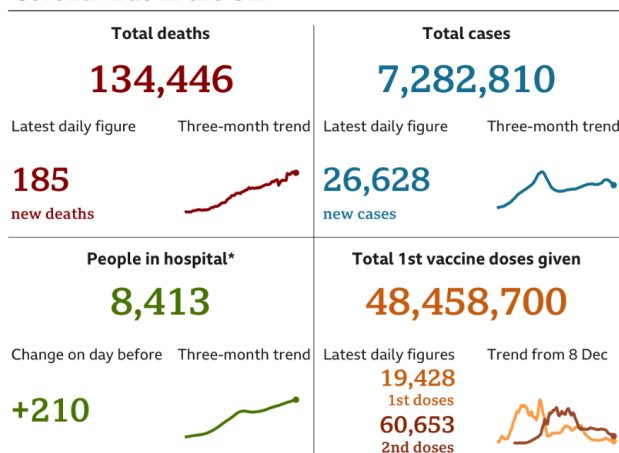
Mr Javid told BBC Breakfast: "We don't want to get to a position ever again where there's unsustainable pressure on the NHS so it's not able to see people in the usual way when it needs to, particularly emergency patients. So in my mind that is the number one issue that we need to always, always keep an eye on."

The health secretary said factors would include hospital admission numbers, pressures on A&E and staffing levels. Appearing on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Mr Javid was pressed on why the government was not acting early to prevent a rise in hospital admissions. He said the UK now had "much better defences" than it did a year ago, including vaccines, new treatments and an improved testing and surveillance system.

Papers released by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) on Tuesday, dated 8 September, said there was "potential for another large wave of hospitalisations". Virus modellers advising the committee - the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) - said it was possible the virus would spread more rapidly after the return of schools and more people going back to their workplaces. They said high levels of home-working had been very important for curbing the epidemic in recent months, with a significant decrease "highly likely" to lead to a rapid increase in hospital admissions. As well as encouraging working from home, they suggested "light-touch measures" such as clear messaging telling people to "act cautiously", more widespread testing, a return to requiring all contacts of cases to isolate, and more mask-wearing.

If hospitalisation rates were allowed to get too high then much more stringent and disruptive measures would be needed, they said. However, the body acknowledged its previous warning - that lifting all restrictions over the summer might prompt a large scale outbreak - had not been borne out by events. Daily Covid cases have also been falling in England over the past week.

Coronavirus in the UK



*Publication dates differ by nation, most recent data for all nations to 13 Sep
Source: Gov.uk dashboard

BBC NEWS

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58566235>

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Climate Protesters Block Access to M25 Causing Rush Hour Delays

By Harrison Jones



Picture: Ben Cawthra/LNP

The M25 is being blocked in a number of places by climate activists, for the second time in three days.

Insulate Britain are stopping traffic between junction 8 and 9 and at junction 23, after causing major disruption on the motorway on Monday. Video showed road users visibly angered by the protest, with lorry drivers heard shouting 'we'll lose our jobs' at the activists around South Mimms, LBC reported.

The rush hour chaos was also seen between Leatherhead and Reigate, with demonstrators stopping traffic in both directions earlier. Diversions are being set up and 25 people have been arrested so far. It is unclear how long the disruption will last – since it largely depends on when police remove activists from the road – but tailbacks are already severe around South Mimms.

The AA first recorded disruption at around 7.25am, but other reports suggested demonstrations began at around 8am, when they sat on the road and caused huge

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tailbacks There has also been a serious road traffic collision at Junction 9 involving 4 vehicles, which police, fire service and ambulances are attending. It is unclear if anyone has been hurt or if the incident is in any way linked to the demonstrations, but there are major delays on the road.

National Highways tweeted: 'Multiple incidents on the M25 between J10 Wisley and J8 Reigate anti-clockwise carriageway closed. Emergency services are in attendance to both incidents. Delays of 30 minutes above normal travel time and approx. 7 miles of congestion back to J12.'

Dozens of people were arrested on Monday, when five junctions of the M25 were blocked, leading to tens of thousands of drivers being stuck in huge queues of traffic for hours. Protesters held signs saying 'please turn off your engine' and 'the police are on their way'. The group, who say 89 activists were involved on Wednesday, tweeted: '#InsulateBritain are back. Boris Johnson can you hear us yet? #getonwiththejob'. Drawing attention to the scale of the climate crisis, the campaign is calling on the Government to better insulate properties and reduce emissions.

Surrey Police tweeted: 'We have now arrested 15 people in connection with this incident. We are currently in attendance at Junction 8 and 10 of the M25 overseeing a protest which was reported just after 8am today 'A number of protesters from Insulate Britain and Extinction Rebellion are at the two locations and appropriate diversions are being set up with the help of partner agencies.'

Highlighting the flooding of London's Tower Bridge on Tuesday, the group wrote: 'Blocking Tower Bridge now?! Get a job and get off the road. Stop wasting our time and money. If it's not us disrupting the roads it's climate change. At least we are peaceful, non-violent and can be moved!'. But their tactics have drawn heavy criticism from motorists and been branded dangerous.

Motorists vented their fury on Twitter, with one writing: 'People blocking the M25 or any other motorway should be immediately removed not allowed to sit there causing chaos. People are on the motorway for a reason nurses, doctors, lorries full of food etc. It is a stupid and dangerous way to protest.'

In a statement, Insulate Britain said: 'We demand credible action now. 'Proper jobs for hundreds of thousands of people to start the first real step – to insulate all the homes of this country – which pound for pound gives us the biggest reduction in carbon emissions. 'It is a total no-brainer and yet this Government refuses to get on with the job. This is criminal negligence.'

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/09/15/m25-blocked-by-insulate-britain-climate-protesters-again-15260705/>

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Peter Shilton: England men's most-capped footballer urges end to gambling advertising in football

Peter Shilton, who has struggled with gambling addiction himself, was joined by other campaigners to hand a petition in at Downing Street urging for tighter government restrictions on the industry.

Sky News



Peter Shilton and his wife Steph joined campaigners, including bereaved families who have lost loved ones to gambling-related suicide, to hand a petition in at 10 Downing Street Photo: Sky News

England men's most-capped footballer Peter Shilton is calling for an end to gambling advertising and sponsorship in football. The 71-year-old, who has struggled with gambling addiction himself, was joined by other campaigners to hand a petition in at Downing Street urging for tighter government restrictions on the industry.

It comes against the backdrop of the Government's review of the 2005 Gambling Act, with a white paper due later this year or early in 2022. The petition, which was started by The Big Step and Gambling with Lives, joined forces with Shilton's own Soccer Shirt Gambling Ban campaign earlier this year with over 12,000 signatures collected.

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The campaigners say football plays an active role in normalising gambling and draws first-time gamblers in with research suggesting there are between 250 and 650 gambling-related suicides in the UK each year. There are also currently up to 1.4m adults addicted to gambling the UK, along with 55,000 children.

Shilton's Soccer Shirt Gambling Ban is particularly focused on the impact gambling partners on clubs' shirts has on young people with only two of the 20 Premier League clubs this season not carrying any such sponsorship. Shilton, who revealed last year that he struggled with gambling addiction for 45 years, told *Sky Sports News*: "Gambling among children is on the increase and we feel very strongly that it should be stopped "Football shirt advertising is a back door to children and getting them interested - they see their hero with betting advertising across their shirt and think gambling is fun. "More and more clubs are not taking up gambling advertising on shirts but what we'd like to see is when the contracts ends, they are not allowed to do it anymore."

Among those companies involved in sponsorship is the Kindred Group, whose betting brands include 32Red and Unibet and have a partnership with clubs including Rangers and Derby County. A Kindred Group spokesperson told *Sky Sports News*: "The Government is in the middle of undertaking a review that will look at the facts and evidence in relation to betting sponsorship in football. As it stands, several academic studies have shown there is no causal link between advertising and the development of problem gambling. Indeed, the key to get the legislation right will be clear evidence base and leveraging the huge advances in data and technology to truly help customers."

"Kindred Group is supportive of raising the standard sports sponsorship in the UK. And there is a role for licensed, responsible and UK based operators to be able to support English football - with that same level of access restricted to those who do not meet that criteria. Talk of bans and prohibition-style measures on a legitimate industry that millions enjoy are blunt measures that we must strive to do better than."

<https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11095/12408267/peter-shilton-england-mens-most-capped-footballer-urges-end-to-gambling-advertising-in-football>