

UK eases lockdown further as deaths, cases slow

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Britain recorded fewer than 1,000 daily confirmed cases of coronavirus on Monday and the daily death toll dropped to 15, as officials said restrictions for the most vulnerable would be eased.

The [death toll](#) among people who tested positive for COVID-19 rose by

15 to 42,647, the lowest daily increase since March 15, although there is always a lag in reported deaths over the weekend.

A total of 958 people tested positive in the 24 hours to Monday morning, and Health Secretary Matt Hancock said only one in 1,700 people now had the virus, down from one in 400 a month ago.

"All of those figures are coming down and pointing in the right direction," he told a daily media briefing.

"It shows that while there's still much to do, we are clearly making progress."

Britain's [coronavirus](#) outbreak has been the deadliest in Europe, but stay-at-home orders imposed in late March are slowly being eased.

Some of the youngest children have gone back to school and non-essential shops have reopened.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce plans for pubs and restaurants on Tuesday, with a restart date of July 4 already pencilled in.

But while most Britons have been enjoying a taste of normal life, 2.2 million people in England classed as clinically extremely vulnerable have been advised to continue to avoid all [social contact](#).

Hancock announced on Monday that they would be allowed to meet outside in groups as big as six from July 6, and from August 1 the entire "shielding" programme would be paused.

Jenny Harries, deputy chief medical officer for England, said lower levels of community transmission and [good weather](#) made this possible.

"Now is as safe as it's likely to be for a while," she said, but warned that some form of tailored advice for the most vulnerable would likely return in winter.

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