

for three months. The impact of the measures already taken would only be seen at the end of the following week at the earliest. Now was the time to wait with composure and determination for the measures to kick in. As the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care had been setting out, using localised measures was the right approach: there were many cases in the North and Midlands but infection rates in the South West of England were low in comparison. The previous week, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced a winter economic package that had rightly been warmly received. The Government would do all it could to help keep the economy moving, including through the lifetime skills guarantee that he had announced the previous day, which would give people the skills they needed into the future.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE said that the focus of attention, resources, and enforcement should be in those areas where coronavirus continued to grow exponentially.

THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER said that the UK's nationwide outbreak during the first wave had been an exception to the pattern across Europe. Italy and Spain in particular had seen highly localised outbreaks. It was possible that this second wave in the UK would remain localised, but the winter was a lengthy period and the pandemic could well become national once more.

Summing up, THE PRIME MINISTER said that now was the time to remain resolute, rather than accept the arguments of those who said that the current regulations should be unscrambled, or that measures should go further and faster. In the medium term, he was confident that science would ride to the rescue. It was by no means certain that there would be a vaccine by the spring, but good progress was being made on scaling up innovative testing technologies. If such tests were developed and deployed at a sufficient scale, it might be a game changer in time for Christmas. This was far from certain and would require a huge amount of work. In the meantime, the Government should continue to follow the strategy it had announced.

The Cabinet:

- took note.

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