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News story

COVID-19 alert level: update from the UK Chief Medical Officers

A joint statement from the UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) recommending that the UK COVID-19 alert level move from level 4 to level 5.

Published 4 January 2021

From: [Department of Health and Social Care](#)



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“ Following advice from the Joint Biosecurity Centre and in the light of the most recent data, the 4 UK Chief Medical Officers and NHS England Medical Director recommend that the UK alert level should move from level 4 to level 5.

“ Many parts of the health systems in the 4 nations are already under immense pressure. There are currently very high rates of community transmission, with substantial numbers of COVID patients in hospitals and in intensive care.

“ Cases are rising almost everywhere, in much of the country driven by the new more transmissible variant. We are not confident that the NHS can handle a further sustained rise in cases and without further action there is a material risk of the NHS in several areas being overwhelmed over the next 21 days.

“ Although the NHS is under immense pressure, significant changes have been made so people can still receive lifesaving treatment. It is absolutely critical that people still come forward for emergency care. If you require non-urgent medical attention, please contact your GP or call NHS 111.”

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Chris Whitty

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton

Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Dr Gregor Smith

Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Michael McBride

NHS England, National Medical Director Professor Stephen Powis

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