

Boris Johnson scraps remaining COVID restrictions in England

People with coronavirus will no longer be required to isolate from Thursday.

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A last-minute row over funding plans for testing threatened to derail Boris Johnson's announcement | Tolga Akmen/AFP via Getty Images

Boris Johnson declared it was time "we got our confidence back" as he announced plans to lift England's remaining coronavirus restrictions.

From Thursday, people who test positive for coronavirus will no longer be legally required to isolate, while free lateral flow tests for all will be phased out by the U.K. government in April.

Johnson said that people who test positive will be advised to stay at home but anyone who gets a positive test after April 1 will be advised only to "exercise personal responsibility." Isolation support payments will be removed and routine contact tracing will end.

Free COVID testing for the general public will end from April 1, with testing refocused on the most vulnerable and in the riskiest settings.

"It is now time to move from protecting people with government interventions to vaccines and treatment as our first line of defense," Johnson said.

England joins several other countries in trying to find a way to live with COVID-19, with Denmark the first in Europe to [scrap all remaining restrictions](#) and drop compulsory isolation.

A last-minute row in the government over funding plans for testing going forward threatened to derail Johnson's announcement. Officials with knowledge of the process [told POLITICO](#) that a government Cabinet meeting on Wednesday was delayed due to an impasse between Health Secretary Sajid Javid and Chancellor Rishi Sunak. Javid is said to think funding for COVID testing should continue for longer.

Labour leader Keir Starmer said the removal of free testing and isolation payments amounted to "turning off Britain's radar before the war is won."

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