10 DOWNING STREET
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THE PRIME MINISTER

I am writing to you to update you on the steps we are taking to combat coronavirus.

In just a few short weeks, everyday life in this country has changed dramatically. We all feel the profound impact of coronavirus not just on ourselves, but on our loved ones and our communities.

I understand completely the difficulties this disruption has caused to your lives, businesses and jobs. But the action we have taken is absolutely necessary, for one very simple reason.

If too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to cope. This will cost lives. We must slow the spread of the disease, and reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment in order to save as many lives as possible.

That is why we are giving one simple instruction – you **must** stay at home.

You should not meet friends or relatives who do not live in your home. You may only leave your home for very limited purposes, such as buying food and medicine, exercising once a day and seeking medical attention. You can travel to and from work but should work from home if you can.

When you do have to leave your home, you should ensure, wherever possible, that you are two metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

These rules must be observed. So, if people break the rules, the police will issue fines and disperse gatherings.

I know many of you will be deeply worried about the financial impact on you and your family. The Government will do whatever it takes to help you make ends meet and put food on the table.

The enclosed leaflet sets out more detail about the support available and the rules you need to follow. You can also find the latest advice at gov.uk/coronavirus

From the start, we have sought to put in the right measures at the right time. We will not hesitate to go further if that is what the scientific and medical advice tells us we must do.

Itṡ important for me to level with you – we know things will get worse before they get better. But we are making the right preparations, and the more we all follow the rules, the fewer lives will be lost and the sooner life can return to normal.

I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to beat the virus, in particular the staff in our fantastic NHS and care sector across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It has been truly inspirational to see our doctors, nurses and other carers rise magnificently to the needs of the hour.

Thousands of retired doctors and nurses are returning to the NHS – and hundreds of thousands of citizens are volunteering to help the most vulnerable. It is with that great British spirit that we will beat coronavirus and we will beat it together.

That is why, at this moment of national emergency, I urge you, please, to **stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.**

