

UK Ends Vaccine Passports, Mask Mandates, as Prime Minister Faces Calls for Resignation

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UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson today ended pandemic restrictions he instituted just last month, citing a drop in COVID cases. Some suggested the move was politically motivated as calls for his resignation increased in the wake of a scandal over alleged parties in Number 10 Downing Street during the pandemic.

by [David Charbonneau, Ph.D.](#), [The Defender](#)

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UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson today ended all [Plan B](#) pandemic restrictions in the UK, including working from home, vaccine passports and mask mandates for public spaces, including schools.

In announcing the change, Johnson [said](#):

“The Cabinet concluded that because of the extraordinary booster campaign, together with the way the public has responded to the Plan B measures, we can return to [Plan A](#) in England, and allow Plan B regulations to expire.”

Johnson first announced the Plan B measures on Dec. 8, 2021. The measures took effect Dec. 15, 2021, after passing a

parliament vote.

The ending of the restrictions means workers are due back in the office Thursday. The Department for Education also will end requirements tomorrow for facemasks in classrooms.

Mandates for [vaccine passports](#) to access businesses or public places will expire next Wednesday without renewal, the prime minister announced, as will public mask mandates.

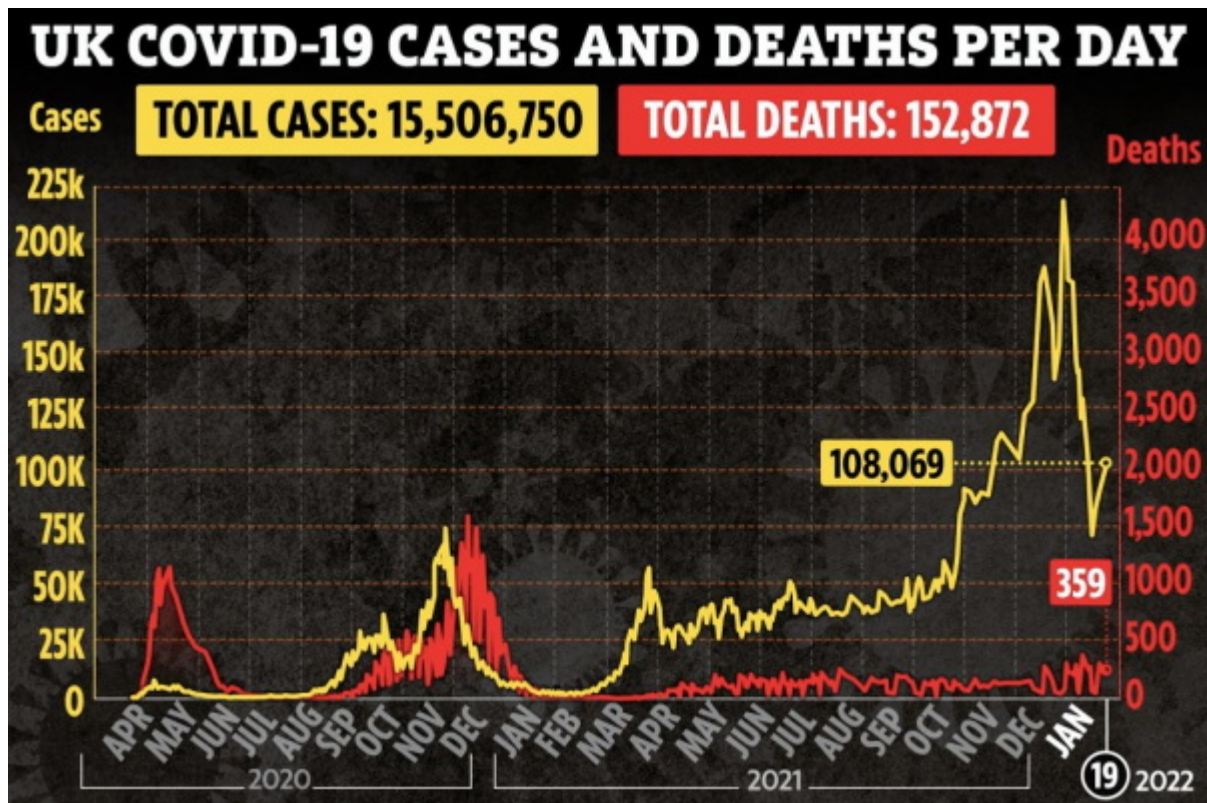
Health Secretary Sajid Javid [called](#) the relaxation of measures a “major milestone,” adding: “But it’s not the end of the road and we shouldn’t see this as the finish line because we cannot eradicate this virus and its future variants.”

Javid added:

“Instead we must learn to live with [COVID](#) in the same way we have to live with flu. We will be setting out our long-term plan for living with COVID-19 this spring.”

The unexpected announcements came in the wake of signs the [Omicron](#) wave has peaked in the UK.

Dr. Susan Hopkins, chief medical adviser to the UK Health Security Agency, [told](#) a Downing Street news conference the latest seven-day average of COVID cases was 93,200 compared with almost 225,000 on Dec. 29, 2021.



She said hospital cases were back down to below 20,000 while there were only 703 on mechanical ventilators – levels not seen since last July.

Omicron is “not the same disease we were seeing a year ago” and high COVID death rates in the UK are “now history,” Sir John Bell, professor of medicine at Oxford University and leading immunologist [said](#).

Mary Holland, president of [Children’s Health Defense](#), commented:

“While we welcome the prime minister’s statement to lift draconian COVID restrictions in the UK, we believe this ‘victory through COVID defeat’ narrative raises more questions than it answers. Why now? Has the science really changed? Who is calling the shots?

“Children’s Health Defense will continue to seek truthful answers and real accountability for the harmful lockdown policies of the COVID pandemic era.”

Some [suggested](#) the timing of Johnson's announcement is politically motivated as calls for his resignation increased Tuesday in the wake of "partygate," the scandal over numerous, alleged parties in Number 10 Downing Street during the pandemic in breach of government lockdowns.

The announcement also came after the prime minister [received a petition](#) on Monday, signed by more than 200,000 people, demanding an end to vaccine passports.

Despite also receiving a petition signed by 160,000 healthcare workers, Johnson said vaccination requirements for healthcare workers and the mandatory testing of travelers to the UK will remain in place.

[David Charbonneau, Ph.D.](#) is a fellow for The Defender.

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