

# *Leading UK scientist regrets late lockdown decision*

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London, June 8 (RHC)-- In a fresh blow to the UK government's coronavirus crisis management strategy, a leading scientist has claimed that the late lockdown has "cost a lot of lives." Professor John Edmunds, who is a member of the government-appointed Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), claimed the decision to go into lockdown later was in part due to the lack of reliable data.

Speaking on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show, Edmunds admitted he "regrets" the advice he gave the government back in March. "I think it would have been hard to do it, I think the data that we were dealing with in the early part of March and our situational awareness was really quite poor," Edmunds added. "I wish we had gone into lockdown earlier ... I think that has cost a lot of lives unfortunately."

Meanwhile, in yet another blow to the government's prestige, two regional English leaders have openly rebelled against the government's decision to ease the lockdown. Greater Manchester mayor, Andy Burnham, and the mayor of the Liverpool City Region, Steve Rotheram, have urged millions of residents in their areas to ignore government advice and continue to apply strict social distancing measures.

Their intervention came after a report by Public Health England and Cambridge University placed the R number (which reflects the infectious power of the coronavirus) in the north-west of England at just above one.

This is the first time regional English leaders have openly opposed the London administration's policy on the coronavirus crisis.

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