



The number of people using London's subway fell by almost 20 percent after the government advised people to work from home because of the **rapid** rise of the omicron variant of COVID-19.

Numbers for the Monday-morning **rush hour** up until 10 am showed that the number of people using the subway dropped by 18% from the previous week. Travel by bus, which tends to include more schoolchildren, was down only by 6% as schools stayed open.

Businesses in the City of London, the primary central business district of the city, told staff to work from home again last week, in response to the government's advice. Even before the change, some employees had returned to working from home to avoid catching the virus before Christmas.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has so far resisted demands to further tighten coronavirus restrictions, with a growing number of his party members threatening to **rebel** against new restrictions.

Difficult words: **rapid** (happening in a short time or at a great rate), **rush hour** (one of the busy parts of the day when people travel either to or from work and school), **rebel** (to oppose somebody in authority).

**Discussion Questions****Topic Talk**

1. Define the following words: *rapid*, *rush hour* and *rebel*
2. What caused the decrease in the number of people using subway in London?
3. What accounts for the bigger drop in the number of people using the subway than the number of people using the bus?
4. What did businesses in the City of London ask their staff to work from home again?
5. Is Prime Minister Boris Johnson likely to tighten COVID-19 restrictions? What might happen if does?

Express Your Thoughts

1. With the rapid rise in the omicron variant cases, did the government in your country tighten coronavirus restrictions?
2. Did the government advise people to work from home again due to the new omicron variant of COVID-19?
3. What have been the major impacts of the surge of the omicron variant infection in your country?
4. Has the number of people using public transport dropped because of the new variant of COVID-19?