**UK government Covid19 press conference 8 April 2020**

**Jeremy Hoad**

(usual caveats apply to this live transcript / commentary)

**Attending**

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Stephen Powis, Medical Director of NHS England

Angela McLean, Deputy Chief Government Scientific Adviser

**Figures**

232,708 tested

60,734 positive

19,438 hospitalised

7,097 dead

938 dead in last 24 hours

**Sunak**

Remind people of strategy

At every stage have followed the best medical and scientific advice

Goal to slow spread and protect ability of NHS to cope

Unprecedented action more be3ds, staff and equipment

Told people to stay at home

Update on PM

Receiving excellent care from NHS team

Remnains in ICU condition improving sitting up in bed

He is my colleague, boss and friend

(exact same scripted words as Raab yesterday)

News about PM reminds us virus is indiscriminate

Respects no bounadries of geography, status or vocation

Collective national effort to save lives

We depend on each other

When you need it, when you fall on hard times, we as a society will be there for you

(nauseating after a decade of austerity from the Conservatives)

We promise to do whatever it takes

One of our greatest strengths as a nation is civil society

You have not been forgotten

(oh great. Thanks. Marvellous to know)

Businesses and individuals doing their part to support charities

Today government will do its part for the charity sector

Govt cannot match funding pound for pound charities would have received

All charities eligible for job retention scheme and furlough opportunities for staff

Some charities on frontline and shutting up shop would contravene their reason for existing

£750m funding for charities announced

£370m for small, local charities working with local people

Unsung heroes looking after vulnerable and holding together social fabric

Pockets of cities, villages and towns

England support through national lotteries communities fund

£60m to Scotland, Wales and NI through Barnet formula

(is that all?)

£360m direct to charities supporting vulnerable people

£200m for hospices

Rest to St John’s ambulance, Citizen’s Advice Bureau, victims of domestic violence, children disabled.

BBC have announce3d Big Night In charity appeal on April 23

Govt will match pound for pound anything raised starting with at least £20m to national emergency Trust Appeal

I spoke of need for kindness, decency and the sort of neighbourliness at the heart of charity and community efforts

Normally invisible l;inks have become more apparent

(maybe this is news to you, matey)

These bonds are not invisible to our local charities (examples given rough sleeping, support workers etc.)

Connections might be hard to see but they are there and strengthened by our compassion for others

Charities embody this

Simplest acts have potentional to change lives

(Ha! The simple act of wrecking many public services and forcing charities to struggle to fill this gap seems to have passed the government by)

When people are hurting and tired and confined we need genmtleness in our lives. It gives us hope, makes us stronger and reminds us we rely on each other.

(hypocritical bullshit as the Tories destroyed much of the support available previously and farmed it out to charities.)

(Sunak went to Questions then remembered he hadn’t had the slides yet)

**McLean**

Slide

Transport

Network Rail Footfall at 17 stations

Reminds us how much we’ve reduced contact

Down 94% through March

Slide

New cases

Not acceprating out of control

5,492 new cases yesterday

Slide

Pple with covid19 in hospital beds

Rate of increase definitely getting slower

Getting towards flat curve

Slide

Covid19 patients in critical care

Flattenning evident in some parts of the country

(England not specified)

Slide

Deaths

International comparison

Long reporting lags

Sometimes deaths reported days or a week after death

**Powis**

In NHS we work closely with partners in charitable sector

I lead cardiovascular area at NHS England

NHS worked night and day to keep supporting and providing needs for any emergency condition

You should continue to seek help for emergencies as usual

**Questions**

Keep saying whatever it takes but do you accept lockdown is trade off between protecting people’s jobs and their health

Sunak – priority is to protect pples health but we’ve also put in place unprecedented economic measures to ensure we can bounce back as soon as we get through this

Should public be prepared for a significant downturn maybe recession

Sunak – always been honest about impact

We can;’t protect everything but we can put in place targeted support to emerge stronger and united to b ounce back as quickly as possible

CMO briefing said yesterday Germany lower death toll is due to testing capacity. Is it time for government to admit people have died because governed had wrong approach with testing?

Powis – I don’t think that’s what the CMO did say

(not explicitly but he said this effectively)

He said testing was one of many factors and a range of things in Germany, cannot say what factors contributed to what

(He’s lying)

CMO was making point everyone should be learning from each other

McLean – rate of death appears lower if you can count more people

We are happy to offer modelling to other countries

Select Cttee hearing sth Korea and Hong Kong and Whitty confirmed this yesterday so will our inability to test contribute to mortality?

Do we have capacity to test in anything like rates needed in next 3-4 weeks?

Powis – we all agree testing is important

Testing is part of many things in strategy

Have spoken to CMO today -he was making point sgtretgies have different approaches

(He is flatly contradicting what CMO DID say yesterday)

Will lockdown continue beyond next week as confirmed in Wales already?

Sunak – COBRA meeting. Tomorrow committed to review in or around 3 weeks data will only be available next week

We should focus on the future to stop spread of virus and for people to stay at home, protect lives and protect the NHS

Best thing we can all do

(avoided question)

McLean – always said we need to ]see data before we can make an evidence based decision on what to do next

What matters is stay home, save lives, potect the NHS

Could diff parts of the country emerge from lockdown at diff points? Is this politically or scientifically possible?

Sunak – We are where we are and I won’t speculate on what might happen

McLean – I don’t want to get into hypotheticals

Stay hjome, protect the NHS, save lives

(They will not be drawn on this at all. Saying they won’t speculate or consider hypotheticals and we are where we are is absolute rubbish and avoids the essential questions people want answers to. The govt looks increasingly inept and out of control.)

Unemployment figures in Norway now over 10% Can you say we won’t see that here?

Sunak – I have been honest this will have an impact

Govt steeping tin to help pay people’s wages to stop them becoming laid off and linked to their companies this will mitigate the impact

We are doing the right thing but I can’;t say there won’t be hardship ahead

We will get through it

Some data outstripping expectations – businesses apply for furlough beyond Treasury estimates? £40bn over 3 months?

Sunak – unprecedented. We don’t have an estimate of what scheme might do

We will look at the figures

Provided more funding to DWP and put £7bn extra into furlough scheme

Success if this is used extensively

Focus is on following advice but headteachers and parents keen to open schools as scientific advice suggests now. Before summer holidays?

McLean – intensive work going on to consider what we might do at thje next stage can’t know impact of 23/3 measures until later

How significant factor are schools helping getting economy back on its feet

Sunak – we are driven by data that’s been our approach and will continue to be

Thanks to schools and staff

Powis talking days ago about green shoots – was this premature?

Powis – green shoots evident in compliancve with instructions on social distancing

Green shoots over time translate into reduction in infections, hospitalisations and deaths

Starting to see plateauing of infections and hospitalisations

If. We didn’t take these measures we’d have seen an exponential curve

We must continue to follow social distancing as otherwise virus will start to spread again

not the time to become complacent, time to continue everybody continuing whether, me, public or football team to continue hard wor leading to benefits

(this is not what he said before, focus has been shifted to social distancing green shoots rather than green shoots in defeating the virus)

Job retention scheme - head of scheme has said it is open to fraud and abuse how is this being. Monitored?

Sunak – schemes being developed at speed

Need to protect protect money that will need to be paid back at some point

Confident decisions made will minmimise risk of fraud

Will have as robust auditing and verification methods as possible to tackle fraud.

Feb 28 cut off date picked to help prevent fraud and people creating fictional jobs for people to be able to claim public money

PM left with persistent symptoms for over a week and not a great deal of social distancing evident in Downing Street. Why not?

Sunak – none of us are superhuman or can avoid getting sick

Powis – confident PM receiving excellent medical care

Praise for St Thomas hospital

(question completely avoided)

Downing St social distancing could have been more rigorously observed?

Sunak – we are now meeting by video

People who have been away are returning to work

Business of govt has gone on and gone on at pace

(avoided question)

Claim PM improving – expectation he can leave hospital next week?

(question ignored)

Brexit – still a good idea to leave EU if we are in a serious recession?

Sunak – we have left the EU that has happened we are now just negotiating the finer points of a trading relationship talks continuing legal texts exchanged

UK negotiator planning meetings through Apriul and May

(he’s delusional on this pretending just business as usual. Still no explanation of any plan or agreement post-transition period)

What will data be to take decision on lockdown exit?

McLean – data on many things being brought together by SAGE

(hasn’t explained what SAGE is)

I could bore you on how many diff data streams are under consideration to understand past and project what will happen next

This is done in a formal process then sent over to politicians

Powis – SAGE has been publishing its material

Are we at a peak now?

(question ignored)

Sunak summary

Charity support builds on other announcements

Our economic plan and charity plan built on one simple idea, that we depend on each other.

(actually we depend on our government and public services in a national crisis and they have been shown to have been weakened by Tory policies over the last decade putting us in a difficult position and placing people in danger of illness or death)