**UK government Covid19 press conference 11 April 2020**

**Jeremy Hoad**

(usual caveats apply to this live transcript / commentary)

**Attending**

Priti Patel, Home Secretary

Stephen Powis, NHS England

Martin Hewitt, Chair of National Police Chiefs' Council

**Figures**

300,034 tested

78,991 positive (excluding NI)

20,101 hospitalised

9,875 dead

917 increase in last 24 hours

(for some strange reason Patel said “974,000 tests” immediately after announcing how many people had been tested so far.)

**Patel**

Government Plan

Priority is to slow spread so fewer ppl are sick at any one time

We are following expert scientific and medical advice and talking the right steps at the right time

(there’s that mantra again telling people they’re doing the right thing at the right time. They say this every day.)

Stay at home to protect NHS and save lives

Stark figures show virus affecting every aspect of our daily lives

As virus continues to devastate lives across our nation my thoughts, prayers and heartfelt condolences are with friends, families and loved ones

Whether you are receiving care or at home you are all in our thoughts at this

PM continues to make good progress

Virus is changing the nature of threat we face from crime

Martin will set out how crime has dropped as pple follow advice to stay at home but also amplify danger for others leaving them vulnerable and exposed

Criminality continues to adapt

Fraudsters losses to victims already

Perpetrators of sickening online child exploitation with more children online and at home

National domestic abuse helpline reported 120% increase in calls in one 24 hour period last week

Extremely concerning increase although police reports haven’t increased yet

I have been working with charities, schools, local authorities to adapt to changing picture of crime

Police and fire fighters working to protect vulnerable

Anyone in immediate danger should call 999 and press 55 on a mobile if you are unable to talk

Our outstanding police will be there for you

We all must do more to protect our friends, families and neighbours by sharing information about the support that is available

(This is the purpose of these transcripts / reports and sharing them in our community / publicly)

Chancellor announced last week £750m fund for charities including those providing services for victims of domestic abuse and their families

Today I can go further announcing to provide support for those in danger of domestic abuse.

New national advice campaign highlighting that they can still leave home to get support and access the services they need at this particular time

Importantly it will tell them that at this time they are not alone.

Coronavirus has opened Britain’s enormous heart and shown our love and compassion for one another as we come together to help those who are most in need and I am now asking this nation to use that amazing compassion and community spirit to embrace those who are trapped in that horrific cycle of abuse

To help us all look out for those who need help we have created a new campaign and we have created a symbol of hope, a handprint, embossed with a heart so that pple can easily show we will not tolerate abuse as a society.

I ask you and I ask everyone to share this on social media or in the windows of your own homes just to demonstrate how much WE care and how much our country cares anmd also we can show and take the time out to show victims of domestic abuse that they are not on their own.

Also providing up to £2m to enhance online support services the helplines for domestic abuse

Services will be boosted by Fujitsu to provide trained support workers to provide crucial services at this difficult time

I am clear it is the perpetrators who should leave the family home, not the those who they torment and abuse but that is not always possible so Where needed we will make sure they have a safe place to go and we are looking at alternative accommodation and refuges

My personal thanks to everyone across our society and country for playing their part and immensely grateful to pple heeding instruction to stay at home

Crucial over bank holiday weekend especially as weather imporves

Thanks to police officers and staff who engage with public so constructively and avoid the need to use the powers that have been granted

My message to anyone still refusing to do the right things is clear if you don’t play your part our selfless police who are out there risking their own lives to save others will be unafraid to act

Their work is helping our drs, nurses, health professionals to fight this virus and save lives

If you don’t follow the guidelines you will be endangering yourself, your family and friends.

To protect those that you care about and the capacity of the NHS

Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives.

**Hewitt**

In many ways this feels like a different Easter weekend

Feels different for police staff and officers as well

Streets are empty, businesses are closed as we adapt to a new way of life

They have new responsibilities and new powers

Officers still out in their cdommunities fighting crime protecting victims and dealing with antisocial behaviour

Drug smuggling cocaine, serious violent crime arrests at Heathrow, 400 domestic abuse suspects arrested in two weeks in W Midlands, man arrested for stealing PPE in London

Work to trace child abusers, national crime agency is working to protect from cyber attacks goes on as before

Online Safety at Home campaign launched

Cyber crime being tackled

21% fall in overall crime compared to last year

Commitment of over 200k officers and staff and volunteer officers means We are in a strong postion

Keep reporting crime

Officers and forces working round the clock

We will come when you call for help

Abusers – don’t think this is a time you can get away with abuse

We will still arrest and prosecute

Police have stepped up in communities to support vulnerable

Eg 90 year old woman collapsed in London, they gave first aid, she was concerned she couldn’t get milk, fixed light bulb and got her milk

Providing community contact in Manchester, putting money on the meter for someone

New responsibilities which we will use carefully

Legitimacy and authority through consent

Implementing new regulations in tradition of Briitish policing

Most cases no enforcement necessary

Small minority have refused to follow instruction where

Full data next week

Data from 37 forces so far 1084 fines up to 8/4

Shows our approach – engage, explain, encourage is working and only enforce as a last resort

Principles of fairness, proportionality and common sense will continue to guide us

Enforcement data to be published fortnightly

Thanks to all officers and staff

Police chief will continue to work with govt and other agencies to protect and support staff

Even in times of frustration work with us

**Powis**

Stay at home, avoid contact and social contact to avoid infections and reduce

A lot of anger at foolish few who flout rules

Praise for vast majority of British public

Slide

Transport reduction being maintained

Slide

Translating into stabilisation of infections and levelling off of new cases, varies from day to day

Slide

Stabilisation, first signs of plateauing of hospitalisations

More cases in London as spread come there first

Slide

Still seeing high numbers of deaths

This will be final thing to change and start to decrease

Will change in next weeks if people follow instructions

NHS strategy to ensure we always have capacity to deal with surge in numbers

NHS is open for business for people with other illnesses

GPs and pharmacies are open

Sick child, pregnancy concerns, signs of heart attacks or strokes – access services through 111 and 999 as always

Strategy to ensure by following instructions we will see reduction in deaths and protect NHS

Bank holiday weekend but this year must be stay at home Easter

**Questions**

PPE – big numbers diff to compare with items needed in hospitals – how many are needed and how many are being delivered?

Powis – critical we get PPE out to those at frontline

1 Guidance for PPE updated a week ago, confident all can sign up to this based on best scientific evidence

2 Ensure supply chain working, huge increase in need, working with govt to get supply through difficualt to get accurate data as changes day to day

3 procuring equipment – global demand, govt working night and day to secure supplies eg on gowns and masks working with HSE to ensure widest range of gowns possible can be used

(specific question not answered)

Day after day questions on PPE – can you give commitment to date when what is needed will be delivered?

Patel – plan has been outlined

Worth noting govt is working across every agency HSE, PHE etc and doing exactly that to ensure distribution and supply chain secured including all public. Services such as prisons

We will be working through that

Look – I can’t speak for every strand of public services and PPE, plan outlined by Hancock, for police and prisons we are ensuring we have adequate supplies

NHS is priority

We are asking people to stay at home

Working with suppliers and manufacturers

(avoided question about a date)

Will you apologise to NHS staff and families who have told us it is lack of necessary PPE that has led to unnecessary infections and deaths?

Patel – we are focussed across all departments of govt to ensure adequate supply

We havbe heard from Stephen and other repeatedly over last few days what we are doing

People working night and day to save lives and prevent deaths

Clear plan for PPE in NHS

There is a herculean task being undertaken

(same line as Hancock yesterday)

Distribution issues have been addressed

Military have been triaging and getting supplies out

Mention of Rolls Royce and Burberry

Govt and colleagues committed to doing that, brining in resources and support staff and new businesses and partners to get supply out and boosting supplies

No apology for failings which NHS staff and families blame on the govt?

Patel – well, I’m SORRY if people feel that but we are facing global pandemic and issues

Demand is going to be exponential, they’re going to be incredibly high

Hancock has spoken about this repeatedly to do much more to manufacture our own PPE, supplies from overseas and distribution

Everyone needs PPE on frontline and are working to do that

You are apologising for lack of PPE that has led to mass infections deaths and infections?

Patel – Look, I have been very clear in what I have just said and look, I am sorry if people feel that way but we are doing everything in our power to boost capacity to get supplies out to frontline

(Astonishing arrogance. Basically, no apology and petulance and aggression shown that people “feel that way” regarding their family members and colleagues dying for lack of equipment)

To what extent are you concerned about the wider impact of the current restrictions?

Patel – of course across whole of govt we are aware of vulnerability of people

You have spoken of long term social and economic impacts and socio-economic impacts, staff being furloughed

First recognised there is govt support for those who need it

Treasury and DWP measures

Long term situation – wrong fdor us top speculate about changes to restrictions

We are looking at the science

If pple need support absolutely through HMRC, DWP that help is there, urge pple to get in contact

Martin – measures put in place to save lives

Vast majority adhering to measures

We are not calling for any extension of the regulations

Ppl must act respoinsibily

Ppl can take exercise but acft responsibly

If you do encounter police when out exercising – all about talking and working and using. Common sense

Patel – measures put in place to stop spread of disease

Daily operational calls with police can see police following guidance very well

We shouldn;’y allow a few social media posts to blow out of proportion

At thew end of the day we hyave policing by consent

Encouragement at heart of approach

Were negative impacts of unemployment, levels of hunger and domestic abuse expected?

Patel – we are inevitably going to have a negative impact and we are working though that with the Chancellor

Need to regognise whole spectrum of economic and social impacts that will emerge over time

SAGE collating data to inform us as politicians going forward

Overriding ocncer is health and wellbeing of population – those people are our priority whether at a local level or in communities

Evidence will come from SAGE

Powis – no easy course with a global pandemic some relate to ecnomic consequences

Worry about

1 direct consequences of deaths and harm

2 NHS overwhelmed but not happened

3 reduc tion in access to health services because of rediurection of capacity

4 long term health effects of economic consequences of lockdown

Hard to ensure all mitigated completely

No easy path

Govt has said it will plot the course based on best evidence

Is the reason you won’t discuss an exit strategy is because there can’t be one until there’s a vaccine 18 months away

Powis – vaccine is part of long term management of disease

Seeing greatest scientific response to unprecedented crisis

Vaccine development is underway and progress being made in early trials

Eg at Oxford

UK strength in life sciences

Vaccvinbes take months to develop, not only component of exit strategy

Don’t discount drugs and medications as imp component of managing infectious diseases

Clinical trial already undewrway w3ith thousands of patients

Drug treatment might come before vaccine treatement

Other components such as social distancing approach

SAGE will advise giovt on best course ahead

We are still in round one fighting virus early on

Any strategy requires getting on. Top of virus

People must follow advice

Home Sec – where have you been for the last 3 weeks?

Patel – delighted to be here

I’ve been in Home Office working 7 days a week on range of olicy areas related to pandemic

Daily cabinet meetings, NHS, home office policies, policing, visa changes to support NHS, border force prioritising supplies

All ministers working night and day to keep pple safe and defeat the virus

This govtg working at every level working together, supporting together to get us through this global pandemic

(more waffle)

Will we have to carry on with restrictions? Will decision be a political decision or a science one?

Powis – Drs, scientists etc job to provide best advice over coming months and longer than that

Never going to be a sprint, will be a marathon

Need to develop a strategy to plot our course through that

We are learning more all the time

Need to evolve as new info develops

Balance economic and health consequences but no easy way through

We need to base decisions on what science is telling us

Patel – govt is absolutely committed to following adice provided

I see scientific reports every day as do my colleagues

Clear about direction of travel and decisions based on the fact

Right now advice to follow advice from government

What about PM recovery if extended period needed for govt operation?

Delayed immigration Bill already – what is plan from govt to allow govt business to continue – would you personally back a virtual parliament?

Patel – message to PM is we want him to get better he needs time and space to recover, that is priority and focus

Immigraytion Bill – we are adhering to science and advice now, discussions about how parliament will function

Need to focus every sinew of govt on saving lives and defeating virus

At some stage we will need to focus on how govt works, scrutiny but not now

Powis – confident appropriate advice will be given to PM on recovery

Understanbding of dispersals, arrests and fines requested of 7 forces but only GMP shared figures - does govt know this data nationally?

What further support if figures go up?

Patel – I am absolutely clear and unequivocal in my support for the police and giving them the powers and resources to deal with the situation

Let’s not forget police officers are members of the community

Restating message to public that if we are serious about saving lives we need public to stay at home

GMP figures consistent with info we have

Paries going against grain of spirit nof guidelines we are asking public to act respoinsibly

Martin – even in densely populated areas like Manchester vast majority are act responsibly

Police will respond to breaches where they need to to get ppl back to where they should be

We are engaging and explaining but only fines or arrests in extreme

Fine system new system now centrally coordinated

Next Wednesday data produced on fines and how policing of lockdown period is being done, sharing data every 2 weeks

Enage with people to help them be responsible to get majority abiding by rules to protect NHS and save rules

If data does show increase in breaches would that lead to stronger powers and what would that look like?

Patel – first I come bvack to them of this afternoon, rules to stop transmission, we don’t want people behavbing irresponsibly to spread the virus

We will make decisions based on scientific evidence and look at this in totality and in the round

Majority of British public – thanks for following guidance and police officers working hard to engage and explain and we will continue to do that

(waffle again and ignored the question)

Martin – numbers will increase as we started at zero two weeks ago

All UK forces saying we are getting significant compliance from people,

Working towards 3Es – engage, explain, exforce

Reguklations are here to reduce transmission, not about criminalising pple

Positive message from police chief to. Reduce transmission

Patel – I know this is an anxious time for people

Risk of hidden abuse, message is simple, you are not alone, message to abusers – you will not get away with the crimes you are committing

Volunbtary sector, new cam,paign to highlight support available

Stay at home advice does not apply and there is a safe place for you to go to

Thanks to exceptional police doing remarkable job at difficult time to keep vulnerable safe, us safe and protect NHS

Stay at home, protect NHS, save lives

(government warning video shown at end)