**UK government Covid19 press conference 14 April 2020**

**Jeremy Hoad**

(usual caveats apply to this live transcript / commentary)

**Attending**

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor

Stepehen Powis, NHS England

Yvonne Doyle, Director for Health Protection and Medical Director at Public Health England

**Figures**

302,599 tested

93,873 positive

19,706 hospitalised (down from 20,184 yesterday)

12,107 dead

778 increase in dead in last 24 hours

**Sunak**

OBR published report on impact on economy and public. Finance earlier today

OBR figures are not a forecast

Imp we are honest with pple about what might be happening in our economy

OBR figures suggest scale of what we are facing will have serious implications for our economy

Same here as elsewhere around the world

Tough times, more to come

As I’ve said before we can’t protect every business and every household

But we came into this crisis with a fundamentally strong economy powered by thje hard work and ingenuity of the British pple and British businesses

Impact will be significant but we will bounce back

OBR expects economic impact to be temporary

We will not just stand back and let this happen

Planned economic response is protecting millions of jobs, businesses, charities, self emplotyed pple and households

Our response aims to directly support pple while restrictions are in place and get pple back to work, recover ecomonyas soon as possible

OBR clear policies govt has set out will do this

The situation would be much worse if we weren’t doing this

Our plan is the right plan

Single most imp thing we can do is to prtotect the health of our pple

Not a choice btwn economy and public health that would be self-defeating

Absolute priority to focus all resources of state, businesses and all of you at home in a collec tive national effort to beat this virus

Govt approach to follow medical and scientific advice with Step by step action plan

Slow spread of virus to protect ability of NHS to cope

I said whatever NHS needs it will get

I have honoured that promise

Extra £14.4bn given in recent weeks

More capacity, beds, key staff, equipment on frontline

SoS for Social Care will be updating on plan for social care tomorrow

Our thoughts are with all families and friends of those who have lost their lives

Powerful reminder of imp of following govt guidance Instructing pple to stay at home to save lives

**Powis**

Main startegy combating virus is social distancing to ensure spread of virus reduced

Over time start to see reductions in infections

Slide

Transpaort

Continue to see much reduced activity

Look at other data regularly tell us compliance levels in public very high

Don’t take foot off peddle, don’t become complacent

Slide

Infection rate translate into reduction in new cases – plateauing

Data is a sample

Slide

Effect on hospitalisations

Vast majority this is mild flue like illness, bad cold but some will need hospital treatment

Plateauing in London and now evident in Midlands

Slide

UK deaths continuing to rise

This will reduce last, take longest to change benefits from social distancing will eventually translate into a reduction in deaths

Hardship of social distancing and not meeting with friends and familt

Need to continue to get on top of virus

**Questions**

Warnings of 2m extra unemployed – will we feel the costs of crisis for a generation?

Sunak – I am also deeply troubled when I see thes numbers

This is going to be hard & will be felt in jobs and incomes

Measures we’ve put in place will significantly mitigate impact

Ensure we can bounce back as quick as possible

Not a generation, we can bounce back but Difficult in short term

Recover quickly and strongly and get our lives and economy back to normal

Doyle - ONS do actually collect total deaths

Working with ONS to get full data

90% deaths occur in hospital

Very dispersed systems require care in getting cause of death right

Working towards daily basis

Borrowing projections suggest significant borrowing – can we really just bounce back in a few months?

Sunak – real economy recovery should be fast

Significant borrowing

Cost would be far worse if we don’t do this

If we get swift bounce back interventions temporary to allow us to get to sustainable position reasionably soon

Feeling in care homes where they feel residents lost to covid19 have been ignored – respectful to include these figures?

Sunak – absolutely not forgotten

Focus to get care homes PPE, testing and support they need

Daily data published need to ensure data is accurate and timely

Doyle – want to have best data on daily basis

Care sector is very much part of the health family

We work on the outbreaks in care homes with active imput to mitigate damage and harm but it is a very dispersed sector

Powis – we can provide data more quickly as much smaller number of hospitals and infrastructure exists to get data rapidly

Patients reported we know have tested positive

Care homes / in community based on doctors’ assessments

Sunak – a couple of hundred hospitals but 10s of 1000s of care homes

Why compare different data sets on govt daily slides (eg France include care home deaths)?

Doyle – inclusion of data from care homes can make it look like sudden increase in France eg because of reporting

Powis – reporting of all diff statistics from diff ctries

We need to learn from diff ctries

Assurances that Scottish pple won’t lose out following reports of prioritising PPE for England – true?

Sunak – Clinical Director in Scotland said they had looked into those reports and they are complete rubbish

Doyle – 4 medical directors and CMOs work closely, very coordinated, want to make sure each ctry gets what it needs

PHE has not in an y sense directed any ctry to be at a disadvantage

Economic impact shocking, deepest slump since 1709, national debt at 100% GDP, state biggest ever are you really suggesting life will return to normal?

Sunak – unprecendented crisis calls for unprecedented economic response so I’m not surprised at figures

Need to mitigate impacts

Keeping employees connected to their employers

We can bounce back quickly

Talked about hardship – might this have to continue after this if high level of debt means UK economy looks very different to even a few months ago?

Sunak - we remain committed to agenda we set out before, levelling up, spreading wealth around ctry

Economic recovery is where we are all in it together

Needs to share opportunity, growth and benefits will become more imp

This will actuaklly HELP right the ship and build economic recovery

(Radically diff approach to financial crash and austerity – suggestion here of investing to grow UK out of impacts of crisis as many called for a decade ago – will this just be rhetoric?)

Clear the economic fallout will disproportionately hit the young what’s your message to younger pple?

Sunak – pay tribute to young pple

Won’t be drawn into writing future budgets now

Message to young is thank you to everything you’re doing volunteering in our community

Society coming together

From economic perspective our job is to provide opportunity to you when we come out of this

We want to make sure there’s opportuynity for you wherever you are and whatever age you are

Need to ensure best research, best opportunities

I want you to see opportunity and hope for the future

(Sunak really stressing positive message and need to share benefits of growing economy in future)

Data on new cases in care homes? R-rate above 1 in care homes compared to community rates more generally?

Powis – we take hospital acquired infections very seriously

We have very strong infection control and prevention measures in our hoslpotals

We are seeing more of this infection because coronavirus is new and pple have no immunity

All standard infection control and preventikon measures being used

If we need to adapt policies we will do that

]can’t give r-number at the momenty because we don;’t know whaqt that is – data not clear enough but work is ongoing

Doyle – we are cognicent of what is happening in care homes

Local teams will be in care homes, mitigation of harm to local pple

Challenging group as many will have dementia

So there is no r number of hospital acquired infections?

Powis – data not clear enough to give or calculate that number

A lot of complaints that money is not getting. Out the door fast enough. Can you give guarantee that portal for furlough moneyt will get out by 25/4?

Sunak – need to ensure money gets to pple who need it

1/3 already dispersed to businesses £3-4bn so far

Loans – enormous improvement from 1k at the end of week before last, now up 4-5 time last week

Grateful to bank staff to work through backlog of applications

Should see acceleration of these numbers in coming days

Never had something like furlough scheme might cover milliosno of pple

Team working night and day to get this up and running

Intention to be up and running by the end of April – on track

Plan to open on 20/4 for applications then. Period of several days before receiving cash – need to do fraud checks and manage BACS system

Businesses should be able to get the cash before the end. Of the month

Loan guarantee scheme – should be taking 100% of risk – will you do that as Osborne suggests?

Sunak – there’s an argument for doing this

Systems like this in Germany and Switzerland

There’s an economic and fiscal question as to whether it would be thew right measure for us

We have other measures in direct cash help not replicated in all other ctries

We must be confident whatever we come up with is deliverable

Some other ctries have existing systems they can use, we don’t

Frustrations exist everywhere – general delivery question applies to all ctries

Simply unfair to put figures on same chart – one with care home deaths and one without? Accept if care home deaths had been included that UK would have been abve France for some time now?

Doyle – difficult to un derstand best practice and comparisons and differences

Even for death we were looking at different denominator populations

Ideal if we were comparing like with like

Always open for learning on that

Warnings unemployment will soar by 2m due to crisis are you open to. Universal basic income? Given problems with universal credit

Sunak – UBI is not the answer to this

UC is working well

Praise staff and injected extra resources into welfare system

Interventions will support most vulnerable pple and getting to pple where they need it

Said UK won’t exceed capacity but why aren’t care home victims being taken into hospitals?

Doyle – NHS is there for pple

Need to understand much more analysis of deaths as they happen

May be reasons why pply from care homes are not being admitted to hospital

No case where patients not being accepted to hospital

Powis – decisions and discussions same now as before crisis based on clinical decisions

Eg DNR orders should be dealt with in exactly the same way as we normally do

Capacity allows this to go on as usual

(technical problems – came back to this)

Idea of how bad economic hit will be but rough sense of how we will pay this? Austerity decade? Tax rises? How will you right the ship?

Sunak – can’t talk about future tax policy here

Mitigate impact

Worthwhile

Right decision

Righting the ship – we’ll have to look at it when we come out of this

Need to keep as much of economy intact to allow snap back as quick as possible and grow the economy to get back to sustainable economy

(Sunak message clear govt won’t be derailed from it’s previous policies)

Doyle - Guided by science but we have benfit of hindsight now so what would you want to have done differently? Eg ventilators

Doyle – I and colleagues have been working since January so mcu month in month out

Question of when was virus first around – if I had known that that would have been a gift to know what to do

We are working so fhard

We do what we do in all sincerity for benefit of population

Humble about it

Powis – great qtn, spend my career looking back b ut you can come to those conclusions too early

Need to. Learn the right lessons and do right analysis

Answer will be different as we get to the end of this

Will all want to look back and know what we could have done differebntly

Sunak – we are all dealing with something no one has really faced before

When faced with unprecedented challenge are we going to be perfect on everything, no but driven to do the best for the ctry whether economic or medical interventions

Apprioach to learn as we go.

No deal Brexit could make economic situation worse so why?

Sunak – reality is we have left with negaotiated deal

We remain committed to timeline by end of this year

Negotiators in contact last week and this week

Legal agreements being exchanged

Confident work can continue as planned

We are getting through it together and can look forward to happier times

Stay at home to save lives

(ends with govt warning video)