**UK government Covid19 press conference 09 May 2020**

**Jeremy Hoad**

(usual caveats apply to this live transcript / commentary)

(press conference now preceded by advice video with trancey dance music)

**Attending**

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport  
Jonathan Van-Tam, Deputy Chief Medical Officer

**Figures**

1,721,443 tests carried out (96,878 tests carried out yesterday)

215,260 positive (3,896 increase since yesterday)

11,809 hospitalised (down from 12,284 yesterday)

31,587 dead

346 increase in dead over last 24 hours

(govt failed AGAIN to hit its own target even with fiddling the figures)

**Shapps**

Deaths are devastating, thoughts and prayers etc.

(unconvincing as usual, keep your thoughts and pointless prayers to yourself)

Ambitious programme to prepare transport network

Gradual process – not a single leap to freedom

Need to maintain social distancing

Stark fact – even with public transport reverting to full service there would only be effective capacity of 10%

Need to think careful about how and when we travel

Behaviour changed for the greater good

Getting Britain moving again presents challenge and opportunities to make use fitter and better off

Benefits of active travel have been discovered

Crucial stay at home but carry on cycling and walking when we get back to work

Gridlock if more cars

£2bn package to put cycling and walking at heart of delivery

National plan in early June

£250m stage swift emergency measures cycle lanes, wider pavements etc

Incr numbers of cyclists planned

Employers – cycle to work scheme

Huge increase in use of scheme

Old bikes – voucher scheme for bike repairs and maintenance

Plans to increase bike fixing facilities

Once in a generation change to promote cycling

Legal changes

At least one zero emission city with no motor vehicles in city centre

National recovery can be a green recovery – positive benefit of this crisis including health benefits and pollution reductions

Fast tracking trials of e-scooters trials to next month in four local authorities

Reduce car use on local journeys

Car industry badly hit

April 2 biggest selling models were electric

£2m package to extend car charging points

Tackling potholes

Digital technology to ensure us more informed – real time travel information with right mobile apps

Roundtable of key players to develop data and apps to help manage demand

Further announcements on huge investments in road and rail

Scale of challenge should not be underestimated

Everyone must change behaviour and ensure social distancing

Have to make changes preventing overcrowding – responsibility of each and every one of us

Let’s all play our part to get Britain moving safely again when that time comes

**Van-Tam**

Slide

5 tests

Slide

Transport use

Gradual increase in motor vehicles

May reflect some pple returning to work, difficult trend to interpret

(motor vehicle use continues its steady rise)

Slide

Daily tests

Some daily fluctuation expected

(govt target not hit for a week now)

Slide

New cases

Several thousand new cases per day still

Difficult to interpret as we have so much more testing capacity enabling detection of new cases

Slide

Hospitalisations

Confident R less than 1 overall

(North West still highest in the UK)

Slide

Critical care bed occupancy

Plenty of capacity across 4 nations

Slide

Deaths

Continues to be steady and consistent fall since mid April

Slide

Global death comparison

USA is an outlier, UK in company with France, Spain and Italy

Data difficult to interpret

Need to get excess mortality data before we can make an accurate comparison

**Questions**

Stephen in the North East

Should I follow Scottish or UK/English advice as I live in NE England?

SHapps – 4 nations have moved pretty much in lockstep

Will hear from PM tomorrow

Tammy from Bristol

How do you plan for social distancing in schools?

SHapps – wait to hear from PM tomorrow

Ongoing discussions to work out best way to bring back schools when that happens

Van-Tam – young children find it difficult to maintain social distancing, touching etc.

Whatever is announced next will be extremnely cautious and painstaking

Caution all the way

SHapps – extreme caution is the way

Seen problems in other ctries

Can you confirm quarantine via airports from next month and why not done weeks ago?

Shapps – we have sought and taken medical advice

V few pple travelling and Many pple were Brits returning

Medical advice important - We DID in fact quarantine anyone from Wuhan, Northern Italy and Iran

As we get R down and have capacity in testing it then makes sense to see what is happening at the borders

The science will back this as well

Wait for PM to make announcemennts tomorrow

Van-Tam – incubation 1-14 days, mean 5 days

If pple go home and quarantine they prevent spread

(both avoided answering the qtn)

Now talking about quarantining pple but also allowing garden centre visits – is this confused?

Shapps – no, pple can understand this to avoid another spike

Will be some places where we tighten, other places we loosen

Wait until formal announcements

(basically said bugger all and confirmed confusion)

Van-Tam – announced testing and tracing with isolation so there IS a real consistency here

Airlines and industry fear they won’t have an industry left if lockdown and quarantine continue for any length of time – open to negotiation?

Shapps – nothing announced yet, wait for announcements

Leisure, entertainment and aviation affected

Chancellor made imp packages available

Aviation sector approached to recognised need for possibility of bespoke conversations We need to develop policy in the public interest

(absolute drivel and waffle)

Investment in cycling welcome but average commute 9 miles so many cannot cycle – what are you doing about that?

Shapps – I’m coming back to talk about investment in roads

Outside London half of journeys are less than 3 miles

If cycling increased by 5% millions fewer road, rail and bus journeys

(Shapps talking about average of ALL journeys here, NOT just commuting so he’s deflecting and effectively lying)

No simple answer if we only have 10% capacity

Imp we all think about how we get about

(more nonsense waffle)

Can you say effectively foreign travel this summer is highly unlikely?

Diriving force transmission in care homes so why so difficult to protect most vulnerable in society?

Shapps – a fact we have to stay at home this minute

FCO advising strongly against all int’l travel

Many ctries not accepting pple

Diff to give blanket advice, See how things proceed

(waffle)

Van-Tam – continues to be diff situation in care homes and v sorry

However, care homes are a difficult situation

Very infectious virus

Dealing with care homes with a largely indoor environment

Elderly population in care homes

(no shit, Sherlock)

Independent effect of age on risk and severity of infections

Many pple in care homes have underlying conditions with increased risks of disease and death

Almost perfect storm of infectious virus, elderly, risk conditions, indoor environment, v challenging place to work in

Colleagues at NHS England and CQC are now putting an enormous amount of effort into solving these problems and givin as much advice and support as they can

(unbelievable avoidance and arrogance)

What about parents travelling to schools?

Shielding when pple go back to work?

Shapps – pple have found a lot of different ways of working

A lot will continue

Pace of schools going back – PM will be speaking tomorrow night to set out roadmap

(SHUT UP about the sodding PM)

Van-Tam – shielding likely to have had a major effect and prevented many deaths, groups kept under review and policy moving forward

Nothing we will do will ever sacrifice continuing to protect most vulnerable in society

(gross insult as this obviously has NOT been done sufficiently so far)

SHapps – trying to raise subject of returning to schools and work before time so pple think about what they might do, not right now

Appeal for patience to wait to hear from PM tomorrow

(Aaaaaarrrggghhhh)

Last week reports stay at home message would be dropped, now stronger evidence of caution from government – bank holiday sunny weekend – a lot of pple saying lockdown is going so they might as well go out – shld be staying at home or not?

Shapps – unequivocal message to stay at home vital not to throw away benefits so far because it is sunny

When we hear the PM we will have to proceed with unbelievable degree of caution. Please stay at home this weekend

(hypocrite as the govt clearly briefed the media and it backfired)

Track and trace to work new cases must be down in hundreds rather than current 4,000?

Van-Tam – test and trace will involve PHE telephones, footleather epidemiology and NHS app Test and trace package together – on its own is part of the solution to live with virus after lockdown, not total solution

How extensive test and tracing needs to be depends on level of disease in population, part of overall measures to give us more room to adjust cosial distancing

(god, that answer was a mess and avoided the question)

Shapps – pple have been downloading NHS app enthusiastically

ONS figures show BAME higher infections – what practical steps has govt taken now to protect pple?

50% of pharmacies nationally owned by South Asian pple – will govt supply PPE so they can stay alive?

Shapps – v concerned about deaths in south Asian communities -not sure why at the moment eg proximity

Also men have higher rates and obesity seems to be a factor

Study commissioned to report at end of May

Determined to get proper understanding of what’s going on

Evrybody in frontline are key workers

Want to get right protection for pple in diff settings

(ignored both specific questions and waffled. Again)

Van-Tam – BAME ONS report – take this v seriously, determination across medical advisory function to govt to get to bottom of this with clarity

Complex mixture of risk by age, gender, co-morbidities, obesity signal emerging and BAME signal emerging as well but thjis is all complicated

Can’t make judgements of risk at the moment clearly, this is a difficult and involved technical thing to do – we are taking this incredibly seriously and determined to get to bottom of it

Shapps – we owe it to everybody to find out what is happening

Enquiry announced 16/4 to report end of May but pple are dying now and want to know what to do?

Shapps – advice wld be the same as for everyone else at the moment

Finding out what is going on is a very rapid piece of work

(basically ignored the heartfelt plea from someone about people dying now and waffled.)

Talked a lot about the future – advice hasn’t changed, wait for the PM tomorrow night but we will proceed with extreme caution

(I give up.)

(If Shapps mentioned the sodding PM briefing tomorrow evening once, he mentioned it a dozen times. We expect answers to questions at now, not deflected, avoided or ignored so the idiot PM can make some announcements later.)

(ends with govt warning video)