**UK government Covid19 press conference 28 May 2020**

**Jeremy Hoad**

(usual caveats apply to this live transcript / commentary)

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

**Attending**

Boris Johnson, Prime Minister
Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer
Sir Patrick Vallance, Chief Scientific Advisor

**Figures**

391,879 tests carried out (119,587 tests carried out yesterday)

269,127 positive (1,887 increase since yesterday)

8,560 hospitalised (down from 9,607 yesterday)

37,837 dead

377 increase in dead over last 24 hours

**Johnson**

We are with the friends and family of the dead in mourning.

(no, you are not, you insincere lump)

Slide

5 tests set for adjusting lockdown

Vital tests met

Will not sacrifice British people

(but he already has)

Slide

Test 1

NHS ability to cope

Heroic efforts meant NHS has always been able to cope thanks to heroic efforts of staff and public

Meeting first test

Slide

Test 2

Sustained and consistent fall in daily deaths

7-day rolling average of 256 down from peak of 953

Test met

Slide

Test 3

Rate of infection decreasing to manageable levels

Average of 2,312 in last 7 days

Down from 5,066 in first week of made

Test met

Slide

Test 4

Confident range of operational challenges including testing and PPE in hand with supply able to meet demand

Acknowledge frustrations

Testing capacity 161,214 per day

100 new deals with PPE suppliers for 2 billion items

(I wonder if they’re still counting a pair of gloves as two items?)

4th test being met

May be some settings needing urgent restocking on ocassion

Slide

Test 5

Adjustments will not mean second peak

All parts of UK moving in same direction, diff parts moving at diff speeds, mention of devolution

Cannot and will not throw away all the gains we have made together

(Oh, really? So I guess the collapse in trust because of government hypocrisy and rule breaking is just to be brushed aside?)

All five tests being met thanks to achievement of UK people

1 Re-open schools

Depriving children of education

Disadvantaged pupils hardest hit

Put this right in safe way

Reception, Y1 Y6 from Monday

Y10 Y12 June

2 Retail to reopen

Outdoor retail from Sunday

Other non-essential from 15/6 but only if shops “Covid Secure”

3 up to 6 pple to meet outside from Monday with social distancing for those from diff households

Pple can meet in gardens and other private outdoor spaces

(Oh, like woods in Durham?)

Long awaited and joyful moment

(He’s taking the piss now)

Minimising contact with others still the best way to avoid transmission

Avoid seeing pple from too many households in quick succession

(no idea what that means in reality)

Pple should not go into other homes or go through them to access the garden

Shielded pple must continue to do so

Thank YOU for all efforts YOU have gone to

Want to reassure everyone we can make all the changes I have outlined in a safe way

(I don’t believe you)

Children and p’tic young children much less likely to be affected by the virus

Transmission far lower outdoors

Guidance will be published on all these changes

(the govt has a track record of making announcements before any guidance is available which is moronic)

There may be some anomalies or inconsistencies in these rules

(The bastard is covering himself for the Cummings lies and hypocrisy)

We will inevitably not get everything right first time

(Are you kidding? After the fiasco so far with the highest number of deaths recorded in Europe and one of the highest death rates in the world? This drivel really is ridiculous.)

We may be able to do more in the coming weeks.

We need to reopen to British economy and society

All steps are conditional on ALL the data and ALL the scientific advice

(he’s just lying here)

I warn you there will be further local outbreaks and we will put on the brakes as required and reimpose measures

(is he talking about brakes because he is subconsciously thinking about car journeys for some reason?)

Will see how changes are working before taking any further steps so anything we do will not risk a second peak

Huge step forward yesterday to return lives to close to normal as possible yesterday through NHS Test and Trace scheme in England (other regions to follow)

(the track and trace system does not in itself return anything to normal unless you consider the breach of civil liberties and state surveillance to be normal as well as the continuation of the lockdown that nobody really knows what that means now)

Video on NHS Test and Trace

(NB This only applies in England, the video doesn’t say this)

“Test and trace works”

(Oh, is that why the government abandoned it in March when recorded cases and deaths were far lower than they are now?)

**Vallance**

Slide

R number

Close to one in many areas

Numbers not coming down fast

If R stays close to 1 these numbers stay high

(this is different from 2 weeks ago when it was claimed R was 0.5-0.7

Basically, Johnson’s bumbled, bluster telling everyone they could have unlimited trips out and go wherever they want had an impact of dramatically increasing the R rate which he now threatens to push into a second wave because there is NO wriggle room now)

Slide

Infections 0.24% of population

New infections estimated to be 1/1,000 per week, 54,000 per week

Not low, still have significant new infections every day at quite a significant rate

Not a lot of room to do things

Cautiously and monitored

(this seems to contradict Johnson’s claims and his announcements easing lockdown even more)

Vast majority of us have not had infection

Figures urge caution

(Even if you told Johnson that, he has clearly ignored the scientific advice)

**Questions**

Jay in Horsham

33yo shielded Mum – how are you going to support clinically vulnerable and aid us?

Johnson

More than 1m pple, we want to release you from your captivity as fast as we can, that’s why we remain very very cautious

(Those measures are NOT cautious, does he think we are idiots?)

Whitty

As R comes down risk decreases and we will get to stage relatively soon where absolute risk is low enough for pple to leave shielding

Appreciate burdens including loneliness on pple

Infections remain high

Carol in Sunderland

If localised lockdowns are implemented what measures will govt put in place for those not able to work – compensation scheme?

Johnson

We will do everything we can to support pple – furlough schemes remain in place, self-emplloyed support etc.

Those who face temporarily losing their incomes will be supported

Clearly we want to avoid too many local outbreaks and quarantine

Where we have to crack down locally we will look after local people

Nobody should be penalised for doing the right thing

(no specifics, he basically ignored the question and waffled)

Why shld anyone else follow rules if Cummings didn’t as confirmed by Durham Police?

What do scientific advisers think?

Johnson

Noticed Durham police wld take no action, matter closed, I intend to draw line under this

(Johnson then prevented Whitty and Vallance from answering)

Scientific Advisers have said behaviour of Cummings risked more pple not complying with social distancing rules – reasonable to ask Whitty and Vallance whether they fear rules are under threat?

Is appropriate social distance 1m or 2m – being looked at?

Johnson – repeat protecting advisers from political controversy

Want to get clear messages over to British public

Pple must focus on those messages

Let’s crack on and getting messages across

(refuses again to answer and censors scientific advisers

The idea the government has provided clear messages since Johnson came back to work is laughable)

Vallance

Evidence looking at distance droplets exhaled might travel 2m is safe distance but this is not an absolute measure, there’s a gradual across that

1m – x10 to x30 times greater than 2m

Paper has laid out how risks can be reduced such as face coverings or being back to back or not facing each other

Series of considerations laid out in a paper

Whitty

Need to reinforce point in slightly relaxed guidelines pple MUST stay at least 2m apart

Test and trace system – if you maintain 2m distance and contacts then have covid then you won’t be counted as a contact

2m distancing helps pple protect themselves

To advisers - are you comfortable with PM saying you can’t answer questions?

Is there anything else the PM has told you can’t talk about?

Track and trace says pple will get call from govt to quarantine – is this no ifs no buts whatever your childcare arrangements?

Whitty

Desire not to get drawn into politics far stronger with us than PM

Johnson

Track and trace

(he’s waffling)

If you’re contacted then yes you MUST quarantine

(unclear as this contradicts what he told Select Cttee earlier this week)

A small minority will have to pay for the liberation of 66m people

(liberation? Are you bloody kidding me?)

Whitty

Virus infectious p’tic through proximity after infection 2-3 days

Key tool to allow us to reduce things for the whole ctry

These pple are doing this to protect us all

Johnson

Can’t you test negative even if you have the virus?

Whitty

You can

Now households can travel across ctry how long can they stay there – camp inside garden or nip inside to use the loo?

Would you advise pple to go on 60 mile trip to test eyesight?

(this question was completely ignored)

Johnson

We do want pple to see family but must be socially distanced, we don’t want people to stay overnight

Can have meetings in gardens and have socially distanced BBQs and wash your hands and use common sense

(he’s just waffling slogans, this is pathetic, BBQs – this is getting very Trump-like in its stupidity. Johnson is such an arse)

Whitty

Infections are from droplets and via hands

BBQ passing things from one to another you can transmit virus so do not do this

(basically what Johnson just said was shit and made up on the spot)

UK has over 9k cases a day according to UCL tracker

Capacity to actually trace?

Why is UK only listing 3 symptoms – a lot less than other ctries?

Johnson

25k trackers

Vallance

New cases closer to 8k a day

Slides not the whole number

Challenge to close this gap and pick up more cases and quickly isolate them and making sure system effective, isolation within 48 hours

System under much more pressure with high numbers

Will be more difficult at the beginning

(Whitty and Vallance are repeatedly signalling that they are not at all comfortable with the government announcements. I wish they would just be honest and say so rather than playing these daft teasing games)

Whitty

Symptoms imp for pple to remember – fever, new cough, loss of smell or taste

Yes, there are many other symptoms but no advantage adding other symptoms if pple always have one of these three symptoms

Sensitivity and specificity good with these symptoms listed, doctors accept there is a much longer list to talk about

90-95% will have one or more of the 3 listed symptoms

Vallance / Whitty – R number increasing in NI – shld pple be alarmed?

PM – we know you won’t sack Cummings but if govt advice is bastardised by actions of Cummings can’t you even condemn him?

(question ignored)

Vallance

R close to 1, some very close to 1

We must be very cautious

(is that why PM said “unlimited travel for everyone” 2 weeks ago? And now plans on opening schools, shops and other businesses and letting people mix even more? That is not by any stretch of the imagination “cautious”)

Numbers of cases remain high, if R remains close to 1, cases remain high

Must ensure measures in place are adhered to and we all stick to them

(Ha! He has implicitly answered the earlier question that Johnson banned him from responding to suggesting the scientific advisers are concerned about what Johnson and the government are doing so soon relaxing the rules, opening schools, letting shops open and letting anyone travel anywhere across England)

Johnson – I don’t think pple will respond differently

(he really is taking the piss after some “people” very close to him broke the rules)

Everybody can see we are taking some small tentative steps conditional on continued determination to Stay Alert, Control the Virus and Save Lives

(Mr slogan ends on a slogan. Johnson is an idiot by the way. Nobody believes anything he says any more)

(no warning video at the end now)