

Foreign Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 7 April 2020

Good afternoon.

Welcome to today's Downing Street Press Conference.

I'm joined by Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance and our Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty.

Before we get on to the detail, can I first give an update on the condition of the Prime Minister. I know a lot of people will be concerned about that.

I can tell you he is receiving the very best care from the excellent medical team at St Thomas' hospital.

He remained stable overnight, he's receiving standard oxygen treatment and breathing without any assistance. He has not required mechanical ventilation or non-invasive respiratory support.

He remains in good spirits and, in keeping with usual clinical practice, his progress continues to be monitored closely in critical care.

We will give further updates on the Prime Minister's condition, when there are any material developments.

And I know that there's been a groundswell of messages of support from people here at home, from leaders around the world and I know that everyone will want to join with me in wishing the Prime Minister a very swift recovery.

As you will know, the Prime Minister asked me to deputise for him whilst he recovers.

In line with the Prime Minister's instructions, this morning I chaired the meeting of senior ministers tackling coronavirus and this afternoon I chaired an update for members of the Cabinet.

And I think it's probably worth just remembering that, as will be the case for so many people up and down the country, who knows someone at work at work who has fallen ill with coronavirus, it comes as a shock to all of us.

He's not just the Prime Minister, and for all of us in Cabinet he's not just our boss, he's also a colleague and he's also our friend.

So, all of our thoughts and prayers are with the Prime Minister at this time, with Carrie and with his whole family.

And I'm confident he'll pull through because if there's one thing I know about this Prime Minister, he's a fighter and he'll be back at the helm leading us through this crisis in short order.

And for us in the Cabinet, we know exactly what he wants from us and what he expects from us right now.

And following the Cabinet discussion today, I can reassure the Prime Minister, and we can reassure the public, that his team will not blink, and we will not flinch from the task at hand at this crucial moment.

We will keep all of our focus and all of our resolve, with calm determination on delivering the Government's plan to defeat the coronavirus. And it's with that objective and that unity of purpose, that Cabinet turned to business today.

We had reports from the four Ministerial Groups on the action we're taking across all of the strategic priority areas: including NHS capacity, procurement of ventilators and personal protective equipment, then delivery of public services including social care, on the economy and our support for both businesses and workers, and of course on the international action we're taking to reinforce our efforts on all of the home front.

As we've explained before, our action plan aims to slow the spread of the virus, so fewer people need hospital treatment at any one time, and that will help us protect the NHS's ability to cope.

At every step, we have been following the scientific advice, the medical advice, and we've been very deliberate in our actions that we've taken, so that we take the right steps at the right moment in time.

We are increasing our NHS capacity by dramatically expanding the number of beds, key staff, life-saving equipment on the front-line, so people have the care they need when they need it most.

As we've consistently said, we are instructing people to stay at home, so we can protect the NHS and so that we can save lives.

So today I can report that through the Government's ongoing monitoring and testing programme that, as of today:

213,181 people have now been tested for the coronavirus.

55,242 people have tested positive.

The number of people admitted to hospital with coronavirus symptoms now stands at 18,589.

Of those who have contracted the virus, 6,159 have, I am very sorry to say, died. Every death in this pandemic is a tragedy, and our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones grieving at what must be an incredibly difficult time.

I think these figures reinforce that the single most important thing we can all do right now, in this national effort to defeat the virus, is to keep on following the Government's advice:

To stay at home. Protect our NHS. And save lives.

ENDS.

Further information