

PM statement at the coronavirus press conference: 16 June 2020

Good evening,

I am delighted to be joined today by the Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, and by Professor Peter Horby, from the University of Oxford's Centre for Tropical Medicine and Global Health.

Today I'm actually going to let them do most of the talking as they have some news to share on a new treatment for coronavirus.

But I'll start by updating you briefly on the latest data.

Can I have the first slide please?

- 6,981,493 tests for coronavirus carried out or posted out in the UK. This includes 113,107 carried out or posted out yesterday.
- 298,136 have tested positive, an increase of 1,279 cases since yesterday.

The second slide shows the latest data from hospitals:

- 410 people were admitted to hospital with coronavirus in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on 13 June, that's down from 438 a week earlier, and down from a peak of 3,432 on 1 April.
- 385 coronavirus patients are currently in mechanical ventilation beds in the UK, down from 513 a week ago, and down from a peak of 3,301 on 12 April.

The third slide shows what is happening in hospitals across the country:

- There are now 5,254 people in hospital with coronavirus in the UK, down 16% from 6,282 a week ago and down from a peak of 20,698 on 12 April.

The fourth slide shows the daily figures for those who have sadly lost their lives after testing positive for coronavirus:

- And across all settings, the total number of deaths now stands at 41,969. That's an increase of 233 fatalities since yesterday.

Although those figures are very sad, they do show that we are making good progress in controlling the spread of the virus.

Tests are up and cases are down.

Hospital admissions are down.

The numbers of patients in hospital overall – and specifically those on mechanical ventilation beds – are both down.

And of course while each death is one too many, deaths are coming down too.

That progress of course has only been possible thanks to the dedication of the British people as we work together to beat this virus.

By observing the lockdown, and sacrificing contact with friends and families, everybody has played their part in bringing the virus under control.

It is critical now that we hold our nerve – and we don't throw away the progress we have made.

On the 11 May I set out our plan to help our country recover and we are working through it, carefully and deliberately.

At each stage we have only proceeded when the evidence suggests it is safe to do so, ensuring our five tests for adjusting the lockdown continue to be met.

And yesterday it was great to see our shops open their doors again. Our retail sector has done a fantastic job to make sure they are Covid Secure, meaning they can open in a safe way for staff and for customers.

It is great to see so many people out shopping whilst observing social distancing – and that is so important to limiting the spread of the virus.

It has also been very good to see more, and more children back at school this week, with some secondary pupils returning for face-to-face contact with their teachers ahead of the exams next year.

And I want to say to all parents whose children are eligible to return to school, I want to assure you it is safe – and there is no need for your kids to miss out on their education, I hope they will go to school.

I know that people want us to go further – with our changes to social distancing measures and I am all too aware the 2 metre rule has big implications for schools and many other sectors, and I absolutely hear those concerns and will do everything in my power to get us back to normal as soon possible.

But we must proceed carefully, and according to our plan. I am still committed to the central goal to get back to life as close to normal as possible, for as many people as possible, as fast and fairly as possible... and in a way that minimises the risk of a new epidemic, minimises the risk to life and maximises our chances of a string economic and social recovery.

Our plan sets out that the next step of adjusting lockdown – for personal care, for the hospitality and leisure sector, for gatherings in places of

worship and other public places – a lot more to come and that as you know will happen no sooner than 4 July.

I remain committed to that plan, and will say more soon about how we intend to take it forward.

Today, the global efforts to find a long-term solution to the pandemic continue, through a vaccine or effective treatment.

And I am delighted that the biggest breakthrough yet has been made by a fantastic team of scientists right here in the UK.

I am not really qualified to announce on this drug and its effects but I will ask Sir Patrick and Professor Horby to say more in a moment.

But I am so proud of these British scientists, backed by UK Government funding, who have led the first robust clinical trial anywhere in the world to find a coronavirus treatment proven to reduce the risk of death.

And I am very grateful to the thousands of patients in this country who volunteered for the trials – thank you.

This drug – dexamethasone – can now be made available across the NHS. And we have taken steps to ensure we have enough supplies, even in the event of a second peak.

Of course, while the chances of dying from Covid-19 have been significantly reduced by this treatment, they are still far too high. So we must redouble our research efforts and we certainly will.

But today, there is genuine cause to celebrate a great, British achievement and the benefits it will bring not just in this country but around the world.

I'll now hand over to Sir Patrick.