

Foreign Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 6 April 2020

Good afternoon, welcome to Downing Street for today's coronavirus press conference. I'm joined by our Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty, Chris it's good to have you back. And also by Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser Angela Maclean.

And before Angela gives us an update on the data, I would like to update you on the steps that the government is taking to defeat the coronavirus.

Our step-by-step action plan is aimed at slowing the spread of the virus, so fewer people need hospital treatment at any one time, and that will protect the NHS's ability to cope. At each point, we have been following scientific and medical advice and we've been very deliberate in our actions, taking the right measures at the right moment.

We are taking unprecedented action to increase NHS capacity, by dramatically expanding the numbers of beds, key staff and equipment on the front-line, to give people the care they need, when they need it most. That is also why we are instructing people to stay at home, so we can protect our NHS and save lives.

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

- 208,837 people have now been tested for the virus
- 51,608 have tested positive
- the number of people admitted to hospital with coronavirus symptoms now stands at 17,911
- and of those who have contracted the virus 5,373 sadly have died

Our thoughts, our deepest condolences are with their loved ones at this very difficult time.

These figures are a powerful reminder of why we need everyone to follow the government's guidance. We must [stay at home](#), to protect our NHS and to save lives.

As you will know, last night, the Prime Minister was admitted to hospital for tests following advice from his doctor. This was a precautionary step, because he continues to have persistent coronavirus symptoms, ten days after first having tested positive for the virus.

I can tell you that the PM had a comfortable night in hospital, and he's in good spirits. He's still in hospital under observation. He is being given regular updates on developments, and he continues to lead the government.

I can reassure the British people that the government remains united in a single overriding priority, which is to defeat the coronavirus and see this nation through the challenge ahead.

In the last week under the Prime Minister's leadership:

- the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove has explained what we are doing to boost manufacturing capability here at home, to meet the rising demand for ventilators and other equipment in the NHS
- Business Secretary Alok Sharma has been setting what the government is doing to support small businesses
- and yesterday, Health Secretary Matt Hancock gave an update on what we are doing to bolster capacity in the NHS, including increasing the number of critical care beds

The FCO is supporting all of these operational priorities.

So we're deploying the diplomatic network right around the world, to source and buy ventilators and protective equipment, so that we can reinforce the NHS frontline here at home.

At the same time, we're working with other governments and the airlines to [bring home as many stranded British nationals as we possibly can](#), prioritising our most vulnerable citizens.

On commercial flights we've helped over 200,000 UK nationals come home from Spain, 13,000 from Egypt, 8,000 from Indonesia.

We've also chartered flights from 7 different countries, bringing home more than 2,000 British nationals.

We've repatriated a further 1,550 from cruise ships, including most recently the Coral Princess and the Zaandam.

And for those travellers still stuck abroad, we're doing everything we can to keep international airports open, to keep commercial flights running, and to charter flights, when there are no other options – under the [new arrangements I announced last week](#), and which have now been agreed with 14 airlines.

We've allocated £75 million to support those arrangements. We've already had flights back from countries including Peru, Ghana, and Tunisia.

And we're fixing further flights from India, South Africa, Nepal and the Philippines, which will fly later on this week.

So, I want to reassure people that every arm of government is doing everything it possibly can to defeat coronavirus and rise to the challenges it presents us at home and abroad.

Last night, Her Majesty the Queen reflected on the national spirit of unity and resolve that we are seeing in our country, as well as the collective effort we need to tackle the disease. From our heroic doctors, nurses and careworkers, through to those manning the tills at supermarkets and pharmacies, those driving the lorries and the buses. They are all worthy of our applause, they are all worthy of our admiration.

And on that note, both the Prime Minister and I would like to thank all the NHS staff for their truly heroic work and we urge the public to continue to follow the government's advice to:

- stay at home
- protect the NHS
- and save lives

And on that note, I will pass over to Angela for an update on the latest data.

Further information

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): letter to pharmacists from Jo Churchill](#)

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

[Northern Irish firm doubles turnover thanks to Dubai export win](#)

About the transaction: Environmental Street Furniture

Region	Northern Ireland
Sector	Manufacturing: furniture design and supply
Export destination	Dubai
UKEF support	Export assist: impartial guidance

Newtownabbey-based [Environmental Street Furniture \(ESF\)](#) is an experienced exporter, selling 78% of its products internationally. Thanks to an introduction from Liz McCrory, UKEF's Export Finance Manager for Northern Ireland, ESF secured its largest-ever overseas order, worth £600,000, to supply its award-winning products to one of the Middle East's largest indoor arenas.

UKEF's expertise and experience gave ESF the edge in the contract negotiations. ESF supplied over 700 perimeter security certified bollards, bins and benches and tree grates around the Dubai Arena.

Dubai Arena was built with UKEF support and opened in 2019, when it was officially named the Coca-Cola Arena.

Alan Lowry, ESF Managing Director, said:

Without UKEF's support we would not have been able to identify and win this contract. We have since been able to double our turnover and our workforce, and are looking to get more business on projects backed with UKEF support through their supplier fair programme.

Liz McCrory, UKEF Export Finance Manager for Northern Ireland, said:

Environmental Street Furniture is testament to the enormous talent present in the Northern Irish business community. I am delighted that the support that I was able to provide has not only won them their biggest export contract, but also put them in position to win further business in the region.

Putting the right finance and insurance in place can give you the exporting edge, helping you to win contracts, fulfil orders and get paid.

[Tell us about your business](#)

UK's Armed Forces efforts recognised by Scottish Secretary

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): letter to councils about local authority meetings and postponement of elections

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