

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 23 June 2020

The Prime Minister leading the coronavirus press conference on 23 June 2020

Good evening,

Could I have the first slide please?

On 16 April, we set out our five tests for adjusting the lockdown, and since then they have guided our path out of lockdown.

At every stage, we have diligently assessed our progress against these five tests before making changes.

It has meant that we have, so far, avoided the catastrophe of a second peak of infection that could have overwhelmed the NHS and meant so many more lives lost.

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Our first test is to protect the NHS's ability to cope, so that we are confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.

Well, the NHS has coped fantastically under the extraordinary pressure of this extraordinary pandemic.

On 20 June, 283 people were admitted to hospital with coronavirus in England, Wales and Northern Ireland – down from 438 two weeks earlier, and down from a peak of 3,432 on 1 April.

And on 22 June, 340 patients with coronavirus were in mechanical ventilation beds in the UK, down from 513 two weeks earlier, and down from a peak of 3,301 on 12 April.

These numbers provide confidence that we are still meeting the first test.

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Our second test is to see a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from COVID-19 so that we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak.

Of those who have tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, it saddens me to report that 42,927 have now died. 171 fatalities were reported in the 24 hours to 5pm yesterday. A further 109 deaths which occurred in April, May and June have been identified and added to the total.

As measured by a 7-day rolling average, the UK daily death rate now stands at

121, down from 216 two weeks ago, and down from a peak of 943 on 14 April.

The second test is, therefore, still being met.

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Our third test is to receive reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board.

In total, 306,210 people have now tested positive for coronavirus, which is an increase of 874 cases since yesterday.

The seven day rolling average of new positive cases is now 1,147, down from 1,543 two weeks ago, and down from a peak of 5,195 on 14 April.

Approximately one in 1,700 people in the community in England are now estimated to have the virus, down from 1 in 400 four weeks ago. SAGE believes infections across the UK are shrinking at a steady rate of between 4 and 2 per cent every day.

Based on all the various data available, the government is confident the third test is being met.

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Our fourth test is that we must be confident that the range of operational challenges, including on testing capacity and Personal Protective Equipment, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.

Yesterday 237,142 tests were carried out or posted out across the UK, compared to around 12,000 at the start of April.

The new NHS Test and Trace service has already advised over 87,000 people to self-isolate who might otherwise have unwittingly transmitted the virus.

We have contracted with over 175 new suppliers able to deliver PPE at the scale and pace the UK requires.

And this progress means we are satisfied that the fourth test is being met.

Our fifth and final test is that we must be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS.

I am once again grateful for the Chief Scientific Adviser and the Chief Medical Officer for their advice on the measures I am about to set out.

I can confirm the government judges we have met the fifth test and we are therefore satisfied that all five tests are still being met.

On 11 May, we set out our plan to recover.

That plan as you may remember set out three steps for adjusting the lockdown.

Step 1 was implemented, as planned, on 13 May, enabling people to spend more time outdoors.

Step 2 was implemented, as planned, in phases on 1 and 15 June. Shops have opened, children have started to return to school and people have been able to see more of their loved ones.

Now Step 3 can be implemented, as planned, on 4 July.

All the measures I am about to set out apply to England – the devolved administrations are responsible for adjusting lockdown in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, moving at the pace they believe is right for them.

After a long period of asking you, the British public, to follow very strict and complex rules to bring coronavirus under control, we can now make life easier for people to see more of their friends and family, and to help businesses get back on their feet and people back into jobs.

Critically, we can make a change to the guidance on two metres, which kept us safe while transmission of the virus was high but which can now be modified.

Having considered all the evidence, while staying at two metres is preferable, we can now move to “1 metre plus” where it is not possible for us to stay two metres apart. This means staying one metre apart, plus mitigations which reduce the risk of transmission.

These precautions could include installing screens, making sure people face away from each other, providing handwashing facilities, minimising the amount of time you spend with people outside your household, and of course being outdoors.

On public transport, it means one metre plus wearing a face covering for mitigation, as everybody I think now understands.

We are setting out COVID-Secure guidance to help businesses take the measures that are right for them.

We can also allow more sectors to reopen on 4 July, as planned for Step 3.

So, from 4 July, the following premises will be allowed to reopen provided they are COVID-Secure:

- hotels, bed and breakfasts and self-contained holiday accommodation
- caravan parks and campsites
- places of worship and libraries
- restaurants and cafes
- bars, pubs and social clubs
- cinemas and bingo halls
- museums and galleries
- hair salons and barbers
- outdoor playgrounds and outdoor gyms

This has been an incredibly tough time for these establishments. But I hope

that everyone working in them can take confidence in knowing they will be able to open their doors once again in just a couple of weeks' time.

And of course they should do so in a way that is COVID-Secure, keeping customers and staff safe.

But I am afraid to say that some premises, such as nightclubs, swimming pools and indoor gyms, must remain closed for now given the particular risks of transmission in those settings. However, we are establishing taskforces for those sectors to establish how they too can open, in a COVID-Secure way, as fast as possible.

At the same time, we can give people more freedom to see their friends and family.

From 4 July, your household will be able to meet with one other household at a time, including staying over.

This can be indoors or outside, at your home, in a restaurant or pub, or in paid accommodation.

I want to stress you should remain socially distant from anyone outside your household.

For meeting outdoors, you can continue to meet in a park or a garden in a group of up to six people, drawn from six different households.

Again, at all times you should maintain social distancing from anyone outside your household.

As we give people back more control over their lives, we will be asking them to follow guidance on limiting their social contact, rather than forcing them to do so through legislation.

And this obviously requires everyone to act responsibly, which I have no doubt they will do. It will still be possible for the police to break up large and irresponsible gatherings. But neither the police themselves, or the public that they serve, want virtually every aspect of our behaviour to be subject to the criminal law.

Yesterday the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and the Health Secretary set out updated advice for those who are shielding in England, so that they can soon start to return to leading more normal lives.

Opening up more of Britain in this COVID-Secure way is only possible if everyone continues to stay alert to the risks of coronavirus.

That means you should:

- stay 2 metres apart and if you can't do that then keep 1 metre apart with mitigations
- wash your hands regularly
- wear face coverings on public transport, or where you are indoors in a

crowded environment where distancing is not possible

- follow the rules when visiting businesses
- crucially, get a test done immediately if you develop symptoms
- and self-isolate if you are asked to by NHS Test and Trace

We are only able to make these changes because we have persevered together and stuck to our path.

We had five tests – and we met them.

We had a plan – and we stuck to it.

The government has asked a huge amount of all of you, and the people of this country have met that challenge with good humour and common sense.

Of course, the fight is far from over. This is a nasty virus still that wants to take advantage of our carelessness. I'm afraid there will be local outbreaks. And I must tell you that if the virus were to begin to run out of control, I will not hesitate to put on the handbrake on and reverse some of these changes, at a local or indeed national level as required.

But we can avoid that if we all continue to stay alert and do our bit to control the virus. The British public have proved again and again, not that it was ever in doubt it, that they can be trusted to do the right thing and to do it with common sense.

There is no doubt we are beating back this virus and, with your continued cooperation and good judgment we will beat it once and for all.

I'll now hand over to Patrick.