

PM press conference statement on the five tests: 28 May 2020

Good evening,

Before I set out our next steps in the fight against the coronavirus, let me update you on the latest data:

- 3,918,079 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including 119,587 tests carried out yesterday;
- 269,127 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 1,887 cases since yesterday;
- 8,560 people are in hospital with coronavirus, down 11% from 9,607 this time last week.
- And sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 37,837 have now died. That's an increase of 377 fatalities since yesterday and we are with their friends and family in mourning.

As you know, we have set five tests which must be met before adjusting the lockdown – as set out on the first slide.

It is vital that these tests are met before any changes are made, because we must not risk all the hard work and sacrifice of the British people.

At all times we are informed by the data and evidence, about the spread of the virus and the impact of the measures taken so far.

I will now take you through our latest assessment of progress against each of the five tests.

Next slide please.

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.

At the start of the outbreak, there was significant concern that the NHS would not be able to cope. That turned out not to be the case, thanks to the heroic efforts of everyone who works in the NHS. And the heroic efforts of the British people to contain this virus.

The data show that on 26 May, 475 people were admitted to hospital in England with coronavirus – down from a peak of 3,121 on a single day, on 2 April.

On 27 May, 11% of mechanical ventilator beds in the UK were occupied by patients with coronavirus, down from a peak of 41% on 10 April.

This significant progress means we are meeting the first test.

Can I have the next slide please.

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

As measured by a seven-day rolling average, the UK daily death rate now stands at 256, down from a peak of 943 on 14 April.

While every death is one too many, it is now the case that there has been a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate, and so the second test is being met.

Next slide please.

Our third test is to receive reliable information, reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection – the number of people catching Covid – is decreasing to manageable levels across the board.

And in the last seven days, an average of 2,312 new cases were confirmed with a positive test, that's down from a peak of 5,066 in the first week of May.

Based on the various data available, the Government is satisfied that the third test is being met.

And in a moment, Sir Patrick will tell us more about other methods of measuring infections, including the R number.

Next slide please.

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.

I fully acknowledge the difficulties on testing and PPE that we have faced since the start of the outbreak. It has been immensely frustrating, but we are now making progress.

Yesterday we carried out 119,587 tests, compared to around 12,000 at the start of April. Testing capacity has now increased to 161,214 a day.

We have now signed over 100 new deals with PPE suppliers around the world. Here in the UK, thanks to the efforts of Lord Deighton and his team and the brilliance of domestic manufacturers we have signed contracts for over two billion items of PPE, including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons.

We are therefore satisfied that the fourth test is being met and we can start to rebuild stocks – though we recognise there may be some settings that require urgent restocking on occasion.

Can I have the next slide please.

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 very grateful to the Chief Scientific Adviser and the Chief Medical Officer for their assessments of the measures I am about to set out on schools, retail and social contact. Although all parts of the UK are moving in the same direction, it is important to note health is devolved and different parts of the UK are quite properly all moving at different speeds.

This package has been carefully designed so that we can ease the burdens of lockdown while expecting to keep that R below one. I cannot and will not throw away all the gains we have made together, and so the changes we are making are limited and cautious.

It is thanks to the caution we have shown so far that all five tests are being met. That is not my achievement or the government's achievement – it is your achievement, only possible thanks to your resolve and dedication to our national purpose to overcome this virus.

So the result is we can move forward with adjusting the lockdown in England on Monday.

Firstly, as I set out on Sunday, we will now reopen schools to more children. Closing schools has deprived children of their education, and as so often it is the most disadvantaged pupils who risk being hardest hit.

On Monday we will start to put this right – in a safe way – by reopening nurseries and other early years settings and reception, year one and year six in primary schools.

A fortnight later on 15 June, secondary schools will begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for years 10 and 12.

Secondly, we will also start to reopen shops as we restart our economy.

We will begin, on Monday, with outdoor retail and car showrooms, where social distancing is generally easier.

And a fortnight later on 15 June, we intend to reopen other non-essential retail – but only provided the five tests are still being met and shops have been made Covid secure.

Lastly, I know the toll that lockdown has taken on families and friends who have been unable to see each other.

So from Monday we will allow up to six people to meet outside – provided those from different households continue strictly to observe social distancing rules by staying two metres apart.

At the moment, as you know, people can meet in parks but not in private gardens. This was a cautious first step – but we know that there is no difference in the health risk. So we will now allow people to meet in gardens and other private outdoor spaces.

These changes mean friends and family can start to meet their loved ones – perhaps seeing both parents at once, or both grandparents at once. I know

that for many this will be a long-awaited and joyful moment.

But I must stress that to control the virus, everyone needs to stay alert, act responsibly, strictly observe social distancing rules, and stay two metres apart from those who you do not live with.

Minimising contact with others is still the best way to prevent transmission. You should also try to avoid seeing people from too many households in quick succession – so that we can avoid the risk of quick transmission from lots of different families and continue to control the virus.

And it remains the case that people should not be inside the homes of their friends and families, unless it is to access the garden.

I should add that, at this stage, I am afraid that those who have been asked to shield themselves should continue to do so.

I want to say to those extremely clinically vulnerable people who are being shielded that I do understand how difficult this has been for you, especially. And I want to thank you for all the efforts you have gone to – because your actions have helped the NHS to cope.

We are looking carefully at how we can make your life easier, and how we can better support you, and we want to say more on that soon.

I want to reassure everyone that we can make all of the changes I have outlined in a safe way.

We know that children, and particularly young children, are much less likely to be seriously affected by the virus.

We know that if shops enforce social distancing, as required by our Covid secure guidelines, then the virus is less likely to spread.

And crucially, we know that transmission of the virus is far lower outdoors, so we can confidently allow more interaction outside.

I understand people will have questions as to how to do all of this safely – and we will publish guidance on these changes to help people, to help you, make the most of them.

Now inevitably, there may still be some anomalies, or apparent inconsistencies, in these rules. And clearly what we're proposing is still just a fraction of the social interaction each of us would normally enjoy.

I know many of you will find this frustrating – I am sorry about that. But I'm afraid it is unavoidable, given the nature of the invisible enemy we are fighting.

It is a complex problem and we are asking for everyone's patience as we work through it together. We will inevitably not get everything right first time.

But I must ask everyone to remember it is that same patience, the hard work,

and sacrifices of the British people in lockdown that have got us so far and allow us to make the progress we have.

By protecting the NHS, getting us through the peak, and getting the virus under control – we are able to deliver all of the adjustments and easing of restrictions I have set out today.

These adjustments are most of those we set out to achieve in step two of our roadmap, and we have also been able to have them in place by June 1 as we had hoped.

There is no doubt that we are making progress and I am hopeful that in the coming weeks we may be able to do more.

Because obviously while protecting the health and safety of the British public is, and must always be, our number one priority, we must also work to restart our economy and society – so as many people as possible can begin returning to their way of life.

But I want to reaffirm that fundamental commitment to the British people that all the steps we have taken, and will take, are conditional.

They are conditional on all the data, and all the scientific advice, and it is that scientific advice which will help us to judge what we are doing is safe.

And I have to warn you, there will be further local outbreaks. So we will monitor carefully, we will put on the brakes as required, and where necessary, we will re-impose measures. It's important to be clear about that up front.

And as before, we will see how these new changes are working, and look at the R value and the number of new infections before taking any further steps, so we can ensure anything we do does not risk a second peak that could overwhelm the NHS.

And yesterday, as I hope you all know, we took a huge step forward that will enable us to keep making progress in returning our lives to as close to normal as possible, while continuing to control the virus and isolate any new outbreaks.

And that is through our new NHS Test and Trace programme in England. The Scottish Government has established Test and Protect, and Welsh and Northern Irish schemes will follow next week.

And I'll now show a short video that explains how NHS Test and Trace works in England and what we all need to do to play our part.

Now I'll hand over to Sir Patrick.

Welcoming cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional bodies (EU)

Thank you very much, Mr President. And let me also welcome High Representative Borrell today and thank him for what was a wide-ranging intervention. And I will try to respond to some, if not all, of the issues he raised.

Mr President, the United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January. We continue to work closely with our European partners, and our outlook will always be global. We recognise the mutual benefits of international cooperation across all areas of the United Nations cross-cutting work to promote international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

Mr President, as the world grapples with COVID-19, it is clear that pandemics do not respect borders. Saving lives around the world requires a coordinated international response. To deliver a robust global response we must all continue to support the international system and the values and rules which underpin it. Tackling this pandemic and its grave effects on our shared parity and stability requires enhanced trust in national governments, in international cooperation, and international agreements.

High Representative Burrell and other speakers have raised the situation in Hong Kong. The United Kingdom is deeply troubled by the decision of the National People's Congress of China to impose national security legislation on the people of Hong Kong. If China follows through on this decision, it would clearly violate Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and freedoms as enshrined in the United Kingdom-China Joint Declaration. I would like to draw the attention of all Council members to the joint statement that Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab issued earlier today with his US, Canadian and Australian counterparts, which sets out our concerns in more detail. We hope that China will now pause to reconsider, take steps to rebuild trust and heal divisions across Hong Kong society and live up to its responsibilities and obligations as a leading member of the international community. In the meantime, the United Kingdom will remain in close contact with all our international partners about next steps.

Mr President, to end the COVID-19 pandemic we need to work with all our international partners, including the EU and the UN. International collaboration keeps supply chains functioning, supports finding and distributing a vaccine, and guides the vital health, humanitarian and development operations of United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in the field. Demands on them will only grow as the crisis deepens. Our response must include supporting the most vulnerable countries, and particularly those directly affected by ongoing conflict. In this regard we welcome the African Union's role in the co-operative relationship between the EU, UN and AU in

supporting African leadership in states and regions affected by conflict. As part of our global efforts to tackle the virus, the United Kingdom will make a direct contribution of almost \$25 million to the AU's Africa Anti-COVID-19 Fund to help efforts to slow the spread of the virus on the continent and to save lives.

We must ensure we make a green, clean recovery from COVID-19 in order to meet the challenge of Climate Change and ensure an ambitious, successful and inclusive COP26. As COP President, the United Kingdom looks forward working with the UN and the EU to deliver the ambitious outcome the world so urgently needs. We consider our European partners as close allies in combating climate change and in leading the world in low carbon transition.

Mr President, some colleagues have mentioned sanctions. Let me simply say that sanctions are a targeted foreign policy tool used as part of a comprehensive and proportionate strategy with careful exemptions for humanitarian activity. The United Kingdom strongly supported EU sanctions while a member of the European Union and continues now to implement them nationally for the duration of the transition period.

Turning to some of the other points raised by the High Representative, on the Western Balkans, we join international partners supporting the goal of a stable region, continuing its progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We welcome the decision to open EU accession negotiations with Albania in North Macedonia. The political agreements in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work on the EU opinion and efforts to normalise the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo through the EU-facilitated dialogue. NATO remains the cornerstone of Europe's collective defense, and we were pleased to welcome North Macedonia to the Alliance earlier this year.

Turning to Ukraine, the United Kingdom will continue to work with the European Union and other partners in support of international law and the wider rules-based international system to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity. Alongside our international partners, we will continue to make clear to Russia that we do not and will not accept its illegal annexation of Crimea and Sebastopol. We also underline our support for efforts through the Normandy Process to facilitate a negotiated end to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the work of the Trilateral Contact Group.

You mentioned, High Representative the work of the European Union in Libya. The EU and UK have continued to work closely on Libya, including through engagement with the Berlin process. We look forward to further cooperation with our European partners to urge Libyan parties and their backers to de-escalate, commit to a lasting ceasefire, ensure unconditional access for humanitarian aid and return to the UN-led process. We support efforts to enforce the UN arms embargo leading through Operation IRINI and recall of the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean continues to be a matter of deep regret.

On Iran, we are working urgently with all parties to use the Dispute Resolution Mechanism to find a way forward on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We regard the Agreement, which was the product of many years of

painstaking diplomacy, as a vital instrument in neutralising the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. We thank the European Union for their ongoing role as coordinator. I want to acknowledge the points made by the High Representative and my E3 colleagues on the US's decision to not reduce nuclear waivers and underline the importance of continued engagement on the way forward. While we recognise the agreement's limitations, we continue to work closely with the remaining parties to the deal to find a diplomatic way forward. We have always been clear over our concerns about Iran's destabilising behaviour, including in Yemen, and our consulting partners, on the broader implications of expiry of the arms embargo in October 2012.

Finally, Mr President, we know the EU/UN cooperation can be particularly effective in the field of peacekeeping. Collaboration through training, partnerships and complementary security initiatives can multiply efforts to further stability, allowing different actors to play distinct but supporting roles. In the Sahel, for example, we value the work of the EU training mission in its efforts to train the Malian armed forces, to which the United Kingdom continues to provide support. We are proud to be partnering with France in Operation Barkhane and also proud to be deploying a 250-strong military contingent to MINUSMA later this year. This will provide situational awareness and information provision for the benefit of all international actors on the ground.

Mr President, an effective United Nations able to tackle so many global challenges is in all of our interests. The United Kingdom will continue to work constructively with the European Union and all other UN members to achieve this.

Thank you, Mr President.

Celebrating 10 years of Green Engineering in Cumbria

The Environment Agency is celebrating ten years of successful soft engineering along Cumbria rivers that has improved habitats and water quality, protected fish and got more people fishing throughout Cumbria and the Scottish borders.

The programme of work, funded through fishing licence sales, has been led by Environment Agency's Mike Farrell, who is a keen angler himself. The series of work has included many different soft engineering techniques at different locations throughout Cumbria including river restoration, tree planting and habitat creation.

Environment Agencies Mike Farrell said

“This has been a great programme to work on over the last 10 years, it’s good to see that all our hard work has paid off. Having successfully completed 130 projects, working with 219 different partner organisations, the programme has led to significant environmental improvements across Cumbria.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this project over the years, from our partners to local school children, local angling groups to the passing public and schools further afield. It really is amazing what can be done when we all come together. Looking back and seeing work we implemented 10 years ago thriving and working to its best potential is certainly rewarding and makes all the hard work from everyone involved totally worth it!’’

Over the last ten years, the Environment Agency, as part of the works, have coordinated the planting of 31,995 trees across the county. This provides river bank stabilisation, creates shaded areas to help boost fish populations and slow the flow of the rivers. All completed with the help of hundreds of school pupils, local angling clubs, associations and environmentalists adding up to thousands of volunteer hours.

The programme has introduced of over 2072 meters of willow to protect banks from erosion as well as 44,141 meters of fencing along water courses. This helps to create riparian strips (area where land meets water) and wildlife corridors. It also allows natural rejuvenation of the river banks, contributes to natural flood management due to re-profiling of the river banks and also decreases the amount of sediment that goes into the river. Along with this the introduction of 58 sections of woody material debris and management of gravel beds provide shelter for young fish and creates channel diversity, enhancing fish to naturally breed leading to a higher number of fish in our rivers.

Dale Renac, Chairman of the River Ellen Angling Association (REAA) said

‘We send our thanks from the REAA to the Environment Agency for their funding and help when carrying out projects on the river Ellen. Six years ago the Bullgill project was started and has now created an excellent riparian strip with over 500 trees planted, the biggest part of it being willow which helped reduce erosion of the river banks.

To this present day were seeing a big increase in damsel fly’s and dragon fly in the improved and replaced river banks. Juvenile fish can be seen amongst the new vegetation that has grown near the river banks and otters and kingfisher are regularly sighted in the area. It is so good to see what can be achieved from these projects when we all come together to help the environment’

The Environment Agency has also worked with hundreds of school children from 15 different schools, across Cumbria, Nottingham and Sunderland. Students from Sunderland attend with Derwent Hill outdoor education centre in Cumbria.

Matthew Ellis, director for the centre said:

“The Environment Agency, through our relationship with Mike Farrell, have been instrumental in these courses providing expert guidance, advice on sensitive and vulnerable locations and up to date information about the current ecological challenges.

In the last three years we are very proud to have planted over two thousand trees and engaged in real projects such as shoring up river banks after devastating floods thanks to this ongoing support.”

A spokesperson for the Oak Field Special Needs school said:

“Oak Field School is a school for children with severe learning difficulties aged 3 to 19 years. For over 10 years, sixth form students and old students have had the great opportunity to work with Mike Farrell and the Environment Agency team.

The students have planted trees and cleared Himalayan Balsam, it has been an amazing and successful project to be involved in over the years, giving the young people the confidence and the experience of working together to put something back into the environment.

The students learnt a lot about the need to care for the countryside and the impact that conservation has on the local environment. Many of the students return every year and look forward to meeting Mike and the friendly and helpful Environment Agency team.

The school and students appreciate the fantastic opportunity to partake in conservation of rivers and nature, we hope to return next year to spend some more quality time caring for our environment in the beautiful location of the Lake District.”

The project has been rewarding for all involved and it is clear that by working together great things can be achieved.

Cleve Hill Solar Park Project granted development consent

Press release

Today, Thursday 28 May 2020, the application for the proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park Project near Faversham in Kent has been granted development consent by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.



Development consent has been given for a solar photovoltaic array, and electrical storage and connection infrastructure, with a generation capacity of greater than 50 MW.

The development is located on land approximately 2 km northeast of Faversham and 5 km west of Whitstable on the North Kent Coast. The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by Cleve Hill Solar Park Limited on the 16 November 2018 and accepted for examination on 14 December 2018. Following an examination during which the Applicant, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to provide evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State on 28 February 2020.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in a 6-month long examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views before making their recommendation."

This is the 87th nationally significant infrastructure project to have been examined and decided within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008. The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

ENDS

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate, [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

[PM call with First Ministers: 28 May 2020](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.



This afternoon the Prime Minister had a call with the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

The PM made clear that as we begin to move to the next phase of tackling this virus, he remains determined to work closely with the devolved administrations. This continues to be a UK-wide approach, even though we may travel at slightly different speeds based on the scientific evidence.

He also stressed the importance of particularly close engagement on programmes that must be UK-wide to be most effective. This includes contact tracing, where coordinated systems across the UK will be critical to the next phase of our efforts. They also discussed the important work of the UK Joint Biosecurity Centre in making the response across the country increasingly targeted.

They all agreed that continued engagement is vital and that they will remain in close contact in the days and weeks ahead.