

Home Secretary outlines support for domestic abuse victims

Good afternoon, welcome to Downing Street for the Government's daily press conference on coronavirus.

I am joined today by Martin Hewitt, Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council, and by Professor Stephen Powis.

I would like to update you on the Government's plan to fight this pandemic.

Our priority is to slow the spread of coronavirus, so that fewer people are sick at any one time, and our brilliant NHS continues to remain able to cope.

To do this we are following expert scientific and medical advice and taking the right steps at the right moment in time.

And that is why we are instructing people to stay home, to protect the NHS and save lives.

I can report that, through the Government's ongoing monitoring and testing programme, as of 9am today:

- There have been 334,974 tests carried out across the UK, excluding Northern Ireland.
- Of these, 78,991 have tested positive.
- 20,101 patients are currently in hospital who have already tested positive.
- Sadly, 9,875 people have now died – an increase of 917 of yesterday.

As this virus continues to devastate families across our nation, my thoughts, prayers and heartfelt condolences are with their friends, their families and loved ones.

To everyone suffering from this horrific virus, whether you are at home or receiving care from our brilliant NHS in hospital – you are in all of our thoughts at this devastating time.

And I am very pleased to say that the Prime Minister continues to make good progress.

But these stark figures highlight the gravity of this national emergency.

The devastating impact of this virus, and the unprecedented but necessary action we are taking to tackle it, is affecting every aspect of our daily lives.

This virus is also changing the nature of the threat we face from crime.

Martin and myself will today update you on the emerging crime picture and the extra work the Government – along with law enforcement partners – is undertaking to better protect victims.

As Martin will set out, total crime has dropped as people follow the necessary advice to stay at home.

But, while the guidelines are helping to keep the majority of us safe – we think they could also amplify danger for others – leaving people feeling isolated, vulnerable and exposed.

Because criminality continues to adapt.

Fraudsters are exploiting coronavirus as a hook for new acquisitive crimes – with losses to victims already exceeding £1.8million.

Perpetrators of sickening online child sexual abuse are seeking to exploit the fact that more young people and children are at home and are online.

And in the last week alone, the National Domestic Abuse Helpline reported a 120% rise in the number of calls it received in one 24-hour period.

Now while we have not yet seen a sustained rise in reports of domestic abuse to the police, the increase in those seeking help for this hidden crime is extremely concerning. And be in no doubt, there will be absolutely no let-up in our operational response.

For the victims of these crimes, home is not the safe-haven it should be.

That is why I have been working with law enforcement, charities, schools, businesses and local councils to address this changing threat picture.

Our incredible police officers and firefighters are out in their communities – yes fighting crime, but also protecting victims.

I want to emphasise that anyone who is a victim of these crimes can still get help.

Anyone in immediate danger should call 999 – and press 55 on a mobile if you are unable to talk.

Our outstanding police will, absolutely, still be there for you.

The National Crime Agency are also bearing down on offenders and raising awareness to protect victims of fraud, cyber-crime and online child abuse.

But, we must all do more to protect our neighbours, friends and family members by sharing information about the support that is available.

The Chancellor this week announced a £750million boost for charities, including those providing services for victims of domestic abuse and their families.

And today, I can announce that we will go even further to provide support for those in danger of domestic abuse.

And I am launching a new national communications campaign to reach out to those who are at risk from abuse, highlighting that they can still leave home – to get the support that they need.

It will signpost to victims how they can access help and but also to reassure them that they can access support services and the police are still on hand.

And, importantly, it will tell them that they are not alone.

Coronavirus has opened Britain's enormous heart and shown our love and compassion for one another as we come together to help those most in need.

And I am now asking this nation to use that amazing compassion and community spirit to embrace those trapped in the horrific cycle of abuse.

And to help us all look out for those who need help, we have created a new campaign and we have created symbol of hope – a handprint with a heart on – so that people can easily show that we will not tolerate abuse as a society, and that we stand in solidarity with victims of domestic abuse.

I ask you and I would urge everyone to share it on social media or in the windows of your home, alongside a link to the support available, to demonstrate just how much this country cares.

And to show victims of domestic abuse, that they are not on their own.

I am also providing up to £2 million to enhance online support services and helplines for domestic abuse, so that anybody who needs that help and support can access that help and support.

These services will be boosted from new IT provided by the business, and in order to boost these services, we have secured support from Fujitsu to provide IT expertise to smaller domestic abuse charities to enable their specialist trained support workers to provide their crucial services remotely.

We also know there are concerns about the capacity of refuges to provide enough accommodation during this challenging time.

I'm clear about this – perpetrators should be the ones who have to leave the family home, not the supposed loved ones whom they torment and abuse.

Our priority is to get abusers out, but, sadly, this is not always possible.

So where a victim, and their children, do need to leave, we will ensure they have a safe place to go.

That's why we are looking at alternative accommodation to best support the work of refuges and ensure that there are enough places for those in need at this difficult time.

Fighting coronavirus requires an extraordinary national effort, and I would like to reiterate my personal thanks to everyone across all aspects of society playing their part.

I am immensely grateful to everyone who is heeding the instruction to stay at home.

This remains crucial over the bank holiday weekend and especially as the weather improves.

But we have given the police powers to enforce the necessary measures we have put in place, including through the enforcement of fines.

I'd like to thank them – our police officers and staff who are working tirelessly to keep us safe, for engaging with the public so constructively, to encourage everyone to do the right thing and avoid the need to use these powers.

The overwhelming majority of the people are listening, making their own sacrifices to support our amazing police officers and staff, as they protect our under-pressure hospitals, and safeguard the most vulnerable.

But my message to anyone still refusing to do the right thing is clear.

If you don't play your part, our selfless police – who are out there risking their own lives to save others – will be unafraid to act.

Their work is helping our doctors, nurses and health professionals to fight this virus and to save lives.

If you do not follow the guidance, you will be endangering the lives of your own friends, families and loved ones.

To protect those you care about – and the capacity of our police and hospitals to protect us all – there is just one simple thing you must do.

Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives.

**[Press statement by Security Council
Members calling for the immediate](#)**

cessation of hostilities in Yemen

The Members of the Security Council endorsed the Secretary-General's call of 25 March for those fighting in Yemen to immediately cease hostilities, focus on reaching a negotiated political settlement, and to do everything possible to counter an outbreak of COVID-19.

They welcomed the announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, of a unilateral ceasefire in Yemen in support of the UN's peace process and the Secretary-General's call. They welcomed the Government of Yemen's positive response to the cease-fire call, and called on the Houthis to make similar commitments without delay.

The Members of the Security Council encouraged the parties to continue their cooperation with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, in order to reach a Yemeni-led and owned, comprehensive and inclusive political settlement, which addresses the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis. They reaffirmed past Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), and underlined their support for the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, its implementation mechanism, and the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference. They underlined the need for an inclusive political process to include the full and meaningful participation of women.

Noting the humanitarian crisis makes Yemen exceptionally vulnerable to an outbreak of COVID-19, the Members of the Security Council stressed that further military escalation in Yemen would hinder the access of humanitarian and healthcare workers and the availability of healthcare facilities necessary to tackle an outbreak.

The Members of the Security Council reiterated their call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and for an urgent return to de-escalation. They reiterated their full support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy and emphasised that no military solution can bring sustainable peace to Yemen. They reaffirmed their strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Yemen.

Troika Statement: Sudan One Year After Omar al-Bashir's Ouster

The United States, the United Kingdom, and the Kingdom of Norway (the Troika) congratulate the civilian-led transitional government and the people of Sudan on the one-year anniversary of the ouster of Omar al-Bashir and his regime. This created the opportunity to forge a new political order and social contract in Sudan. We commend Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and the civilian-

led transitional government, as well as others, especially those representing civil society, on their efforts to deliver peace, justice, and freedom to the Sudanese people. We recognize the efforts being made to ensure that the people of Sudan enjoy equality and respect for their human rights, including religious freedom. Sustainable progress in these areas reflects the values and fulfils aspirations of the Sudanese people. The Troika, as a witness to the Political Agreement between the Forces for Freedom and Change and the Transitional Military Council in August 2019, remains steadfast in supporting Sudan's peaceful, democratic transition.

Sudan has an unprecedented opportunity to advance justice, peace and development for all Sudanese and to empower women, youth, and those from traditionally marginalized areas. Much urgent work remains to achieve the goals of the revolution. As an immediate next step, we look forward to seeing progress on forming the Transitional Legislative Council, appointing civilian governors, concluding peace agreements with armed opposition groups, undertaking serious, although initially painful, economic reforms, and increasing transparency of government finances, including those of the security institutions.

The way forward is more difficult because several of Sudan's ongoing conflicts are unresolved. The transitional government's commitment to the permanent cessation of hostilities it announced in October 2019, and the recent extensions to the unilateral cessations of hostilities declared by two rebel groups, are important signs of good will. We support the UN Secretary-General's call for a global Coronavirus ceasefire and we call on all parties involved in Sudan's armed conflicts to commit to permanent ceasefires and unhindered humanitarian access. Yet, peace is more than the absence of war, and it is urgent that all parties agree on the terms of a comprehensive peace. We welcome reports of progress in the peace negotiations in Juba. We call on all parties, especially those that so far have refused to engage in meaningful negotiations, to join in a comprehensive peace agreement.

We recognize the Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant additional challenges for Sudan and the Sudanese people. This a test for the all those working for the new Sudan. As well as responding to the pandemic, we recognize the significant economic problems that Sudan continues to face. Progressing a reform programme to help address these problems and help stabilise and stimulate the economy would allow the international community to work with and support the civilian led transitional government. It would also help in the response to the pandemic. The Troika countries are committed to helping Sudan in this time of need.

[The Government is a strong supporter](#)

of free and competitive energy markets

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and His Royal Highness for calling this extraordinary meeting of the G20 Energy Ministers.

I would also like to thank the International Energy Agency for its excellent analytical work on what's current happening in the energy markets. This has been invaluable.

The global COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest public health emergency and greatest economic challenge we have face in a generation.

In the UK – as for us all – our primary goal is to protect people's lives from this virus. At the same time, we have also taken decisive action to protect our economy and enable its rapid recovery, including by providing £330bn worth of Government backed and guaranteed loans.

COVID-19 has brought new challenges to the UK energy sector, and it has responded positively by implementing new measures and working practices to ensure reliable energy supply and a resilient energy sector. I commend those working within the energy sector for their efforts in the UK and abroad. We will continue to work closely with actors across the sector to ensure that our energy system remains secure and reliable, within a competitive market framework. This will support the whole UK economy, including of course those leading the fight back against the virus, to ensure we protect our fellow citizens and support our economy to thrive after this emergency.

We will also continue to work collaboratively across the G20. I welcome actions taken by G20 countries to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19. We all recognise the valuable role that many of the broader economic and financial measures that have been introduced by G20 countries as part of the COVID-19 response will have great importance for the energy sector.

The UK is a strong supporter of free and competitive energy markets. Ensuring reliability, stability and security in supply during this global health emergency is vital importance. So we will continue to support stable, competitive markets to provide security in supply.

Beyond the current health emergency, the energy sector will have an important role to play in driving a clean and resilient global recovery. Through the ongoing transformation of our energy systems we can secure livelihoods, drive development, and deliver on the Paris Agreement. This sector we all know has a central role to play in raising global ambition on the clean energy transition.

Thank you.

Government sets out plan for national effort on PPE

- To date, over 761 million pieces of PPE delivered across the UK
- Full, 24/7 military operation underway to manage supply and demand right across the UK
- New domestic PPE manufacturing effort with Rolls Royce and McLaren to make more protective equipment
- Website launching to enable primary, social, and community care providers to request critical PPE

A UK-wide plan to ensure that critical personal protective equipment (PPE) is delivered to those on the frontline responding to coronavirus (COVID-19) has been published today by Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock.

The [3-strand plan](#) launched today will provide clear guidance on who needs PPE and when they need it, ensure those who need it can get it at the right time and set out action to secure enough PPE to last through the crisis.

A full, 24/7 military operation is already underway to deal with the unprecedented, global demand for PPE as a result of this pandemic.

A new national supply and logistics network has been created from scratch in a matter of weeks to manage supply and demand across the UK, and to make sure appropriate PPE reaches those who need it.

A new website, developed with the help of the military, is being rolled out in the coming weeks to improve distribution and will enable primary, social and community care providers in England to order critical PPE.

In addition, a [new PPE hub](#) provides easy access to all the government's guidance on PPE in one place – a one-stop shop people can visit to understand what PPE they need.

This is in addition to a 24-hour helpline that already allows providers to request emergency drops of PPE to meet immediate need.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I will stop at nothing to protect those on the frontline who are fighting this virus.

Our heroic health and care staff are working around the clock and my absolute priority is to support them. Our new online ordering tool for PPE is supported by a 24/7 national supply and logistics network.

There is a herculean effort behind the scenes, supported by the military, to get the right kit to our frontline heroes. These new

supply chains, matched with a call to arms for more businesses and organisations to join this national effort, will help save lives.

The 3-strand plan sets out:

1. guidance: being clear who needs PPE and when, and who does not, based on UK clinical expertise and WHO standards. This will ensure workers on the front line are able to do their jobs safely, while making sure PPE is only used when clinically necessary and isn't wasted or stockpiled
2. distribution: making sure those who need PPE can get it and at the right time. The government will ensure those who need critical PPE receive it as quickly as possible by setting up a new national supply system
3. future supply: taking action to secure enough PPE to see us through the crisis. The actions being taken to ensure we have enough critical PPE to last the UK through the pandemic, working alongside industry to boost future supply. The government has already co-ordinated deliveries of PPE directly to health and care providers and to 38 local resilience forums across England. These efforts are being co-ordinated across all 4 nations of the UK to ensure appropriate distribution of critical PPE

Since the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, over 761 million items of PPE have been delivered across the UK to 58,000 different settings, including hospitals, hospices, care homes, home care providers, GPs, pharmacists and dentists to ensure our frontline is protected. This includes 158 million masks, 135 million aprons and 360 million pairs of gloves.

The plan also emphasises the need to ramp up domestic production of PPE. The government is calling on industry to join forces to manufacture more protective equipment to support the national effort.

Already companies such as Burberry, Rolls-Royce, McLaren, Ineos and Diageo have started work to produce equipment including gowns, visors and hand hygiene products.

Last week, following extensive consultation with the Medical Royal Colleges, all 4 UK governments published updated guidance for PPE for health and care workers. This covers doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers and social care staff.

Critical PPE guidance has also been published for cleaners, funeral directors and first responders. Beyond these roles in settings including supermarkets and public transport, the clinical evidence, which is kept under review, does not suggest widespread benefit from wearing PPE over and above social distancing, social isolation and good hand hygiene.

In addition to this a new dedicated team has been set up to focus on securing supplies and identifying PPE suppliers from across the globe to meet the increasing demand for a growing list of products, with a call to arms to businesses to turn their manufacturing efforts to this response to meet technical specifications published by government.

Businesses and organisations including Kingfisher Group, Apple, Huawei and BP

have also stepped up to the plate to generously offer their own PPE for use by the NHS and public organisations.