

FOR INFORMATION - Downing Street Coronavirus News Conference summary, 9 September

**TO: Business & Operational Continuity Committee
UK Finance COVID-19 Exit Strategy Group**

Dear member,

Please see below a summary of the Downing Street Coronavirus News Conference, 9 September 2020.

If you have any questions, please contact either myself or Rogan.

Downing Street Coronavirus News Conference 9 September 2020

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, chaired a 10 Downing Street press conference today with Sir Patrick Vallance, Chief Scientific Adviser, and Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, in attendance – their first press conference together since the end of June. The purpose of the conference was to update the public on the response to coronavirus as the nation enters into Autumn and Winter and change the public messaging with the aim of a “strict observance of the rule of six” amongst the public.

Headlines

Latest data

- The latest data shows a significant increase in the numbers of cases amongst 20-29 year old adults and also teenagers aged over 17 since the middle of August.
- Compared to other countries, the UK is on a similar path of increased infections as that seen in France, with a four week delay.
- An increase in infections is also evident in all regions across the country. The full dataset is available [here](#).

New Covid-19 national measures

In response, the PM reiterated the importance of observing the basic hygiene measures of handwashing, wearing face masks and social distancing.

New social distancing rules

- As announced, in England, from Monday, people must not meet socially in groups of more than six, in any setting inside or outside. PM said changes to social distancing rules are to simplify and strengthen the rules.

- This does not include various exemptions: households/support bubbles larger than six; venues can host more than six people but groups up to six cannot mix with each other; events, such as weddings and funerals can take place; and sporting events can take place too.

New stronger enforcement

- In future, premises and venues where people meet socially will be legally required to request the contact details of a member of every party, record and retain details for 21 days and provide them to Test and Trace without delay.
- Local authorities will have stronger powers to shut premises and fines will be issued to premises who fail to make their venues covid secure. - Enforcement will be boosted by introducing covid-secure marshals in town and city centres.
- Passenger locator forms to the UK will be simplified and measures introduced to make sure they are completed before departure to be introduced .
- Border force will step up enforcement measures at the border.
- Opening hours of premises initially restricted in certain areas.
- Pilots for larger audiences in stadiums and conference centres from the 1 October to be reviewed. Culture Sec to say more shortly.
- Department for Education publishing updated guidance for universities in how they can operate, including not sending students home if they

New plan for mass-testing programme

- Existing testing strategy to be expanded to 500,000 daily tests by October.
- New ambitious testing strategy planned – which the PM caveated may not succeed – aimed at identifying ‘negative’ results so individuals can behave in a more normal way.
- New simple, quick and scalable tests to be made available with results in 90 or 20 minutes.
- This can be deployed on a far bigger scale, allowing people to lead more normal lives without the need for social distancing.
- Approach to be piloted in Salford next month with audiences in indoor and outdoor venues.
- May be possible for theatres and events to have ‘more normal life’ before Christmas.
- CW refused to be pinned on date when this would be established.

Update on Covid-19 treatments and vaccines

- Evidence of immune response generated in vaccine trials so far. In UK, vaccine taskforce has made sure that 6 vaccines will be made available in 4 different classes of vaccines. They have also expanded manufacturing capacity for production in the UK.
- The reported ‘pause’ in the Oxford vaccine trial not unusual in a phase 3 clinical trial, according to Sir Patrick Vallance. While not good, SPV said this is inevitable and it’s sensible to look at this seriously.

Questions

- On CJR (furlough) scheme, PM reiterated that the govt has no intention of continuing the scheme, which he said keeps furloughed workers in “suspended animation”.

- On reopening of schools, CW hinted that they may have to revisit this at a later date should infections dramatically increase.
- On changes to the EU withdrawal agreement, PM reiterated they are establishing a 'safety net' to ensure peace in Northern Ireland and "protect the settlement of the United Kingdom".

ENDS