

Transcript of- [Watch again: Boris Johnson says government is moving towards 'delay phase' of coronavirus - YouTube](#)

1:11

[Music]

2:07

[Music]

2:43

coming again this morning I chaired a meeting of the government's Cobra Emergency Committee on the coronavirus

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the First Minister's of Scotland and Wales and the First Minister and Deputy Minister of Northern Ireland

2:57

Deputy First Minister Northern Ireland also attended and we agreed to continue to work closely in the weeks and months

3:04

ahead we received a detailed briefing from the chief medical officer and the

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chief scientific advisor him again I repeat my gratitude to both Chris and to Patrick there have now been four deaths

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from coronavirus in the UK and our deepest sympathies are obviously with

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their friends and families our action plan as you know sets out four phases of

3:29

our approach to tackling the virus contain delay research and mitigate we

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remain in the container phase of the outbreak but watching what is happening

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around the world our scientists think containment is extremely unlikely to

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work on its own and that is why we are making extensive preparations for a move to the delay phase we're preparing

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various actions to slow the spread of this disease in order to reduce the

4:02

strain it places on the NHS the more we can delay the peak of the spread to the

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summer the better the NHS will be able to manage Patrick and Chris will give

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you some more detailed information on the latest advice we're giving the public today and how we expect that

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advice to change as the outbreak develops as sitting stands I'm afraid it

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robear's repeating that the best thing we can all do is wash our hands for 20 seconds with soap and water

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we'll also take questions because I know there are lots of things that the public want to hear from

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visors about but before that I want to stress the following things first we are

4:48
doing everything we can to combat this outbreak there based on the very latest
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scientific and medical advice second we have a truly brilliant NHS where staff
4:59
have responded with all the determination compassion and skill that
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makes their service so revered across the world and they will continue to have this
government's full support my
5:12
support in tackling this virus on the frontline third we will set out further
5:19
steps in the days and weeks ahead to help people protect themselves their
5:24
family and in particular the elderly and vulnerable finally while it's absolutely
5:33
critical it's absolutely critical in managing the spread of this virus that
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we take the right decisions at the right time based on the latest and best
5:46
evidence so we mustn't do things which have no or limited medical benefit nor
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things which could turn out actually to be counterproductive there is no hiding from the fact
that
6:02
the corona virus outbreak will present significant challenges for the UK just
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as it does in other countries but if we
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continue to look out for one another to
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pull together in a united and national effort I have no doubt that we can and
6:24
will rise to that challenge and I'm not going to ask Patrick and then Chris to
6:33
give their own perspective on on where we are Patrick energy thank you very much numbers
are increasing and they're
6:38
increasing across Europe and in the UK and that increase in numbers is consistent with the
fact that there is
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transmission of this within the community the number that's particular important actually is
the number of people in intensive care which show
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that there are others out they've had it and that's coming to seriously ill people in some
cases who may have
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infected others before they got to intensive care so we know that there is a community
transition and transmission
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in terms of the things that could be done to try and suppress the number of
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people that get this at the peak push the peak into the summer and also to
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protect those that are most vulnerable in society we need to understand where
7:21
we are in the epidemic and make sure that we take the actions that need to be taken at the
right time and those
7:28
possible actions are laid out in the plan they've all been modeled and there are
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others that were looked at that are less effective than the ones that are in the plan as well
they've all been modeled
7:39
and we get together and review those numbers through Sage looking at the numbers on a
daily basis with groups of
7:46
mathematical modelers people who understand disease epidemics clinicians
7:52
virologists other types of scientists with expertise across a range of
7:58
disciplines those different options then can be modeled to give a certain
8:04
percentage effect on both the peak and the number of potential deaths and the
8:10
number of potentially very ill people it's important that no single intervention on its own is
enough to
8:16
make the difference you have to do things in combination and you have to do them at the
right time do it too early
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you just end up with the measures not having any effect so for example if you
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asked everybody with a mild sniffle at the moment to go into isolation you get a lot of
people who haven't got
8:34
coronavirus they've got some other circulating illness in due course that will change so that
we need to get the
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measures at the right time so they can be implemented properly and people can actually
adhere to them and it's
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sensible to make the difference that we're looking for so those combinations we're going to
look at and trigger at
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the right time in the right combinations to make sure that we have the effect that we're
looking for and that approach
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of being very driven by the data and very driven by the science is exactly why some of the
measures we're taking may
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look a bit different from some of the decisions that others have made with the outbreak
they've got in their country which might be progressing at a
9:10

different stage or might have different characteristics so that's what we're trying to do and Chris will say more about the details of where we are as of

9:16
now thanks Patrick Chris in addition to what Patrick's just said I think that

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it's important to remember that both the NHS and public health professionals already doing a very large number of

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things and those are steadily changing as this epidemic goes on so we started

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off very heavily concentrating on geographical issues looking at fevers

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and other symptoms in people who'd come from areas where the outbreak had begun

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and then when it how it seeded out including most recently to Italy but as

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time is going on for the NHS for our public health colleagues we're moving more and more to looking at people who

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have never left the UK to check that they might have coronavirus and if they

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do that they can be treated and isolated properly and the key at this stage remains to find early cases to isolate

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them and where appropriate to follow their contacts we'll be making one additional change on the health side

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tomorrow at the moment we are screening everybody who's in intensive care for coronavirus if they have symptoms that

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are compatible with coronaviruses so if they have a very bad pneumonia and we'll be extending that out now as from

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tomorrow to everybody who has a significant enough pneumonia or other respiratory tract infection to get into

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hospital at all so that's a that's a medical advance move forward but I think

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what we're moving now to is a phase when we will be having to ask members of the general public to do different things

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than they would normally do but I would repeat the point that the PM and Patrick

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have just said it is important on this it's not just a matter of what you do it

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is also a matter of when you do it because anything we do we've got to be able to sustain once you've started

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these things we will have to continue through the peak and that is for a period of time and there is a risk if we

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go too early people were understandably get fatigue and it'll be difficult to sustain this overtime so getting the

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timing right is absolutely critical to making this work at the moment the

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things that we are doing which are appropriate for any other significant respiratory tract infection are also

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appropriate for the currently very small number of coronavirus cases we have in

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the UK so those would include washing your hands with soap and water as the Prime Minister has said it includes

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covering your mouth when you cough or Smith sneeze and disposing of tissues as everybody knows it also would include

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what anybody would get is advice from their GP which is if you've got a very serious respiratory tract infection

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you're sneezing everywhere and high fever you've got a runny nose if you phoned up your GP they would say

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stay at home don't infect elderly people don't infect your workmates this is no

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different from anything else you would normally we would normally would advise at this time of year and remember in

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terms perspective in an average year about 8,000 people a year die of flu it

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is very important we do this for all respiratory tract infections and as with coronavirus those who are older and

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those who have pre-existing health conditions are a greater risk but we're now going to be moving into a position

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where at the moment as patrick said the ratio between people you've got

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coronavirus in the UK and other significant respiratory tract infections

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is very very low that is going to shift over time for two reasons one of which is the modelling shows that the actual

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amount of coronavirus is steadily going to increase and we're expecting the numbers to increase initially slowly but

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really quite fast after a while you have to catch it before the upswing begins and secondly the other causes of coughs

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and colds that are seasonal this time of year are the tail end of the period of maximum activity in the UK so the ratios

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are going to shift very significantly so we are now very close to the time probably within the next ten to fourteen

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days when the modelling would imply we should move to a situation where we say everybody who has even minor respiratory

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tract infections or a fever should be self isolating for seven days afterwards and this is going

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to be the next step we have not yet reached that step but we are going to be reaching that step in the really quite

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near future and this is what we wanted to lay out as the first step along a path towards trying to reduce firstly

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the delay of the epidemic it's part of the overall contain delay research and

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mitigate strategy and then to pull down the peak of this epidemic so that it is smaller than it would have been if we

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don't take these interventions so that will be the next step thank you very much thanks very much Chris and thank you Patrick I hope

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that's that that's given some some clarity about about where we are but let's let's please have have some

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questions Vicki Vicki on BBC prime

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minister you touched on over there you talked about public concern and it's clear that some in the public are beginning to question why you're not

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taking those more aggressive approaches if you like that we're seeing in lots of other countries and people are wondering

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why that's not happening are you confident you are doing enough to keep people safe and a question to to their

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Chiefs if I might lots of people asked about flights from Italy they haven't been stopped and as far as we're aware

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people are not being tested coming off those flights can you explain why yes I'm Vicki I just really go back to the

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advice I gave earlier on and really to repeat what the CSA the Chiefs are advising the city and the chief medical

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officer have said it is really vital as we take these steps to protect ourselves

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and encourage everybody to protect it everybody else that we do it at the

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right time it's not what you do it's what you do but it's when you when you

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do it and what's happening as as patrick said what's happening in other countries

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doesn't necessarily mirror or what's happening here in the UK and and that's why I were following the scientific

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advice in the way that we are so it's

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important to actually look and see what really works and and make those measures there's lots of things that seem intuitive when you think well that

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should work turn out to have very little if any effect and one of those is actually ports screaming so temperature screening

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in Airport doesn't really have much effect it's worth noting that those countries that instituted it very early some of their first cases came through

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that screening weren't detected in the screening and then popped up and some of those have stopped doing it now

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so that isn't an effective effective measure and other measures that people

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look at so mass gatherings and so on actually don't make much difference if you really look at it and so those

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aren't the first things you get you'd go for they're not the things that really helped contain that's why what we're

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looking at is the things that really do make a difference in making sure those are the things we concentrate on at the

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right time which is I think important to remember that Italy and I think all of

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us our hearts go out to the situation in Italy you know they were the first country in Europe to actually ban

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flights at that stage from from China and they also looked at airport screening and as you can see this is not

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cause and effect but that has not been a reason to actually slow down the epidemic in that country good thank you

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Paul Brownback Evie Thank You Prime Minister Prime Minister just to pick up

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on Vicki Ann's question other governments across Europe are taking more drastic steps now are you

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suggesting that perhaps that's due to political pressure rather than sound scientific advice now you're absolutely sure you shouldn't be doing the same

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thing and just a question to all of you is it still meaningful to say that we're in the contained phase when the virus

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isn't being contained and we now have evidence it is spreading within the UK well first of all I think that the best

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answer to that Paul is is you know just that the phenomenon the epidemiology may

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be different from one country to the next and I think it's very very important that we in the UK are guided

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by the best and the latest scientific advice and that's that's what we're doing injustice on your second point

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about containment and containment and delay as and when we may move into the

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delay phase it's obvious that we're not abandoning contain because clearly we're

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going to want to contain as well as delay the outbreak very important period the government

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that just because you moved from one phase over that doesn't mean the ambition of containing the outbreak has

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been abandoned when you start off in

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delay most of the things you do are exactly the same as you would do and contain so it's all about case finding

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and isolation as you move through beyond a certain point that ceases to be an effective strategy but at the moment we

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still think it is useful to identifying people based on geography identifying early cases and isolating them in case

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of this case finding thanks 3b great news thank you thank you

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prime minister question fuel and the chief my profits if I'm a prime minister just two weeks ago in Italy there were a

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hundred and fifty three cases of corona virus and just three deaths now 16

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million people have been quarantined of reflection if you like of the public

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health challenge we are all facing globally is there a risk that in trying

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not to alarm and panic people you are actually going to slow in taking these

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measures and to the chief medical officer your Scottish counterpart said

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four percent of the population in Scotland might have to be hospitalized if you extrapolate that figure across to

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England that's over two million people do you accept that figure thank you well

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I obviously you're right Beth in the sense that there's no question that this

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is going to become a significant of much more significant outbreak than it
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currently is that's obvious to to everyone but it is vital that we take the steps that we think are necessary at
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at the right time and we and we follow the science and that's what I think the
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public would expect us to do to give them the latest information now in the course of this of this week obviously
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we're going to be looking more at the the the detail of the step so that
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we could take as we asked the public to join us you know in a national effort to
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to delay the the spread of the of the virus but we'll be setting out that
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detail in in due course we don't think that this is the right moment we still think that the best thing we can do is
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as I say to contain do it systematically moving from one to the next getting the
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right combinations not ending up with a series of individual actions in response
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to things so be in a control of where you are in the epidemic not in reaction
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mode and that's really what we're trying to do making sure that when we do do things we get that right constellation
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of things done to make sure that we have the biggest impact only about 4% what dr. Calder would
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obviously speak to every day was talking about was the reasonable worst-case
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scenario planning tool and that is rightly aiming at the absolute top of
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the range the reality I think there are probably two points to make on this the first of which is the great majority of
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people who have this infection will actually have a mild or moderate infection that will be managed at home
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and indeed will not need any testing they will simply feel unwell we will want them to self isolate for seven days
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and then they will get better and they actually won't touch the health service at all a minority will need hospital
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care the percentages to be honest are largely speculative and it really will
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depend on what the how the epidemic progresses which we're really in the early days of and then how doctors who

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see people and nurses who see people as they come in they will make decisions about whether someone actually needs to

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come into hospital or not because clearly if you don't need to be in hospital you shouldn't be in the hospital it's very much going to be

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about choosing the people that are going to benefit most from hospitals and the percentages to be honest are largely

22:04

speculative thank you Heather Stewart from The Guardian hello we all saw

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footage over the weekend of people squabbling over toilet rolls and empty shelves and so on is it just

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prudent for people to be stocking up on the kinds of things that they would need if they were going to have to stay at home for a week and are you confident

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that as this as the outbreak escalates both here and in other countries that you can keep shelves stocked well we're

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certainly confident that we have fantastic supply chains I know that both both Giorgio Napolitano and Matt have been

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talking about Hank I've been talking to the supermarket's making sure that we

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keep things moving just in terms of preparations and and where the public I

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think it's very very important that everybody should behave responsibly and think about others we will be setting

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out as I say in the course of the next few days what further measures we think

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may be necessary I stress may be necessary we think it's it's probable that we'll go to a delay phase but we'll

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be spelling out what is useful and appropriate for the public to do in the course of next few days so there'll be a

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meeting of the scientific advisory group on emergencies tomorrow and then a

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further Cobra on Wednesday to consider the next steps and Gordon Rainer Terry

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welcome Thank You Prime Minister a lot

23:42

of people at home watching this now will probably be elderly in the upper 80s category that we know is a high-risk

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group is the advice for those people still just to wash your hands more

23:56

regularly and nothing else or are there other steps that you are suggesting that they should be taking to

24:02

protect themselves and also can you give any reassurance that if we do get to a stage where people with any kind of

24:09

respiratory illnesses need to self isolate for seven days that you will be able to get food to elderly people who

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perhaps aren't used to ordering shopping online like you know other people might be able to how you can identify those

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people and get food to them well on the medical advice perhaps like you're going

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to do you Chris first of all we're saying one of the key things that were becoming

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forward with in the next stage of the plan after this is advice for older people and also those who are vulnerable

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for other reasons so pre-existing health conditions people who are vulnerable we

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know from infections in general for example people who are pregnant have a slightly increased risk there are a variety of other areas where we would be

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looking at and we be saying we want to be able to protect these people particularly during this epidemic and we

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will be giving advice based on their degree of clinical need and that will be different for different people and it's

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sometimes allowed to be tailored to particular individuals but that advice is going to be the next stage at this

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point but then that the thing we're gonna be moving on to in the next ten to fourteen days is very much asking people

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who have got symptoms however mild to stay at home for seven days afterwards

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because that is a way of protecting the public including older people thanks yes

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well as I said in my answer just now we'll make sure that we do everything we

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can to keep keep supermarket stocked and and the economy working well you'll be

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hearing a bit more in the in the budget on Wednesday about measures to support the economy in in against coronavirus

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Jason graves

25:59

thank you Jason goes from the Daily Mail lots of people will be very worried about it some people will be much less

26:06

worried about it what can you say to them how many lives might they save by sort of pushing back that peak is and

26:13
will the overall number be smaller and Prime Minister can ask you separately last week you told us you were still

26:19
shaking hands with everybody it looked in the Commonwealth Day service like you weren't checking everyone's hands are

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you are you in or out on handshakes now well let me just on the handshaking we

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were all given an instruction not not to not to shake hands and there's a there's a good reason for not shaking hands

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which is that the behavioral psychologists say if you don't shakes somebody's hand and that sends an

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important message to them about the importance of washing your hands so there's a subliminal cue there to

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everybody to wash your hands which is which is I think I'm right in saying Christmas battery is still far more

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important things that the handshaking issue which is obviously a matter for individual choice but the handshaking is

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issue is much less important in tackling the spread over the disease and washing

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your hands sorry and on your point about I think that really want to the

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potential yeah I think the measures

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we're looking at are looking to try and reduce the peak numbers up to 50% and to

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try to reduce the mortality the death rate as far as we can in the at-risk

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group by 20 or 30 percent is this sort of numbers that you're trying to look at us what other people are doing as well

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that's not unique to how we're approaching it and those are the sorts of numbers you can go for what what you

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can't do is suppress this thing completely and what you shouldn't do is suppress it completely because all that

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happens then is it pops up again later in the year when the NHS is at a more

28:00
vulnerable stage in the winter and you end up with another problem so is to try and manage that in the most appropriate

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way in terms of the peak move it a bit suppress it and make sure that we protect those people who are most vulnerable thanks

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very much Samuel is to express a World Health

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Organization and boy this morning suggested that small gatherings are particularly risky areas such as

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churches pubs that kind of thing is that something you can see the government making some kind of

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restriction on in the future suggesting people shouldn't temperature it shouldn't go down the local pub and should elderly people already avoid such

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areas small areas of social gatherings well I'm going to ask Christian well

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I've made the point before that the large gathering actually it's the one everyone goes for but of course you're

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either as an individual who's infected have a high probability of infecting a small number of people in a small space

29:00

or a very very low probability of infecting a large number of people in a big place I mean there's only a certain

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number of people who can infect so one person in the seventy thousand seat the seater stadium is not going to infect

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the stadium they'll infect potentially a few people they've got very close contact with and that's true in any

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setting in the house in a church you know in a restaurant or anywhere so the

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chances are being infected are to do with the proximity to the person that you're with all the people that you're

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with that doesn't mean those are good things to try and stop because the measures which come before that in terms

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of their effect on it are things like case isolation as Chris Witte has said things like making sure that the elderly

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have the right advice to be able to look after themselves and other measures before you get to things like that and

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nobody's really going to the sorts of measures of really stopping those things and when you do that essentially you're

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saying stop all interaction which you can't do and shouldn't do yeah well at

30:00

the moment we have as as Chris witty has said very low number still in this country so the probability of coming

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across somebody in the church is infecting is very low now as the epidemic progresses of course that

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probability becomes higher and therefore elderly people in that situation then may take other measures Chris you wanted

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I think the only thing to add to that is the point about a state - State Fair your two points actually about sustaining it that once we started

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down that path we need to carry on throughout through the peak of the epidemic and that's important that we have things that are sustainable but the

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second is if people take the advice that in we can't be giving very shortly about

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if you've got symptoms you stay out of circulation whether it's worked or anything else

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that is a very major protection for other people around in society so that's why we're going for this one

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early on in the path of this epidemic and just just on that so one other point is is that the measures where that will

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be recommended like those some of them are about protecting all of us so it's about us being good citizens to protect

31:02

each other and some of them are about us protecting ourselves and it's important that we do both okay well look I thank

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you all very much I think we've covered all the essential points that I think we we feel that we need to make to you in -

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to everybody I hope that given at least some clarity and people understand the

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logic of the advice that were getting the governor's getting and transmitting to you about the range of options we

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have in particular about the the slightly counterintuitive advice about large gathering sporting events schools

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that's that's coming across we will be setting out more in the course of this

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week about what measures people and families can be taking as we move into

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the delay phase as and when we move into the today phases as you've heard what

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we're asking people to do now is to ensure that if they have a serious

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flu-like symptoms as happens every year

32:04

then they should do what they do every year and stay it at home and not risk infection of their of their colleagues

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and that's that's normal and common sensical the most important thing to to

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get over is that whatever is happening in other countries whatever measures are being urged upon us being their diet we
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are considering absolutely all of them and in due time they may of course become necessary but the clear advice
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for our scientists from the the CSA and the CMO is that timing is crucial in in
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tackling any kind of outbreak any kind of epidemic the timing of your measures
32:46
is absolutely crucial crucial so this is clearly going to continue to be a big
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national challenge and it I think it's going to grow and and become an even
32:58
bigger national challenge that's that that is pretty obvious from where we are today but I think it is also obvious to
33:06
me that we know how to defeat it and I think with a great national effort we
33:13
will be able to pull together and do just that but one thing is for certain we will be keeping you fully informed I
33:21
think the best thing we can do is be as transparent with you as possible to share our thinking to show our working
33:28
as we as we progress and as I say wash your hands
33:34
I never can be repeated too often thank you all very much indeed thank you
34:03
you
English (auto-generated)