

about needing more PPE than they had been previously. Despite the data in the COVID-19 dashboard, he said that he did not expect shortages of PPE in the next fortnight. He said that hospices accessed PPE through Local Resilience Fora.

Responding, THE PERMANENT SECRETARY AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE said that there had been huge progress on making sure that the NHS had sufficient levels of PPE, but supply was much tighter in the wider public sector and in social care, which now needed to be the focus. Supply had increased of the more technical equipment that was mainly needed by the NHS, such as gowns and certain masks, but the bigger problem had become the more basic supplies across the economy.

Responding, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE said that supplies of PPE felt less stressed than in previous weeks, but that there was a lag between that and frontline staff feeling secure that enough PPE was available. There had not been any reports of stock-outs on key items from NHS trusts, and no NHS trusts had yet needed to evoke emergency protocols to substitute lower-quality PPE due to lack of supply. However, this should not be relied upon too heavily in communications to the public, including at the press conference. There was ongoing work to investigate the suitability of PPE for all those using it, and testing to make sure it was suitable for - women, those who are Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), and those with different face shapes or facial hair.

Summing up, THE PRIME MINISTER said that the daily COVID-19 dashboard should differentiate between PHE and NHS data on daily deaths so that comparisons could be made to previous days' data, and that it should include data on the actual date of death. With care homes included in the data, the UK were at that time fourth in the world for the number of daily deaths, behind only Spain, Italy and Belgium. He said that it was likely that the UK would overtake Italy and possible Spain as well. The number of daily deaths had to be explained to the British people; even if the deaths per million figure was used the data was still horrific. He said that the Government needed to understand and communicate the factors that led to the virus having a greater impact on the UK, such as population density, the country's aging population, and comorbidity with other conditions such as obesity in the population. This had to be properly explained to the public, or the Government's approach would continue to be questioned. He said that a script should be provided for Ministers to explain this.

Continuing, THE PRIME MINISTER said that it would be useful to have a script for that day's press conference that set out what was actually happening with PPE in hospitals. He said that PPE would be critical to easing lockdown measures and reopening schools and public transport safely. Production of PPE needed to be increased.