
- Daily press briefing: 30 March
- Committees launch inquiries on COVID

Daily press briefing

The foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, was joined by Sir Patrick Vallance, Chief Scientific Officer and Prof Yvonne Doyle, director for health protection and medical director at Public Health England.

Key points include:

- An unprecedented number (hundreds of thousands) of British citizens abroad are trying to return home. A partnership between the government and airlines was announced to repatriate Britons stranded abroad.
- 134,946 individuals have been tested for the virus, of which 112,815 had tested negative and 22,131 positive. The UK death toll stands at 1,408 individuals.
- “As of this morning, 900 NHS staff had been tested” with the antigen test.
- Evidence indicates that “behaviour changes” for transport use had been successful. The evidence indicated a dramatic fall in underground, national rail, use of motor vehicles and bus use since the start of February.
- Cases with a positive test had increased since the middle of March but adherence to travel restrictions will lead to a drop off of cases overall.
- In recent days, admissions to hospital for COVID-19 have increased at a “constant not increasing amount” which may suggest we are already beginning to see an impact of the measures.
- The lag phase still means things will get worse before they get better.
- The UK’s trajectory is similar to France in terms of infection rates
- The Chief Scientific Officer could not promise that no ICU would breach capacity but reiterated that the key was keeping it below ICU capacity as a national measure.
- Confirmed that there is a lag in the data on deaths and ONS data tomorrow will also highlight deaths in the community as well.
- Prof Yvonne Doyle confirmed over 170 million PPE items had been delivered to the frontline but stated that further guidance on use of equipment would be forthcoming.
Committees launch inquiries on COVID-19

The International Trade Committee has launched an inquiry on the impact that coronavirus is having on international trade. It will look at the impact on global supply chains, access to essential goods and restrictions on the movement of people.

The Women and Equalities Committee has launched an inquiry into the impact that coronavirus is having on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee will convene remotely tomorrow (31 March) at 2pm in a private meeting so that MPs can review the support required by charities in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. This will be the first of several engagements.