

Message

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Sent: 07/05/2020 08:10:13
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Subject: 'The UK Government's Recovery Strategy'

I've now done more than flick through the document NR shared last night and I am concerned if the plan is to publish it on Sunday. On a fundamental level I don't see how this can be the recovery strategy without any debate or advice about the policy or choices contained within it and without it being shared with Government Ministers. It does not read like a plan or a strategy. It may well be a pretty accurate account of the difficulties of the situation we are in.

I have some basic qs about the policy here - the aims and principles don't really flow through to what we are saying we are doing; and this document commits to - for example - prizing health outcomes first (p 13 "the first consideration is the nation's health"). This has not been government policy up until now. If public health really came first our transport; economy; laws on drinking and smoking etc; would be different. We couldn't even agree on a sugar tax! And we don't really mean health outcomes vs economy. It's a false dichotomy at the best of times. The LSE analysis says that the lock down if it continues will take measurable life expectancy off poor children to protect the elderly/people with comorbidities incl those who have made lifestyle choices that make them more vulnerable. That's even worse if we're having to restrict the whole of society because we can't restrict transmission in care/healthcare settings. How is that prioritising health?

As it stands it is a gift to the Opposition. A critical version of the narrative set out is: even though tens of thousands of people have died we've succeeded in the first phase because there were NHS empty beds and ventilators no one needed (p4/5); we are aiming for normal but telling people that might never be possible; saying the only long term solution is a vaccine & treatment but that might never be possible; we haven't got a plan for winter; much of what we'd like to do to control the epidemic isn't possible; we're going to invest in worthless tech and novel tech (p14) that we reliant on to get out of the lockdown (p31); we're going to run a highly localised re-imposition of lock down but we don't know if/how we can actually do that (p 18&19); vulnerable people will be fine because we've appointed someone no one has heard of (p.25) we've got some vague ideas about how to make healthcare settings safer (p.27)... I could go on. But I wouldn't want to be the PM every Weds having bits of this read back to me.

Is this our actual plan? And why do we feel the need to share something this half baked with the public? It did not give me hope as promised on p5.

I would much prefer us to level with the public - I think we should be much more open and transparent - but this is quite a leap in that direction. And I'm sure people will be left wondering why we are doing so much with novel tech when other countries are just using stuff off the shelf (as far as I can see); and why we are so vague in comparison (based on a quick read of Ireland, Ge, Fr and Aus plans - I hope we have someone working on proper analysis of other countries published plans - and that this is being shared).

What is the plan with this doc? I am very happy to express these concerns directly to whoever and in whatever form but we can't just let this happen.

H