

SimonC-Caino-dom

Lee, Simon, You

26/08/2020

Whats the true reason for the turn on masks? We just slow catching up? WHO and Scotland bounced? Gavin fucked up? PM dithering?

12:21 pm

Case Simon

[Long message alert]

- 1) At every stage of masks we in the UK have been slow - because our medics/scientists don't like the evidence basis (and unlike others won't operate on a precautionary principle)
- 2) WHO new guidance came out at the weekend and was clearer on their position than before
- 3) Sturgeon jumped on WHO shift on Monday and began UK domestic debate about masks
- 4) polling and focus groups show parents still v nervous about safety of schools and support masks
- 5) weeks ago, we recommended to PM that we create permissive guidance around masks, because we could foresee it was going to be a drama in Sept. Gavin discussed at a Covid cttee mtg. Because at that stage it was Unions pressing for masks (no science back-up), Gavin was in "no surrender" mode and didn't want to give an inch to the unions, so said we should hold firm. PM gave him full support in this approach
- 6) I advocated shift yesterday because we cannot hold a line on anything, believed we would cave later, so wanted to shift early. Holding firm successfully would have meant Chris and Patrick publicly saying WHO/Scotland wrong on science, which they wouldn't do. It also would have meant PM holding a position under sustained attack, which he won't do. All of this would have further dented patent confidence in safety of schools, resulting in increasing our chances of succeeding in the key test of this period (getting schools open next week)

My conclusions:

- our scientists are slow and too purist
- because we have a massive trust deficit with this gov't at the moment, we are finding it impossible to hold debatable positions
- at every turn, PM backs bullshit "no surrender" ideas from Hancock/Williamson/Shapps and then totally regrets it later
- we actually executed yesterday as well as we could have done (largely thanks to Cookie and Alex B). If it weren't for shadow of exams fiasco, it wouldn't have been such a "u-turn" issue
- we really, really need a reshuffle and totally new approach to how this gov't works

12:39 pm

gotcha thanks all makes perfect (depressing) sense

12:40 pm

Case Simon

After this morning's FT driven performance by BJ, I am at end of my tether. He changes strategic direction every day (Monday we were all about fear of virus returning as per Europe, March etc - today we were in "let it rip" mode cos the UK is pathetic, needs a cold shower etc). He cannot lead and we cannot support him in leading with this approach. The team captain cannot change the call on the big plays every day. The team can't deliver anything under these circumstances. A weak team (as we have got - Hancock, Williamson, Dido, No 10/CO, Perm Secs) definitely cannot succeed in these circs. IT HAS TO STOP! Decide and set direction - deliver - explain. Gov't isn't actually that hard, but this guy is really making it impossible

12:47 pm

totally agree. Am already getting lots of despairing messages from people in mtngs with him. And hes carrering around on whatsapp as usual creating chaos and undermining everybody

12:48 pm

Me/Case/Cain 10/9 (NB Cabinet Secretary summary of PM view that day)

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