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Sent: Tue 23/06/2020 5:14:04 PM (UTC)
Subject: O/S: SAGE 23 June
[3a. 20.06.22 SPI-B Consensus on reintroduction of measures and their impact on rate of infection.docx](#)
[3b. 200622 SPI-M-O Statement sent to SAGE.pdf](#)

Headlines:

- Vallance noted the heavy trailing in the press of the measures the govt has now announced it will relax; said he and Whitty had made clear to the policy makers that this package was at the riskier end of the spectrum (with the potential to increase R above 1), and that they needed to be prepared to re-impose measures if necessary. Noted also that this package reduces the space for doing other things, like bringing schools back in September. If schools are to return, policymakers may have to re-impose restrictions in other places like retail.
- As measures eased, the risk of outbreaks was high, so there was a need for very active monitoring and data collection. Contact tracing and outbreak investigation are likely to be the best source of information on where and when transmission is occurring and within which groups. Desire also to bring together the various sources of behavioural info (including polling, mobility/Google places data, Comix survey etc) in a behavioural data sit-rep, including to help with interpretation of R.
- Suggestion that PHE are starting to collect field data for weekly sit rep on local outbreaks, by place and scale – with a particular focus now on workplaces, including spot checks on retail.
- Some concern expressed about latest trends in the data – the ONS survey was showing incidence as broadly flat (though sample size remains small so numbers need careful interpretation), without further declines; and some early signs from latest Comix survey (received overnight though not yet fully assessed) that R could be increasing and could be close to one in some areas, especially the NW.
- [As per the letter Philippa circulated yesterday] NHS have looked in to the serious concerns raised by the modellers about the hospital admissions data, and claim it is causing no more than a 5% error in that data stream. Though say they are actively undertaking field work/deep dives in some trusts to confirm.
- Looking ahead to potential future re-imposition of measures:
 - o SPI-B have considered the behavioural science – including that: the psychological approach to measures has changed since the start of lockdown (there was fear on the way in, some anger on the way out), that resistance to social distancing has increased in recent weeks, and the inequitable impacts of both the pandemic itself and the lockdown measures are important to consider.
 - o Spi-B note using on re-introduction or relaxation of individual measures should not be looked at in isolation; necessary to consider a package of interventions as a whole and what implications one measure may have for the choices in other areas. Use ready reckoners to explore the how the impact on transmission from one intervention can be weighed against other impacts – eg closing schools and closing retail may have equivalent impacts at a particular point, so may need to choose between them. Basic conclusion that not possible to re-open everything, and will be necessary to leave some ‘space’ for schools to re-open in September.

Detail

- SAGE commissioned by CabOff to give a view on which measures would have greatest impact and should be re-introduced first if there is such a need.
- SPI-M note that the focus going forwards should be on local control; a need to re-impose national measures would suggest a failure of local lockdown. Question also of the gap between a local response and a national one – what does a regional response look like?
- SPI-M clear that it is not possible to have everything back as it was before without re-igniting transmission; important that policy makers realise they can’t re-open everything over the summer as planned, and then just open schools in September. Need to be alive to the networks across the country that will be created (including over the holidays as people travel between regions, but also once pupils return to school). Vallance reiterates that he and Whitty have made clear in Cabinet

that if 'space' in R is used now, it won't be available to use elsewhere later on, eg in schools. Whitty suggests that while there is a strong political incentive to open schools in September, there is not a recognition that to re-open schools, that may mean needing to close other things.

Behavioural insights

- When deciding what measures to introduce, should be noted that changes in behaviour may precede policy announcement, eg in response to media coverage of local outbreaks – points to govt getting ahead through a pro-active sharing of information. Behavioural changes also tend not to be sudden, unless through legal enforcement.
- Noted that the psychological context now is different compared to the beginning of the pandemic; including given equity considerations and the greater impact of both the pandemic and the restrictions on some sections of society. Means there is likely to be greater differences of view about the appropriateness of restrictions and anger in some places; and points to need for mitigants to counter inequities.
- Suggested there has been an increase in resistance to, and compliance with, social distancing by some parts of society over recent weeks (which could make re-imposition difficult), and evidence that some people still lack a basic understanding of covid (eg 65% of population do not understand that symptoms are fever *or* cough, not just both).
- Recommended that govt develops a communication campaign that engages the community in 'co-creating' the relevant guidance. Should start that process now, so that if and when imposition comes, that is seen as legitimate by the public.

Modelling insights

- Static modelling undertaken, using ready reckoners, to estimates of R if changes across various dimensions - eg across activity activity happening outside the home (eg leisure, work); degree to which schools are open (eg 1/2 of primary, all primary, all school); how much contact tracing is diminishing the transmission of the virus; and the degree to which environments are 'covid secure' (though this is difficult to measure). See 'wave' charts in 3b attached.
- Ready reckoners allow package of measures to be considered as a whole, and different measures to be weighed against one another rather than trying to focus on re-introduction or relaxation of individual measures in isolation – eg at a point in time, closing schools may have a similar impact to closing retail, implying choice would need to be made between the two.
- Completely opening schools now could lead to R increasing to around 1. In order to open schools and allow a higher level of work and leisure contacts than is currently possible, you would need both an improvement in covid security and highly effective contact tracing.
- Given that contact tracing is less likely to be effective when incidence is high, you need a sustained period where R is below 1 to make it more likely that schools could open safely in September.
- Paper concludes that, in order to be able to re-open schools in September without causing a second wave, it is critical that some measures remain in place, so that the reproduction number remains below 1 at the start of September when all children return to school.
- Paper also considers role of local lockdowns, and concludes that national reintroduction of measures will only be necessary if transmission 'gets out of control over wide geographical areas or in many sectors simultaneously'. Emphasises the importance of having sufficient data to quickly detect outbreaks, and to reacting quickly to such outbreaks.
- Finally, concludes that in the face of needing to tighten measures in order to reduce incidence, more stringent measures (such as simultaneously closing schools and retail) will need to be in place for a shorter time than less stringent measures (such as only closing retail) to achieve the same impact.

Vanessa
