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Subject: RE: 6.30pm PM Meeting on NPI review

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[on a shortened copy list as I have given a fairly frank account below]

Thanks for pulling this together. Readout of the meeting:

- Patrick gave the SAGE update:
 - $R = 0.7-1.0$; 140k prevalence and 8-9k incidents (flat or down)
 - Then we went down a total rabbit hole discussing the 3 charts that VM sent (copied again below for ref).
 - Said that SAGE was in middle chat given only thought 20% confidence in test/track/trace
 - Clear that bubbles don't work alongside schools as they are an amplification.
- On these 3 charts as we probed it turns out that:
 - Patrick was not entirely clear what x axis meant. He said that 100% is return to normal life.
 - Cx challenged that if we open a shop and social distance properly – it is possible to go shopping without a contact (2m/15mins). Albeit clearly there will be imperfect so maybe you get some. Cx asked if this is taken into account. Patrick said the chart assumed social distancing but that doesn't make sense if 100% is normal life.
- Cx also challenged on why 20% confidence in TTT given Dido had presented to PM that we would have x contact tracers/y tests – as planned. Position was defended by saying that whilst we will have capacity it will unlikely be effective. Which is what is reflected in 20%.
- We went literally round in circles trying to interpret and challenge this chart.
- When we were about 70% through this slightly very circular discussion the Cx made a very impassioned presentation of his views, making some of the following points: i) what was modelled pre last review point was actually more ambitious than what we are considering ii) can always make the case that in 2 weeks we will know more iii) pointed to what international comparators have done iv) said that given current incidents and 2-week half rate we should hit 4k in two weeks which a few weeks ago was the target. But then concluded by saying that this is ultimately a political judgement and his view is that we should take everything in round alongside poverty/non-COVID deaths/education attainment gap.
- The PM did seem to pick up on international point but also said that ultimately he couldn't risk R rising/second wave.
- PM concluded the discussion by saying:
 - Need to clarify these SAGE charts and have a clear interpretation
 - But based on initial review the middle chart seems to give HMG room for some schools and some retail
 - However he pointed towards position that we can do all of both
- Simon Case agreed to take this away and would should two packages
 - Full package; pros/cons; R
 - Attenuated package; pros/cons; R

I very much expect this discussion to now be picked up at Bilat tomorrow.

Noone can say that HMT has not given gold standard economic advice to the PM/Cx and that the Cx has not eloquently and authentically put these points across. But once again he was a lone voice and it was a tricky meeting, where sense was they were trying to appease him. But as we all expected – whatever we do on 1st June will be likely watered down. Which could have impact on 4th July (if only as an indicator of risk appetite).

Will be interesting to see how this reads across to recovery discussion.

Thanks for all quick advice. In particular the Cx said the SAGE advice was excellent.

Thanks
Elizabeth

