

Message

From: Whitty, Chris [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=0B3EE62E0CA04E978730B14F9B416A1E-WHITTY, CHR]
Sent: 18/02/2022 02:00:03
To: Simon Ridley [simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science) [P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk]
CC: Scott Stevenson [scott.stevenson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; Tom Smith [tom.smith1@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
Subject: Re: Meeting tomorrow on covid plan

(My comment in para 1 refers to our level of resource for health protection going into the pandemic rather than now as on rereading it is ambiguous)

From: Whitty, Chris
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 10:28:52 PM
To: Simon Ridley <simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>; Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science) <P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk>
Cc: Scott Stevenson <scott.stevenson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>; Tom Smith <tom.smith1@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Meeting tomorrow on covid plan

Thanks Simon

One of the repeated learnings from every pandemic and major epidemic is people say 'why did they not learn from the last one, and dismantle the critical health protection infrastructure after only a few years and without sufficient understanding of the risks'. I am confident the Public Inquiry into COVID will find that also, whatever else it finds.

In this case we seem to be dismantling much of the critical infrastructure whilst the pandemic is still in full swing, with the overwhelming majority of medical and epidemiological opinion both in the UK and internationally expecting further surges and major variants before we have all the medical countermeasures in place. I am not convinced the slides fully reflect that this is the professional expectation.

Whilst I have been supportive of scaling back in several areas (most recently over 50 routine testing), there is a critical minimum below which it moves from a reasonable risk to take (but still a risk) into highly imprudent territory. The SR settlement, which was sold as temporary, is clearly in the 'highly imprudent' territory.

I think the current process is rushed, through no fault of your team, and the danger is Ministers do not fully understand the risk they are taking.

Chris

From: Simon Ridley <simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 February 2022 21:39
To: Whitty, Chris <Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk>; Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science) <P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk>
Cc: Scott Stevenson <scott.stevenson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>; Tom Smith <tom.smith1@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: Meeting tomorrow on covid plan

Dear Patrick and Chris,

I attach some draft slides for the meeting tomorrow. The meeting is going to be a difficult conversation given very different positions both on substance and on funding.

The aim of the slides is to present the uncertainty, the two ends of the spectrum and a point between on key choices based on the costing work done by UKHSA .

We have also sent the slides to HMT and Health colleagues.

I would be grateful for your views. I would also be very happy to discuss in the morning

best wishes

Simon



Simon Ridley
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