

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Begin forwarded message:

From: Dominic Cummings [Personal Data]
Subject: Re: corona
Date: 17 March 2020 at 18:15:49 CET
To: Timothy Gowers <wtg10@I&S>
Cc: Ben Warner <bwarner@no10.gov.uk>

Tim, we pushign system as hard as possible, think tmrw we'll announce schools closed friday -- with some sort of system for critical workers hacked together
pls keep to yourself but fyi

On Mon, 16 Mar 2020 at 13:53, Dominic Cummings [Personal Data] wrote:
Ben and I agree, cycles of off/on seem least bad option to stop nhs collapse and buy time to build capacity, research etc

On Mon, 16 Mar 2020 at 13:07, Timothy Gowers <wtg10@I&S> wrote:
Just to say that I've now finished the NPI draft and everything in it matches the conclusions I had come to myself (based on much less detailed evidence). In particular, I think cycles of suppression and relaxation are the least bad way to go, even if they go on for a year or two. And the best time to start a suppression policy is now (given that we can't turn the clock back). I realize that the measures themselves cost lives, but that should be compensated for by the fact that the sooner a suppression policy starts, the sooner it can be relaxed. (Whether that compensates only partially or whether in fact it more than compensates depends on the decay rate achieved by the social distancing measures, which I don't have the data to judge, though it should be out there.)

On 16 Mar 2020, at 12:36, Dominic Cummings [Personal Data] wrote:

please feel free to suggest language on schools you think sensible -- we are just desperate to avoid a load of NHS staff not coming to work cos their kids have no school in next 3 weeks
am sure we can navigate sensible path

On Mon, 16 Mar 2020 at 12:16, Timothy Gowers <wtg10@I&S> wrote:
I'm very glad to hear this. The only thing that worries me slightly is what you say about schools. I understand the point you are making, but would it not be a good idea to tell parents (such as me) for whom it is not a significant problem to keep their children at home to do so? That wouldn't catch everyone, but it would reduce the numbers without compromising the NHS etc. But perhaps that's what you're going to say anyway. Best wishes, Tim

PS Completely understood about confidentiality, and the last thing I'd want is any media attention anyway. Over the last few months I've had various approaches from journalists who have seen my name on your blog, and I have always refused their requests for interviews. And the only person who knows you've contacted me about coronavirus is my wife, who is very discreet too.

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On 16 Mar 2020, at 12:07, Dominic Cummings

Personal Data

> wrote:

Think overtaken by events.
We announcing new wave of measures in a few hours and telling
over 70s etc to prepare for 12 weeks isolation from weekend, get
ready now etc.
And general big advance on social distancing for all now, 14 day
quarantine for households etc.
London cd be near lockdown in a week.
Singapore has not closed schools and this is one thing we are
leaving for near last given disruption to NHS workers etc.
Ben -- please send Tim all stuff from SAGE -- Tim, Vallance is going
to make SAGE stuff public, please dont share things publicly yourself
outside this process or media chaos, ok?

On Sun, 15 Mar 2020 at 13:02, Timothy Gowers

<wtg10@

I&S

> wrote:

Dear Dominic,

If you could send me details about "our advice is starting this now
would kill more than it would save" I'd be very grateful, as I don't at
the moment understand how that can be the case. I can explain
my reasoning, but probably better to see the advice first, as the
reasoning would almost certainly change once I've seen it and
properly appreciated all the various factors.

As for reviewing stuff coming out of SAGE, I'm absolutely ready to
do that to the best of my ability, so do send on anything you'd like
looked at.

Best wishes,

Tim

On 15 Mar 2020, at 12:08, Dominic Cummings

Personal Data

> wrote:

Thanks tim, i basically agree.
We cannot do herd immunity in the crude way media
discussing without NHS collapse.
We must avoid NHS collapse at all costs.
We will have to move rapidly to extreme measures
to buy time to increase NHS capacity, work on drugs
etc.
The only question is how fast to move through levels
of extreme action.
Proper social isolation for vulnerable groups will kill
many of them -- our advice is starting this now would
kill more than it would save -- but of course we must
review constantly and try to time for when it will save
more of these groups than it kills.
To complicate further London may be 4 weeks
ahead of northern Scotland.
I am copying this to a few people working for me --
they are all scientists by background, physics/data
science, epidemiology... Ben is no10, Marc is
helping NHS with data, tech, dashboards etc but he
is also talking to Vallance/Whitty re the
science/policy.
It would be great if you could review stuff coming out
of SAGE etc for us. Ben will keep you in the loop
and you can feed back to him.

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You cd Skype etc.
There are clearly many great people in
SAGE/government science network but the more of
the smartest people we can get looking the better...
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On Sat, 14 Mar 2020 at 12:16, Timothy Gowers
<wtg10@I&S> wrote:

Dear Dominic,

I'm ready to help if I can, but I'm ahead of the
curve as far as social-distancing measures are
concerned, so would very much prefer the end-of-
phone option to the appearing-in-person option. (I
think and hope that this will soon be standard
anyway.)

Incidentally, while my initial reaction was to think
that the current UK policy was sensible, I have
changed my mind, and I now think that we should
move urgently to extreme containment measures.
Because of the urgency, and because I think I can
express myself better in writing than in
conversation, I have dashed off a few pages
setting out why I have come to this conclusion. I
am happy for you to share them with anyone you
want. The arguments are likely to be familiar, but
perhaps it helps to have them set out the way I
have done it. If they are wrong (which is possible),
I would like to know what I'm missing. Also, if there
are parts of the document that you find unclear,
please let me know and I'll rewrite them.

When you say that we have two weeks to make
decisions, my own view (as I explain in the
document) is that some major decisions should be
made straight away — a two-week delay just
multiplies the adverse consequences by a factor
of 10-ish.

Because I've written the attached file quickly, I
may at some point send an updated/improved
version.

Best wishes,

Tim

> On 14 Mar 2020, at 01:22, Dominic Cummings
<Personal Data> wrote:

> tim
> sorry not been in touch but since i saw you ive
been swamped by corona.
> would you help us?
> the problem is extreme and there are some
extreme government problems not suitable for
discussion on email.

> i dont have any specific role for you but if you could just come to london for 90-120 mins twice per week or be on the end of a phone this would be v useful.

> e.g attending SAGE mtngs and listening to the modelling and providing challenge.

> we urgently need people like you to help.

> we have maybe 2 weeks to make decisions that could make difference between thousands dying/not.

> we need to integrate skills like yours with great policy people, operational people etc plus teams to smash barriers to effective action.

> if you cd spend 5-10 hours per week for ~16 weeks then we wd be extremely grateful and you cd save lots of lives

> sorry for haste of this eemail, im trusting you not to forward and risk mayhem with media

> dom

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