

Message

From: Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science) [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=34A3DB026A094839B977362D13396897-VALLANCE, P]
Sent: 25/10/2021 12:07:06
To: Simon Ridley [simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
CC: Chris Whitty (Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk) [Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk]; Simon Case [SCase@no10.gov.uk]; Dan Rosenfield [DRosenfield@no10.gov.uk]; Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GO-Science) [gcsa@go-science.gov.uk]
Subject: current advice

Dear Simon

We thought it worthwhile to lay out our current advice following the meeting this morning:

1. As the main ministerial objective is to prevent the NHS from becoming overwhelmed, it is crucial that the NHS provides an up to date assessment of the excess pressure it is under and what would lead to it heading towards becoming overwhelmed. Clearly that is for the NHS to provide, not for us.
2. This includes covid direct pressure which can be reduced by NPIs, as well as indirect pressure from covid (backlogs, late presentations) which contribute to this year being especially difficult over and above normal winter pressures. The effect on the NHS is the combination of all of these, although NPIs are only likely to have a significant effect on direct covid cases and other respiratory infections. It is the combination that is leading to pressures, and is likely to continue to over the winter.
3. All the reports indicate that the pressures from respiratory infections (covid and non covid) are going to get worse, as they do every winter and we should be prepared for this. Winter also increases other (non-infectious) pressures on emergency services. Covid currently is still increasing, even though the rate of increase may have declined a little over the past days, and is at a high level even if it now flattens. We are not yet at the point of the year the flu season properly takes off in a typical year, as the data this morning show, but this may be soon.
4. Ensuring good covid immune coverage is essential and therefore the vaccination programme rollout remains our key defence and speed of reaching eligible cohorts is of the essence.
5. The measures in plan B – masks, certification and some form of work from home if you can messaging – would make a difference to covid and probably other respiratory infections and in the presence of good immunity would likely be enough to take the edge off things and allow numbers of infections to decrease. The earlier action is taken, the less severe the measures need to be.

No doubt all of this is obvious but we thought it worthwhile to lay it out again clearly.

Chris and Patrick