Message

From: NR
on behalf of First Minister [firstminister@gov.scot]
Sent: 14/03/2020 12:43:22
To: First Minister [firstminister@gov.scot]; Smith G (Gregor) [Gregor.Smith@gov.scot]; Chief Medical Officer [CMO@gov.scot]; Calderwood C(Catherine) [Catherine.Calderwood@gov.scot]; NR NR Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport [CabSecHS@gov.scot]
Subject: SAGE 15 - 13 March 2020 - Meeting with FM

All,

Please note the points below, FM wishes to discuss on the call at 2pm.

1. Aggressive containment approach that many other countries appear to be taking versus the UK manage it/flatten curve approach

FM understands the theory and the objective of the UK approach but still feels uneasy that it seems out of step not just with other countries but with WHO.

2. Notwithstanding above, the distinction between approaches feels like it is becoming more and more academic. The carefully modelled SAGE approach is being rapidly overtaken by public and organizational behaviour - which surely must change all the assumptions it's based on. If it's all based on telling the public what to do at the right time - and not too early - where does it leave the model if the public are already behaving differently. Are we at risk of falling dangerously between the two different approaches and getting the full benefit of neither? And also damaging public trust along the way - so that by the time we might be giving certain messages in a couple of weeks, no one is listening. Therefore if public is already so far ahead of SAGE approach that it's rendering it less effective, aren't we better getting fully behind a more aggressive approach?

3. Doesn't the above mean we should at least be moving to the elderly/vulnerable groups isolation/distancing advice sooner rather than later?

4. Should we be giving more general population advice now on social distancing for people who don't have symptoms and are not in priority groups - almost as a supplement to hand washing advice. Anecdotally - from FM's surgeries in last couple of days - that's what people want to know. Should they generally be reducing contact a bit, maybe staying away from groups of people eg community council meetings, as much as poss. Again, in absence of advice, people will make their own decisions.

Thanks

NR
DPS/First Minister of Scotland

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