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Minutes

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Minutes of a Meeting of the
Covid-19 -Strategy Ministerial Group
held at Number 10, Downing Street on

Thursday 26th March 2020
At 0915 AM

P R E S E N T

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
First Secretary of State and Foreign Secretary

The Rt Hon Michael Gove
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

The Rt Hon Matthew Hancock
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps
Secretary of State for Transport

Lord Agnew
Minister for Her Majesty's Treasury

ALSO PRESENT

Sir Patrick John Thompson Vallance FRS FMedSci FRCP
Chief Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister

Professor Chris Whitty CB FRCP FFPH FMedSci
Chief Medical Officer for England and the UK

TBC
Public Health England

Simon Stevens
Chief Executive Officer of the NHS

Chris Wormald

Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Care

Emily Lawson
Chief Commercial Officer, NHS

Alex Aiken
Executive Director for Government Communications

Dominic Cummings
Assistant to the Prime Minister

Tom Shinner
Special Advisor to the Prime Minister

Lee Cain
Director of Communications, No 10

Stuart Glassborow
Deputy Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

NR

Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

Sir Mark Sedwill
Cabinet Secretary

Secretariat
J Glover
J Black
K Hammond

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Covid-19 Dashboard

The PRIME MINISTER opened discussion with comments on the future of testing, including prospects of antigen and antibody testing. He explained that the primary focus of the meeting would be the newly developed Covid-19 dashboard and invited Tom Shinner to introduce it.

TOM SHINNER thanked the CCS team who developed the dashboard. He highlighted that attendees at that morning's meeting were the first group of ministers to view it. He provided an overview of what the dashboard intended to cover and how it should be used - demonstrating how users could find headline numbers, timestamps, information on the data limitations and more 'experimental data'. Continuing, he flagged that HMT, the NHS and ONS were key organisations feeding in live data.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- a. DHSC could provide further data on ventilators and NHS capacity.
- b. Figures collated over a longer period of time could prove more meaningful and remove some 'quirks' from the data. There were risks to over-interpreting numbers going down although the dashboard represented great progress.
- c. The dashboard could now show the first signs of interventions making a difference. For example, the initial impact of guidance on hand washing and social distancing which came out three weeks prior, would now be reflected in the figures.
- d. The international comparators chart was useful as it showed that France and Italy were in critical positions. The chart should be expanded to include the US.
- e. It would be important to note what happened in China after it started to ease lockdown restrictions.
- f. The UK's approach to relieving lockdown would need to be cautious and was still in the considerable distance. There was a question around why Italy seemed unable to flatten their curve the way France had given their aggressive lockdown. It would not bode well if the UK's lockdown was ineffective.

The PRIME MINISTER asked for the following data to be added: headline data on supply and demand in the NHS, intensive care capacity (including the number of unused empty beds), ventilator capacity; PPE supply; the roll-out of testing (including projections) and supply of necessary components (e.g. swabs and reagents). He commented that the fact the dashboard largely reflected figures from England and Wales was a limitation and requested that Tom Shinner and the CCS team continue pushing for more data on Scotland and Northern Ireland. He praised the dashboard overall.