

[06/09/2020, 11:17:18] Imran Shafi: Looks good. Would maybe explicitly say it's spread across the country not just the usual geographic areas.

[06/09/2020, 11:17:29] Simon C: Good point

[06/09/2020, 11:18:29] Imran Shafi: Also I need to get onto whatsapp with him myself so you don't have to do this all the time! We should engineer a natural way to do so. Maybe a three way group w me/you/him or something

[06/09/2020, 11:21:18] Simon C: I agree!

[08/09/2020, 17:00:15] Imran Shafi: Should PM say he's going to reflect on it overnight and then we just tell them his answer tomorrow

[09/09/2020, 15:28:03] Simon C: I have just seen and have serious concerns about the exemptions list. Also I haven't seen the PM's speech - though I presume it will be excellent

[09/09/2020, 15:28:09] Simon C: From Matt H

[09/09/2020, 15:29:01] Imran Shafi: Is he passing on concerns to taskforce?

[09/09/2020, 15:29:20] Imran Shafi: I'll ask them to reach out to dhsc

[09/09/2020, 15:29:27] Simon C: Th a is

[09/09/2020, 15:29:29] Simon C: Thanks

[13/09/2020, 12:10:42] Simon C: I think you need to call the PM directly about this shooting issue. He is bouncing around on WhatsApp - probably best if you just talk him through it

[13/09/2020, 12:26:16] Imran Shafi: Martin called and is suggesting a quick group call w PM on it. We all think allowing hunting is mad but PM seems keen. Would be good to have Lee there to persuade on the optics. If that doesn't work logically will call direct

[13/09/2020, 12:30:34] Simon C: Okay - this is all a bit of a farce, to be honest. PM doing this all on WhatsApp with a bunch of people who don't have any detail. Am not sure why we don't just operate a normal private office system - which involves the lead PS engaging the boss on an issue on behalf of everyone.

[13/09/2020, 12:59:14] Simon C: Can I just be clear about what you are want to see, PM - I assume it is shooting and hunting fine outside in groups of six or less? All of the associated social activity that goes alongside has to be subject to exactly the same as everything else (ie the rule of six)?

[13/09/2020, 12:59:33] Simon C: That was my qn to PM. This is his answer:

[13/09/2020, 12:59:48] Simon C: Simon yes on shooting and hunting

[13/09/2020, 13:00:48] Imran Shafi: But anything and everything is fine in groups of six or less - I thought his point was the activity itself is ok w more than 6

[13/09/2020, 13:01:05] Simon C: Nope

[13/09/2020, 13:01:05] Imran Shafi: Doing a call at 115

[13/09/2020, 13:01:46] Simon C: I can't join - but doesn't need me

[13/09/2020, 13:01:54] Imran Shafi: I'll cover

[13/09/2020, 13:02:01] Imran Shafi: Simon Ridley joining too on the details

[13/09/2020, 13:02:29] Simon C: You may not need the call, given that his instruction is clear

[13/09/2020, 13:03:29] Simon C: Or at least just tell him how you are going to deliver what he wants

[13/09/2020, 13:05:51] Imran Shafi: Ok cool - will play back to him this steer and then make sure he's clocked this means we make no changes to exemptions and this has risk of backbench pressure as they are explicitly asking for more than 6. So long as he's understood that then this is quite simple process wise

[11/11/2020, 17:08:39] Imran Shafi: Heads up - Dom v unconvinced we have a joined up strategy across testing, tiers etc. I think he's right (I flagged w [REDACTED] yday -she may have mentioned to you).

Henry and I are going to whiteboard with both testing and strategy teams together tonight how the whole thing fits together - hopefully will help w the integration across teams. And we'll do another session w Dom before it goes anywhere near Pm.

Wonder if it's also worth being clear James sets the requirement on testing as integrated w strategy, w Shona then delivering against that requirement so there's clarity - but not sure what convos you've had w them both...

[11/11/2020, 17:13:52] Simon C: I agree with you and Dom. It is not connected. Your last para is key. James must integrate this all. Want me to talk to him?

[11/11/2020, 17:22:26] Imran Shafi: That'd be helpful, thanks. I think he might have been trying not to step on Shona's toes but important that it's not a separate fiefdom

[15/11/2020, 13:17:57] Imran Shafi: Hey, hope you're holding up. Trying to think through what this all means for COVID world in the spirit of making sure we are the rock that helps the PM through this. Do you agree with the below?

1. We have to bring in the core COVID O Ministers a lot more, starting with our planned session with them Tuesday. It'll help protect him, and also means he will continue to hear the "pro-health" political argument that otherwise D/L would have provided and keep it balanced
2. Can also do small gestures eg let Matt come to big meetings in person
3. Probably need to have more of cabinet involved eg Patel/Dowden/Sharma ahead of signing off big decisions - again to protect
4. Cookie remains lead political advisor on COVID w Ed - and we may need to be clearer in our civil service recommendations to support. Should do more "challenge sessions" etc with Munira, Nikki etc and redouble efforts to make it feel like a whole-House effort - but (I think - to test, and could be wrong) they are not expected to be in the room when major "small group" decisions are being taken - ultimately something the PM will need to guide on re who does what
5. Some more junior political advisors in No 10 will use this as a chance to try to persuade him again to do a national mass test in Dec. We hold very firm against that

Anyway appreciate this will all be quite fluid and may be totally wrong in a couple days time but good to get any reactions. Will talk through in high level w TF too.

[15/11/2020, 13:20:44] Simon C: These look like the right sorts of things. Let's discuss with Ed tomorrow how to proceed. I am not sure if Dom really will still dial into stuff, incl mass testing, so we will need to check with PM tomorrow

[15/11/2020, 13:22:21] Imran Shafi: Sounds good

[17/11/2020, 18:29:29] Imran Shafi: No pushback at all on hospitality ...

[18/11/2020, 15:19:21] Simon C: Can we sort a clear written instruction to Matt/Shona/Dido from PM about what he wants, by when, on mass testing? They cannot cope with constantly shifting direction.

[18/11/2020, 15:19:43] Simon C: You and Will W might be able to sort?