

Message

From: Rob Harrison [rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
on behalf of Rob Harrison <rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> [rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
Sent: 18/11/2021 11:23:59
To: [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk
CC: Elkie Symes [elkie.symes1@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; [NR] [NR]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk; [NR] [NR]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk; Kathy Hall [kathy.hall@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; [NR] [NR]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk; Sapana Agrawal [sapana.agrawal@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; Ben Cropper [ben.cropper@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; Susan Mangles [susan.mangles@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]; Simon Ridley [Simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
Subject: Re: [Actions & Readout] CabSec Discussion on Winter Strategy - Weds 12:15

[Name Redacted]

A further update.

HMT have refused to share the analysis supporting the figures below and now backed away from quantifying the effect. They have instead shared a [note](#) which draws qualitative conclusions (of plan B measures, WFH is likely to have the highest economic impact, falling disproportionately on consumer-facing sectors in city centres) and emphasises the uncertainty, but does not include any estimates, even approximate ones. This is frustrating but not a totally unreasonable analytical position, given the high levels of uncertainty over (a) the effect on behaviour of reimposition of a requirement to WFH, and (b) the impact of those behavioural changes on economic activity (net and distributional). SAGE/SPI-M have also said that they are unable to quantify the effect on transmission, and provided full workings.

The remainder of [our analysis](#) stands, but it no longer includes quantified estimates. We have not yet integrated HMT's latest comments (which only arrived last night) but will now do so.

This means that, at present, there are no figures which either we, or HMT, are able to stand behind. £11-18bn should be struck from the record. We are however progressing the work with ONS on the relationship between mobility and spending, and we will keep you updated on developments.

Regards, Rob

On Wed, 10 Nov 2021 at 18:22, Rob Harrison <rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:

[NR]

We are still pursuing this with HMT. They have gone up to PUS's office for permission to share the underlying work, and if we don't get it tomorrow I we might need to ask you to give it a nudge. We're also pursuing mobility-spending link with ONS. We will have more to say on this, and sorry it is taking longer than hoped.

Rob

On Wed, 10 Nov 2021 at 16:13, [NR] [NR]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk wrote:
Rob, Kathy, Sapana,

Thanks for the above on economic costs. Just to chase gently on other strands among the work going into PM prep:

- On Action [3], **Rob:** To confirm, is it your view then that 11-18bn is HMG best estimate of per annum cost for WFH restrictions (i.e. nothing more to be gained/modified from CTF analysis independent

of/scrutinising HMT, nothing further from supply chains work); and any more mention of £18bn as a 'cost of Plan B' should be pro-rated for a reasonable duration.

- On [2], **Kathy**: did you have any further thoughts on how we can approach the CQC question with DH or CQC directly?
- On [5], **Sapana**: did you get any clarity on how large surge capacity really is? Appreciate not a straightforward answer!

NR

		<div>NR</div> <div>Assistant Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary - Covid-19, MOJ, & Analysis Cabinet Office</div> <div>E: <div>NR</div> @cabinetoffice.gov.uk</div> <div>M: <div>NR</div> T: <div>NR</div></div>
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On Mon, 8 Nov 2021 at 07:41, Rob Harrison <rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Sapana,

A quick update on this, for today's deadline. More to follow later in the week.

We have pulled together relevant extracts from our Plan B spotlights into a note - working draft [here](#). Note especially the caveats up front.

NB the presentation of the HMT estimates in [Politico](#), picked up by the rest of the press, is factually inaccurate. HMT did not say that implementing Plan B until March 2022 would cost £18bn. They estimated that the cost of mandating working from home might be £11-18bn *per annum* in lost consumption. It is highly unlikely that Plan B measures would be in place for anything like this long.

We are doing two things:

- a) Getting hold of the HMT analysis so that we can set out the workings and assumptions transparently, and test them.
- b) Working with ONS to see if we can develop a 'ready reckoner' to estimate the impact on total spending of an X% reduction in mobility.

As you know, DGA (including many of the people involved in this work) are providing the analytical support to the supply chains unit, and we are not aware of any new data which will help us with this question.

We'll provide a further update, and a finalised copy of the note, later this week.

Regards, Rob

We do not think that any of the data we have gathered on supply chains will help with this problem, but

On Thu, 4 Nov 2021 at 18:29, Sapana Agrawal <sapana.agrawal@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Brilliant thanks Rob.

On Thu, 4 Nov 2021 at 17:38, Rob Harrison <rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
I spoke to

NR

 Will email tomorrow.

On Thu, 4 Nov 2021 at 16:56, Sapana Agrawal <sapana.agrawal@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Thanks both - appreciate the challenges on this. The view of the room was that it would be helpful to have an independent (from HMT) assessment and that from Cab Sec's conversations with [NR] that there may be a chance to go further given new data he has.

[@Ben Cropper](#) could I loop you in with Cab Sec's office to hear more about the [NR] conversations and if you think it isn't possible to do something then I think it's fair to say so?

On Thu, 4 Nov 2021 at 16:50, Ben Cropper <ben.cropper@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Yes - this is something that we have been working on with HMT and it has proved difficult for analytical and institutional reasons. We should share what has been done already (although noting that some of it is currently the subject of a leak inquiry so is quite sensitive).



Ben Cropper (He/Him)
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[I&S]
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On Thu, 4 Nov 2021 at 16:44, Rob Harrison <rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Sapana,

I'm pretty sceptical about this. Uncertainties over effects of plan B remain high. HMT have already done an estimate of the economic costs of WFH (the most economically costly element of Plan B); we cited this in our spotlight and I don't think we are likely to be able to do anything better. (Do we think anyone in the meeting was aware of it?) I don't see any obvious connection to supply chains but might be missing something. With all the other pressures on the SC analytical effort, the bar for anything new and speculative will be high.

Happy to discuss.

Rob

On Thu, 4 Nov 2021 at 16:15, Sapana Agrawal <sapana.agrawal@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Rob [NR] in the cab sec meeting yesterday it was discussed that it would be useful for TF to work with the supply chains cell to see what new data they have to create a CO view on the economic impact of Plan B. Is this something you agree with and could help take forward?

Best wishes,
Sapana

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [NR] <[NR]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>

Date: Wed, 3 Nov 2021 at 20:06

Subject: [Actions & Readout] CabSec Discussion on Winter Strategy - Weds 12:15

To: <chris.whitty@dhsc.gov.uk>, Dan Rosenfield <DRosenfield@no10.gov.uk>, Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GO-Science) <GCSA@go-science.gov.uk>, Henry Cook <HCook@no10.gov.uk>,

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Hi all,

Many thanks for joining what was a good discussion earlier today. Ollie has progressed with the major next steps on PM meetings—into which these should feed—but for completeness some additional actions and a readout below.

Actions

1. **All** to ensure discussions on health objectives ‘join the dots’ where there are competing pressures and trade-offs to be made. [Ongoing]
2. **Kathy & NR** to explore the role of CQC (and other regulatory/standards bodies) this winter, to identify whether the burden of inspections on Trusts could be reduced, including through better remote use of the data they collect. It would be good to have a short update in the next week on how this could be approached with DH SOS and Peter Wyman. [10 Nov]
3. **Simon** to work with CO colleagues to determine what additional insight on the economic cost of Plan B may be provided through the work of the Supply Chains cell. A short line assessing whether we are likely to be able to get closer to an independent costing (not necessarily with the calculation itself) would be great ahead of PM meeting next week [8 Nov].
4. **Kathy**, working with others as necessary, to provide an update on plans to better incorporate Step Down care (and increase use of ‘discharge to assess’) in the NHS Winter Plan; and target impactful small sums to support the social care sector in easing delayed discharges. This will feed as a priority into the PM meetings, but grateful if I can have a short update on how this is progressing by end next week, with any findings from the MOD capacity audit. [12 Nov]
5. **Sapana** to establish the potential size of surge and ‘super surge’ capacity, to inform future discussions where it is raised. [8 Nov]

Key points from discussion

- The NHS faces pressure each winter, but a mix of increased demand, Covid-related workforce pressures, and infection control measures mean performance is already low, while ambitions for elective activity remain high. Delayed electives from previous waves are more urgent now than they would otherwise be, where an individual’s condition has worsened.
- Some workforce issues—such as in domiciliary care and Ambulance driving—are closely tied to wider workforce competition in the economy, but reduced Covid prevalence would reduce the number of NHS Trust staff absent for sickness or childcare needs, and present more space to ease IPC measures that reduce capacity.
- In addition to the yearly NHS Winter Plan, Jenny Harries is conducting a review of IPC measures, and MOD are conducting a bed audit to identify where capacity has dropped (to report w/c 8 Nov). To go further, more work can be done on delayed discharges and relatively small sums of money targeted at social care capacity may have an outsized impact on the system.

- Provider executives already make operational decisions daily on emergency and elective patients, and while incentives are strong to bring up levels of elective activity, day-to-day patient safety is their priority.
- The role of the CQC, particularly in low-performing trusts, is valued, but physical inspections can be disruptive (and have been scaled-back on occasions in the past). There is a correlation between trusts receiving low CQC scores and those with poor infection control, but CQC reporting may not itself precipitate improvement. The National Recovery Service is working with 8 at-risk systems, and other organisations aim to share best practice.
- There may be long-term structural issues in the architecture of hospital buildings and the approach to seasonal funding and delivery of services that would require significant work to address. Where e.g. H2 funding does not roll over, there may be cross incentives for prioritisation.
- Plan B would have modest effects, mostly impacting flow within hospitals rather than 'at the front door' (as Covid patients don't routinely come through A&E). As above, if it brought down prevalence significantly it would also ease workforce and capacity issues beyond the immediate occupancy count, which is a minority of overall inpatients. Following the extensive work on supply chains this summer we may be in a better position to assess the economic impact of Plan B as prepared.
- The group also discussed how best to bring these issues to the PM and his ministers in coming weeks.

Do feel free to correct where there are any misrepresentations in the above.

NR

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On Tue, 2 Nov 2021 at 18:42, NR <NR@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> wrote:
Dear all,

With thanks to Kathy and team for their work pulling together, and all those who have commented, please find attached the paper for tomorrow's meeting with the Cabinet Secretary on winter strategy.

The meeting will examine overall pressure on the NHS, and seek to answer the question of what we are doing, and could do, to mitigate pressure with non-covid levers on emergency/planned work, against the choice to implement Plan B. We expect to cover the current level of pressure, discuss the strategic options available, and touch on the approach to bringing an update and decisions where appropriate to the Prime Minister.

I understand there have been some issues with invitations coming through on No10 system; to confirm, the meeting will be held in Cab Sec's office between **12:15 and 1pm tomorrow (Wednesday)**. I will be in touch if there are any changes.

Do call if you need any more info.

NR

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