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**From:** Rob Harrison [rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 12/01/2022 20:57:55  
**To:** Tinsley, Louise - HMT [louise.tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk]  
**CC:** Joseph, Kate - HMT [kate.joseph@hmtreasury.gov.uk]; [NR] - HMT  
[NR]@hmtreasury.gov.uk; [NR] - HMT [NR]@hmtreasury.gov.uk; Lee Morrison, Jo -  
HMT [jo.leemorrison@hmtreasury.gov.uk]; York-Smith, Dan - HMT [dan.york-smith@hmtreasury.gov.uk];  
Lombardelli, Clare - HMT [clare.lombardelli@hmtreasury.gov.uk]; [NR] - HMT  
[NR]@hmtreasury.gov.uk; Ben Cropper [ben.cropper@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]  
**Subject:** Re: Self isolation evidence pack: comments by 1000

Louise,  
I'm sorry I didn't come back to you on this yesterday.  
As time was short, I did as you asked and referred to your work as HMG internal analysis.  
Let's come back to the general principle once we are through this.  
Regards, Rob

PS Please could you share the model/spreadsheet that goes with your note?

On Tue, 11 Jan 2022 at 11:43, Tinsley, Louise - HMT <[Louise.Tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:Louise.Tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk)> wrote:

Hi Rob

Thanks for the call. Appreciate your suggestions about steps that could be taken to protect the document /minimise circulation etc, but we remain of the view that input from us should be presented as 'HMG internal analysis'. I'm happy for any follow-up questions to be sent our way - but in this (or any other) document, this should be presented as government, rather than HMT, analysis.

Thanks  
Louise

**Louise Tinsley** | Deputy Director | Economic Risks | Economics Group  
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**From:** Rob Harrison <[rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 11 January 2022 10:40  
**To:** Tinsley, Louise - HMT <[Louise.Tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:Louise.Tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk)>  
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**Subject:** Re: Self isolation evidence pack: comments by 1000

Will call at 1100?

On Tue, 11 Jan 2022 at 10:39, Tinsley, Louise - HMT <[Louise.Tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:Louise.Tinsley@hmtreasury.gov.uk)> wrote:

Rob - I'm happy to discuss – do you want to give me a call when free on: [I&S].

Louise

**Louise Tinsley** | Deputy Director | Economic Risks | Economics Group

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**From:** Rob Harrison <[rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** 11 January 2022 10:34

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**Subject:** Re: Self isolation evidence pack: comments by 1000

[Name Redacted]

We'll get to the comments, but can I please test describing this as HMT analysis. That is what it is, and it is disingenuous not to reference the source. Every other piece of supporting analysis is referenced in this way. Happy to discuss.

Rob

On Tue, 11 Jan 2022 at 10:26, [NR] - HMT <[NR]@hmtreasury.gov.uk> wrote:

Morning Rob,

Thanks for sharing the evidence pack with us. Some general comments from HMT are set out below while specific comments are included throughout the attached slide pack.

On the pack:

- References to ‘HMT analysis’ have reappeared in this slide pack – per our previous comments, this should only be referenced as ‘internal analysis’. We have flagged these references in the pack.
- We think there needs to be more discussion of behavioural effects - they feel like a key factor missing from the pack.
- Please can we be clear and consistent on how we are talking about the number of isolation days. I.e., *minimum X days isolation*.
- Given absence of some discussion, particularly on sectoral impacts, we would prefer this was presented alongside the longer evidence paper.
- Updated analysis: we have analysed the impact of a 1-day reduction on workforce absences and GDP. Please find below summary bullets (in the same format as those within the pack):
  - *Internal analysis, using adjusted LSHTM epidemiological scenarios, suggests that reducing the isolation period by one day would reduce the peak number of absences by 50k – 125k to 475k – 975k. This represents 1.5-3.0% of the workforce [medium confidence].*
  - *Assuming average productivity across all absent workers, the direct impact with the current isolation policy could be between 1.3% and 2.6% of January GDP level. A reduction of the minimum period of isolation by one day could therefore directly reduce this impact by c.0.1ppt – 0.2ppt to between 1.2% and 2.4% of January GDP.*
- On the confidence table: we believe the workforce absence estimates should have a medium confidence – suggest the below edits to both the economic impact and overall impact ratings.

All the best,

Name Redacted

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Economic impact

We have low/medium confidence in estimates of economic impact and workforce absences. These are based on internal analysis, and dependent on a number of assumptions, including the trajectory of the epidemic. The analysis only covers the impact on workforce absences and cannot be used to give an overall impact of this policy on the economy. does not account for any increase in infectious release from reducing the isolation period, the age profile of infections or those who remain positive or unwell post-isolation period. They also do not account for those who can work from home if well enough and those who may need to continue to be absent to care for others

	in the household who continue to test positive (e.g. parents).
Overall impact	We have low confidence in judgements on the net impact of changes to isolation policy. Any relaxation would almost certainly increase transmission, <b>which could put further pressure on the NHS</b> , but we have been unable to estimate the number of additional infections as a proportion of total infections in the population, or their net effect on numbers isolating. It is reasonable to assume that a policy that leads to any reduction in the overall number of days of isolation for the population will lead to reduced workforce absences and greater increased out-of-home economic activity, but we cannot estimate to what extent this may be offset by subsequent infections and isolations. Impact will vary locally and by sector and region, and the effect on some critical workforces may be higher than a whole-population analysis suggest

**NR** (he/him) | **Covid-19 Response – Economics and Science** | Strategy, Planning and Budget Group  
 HM Treasury, 2/22, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

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**Subject:** Re: Self isolation evidence pack: comments by 1000

If I could make one additional request, we would also welcome comments on this confidence statement, which we will include on an additional slide.

Modelling	We have high confidence in UKHSA’s modelling, details of which have been published and cited by others including USG and WHO. However, it assumes 100% compliance, which is unlikely, so overall we have medium confidence in conclusions based on it.	<b>Medium</b>
Economic impact	We have low/medium confidence in estimates of economic impact and workforce absence. These are based on internal analysis, and dependent on a number of assumptions. The analysis does not account for any increase in infectious release from reducing the isolation period, the age profile of infections or those who remain positive or unwell post-isolation period. They also do not account for those who can work from home if well enough and those who may need to continue to be absent to care for others in the household who	<b>Low/Medium</b>

	continue to test positive (e.g. parents).	
Overall impact	We have low confidence in judgements on the net impact of changes to isolation policy. Any relaxation would almost certainly increase transmission, but we have been unable to estimate the number of additional infections as a proportion of total infections in the population, or their net effect on numbers isolating. It is reasonable to assume that a policy that leads to any reduction in the overall number of days of isolation for the population will lead to reduced workforce absences and greater increased out-of-home economic activity, but we cannot estimate to what extent this may be offset by subsequent infections and isolations. Impact will vary locally and by sector and region, and the effect on some critical workforces may be higher than a whole-population analysis suggests.	Low

On Mon, 10 Jan 2022 at 22:56, Rob Harrison <[rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:rob.harrison@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)> wrote:

All,

Thank you again for your help and and tolerance over the past few days. I apologise for another late night message with an unreasonable deadline, but we would be grateful for comments by 1000 so that we can address them before we finalise and circulate for Covid-O.

The evidence pack had become enormous, so the attached slides attempt to summarise the points which are critical to the decision - and where we have evidence. Where we do not, we have tried to make this clear. Inevitably, we have had to take out more than we have left in. We have tried to reflect previous comments but if we have missed any, I apologise.

We would particularly welcome comments on the following points:

- Is anything essential missing?

- UKHSA/HMT: have we accurately represented your analysis?

- HMT: The figures in slide 9 on workforce absences are based on a reduction of two days (7 to 5, i.e. 6 full days of isolation to 4). Are you able to provide the comparative figures for a reduction of one day?

Regards, Rob

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