

Review the data

I reproduce below my piece from April 11th. I am pleased others now have come to see that bad data and wrong forecasts are a problem for the government's scientific advisers:

Review the data

The death rate is too high. Every death is a tragedy. We all want to see it going down. The nation mourns those who have lost their lives to this disease.

Soon the government needs to review progress with its object of flattening the curve of the virus spread, to consider how long we need to remain in lock down.

I am glad we are now privy to the figures the government relies on. In the daily briefings we are shown two graphs or "curves", the trend in hospital deaths from CV 19 and the trend in hospital admissions for the infection.

It is presumably these curves that need to be sufficiently flattened to allow the government to transit to the third phase of its advisers' planned handling of the virus crisis.

There are several issues with the Death figures that need getting right. I think it would be good for some administrators and statisticians from government and or from the scientific community advising the government to spend some time ensuring accurate data. This should not involve medical and hospital staff time which is needed to handle the patients.

There was a change in the basis of their compilation on March 26th, when they shifted from 8 hour to 24 hour reports, moving the numbers up. Can they smooth the figures to allow for this?

There is the issue of whether the deaths are all recorded on the appropriate day. The day before yesterday we were told the higher number included deaths from earlier days which they thought had not been recorded at the time. Can't the numbers to be reworked for all but the most recent by reference to the death date on the medical death certificate?

There is the possibility of double counting. If deaths are sometimes recorded promptly before paperwork is completed, and other times when the paperwork is ready, there needs to be a check that they do not end up recording the same death twice.

The wider ONS figures are also of interest. These are higher as they include deaths not in hospital where CV19 was present. These include some where the deaths certified as with CV19 are based on statements about symptoms with no tests to confirm the presence of the virus. The figures include cases where CV 19 is mentioned where other severe conditions mean the patient would probably have died without the virus anyway.

Hospital admission with the virus is an easier series to get right. Presumably all on admission for CV 19 treatment are tested to ensure they have it, to make the correct treatment available. Admission takes place at one stated time and date, so it should be relatively easy to get a clean series of numbers that are accurate. A simple check would be to compare bed numbers and occupancy rates by hospital and to examine any outliers.

This is such an important decision both to control the disease and for the jobs and livelihoods of the many, that the decision takers need the most accurate possible numbers. (End of original)

I repeat again today these questions

What is a Covid 19 death? What are the numbers for dying of CV 19 and dying with CV 19?

Are the back numbers correctly attributed and compiled?

What is total NHS and private sector bed capacity and what is the current utilisation rate?

What proportion of total beds are currently taken by CV 19 patients?

How are the extra nurses recently recruited and the returners from early retirement being deployed?

[The casualties of lock down](#)

Lockdowns are setting us back. Here are some of the areas where we need to advance.

1 More people working for themselves and building small businesses

Lockdowns ban many from working at all, and impair the working of many others. Small businesses are being driven into debt, and entrepreneurs being forced to ask if they can continue. Meanwhile the Treasury threatens them with IR 35 clamp downs. Let's find ways of getting more back to work with a fairer tax regime.

2 Restoring Town Centres.

A second lock down of non food retail stores accelerates the switch to on line and will lead to the loss of many more shops. High Streets will contract or close down under the pressures. Let's find ways to re open them.

3. Levelling up the country

More people with professional and administrative jobs on good salaries live

in London and the South east. Many are able to work from home and continue on the same salaries. More people with jobs that are at risk or have reduced pay for reduced working live in areas that need to level up. It is easy for people like government advisers and Ministers whose income is guaranteed whatever the circumstances to decide on a lockdown which does not cost them work and income.

4. Running sensible public finances to avoid burdening future generations

Today the government rightly offers substantial subsidy to companies and money to individuals who are banned from working. Tax revenues will be badly damaged again by lock down. We cannot go on like this indefinitely. The way to get the deficit down to more sensible levels is to get us all back to work.

5. Promoting prosperity and growth

I campaigned in the General election on my slogan of Prosperity not austerity, with policies of promoting more opportunity, enterprise and ownership for the many. These aims seemed entirely at one with the Conservative party's national Manifesto.

We now have an economy badly scarred by the first lock down, with incomes and output well below 2019. We need to get on with the job of rebuilding as soon as possible.

NHS output stays low

I have been asking about the big decline in non CV 19 work in the NHS this year. Like most people I am grateful for the tireless work the CV 19 teams put in to nurse and treat those with CV 19 during the peak period of the pandemic in the spring and subsequently. Some medical and research staff have also made important advances in understanding this nasty disease which is a great contribution for all of us. Now it should be possible to use the extra capacity put in earlier this year for CV 19 and to run the rest of the NHS for the many other conditions that need treating.

The government tells me in answer to Parliamentary Questions that it has "paused " data collection and assessment of productivity this year owing to the CV 19 problems.

They state "we expect NHS productivity will have fallen considerably in 2020-21 because of increased spending on the Covid 19 response and due to reductions in elective and non elective admissions to prevent further infections in hospitals". In other words, because they persevered with mixed use hospitals with CV 19 treated alongside other conditions they removed elective non urgent surgery for a period from the hospitals altogether. They

saw a reduced number of patients with other more serious and urgent conditions. Fear of infection spreading meant more social distancing and lower workloads for non CV 19.

I was also told that “for July and August, (after the end of lockdown), total completed pathways from referral to treatment were 61% of those for the same period in 2019.” By August the NHS was achieving 71% of previous year levels for first outpatient appointments.

This means we are still short of significant capacity to handle non CV 19 matters. It also indicates that the decision to carry on treating CV 19 in General hospitals rather than creating isolation hospitals comes with a cost in lost activity for other conditions. In many places around the country it is possible to designate a Nightingale or one of the existing General Hospitals as a specialist isolation hospital to free the others to work normally at full capacity. We need the CV19 capacity added through Nightingales, and through acquisition of many more ventilators and intensive care equipment for CV 19 and we need to get back to previous capacity for everything else.

The US election

So once again the mainstream media and the polling companies get an election massively wrong. They are tone deaf to people who vote for so called populist politicians. They despise parties that dare to stand against some of the fashionable and often wrong analyses and policies of the World bodies and elites that presume to know best. This makes it impossible for them to see the appeal of policies geared to freedom, free enterprise, self respect, and healthy scepticism of centralised power in governments and international bodies.

Doubtless they will now claim the fault was all the voters who voted the wrong way. They usually decry them and abuse them, and may say they lied to the pollsters. The fault is all their own, not that of the voters. If they are so clever and so worth their hire, they need to ask the right questions of the right people in their samples and interviews to get the forecast right. What is the point of them if they cannot?

Some of the media are quite incapable of understanding a Trump voter or a Brexit voter, because they start from the belief that it is an unacceptable conduct which only the bad, the ill informed and the stupid could countenance. Remember Hillary Clinton trying to win the Presidency by calling all who were planning to vote for Mr Trump the deplorables? I strongly disagree with the socialist way, but I respect those who vote for it and believe in it and seek to engage in political argument with them, not in trading abuse about their abilities and motives.

The polls said there would be a 10% gap between Mr Trump and Mr Biden. There is a 1.8% one. They said Mr Trump would lose a number of crucial swing states he won. The weight of media opinion was a Biden win was both inevitable and desirable. They endlessly repeated that Mr Biden would unite the USA whilst Mr Trump would divide it. They should look around them. The USA is deeply divided, and Mr Trump and Mr Biden stand for two very different ways forward for their country. It is not an easy task for anyone to unite the USA. Those who want their personal freedoms will always oppose the big government model. Those who want more government control and action to right the wrongs they see around them will never accept the demands of those who simply want their own right to lead their lives without more government demands.

[Vote on lock down](#)

The government won its motion to impose an English national lock down from tomorrow by 516 to 38 votes. Labour supported the government. It was mainly Conservatives voting against with some DUP MPs. Clearly there were numerous abstentions or absences on what was a most important vote. I voted against, as the government did not amend the Regulations in ways suggested to reduce the damage to jobs and social life. Most of the speakers were Conservative, with many asking for amendments to the rules, seeking better data and asking for an exit plan even where they were voting for the motion.