

SAGE 17 – 18th March – Discussion on London lockdown

Task

- DHSE and SAGE were asked to provide CCS with health and behavioural science in respect of a further tightening of social distancing, up to "lockdown" of London to reduce or slow transmission of C-19.
- DHSE and SAGE were asked what would be the:
 - recommended measures,
 - rationale for implementing these (including impact of each on the curve),
 - plan to enforce them/ensure compliance.

Conclusions

- SAGE noted the evidence that previous measures have influenced behaviours:
 - TfL state 40% reduction on public transport capacity
 - Retail, particularly supermarkets, saw massive increase in footfall
 - A YouGov survey suggested 45% have stopped visiting leisure venues, 30% stopped seeing friends, 27% stopped seeing family, 16% have stopped sending school age children to school, 13% stopped going to work, and 20% stopped using public transport.
 - Data on leisure venues (including bars and restaurants) are expected in 1-2 days.
- London is further ahead than other places, possibly 1-2 weeks. Considering a doubling time of 5-7 days, London healthcare will experience serious capacity issues in 2-3 weeks.
- SAGE agreed that the biggest impact on slowing the spread would be:
 - Closing schools, colleges and universities
 - Stopping leisure activities, including bars, restaurants and theatres.
 - Closing places of work, particularly indoor workplaces.
- Members discussed the benefits of stopping or reducing public transport but concluded this would have minimal effect. Stopping taxi services would have almost no effect.
- Concerns were raised over whether locking down London would cause people travel and seed the virus in other places. It was confirmed that seeding in this way should not be a concern as infections are already present outside London.
- Members considered virus hotspots outside of London, the largest of which is the Midlands, where the proportion of ITU cases relative to population is equivalent to London.