Twitter Thread by Tony Yates



Tony Yates
@t0nyyates

asks what went wrong. Many things....

1. The government and particularly the PM was complacent in getting into gear as the virus gathered pace in China and Italy.

2. The March lockdown came far too late. A fault that may lie with the govt and the scientists advising; perhaps the latter were incorrectly assuming a lockdown would not be agreed to and so did not recommend it early enough.

3. The first lockdown was arguably too stringent and inefficient, and possibly even too long. IMO it was a reasonable precautionary design. But a case can be made.

4. Test trace isolate was a total disaster. Including the hiccoughs developing the app[s], and the non digital side of the operation. Time spent lockdown, and enjoying low transmission in Summer, was wasted.

5. Senior figures gave terrible messages of compacency early on by failing to socially distance in front of the camera, and protect themselves, threatening the continuity of the power to make decisions as the PM succumbed.

6. The govt risked a collapse of consent for the lockdown in failing to sack Cummings, and being complicit in the lies about his lack of compliance with the regulations. Luckily this collapse did not happen, but it may yet come to bite.

7. Instead of using the Summer to build test/trace/isolate, there was a catastrophically bad shift in messaging urging people to go back to work, and even subsidizing some risky activities like eating out.

8. The November lockdown came too late, many weeks after the SAGE 21 September recommendation.

9. That lockdown was unwound too much, too early, and in particular the determination to encourage mixing at Christmas and New Year boosted infections and created the 3rd wave.

10. And of course the current lockdown began too late. Punctuated by the chaos of sending primary kids to school for one day, subsequently closing.

11. Persistent failure to properly finance self-isolation for those who test positive.

12. Allowing universities to encourage students back to campus [most likely so that they could collect rent and fees from the students].

13. Aggravating the financial uncertainty for firms and individuals by making the support schemes such that they end at cliff edges, to be revised at short notice, rather than tying them to the state of the virus.

14. Compounding the uncertainty of covid by keeping open the possibility of No Deal until the last minute, when there was the option of settling earlier, or negotiating an extension to the transition.

15. General failure to appreciate the broad lack of a trade off between the economy and the virus; a view that tilted policy most recently before the November lockdown.

16. Witty mentions the 'learning' that took place over the usefulness of masks, and the importance of asymptomatic transmission. I need convincing that in the face of uncertainty the precautionary approach was to recommend masks and assume the worst about transmission.

17. Haphazard and apparently corrupt procurement procedures for PPE, documented so graphically by @JolyonMaugham and the @GoodLawProject

18. Inappropriate involvement in the officially independent processes of SAGE with Cummings participating in the meetings.

19. Failure to interdict foreign travellers properly and put in place proper testing and quarantining measures, that worked so well in the success countries. [Still ongoing].

20. Many small but significant errors during the period of regionally differentiated lockdowns, including: 1) inadequate financial compensation [remember @AndyBurnhamGM 's stand off] 2) failure to share local data on infections [remember Leicester]

21. The pre November lockdown powerpoints as Gupta presented to Sunak and Johnson... access to someone who had made multiple bad calls on the virus, circumventing SAGE synthesis of the science.

22. The 'design a new ventilator from scratch' saga. Which yielded no ventilators.

23. Giving up on testing and tracing very early on in the pandemic. [Treating this as separate from the failure to build capacity between the first and second lockdowns].

24. Perhaps not a distinct failure, but.... not attempting 0 covid over the late Spring/Summer period.

25. Awful Comms failures, briefing possible future changes in policy via trial balloons launched by Peston, Kuenssberg, The Telegraph, Mail and other friendly outlets.

26. Much suffering caused early on by the failure to encourage people into hospitals in the first lockdown.

27. Bit cheeky, but will lodge as a line item a failure to listen to me and others calling for a Centre for Econ and Epidemiology to do transparent, joined up econ and epi analysis and forecasting.... https://t.co/f7iCLm7egn

28. Circling back a bit over old ground, but giving weight to the argument 1) that there would be lockdown fatigue [ok a fair error in hindsight] but 2) that if there was going to be fatigue you should lock down later! [In fact opposite is the case].

29. Pouring scorn on a Labour policy suggestion that became govt policy soon afterwards, namely the November lockdown.

30. Clearing hospitals of old patients back into care homes, and failing to protect care homes early on. Subsequently lying about when this was done and blaming care homes for the disaster.

31. Putting Brexit/nationalism ahead of our citizens by opting out of the EU equipment procurement plan, and then lying about having done so afterwards.