Twitter Thread by Stephen Reicher



Stephen Reicher
@ReicherStephen

An assessment of Johnson's press conference

Pros:

1. He has finally acted (better late than never)

2. He has extended the furlough scheme

3. He recognises test and trace needs to improve

Cons:
1. Even though coming 6 weeks after the SAGE call, with cases, hospitalisations and dealths now some 10 times as high, the measures are STILL weaker than proposed (e.g. no move to online teaching in universities)

2. No acknowledgement of the failures of the testing system, beyond numbers of tests (e.g. the falling proporttion of contacts being traced) and the need to root it in local public health structures.

3. A call for people to self-isolate, but no mention of the support needed to help people to do what is necessary: empty exhortations in the place of practical help.

4. No reversal of the laissez faire approach which simply hands over responsibility to others - employers, owners, head-teachers etc. - to create COVID safe facilities. No help to make this happen, no inspection to ensure it happens.

5. No strategy to keep infections low once restrictions (assuming they work) are lifted. Just an empty optimism that vaccines will come along and save us in the spring.

Overall verdict: A move in the right direction, and certainly better than nothing, but far too late, possibly too little, a last ditch reaction, and most seriously, no overall plan.