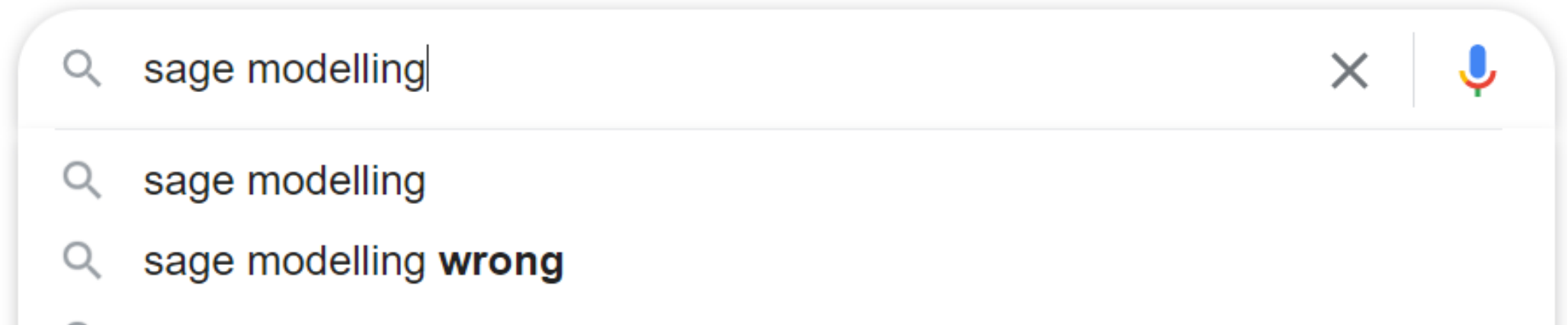


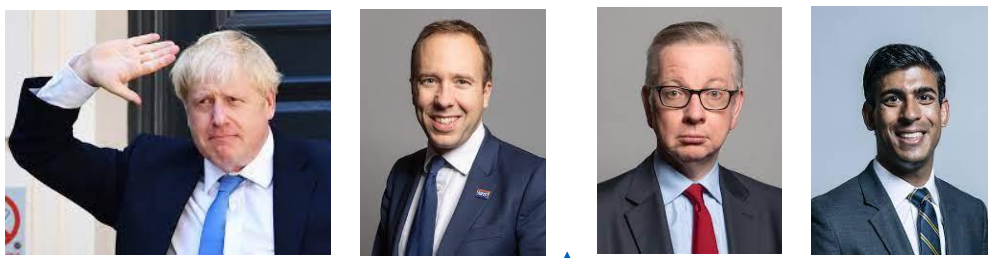
Challenges In Communicating SAGE's Covid Modelling

25 January 2023

Tom Irving, Co-Head of SPI-M-O secretariat, Jan 2020 - March 2022

Tom.j.irving@gmail.com





Cabinet Office



SAGE



Scientific Pandemic Influenza group on Modelling, Operational (SPI-M-O)



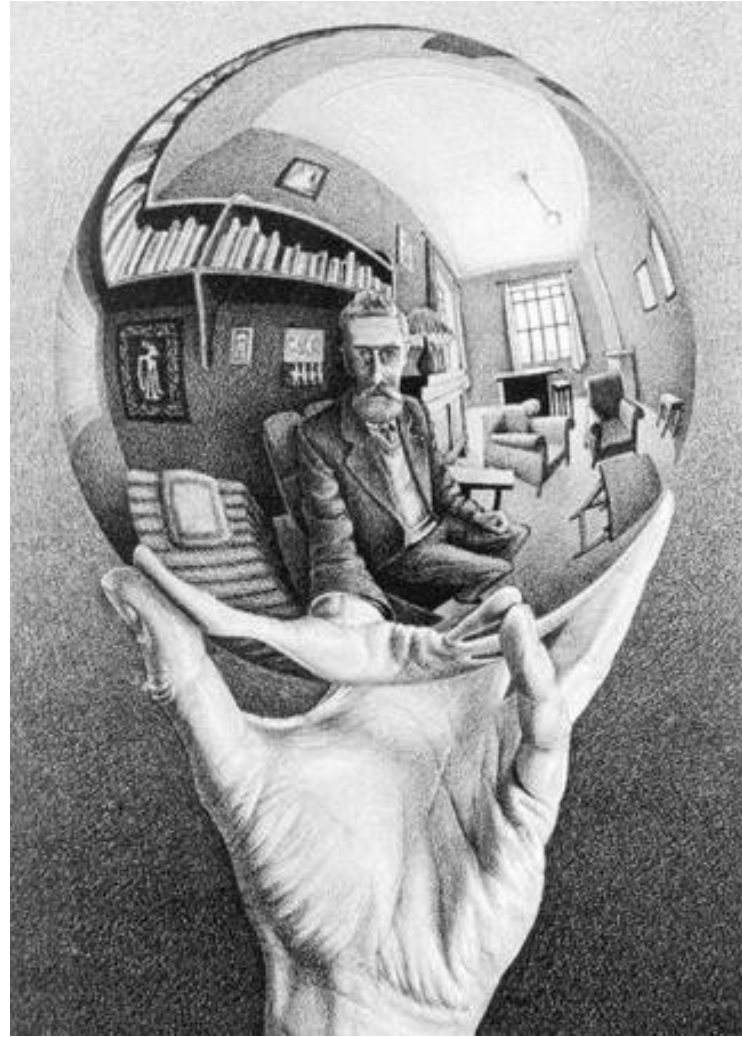
Challenges



Please Please Me



You Can't Always Get What You Want



Under Pressure

THE Sun
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Wednesday, May 6, 2020 THE PEOPLE'S PAPER 55p thesun.co.uk
Fling claim ... Lauren with Simon
SHOWBIZ EXCLUSIVE
COWELL'S MEL HELL
LAUREN'S FURY: SEE PAGE 13
Win!
BUMPER TECH BUNDLE
SEE PAGE 26

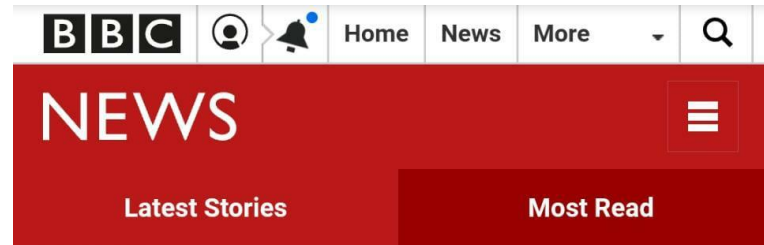
BORIS BOFFIN & MARRIED BLONDE

By NICK PARKER
THE scientist who sent Britain into lockdown quit last night after breaking social-distancing rules to see his married lover.
Professor Neil Ferguson welcomed num-of-two Antonia Staats, 38, into his home while lecturing the rest of us about keeping apart in the coronavirus pandemic.
The Oxford-educated expert, 51, resigned from his role as a Government adviser.
He said: "I deeply regret any undermining of the clear messages around the continuing need for social distancing."
Full Story - Page Six

Prof Lockdown broke lockdown to get his trousers down

Trysts ... Prof and married Antonia

There Are Worse Things I Could Do



Fifth of UK workers 'off sick at coronavirus peak'

Non-urgent NHS care may be delayed and police asked to focus on serious crime, if the virus worsens.

🕒 1h | 🇬🇧 UK | 💬 1539

- **Visual guide to the outbreak**
- **Carney warns of 'large' shock**
- **Tokyo 2020 'could be postponed'**

'STOP THE COUNT!'

Trump fights to block Biden's path to victory



The Daily Telegraph

BRITAIN'S BEST QUALITY NEWSPAPER

'Death toll graphs were wrong'

Government forced to reissue key charts used to justify second lockdown after admitting projected fatalities were overstated

By Laura Donnelly HEALTH EDITOR and Harry Yorke

OFFICIAL projections that pushed the country into a second lockdown have been quietly revised to no longer suggest deaths could soon overtake those at the peak of the first wave. The Daily Telegraph has learnt.

Graphs shown at a Downing Street press conference on television last Saturday indicated England would see up to 1,500 deaths a day by early December. In beyond numbers were in the first wave, but documents released by the Government show that the figures were in fact too high and have now been "amended, after an error was found".

The revised forecast reduces the upper limit to 1,000 deaths a day by Dec 8 - on a par with April's peak.

Presenting the graphs, the Patrick Vallance, the Chief Scientific Adviser, said figures over a six week period presented "a very grim picture" with "greater certainty" than long term modelling could provide. But the Government Office for Science has altered two slides, reducing the range for deaths and hospital admissions.

While the presentation suggested daily hospital admissions could reach 3,000, the upper end has since been cut to 6,000 on the updated slides. It comes days after it emerged that separate modelling, showing a worst case scenario of 4,000 deaths a day by the end of December, was based on outdated figures. These have also been

amended. They prompted Theresa May to question the Government's use of statistics and ask if "figures are chosen to support the policy rather than the policy being based on the figures".

Prof Carl Heneghan, from Oxford University, said last night the graphs presented at the weekend were "riddled with errors", raising concerns that a desire for lockdown had seen forecasts "systematically" exaggerated.

Greg Clark, the chairman of the Commons science and technology committee, said the locked admissions of errors was "of great concern", especially as one had been used as "the key projection" in the case for lockdown to prevent the NHS being overwhelmed.

Steve Baker MP, given advance sight of the projections ahead of the briefing last weekend, warned: "Government must accept public confidence rests on not even getting the modelling right."

Yesterday, the US statistic watchdog criticised the Government for a lack of transparency about the data driving its lockdown policies.

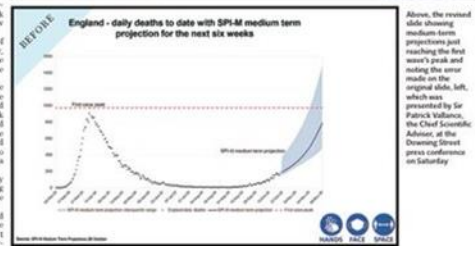
Last Saturday, when Boris Johnson announced lockdown, Sir Patrick presented a series of slides on the outlook for the pandemic, including the now disputed 4,000 deaths graph.

On Tuesday, Sir Patrick and Prof Chris Whitty, the Chief Medical Officer, were grilled by the Commons science and technology committee about the use of the modelling scenarios.

Sir Patrick said he "regretted" it if he did not make clear the scenarios were models rather than projections and were "not as reliable" as the six week forecasts he had presented. He told MPs: "The right graphs to focus on are the six week medium term forward projections," and described the two slides on hospital admissions and deaths as "the ones that are important".

And angry exchanges, Prof Whitty said he had "never used anything beyond six weeks in anything I have ever written or presented in this house".

Prof Heneghan claimed the data had been used "systematically" to drive the country into lockdown. He said: "It worries me that on matters this impor-



tant, we are finding the data is absolutely riddled with errors."

Referring to data presented to 14 million people on prime-time television should not be "smack out", he said, and urged ministers to be more transparent. "Public compliance is essential and in due course we will need people to take the vaccine. That requires people to trust the Government," he added.

Yesterday, at a Downing Street briefing, Sir Simon Stevens, head of the NHS, said the service was dealing with the equivalent of 22 hospitals of Covid patients. He pointedly contrasted the NHS data with other charts presented.

He said: "These are facts, these are not projections, forecasts, speculation. These are the patients in the hospital today. And... we already know what is likely to happen, because today's infor-

25,177 DAILY CORONAVIRUS CASES

CHANGE IN 7-DAY AVERAGE

47,712 DEATHS +192

tion in the intensive care case book for a fortnight since".

A government spokesman said: "The main consensus projection remains unchanged. The data still clearly shows, without intervention we are likely to breach the first wave of hospital admissions and deaths in a matter of weeks."

Meanwhile, Boris took confidence in the first wave would be extended to March, and Matt Hancock, the Health Secretary, said people would be allowed to travel abroad for assisted dying purposes during the second lockdown.

Dominic Raab, the Foreign Secretary, announced he was self-isolating after coming in contact with a positive case.

Conf Telegraph Page 9 Editorial Comment Page 21

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'STOP THE COUNT!' Trump fights to block Biden's path to victory



The Daily Telegraph BRITAIN'S BEST QUALITY NEWSPAPER

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Government forced to reissue key charts used to justify second lockdown

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England - daily deaths to date with SPI-M medium term projection for the next six weeks



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Covid modelling that prompted first UK lockdown based on 'inaccurate' case numbers

Report published in March 2020 suggested more than 500,000 people could die from the virus if Britain took no action

By Sarah Knapton, SCIENCE EDITOR

26 February 2022 • 7:00pm

Press

Bob Seely told to 'calm down' during his Westminster Hall debate following outburst after 'far-right' comment

The Westminster Hall debate got heated for a few minutes yesterday after the SNP Shadow Spokesperson, Brendan O'Hara, referred to far-right libertarian Tories whilst gesturing towards Bob Seely

[Read and contribute to the 11 readers' comments ↓](#)



The Westminster Hall debate, called by Isle of Wight MP,

Wednesday, 19th January, 2022
6:57pm

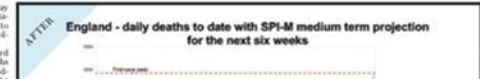
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The Westminster Hall debate got heated as the SNP Shadow Spokesperson, Brendan Lewis, and libertarian Tories whilst gesturing towards the speaker. Read and contribute to the 11 readers' comments ↓



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Sage member hits back at Dido Harding over claims testing demand surge not predicted

Sir Jeremy Farrar says advisory body had given 'clear advice' that fully functioning test, track and trace system should be in place

By Sarah Knapton, SCIENCE EDITOR
18 September 2020 - 9:00pm



Wednesday, 19th January, 2022
6:57pm

Friday 6 November 2020

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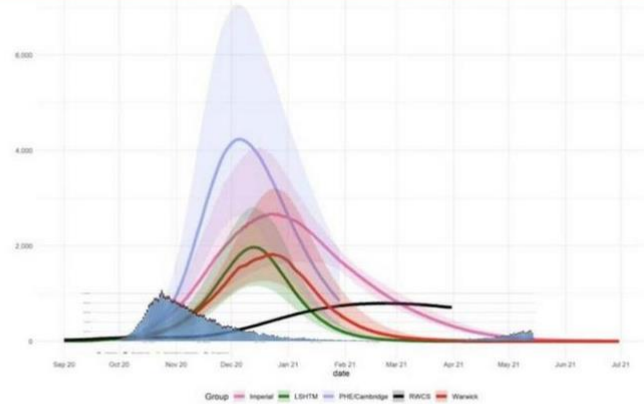
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10,000 people could die from

Careless Whisper



This key document shows several UK daily death projections by different modellers, compared with the first wave. The black line represents the government's predicted "reasonable worst-case scenario"



Coronavirus: Cabinet to meet as PM considers England lockdown

The Message



Absolute Beginners



Nine lessons



Lessons for communication

Radical transparency

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Scientific evidence supporting the government response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

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Thank you

MATT



'We did some modelling on possible outcomes in the Test cricket. The result was even worse than we predicted'

Tom.j.irving@gmail.com