What next after Leicester?

Local authorities faced with a local lockdown

Burning Issue

How does Central and Local Government and work together to avoid the need for a new lockdown by taking the right pre-emptive actions?

Some suggestions

Good risk management and contingency planning requires access to reliable information focussed on identifying risks early that are shared across all relevant parties, which in the case of COVID-19 means everyone!

A useful analogy is how communities avoid the worst effects of bush fires. A multi-layered approach is needed. Prevention involves prioritising actions (e.g. clearing or damping down tinder) in the locations of greatest known risk to maximise effectiveness. Targeted communication is focussed on those neighbourhoods most at risk and on those individuals whose behaviour is most likely to spark an outbreak. Then there is an intelligent use of up-to-date satellite and weather data to enhance early warning systems so that vigilance activity is dynamically allocated to the highest risk. Finally, should an outbreak occur, a multi-agency response swings into action quickly and decisively by executing a pre-planned response.

Why use More Metrics Data to support this activity?

Our data is updated weekly and includes a forward projection of the COVID-19 infection risk that is simple to understand and interpret. Using this measure as at 21st June 2020 for Parliamentary Constituencies, we can identify those most at risk of continued infections that need to be particularly vigilant. This analysis is the equivalent of identifying those locations of greatest known risk (using our bush fires analogy) combined with updates that enhance early warning systems when used alongside other routinely collected data. This therefore directly supports a number of the critical requirements of a well thought through risk prevention strategy.

So how does this work in practice? In the table below we have used our free to use data to create a risk table for 650 parliamentary constituencies. The data in this table is sorted (highest risk first) by column E which estimates the percentage of the population yet to be infected based on current trends.

Parliamentary future risk		A	B	C	D	E
Parliamentary Constituency	**Pcon Code**	**AsIs Infection Rate 21st June 2020**	**Time Adjusted Infection Rate 21st June 2020**	**FutureCases To Current Cases Ratio 21st June 2020**	**R Value 14th June 2020**	**Future Infections (A x C)**
Ynys Môn	W07000041	7%	12%	40%	1.98	2.9%
Arfon	W07000057	10%	14%	26%	1.505	2.6%
Castle Point	E14000622	10%	9%	15%	0.958	1.6%
Rayleigh and Wickford	E14000888	10%	9%	16%	1.022	1.6%
Barnsley Central	E14000541	20%	18%	8%	1.131	1.5%
Leicester South	E14000783	16%	14%	9%	0.927	1.4%
Southend West	E14000957	11%	10%	13%	0.769	1.4%
Bedford	E14000552	21%	19%	7%	0.547	1.4%
Northampton North	E14000861	14%	12%	9%	0.902	1.3%
Leicester East	E14000782	18%	15%	7%	0.927	1.3%
Stalybridge and Hyde	E14000967	18%	16%	7%	0.63	1.2%
Manchester Gorton	E14000808	20%	18%	6%	0.716	1.2%
Ashford	E14000536	26%	23%	5%	0.779	1.2%
Wrexham	W07000044	10%	13%	11%	0.805	1.1%
Dover	E14000670	15%	14%	7%	0.922	1.1%
Leicester West	E14000784	17%	15%	7%	0.927	1.1%

We see that three constituencies in Wales have high future infection risk Anglesey (2.9%), Arfon (2.6%) and Wrexham (1.1%).   Other danger signs for these parliamentary constituencies are:

- The high R Values for the local Authority Parent close to or above 1

- The high "Time Adjusted" infection rate values which lie above the "As Is" infection rate values indicative of areas still working their way through phase 1 before "steady state" is achieved under the historic lockdown rules. Not reaching "steady state" before lockdown rules are relaxed is particularly risky (as can be observed by the situation playing out in the USA).

The rest of the high-risk constituencies are situated in England. Three of these are based in Leicester (highlighted in blue) which, at the time of writing, is beginning the UK's first local lockdown. This unfortunate situation confirms how critical it is to monitor the future risk continually using all available resources to pre-empt this kind of response when things go wrong.

In this context, our table shows a further 10 constituencies in England that are of similar level of risk right now to the Leicester constituencies. This should immediately prompt National Government and Local Authorities in these locations to be on high alert, calling on national and local resources to re-double their collective efforts to stop a "flare up". Preventative action taken now in these "tinderbox" locations will have huge benefits in de-risking the course of the infection without the need for possible draconian action later with the unwanted knock-on effects this will have on the local economy and the morale of residents.

Targeted communication is an important component in this pre-emptive strike and the challenge then becomes who should we talk to about what and when? As always, the right balance needs to be found in terms of tone and content to let people know what they need to do today, and why. This is so that they are as fully on board as possible. Importantly, this is an exercise in persuading the majority to do the right thing, willingly, and not about persuading the small number of "deniers and disbelievers" who will need to be tackled in other ways.

The messages therefore need to vary a lot, for example:

- By Location. "You are in a high-risk household in a high-risk neighbourhood within a high risk local authority and this means we need you to do this today. And this is how we are going to support you to do the right thing......."

- By Age Band. "You want to meet up with your mates but do it safely so that you don't hurt the ones you love. This means …….."

- By Business type focussing on the high risk locations such as meat packers, care homes, etc., with check-ups and enforcement action suitably targeted to ram the message home.

- By channel and message giver, e.g. by using relevant local heroes for the audience concerned, on platforms that maximise the reach and impact.

To support this highly targeted communication strategy, our GDPR friendly data is designed to work alongside data agency contact lists to enhance the effectiveness of selection rules. It has a near 100% coverage across the UK and is highly localised, being postcode tagged. It is also specifically related to COVID–19 risks and outcomes, making it a unique "added- value" resource that can be used by communication professionals within existing CDM operations quickly.

By way of example, if we compare the profile for the three Welsh constituencies to the three for Leicester, we see contrasting profiles.
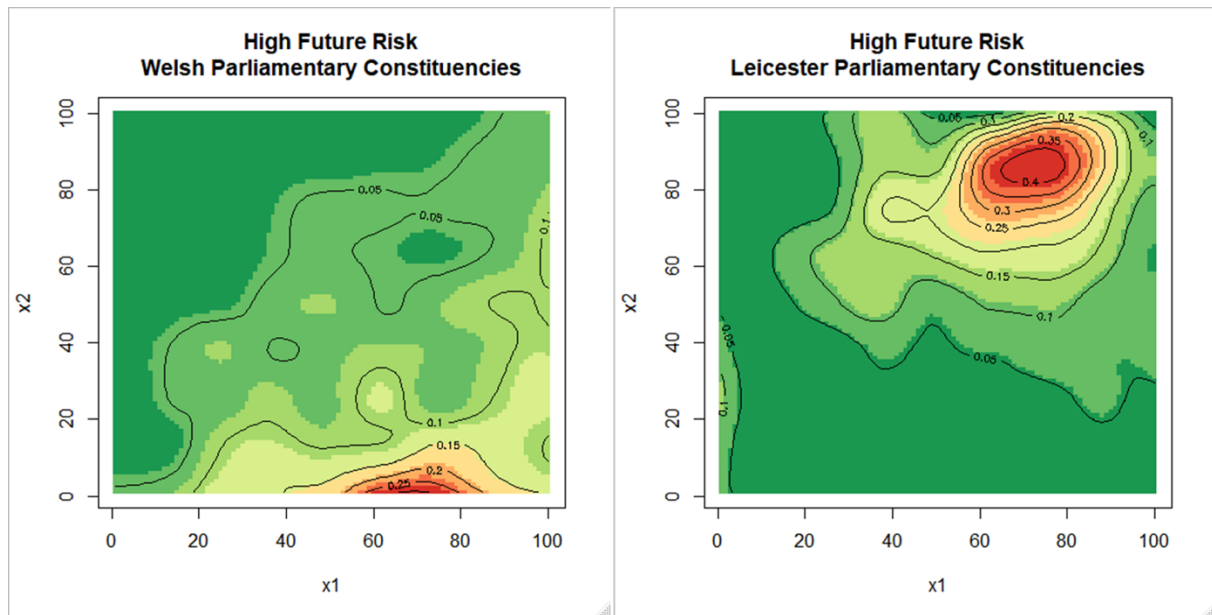
The Welsh profile is concentrated in Zone D where age risks are high. The message that needs to be communicated here is for the older, at-risk to keep self-isolating so that they are not exposed. Extra support to this vulnerable group and their carers where relevant should be the focus whilst the infection rate is brought down. If visitors / tourists are the reason infection rates are staying high, then additional steps to control this source should be considered to ensure they are kept well away from vulnerable citizens, for example using ribbons to communicate risk to strangers (as discussed in the case of the Western Isles).

In Leicester the risk profile is concentrated near Zones B and C (Overcrowding and Health Risk respectively).   If the infections are remaining high in these types of neighbourhood it indicates that there is a need for a concerted set of actions to stop infection rates quickly getting out of control. Individuals with additional risks in these neighbourhoods (e.g. those with obesity or other health issues, or high risks related to ethnicity) should be of particular concern, especially if exposure through other members of the household is likely to be a factor.

Get access to our data

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