

COVID-19

**a case study on crisis
communication of the UK
Ministry of Health**

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POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Timeline

Sandman's theory

Who is the key spokesperson?

What are the main risks and issues that
have to be addressed?

Who are the audiences?

What are the communication channels?

What are the messages?

How did organisation use social media?

5 stages of a crisis

Which stage is the UK now?



STAGE 1
Detection

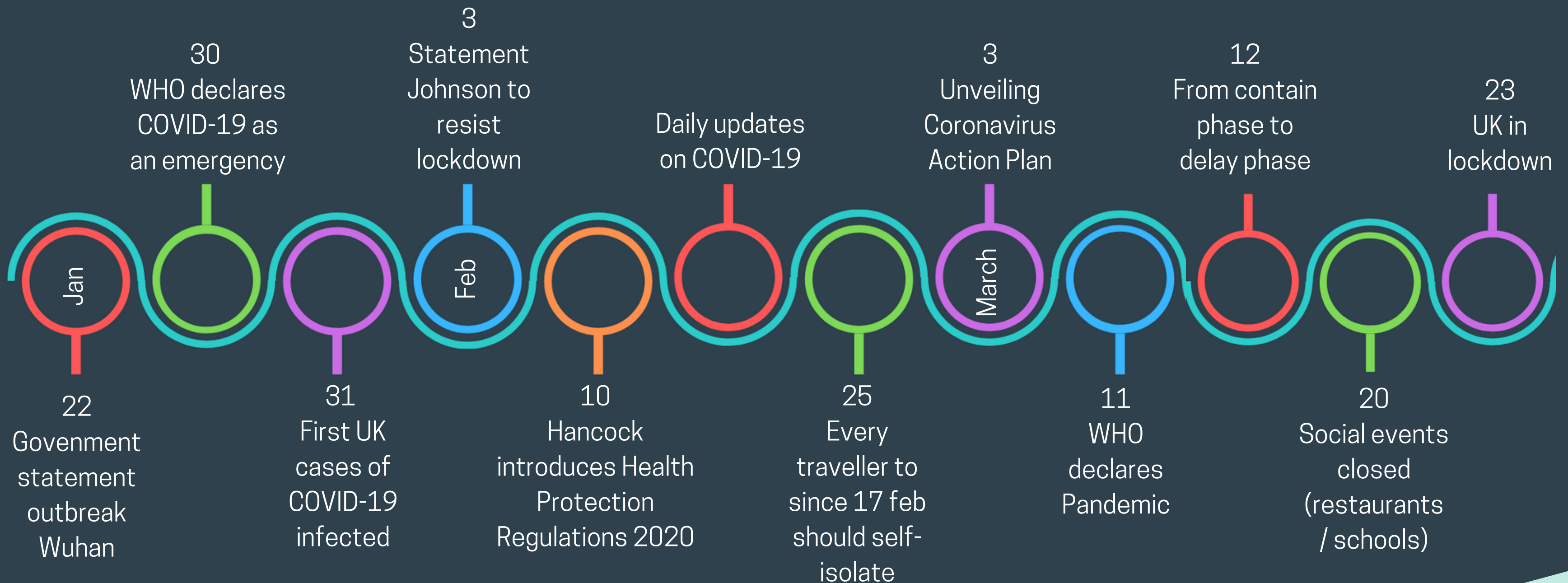
STAGE 2
Prevention/
preparation

STAGE 3
Containment

STAGE 4
Recovery

STAGE 5
Learning

What happend?



For the first time in history we
can save the human race by lying
in front of the TV and doing
nothing.

Let's not screw this up!

#CORONAVIRUSQUOTES

Sandman's theory

Voluntary or **Coerced**?

Natural or industrial?

Familiar or **exotic**?

Memorable or not memorable?

Dreaded or not dreaded?

Chronic or **catastrophic**?

Knowable or **not knowable**?

Controlled by **me** or by **others**?

Fair or **unfair**?

Morally irrelevant or morally relevant?

Can I trust you or **not**?

Is the process **responsive** or unresponsive?

Sandman's theory - Trust



=

Outrage over



Fake news

Sandman's theory - unknowable



What is the virus?
How does it work?
How does it spread?
How do we cure it?



Different opinions
Fake news

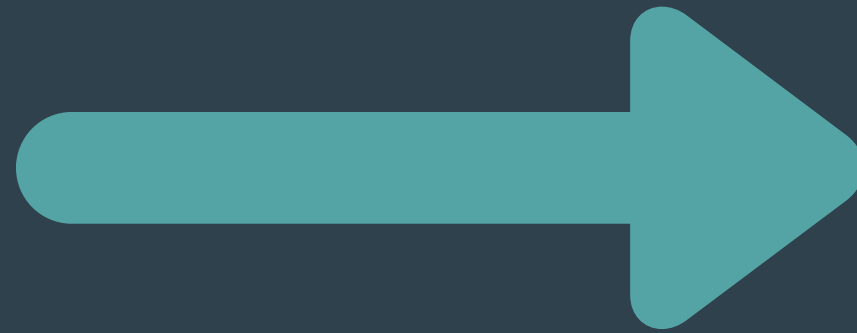


Detectability
Not knowing whether
you have COVID-19

Sandman's theory - Dreaded



Beginning



Now

Spokespersons for the Ministry of Health

WHO ARE ADDRESSING THE NATION?



MATT HANCOCK
Secretary of State for
Health and Social Care



HELEN WHATELY
Minister for Care



EDWARD ARGAR
Minister for Health



CLARA SWINSON
Director General,
Global and Public
Health



LEE MCDONOUGH
Director General,
Acute Care and
Workforce

Risks and issues

FACTORS WE HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

PANIC AND FEAR

- Public perceptions;
- Mental health issue;
- Panic behaviors (panic buying) .

FAKE NEWS AND MISINFORMATION

- Racism;
- Wrong instructions for public health;
- Wrong information on the virus.

FULL HOSPITALS

- Risk of cross infection;
- Overloaded workload for health workers;
- Medical resource shortages.

PEOPLE

- Provide information and help to people accordingly (senior citizens, lower-income class, children, health workers, travelers);
- Rules for confirmed patients or people showing symptoms.

Examples: deal with risks & issues

PANIC AND FEAR

- Mental health support- Every Mind Matters
<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
- Optimistic information

FAKE NEWS AND MISINFORMATION

- Release F & A video on basic fact about the virus
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV_UnPI8qMA

FULL HOSPITAL

- Introducing new regulations and rules (e.g. quarantine at home, call ambulance in advance)
- Call for donation of medical resources

PEOPLE

- Washing hand song:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9VjeIWLnEg>
- Stay at home campaign (#StayHomeSaveLives)

Audiences

HEALTHY
PEOPLE

LOW-INCOME
CLASS

CHILDREN
& PARENTS

RISK GROUPS

PEOPLE SHOWING
SYMPTOMS

DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
VICTIMS

WORKERS

HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONALS

Example: a communication targeting children and parents



HM Government

Closure of schools: Information for parents and carers

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response or you work in a critical role in one of these sectors:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services workers

AND if you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for schooling and childcare.

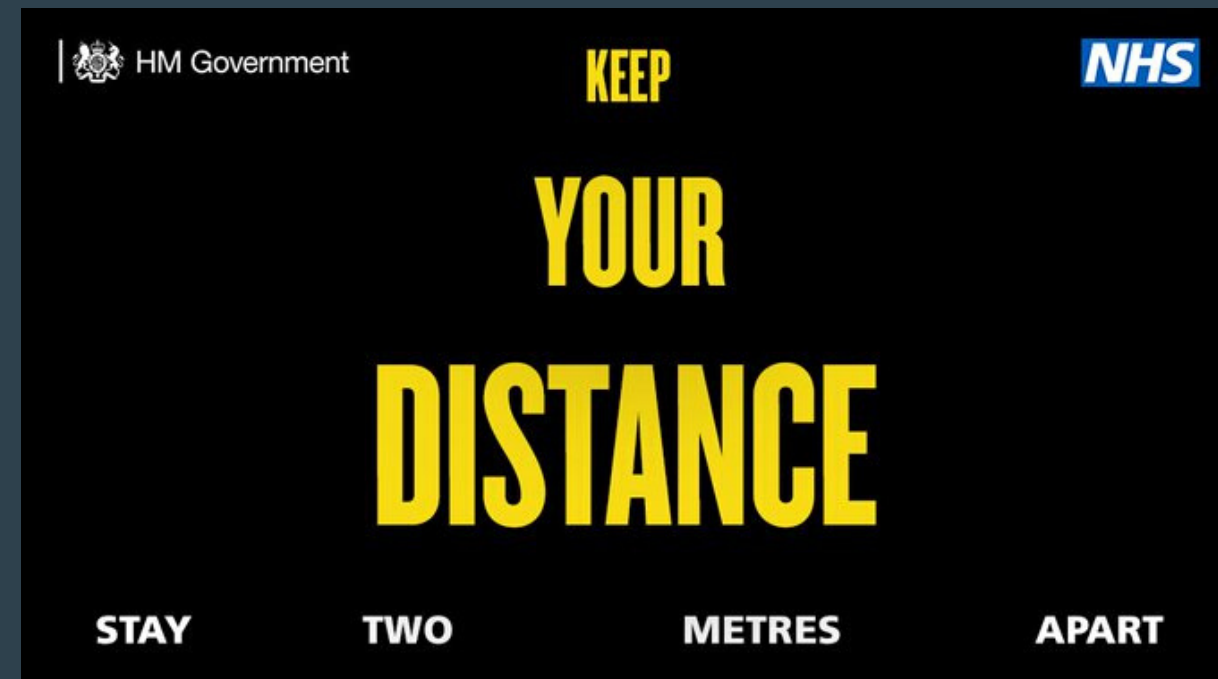
Communication channels

- Online (Social media, Website, Whatsapp group chat)
- Traditional media outlets
- News conferences
- Hotlines
- Public billboard



What are the messages?

- Wash your hands.
- Stay home.
- Keep your distance.
- Do not touch face.
- Every mind matters.
- Protect the NHS.
- Save lives.



About Every Mind Matters

[Every Mind Matters](#) provides simple NHS-approved tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health. If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please contact [NHS 111 online](#).

You can access free easy [10-minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or try other exercise videos at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has tips for [keeping active at home](#).

The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep.

Visit the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools, if you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood.

If you already have a mental health problem, you can access [comprehensive guidance provided by Mind](#).

How was social media used?



REPUTATION MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT

Social media is used by the Government and Ministry of Health to spread positive messages and support towards the action against COVID-19



ANSWER QUESTIONS

Social media is also used as a fast way to provide questions of the UK residents



SPREADING AWARENESS ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS

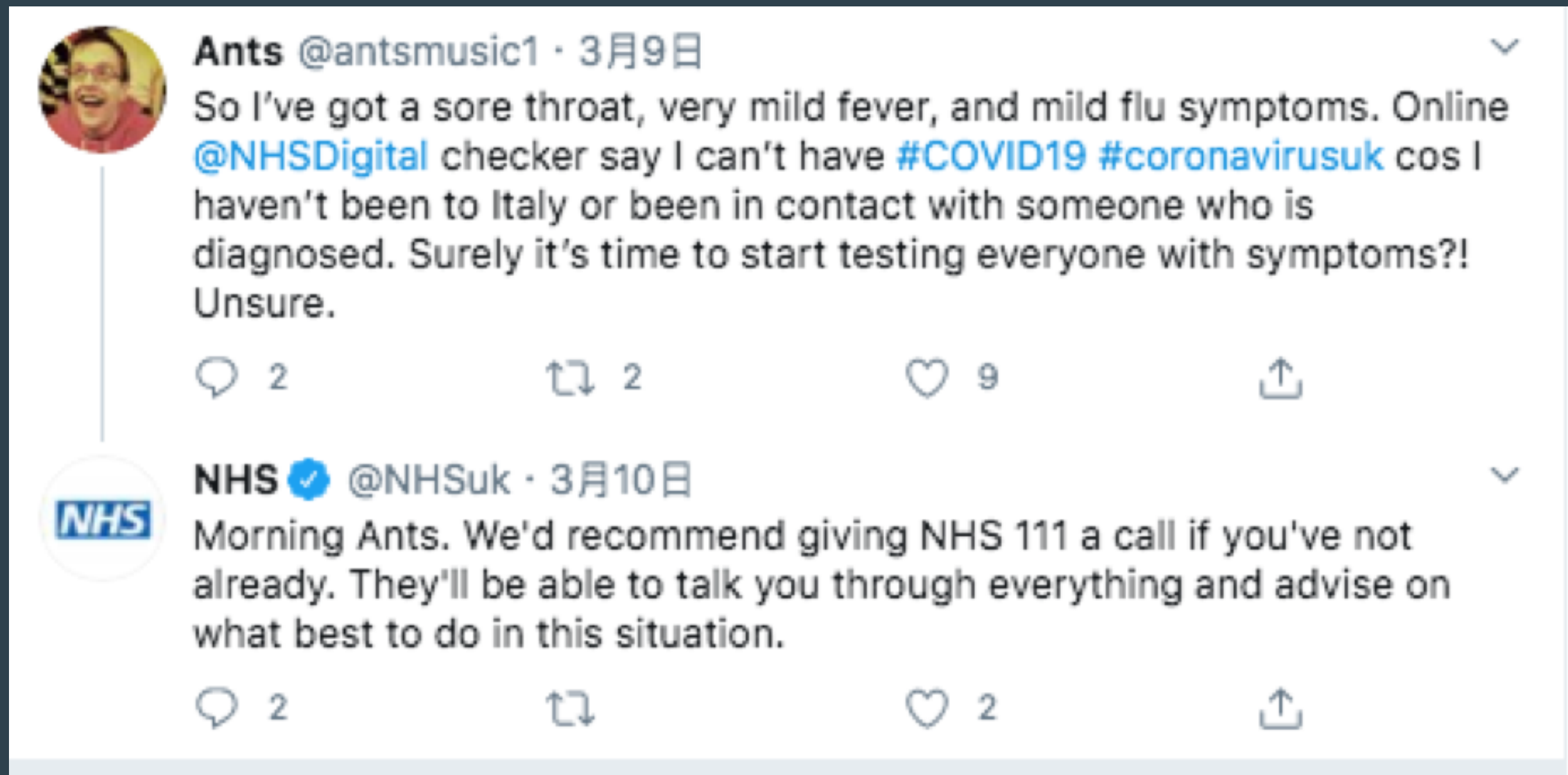
The British Ministry of Health uses social media as a fast way to deliver new updates on topics regarding COVID-19



CONTROL THE OUTBREAK

Give UK residents guidelines to uphold and tips on the prevention of the spreading of the virus.

NHS answers questions



The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter thread. The first tweet is from user 'Ants @antsmusic1' dated March 9th. The text of the tweet asks for advice regarding COVID-19 symptoms and testing. The second tweet is a reply from the official NHS account (@NHSuk) dated March 10th, providing a helpful response to call NHS 111.

Ants @antsmusic1 · 3月9日

So I've got a sore throat, very mild fever, and mild flu symptoms. Online @NHSDigital checker say I can't have #COVID19 #coronavirusuk cos I haven't been to Italy or been in contact with someone who is diagnosed. Surely it's time to start testing everyone with symptoms?! Unsure.

2 2 9

NHS ✓ @NHSuk · 3月10日

Morning Ants. We'd recommend giving NHS 111 a call if you've not already. They'll be able to talk you through everything and advise on what best to do in this situation.

2 2

The respond is useful, polite, and friendly.

Fighting rumours

Daily Mail U.K. @DailyMailUK · 4月22日
Empty 4,000-bed Nightingale hospital TURNS AWAY 30 'life or death' coronavirus patients trib.al/jGbbVw4



LONDON'S GHOST HOSPITAL

20 43 50

Department of Health and Social Care @DHSCgo... · 4月22日

This is misleading.

There is no shortage of nurses and all coronavirus patients who need treatment are being treated in existing London hospitals.

Nurses working across the city have received additional training and can be deployed to NHS Nightingale should capacity be reached.

14 35 277



OVERALL CONCLUSION

The strategy the UK used to battle COVID-19 was questionable. But the media used and the messages where very effective.

"The world is going through a period of crisis, but whether we look at it as a crisis or as an opportunity to reshape our thinking, depends on us."

- Abhijit Naskar