



COVID-19 – A Call to Arms

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COVID-19 Actuaries Response Group - Learn. Share. Educate. Influence.

As you will all know COVID-19 is putting a huge strain on Government agencies from the health service to local authorities to other agencies requiring mathematical and statistical skills.

We were conscious that in past times of national need, actuaries with the right skill sets have made a difference with the application of their skills to Government needs. Ten days ago we approached the COVID-19 Actuaries Response Group to discuss what volunteer actuaries could do. Since then we have approached various Government agencies to understand what volunteer actuaries could help with. Examples from discussions we have already had (but not limited to):

- supporting service provision experts with organising the logistics of plans to e.g. provide food, medicine and critical services to vulnerable citizens who require to be “shielded” across the whole of society;
- Government agencies requiring people with actuarial, statistical and mathematical skills to understand the potential demand on their finances and service demand;
- the Royal Statistical Society has asked for people with experience of development of large scale dynamic models and integration with data science pipelines

We believe that key skillsets will be those with modelling experience. We also recognise that the more general actuarial skills we all take for granted, such as the ability to collate data, critically assess its value and produce simple spreadsheet models could also be invaluable in many areas.

What are we asking for?

From our discussions it is clear that government agencies want help and support. This is your chance to support the UK with our skillsets.

If you can volunteer at least 25% of your time to support the UK, please write to us at c19actuarialresponse.action@gmail.com

What we are looking for are actuaries who are willing to roll up their sleeves and get involved in modelling and data analysis. Although we will need actuaries with deep modelling expertise, please do volunteer even if you don't feel that you have the greatest modelling skills. From our discussions, it is clear that Government could also use actuaries with data analysis and interpretation skills – these are skills that are core to what most of us do every day.

This is a critical time for the UK and from our discussions we have the skill set to be able to support and help the UK in its time of need.

Examples of Actuaries supporting nationally at times of extreme crises:

- During WW 2 actuaries analysed highly sensitive and critical data, often of limited quality, in order to inform decision makers. The record shows that those “drafted” from their offices to support were commended for making a disproportionately large difference to the war effort in both the UK and US;
- NHS and Welfare State – following the war, actuaries also played a key role in establishing the most ambitious comprehensive welfare system in the world;
- 2008 banking crisis – more recently, actuaries from a number of consulting firms were seconded to the UK Treasury to help establish the £540bn bank bailout package.