

An exit strategy

We need to lift the ban on people working. A 3 week firebreak against the virus has bought the NHS time to expand capacity and to handle the resulting case load. As a result there are many more Intensive care beds and oxygen systems available.

Government in the next phase should still have as its main aim limiting the number of deaths. That is why it should still strongly advise all those at risk groups and the elderly to stay at home out of contact with possible virus spreaders. It should redouble efforts to ensure all at risk get home deliveries of all they need, and plenty of social contact through the phone and social media.

The rest of us should be free to go back to workplaces whilst continuing with strong hygiene measures and whilst keeping a sensible distance from others where possible. We need to rescue the small businesses and save the self employed by letting them earn money again.

We should not go for the return of just those people who pass a test to say they have had the virus. The right to work should not depend on some government test which might not even be accurate. We do not want to create a perverse incentive to put yourself in harms way to try to catch the virus so you can then win your freedom. It is difficult to see how you could enforce a ban on people who had not had the virus from travelling and working.

The economic cost of continuing with these lock downs will be massive. Unemployment will shoot up to record levels, many businesses will go bankrupt or go through major financial reconstructions, state spending and debt will leap up, and there will be a major reduction in the standard of living and disposable incomes of many people previously or still working in the private sector.