

Finding freedom

To some the full relaxations of rules imposed to fight Covid 19 cannot come soon enough. I have varied complaints from people who strongly object to what they call house arrest. They think it would be better to isolate people with the disease, and offer support to allow people most vulnerable to the disease to limit social contacts, rather than asking most of the population to stay at home. To them freedom is the freedom for the many to have a social life of their choosing, to travel as they wish, and to run their businesses as they see fit. They argue if we do not get back to this soon there will be unacceptable economic damage.

To others freedom is the discovery that they can work from home, draw their full salary, and avoid the 3 hour return commute each day. They say their lives have improved. They are no longer dependent on the erratic goodwill and competence of the train companies, and no longer have to push themselves into a crowded tube train or onto a bus to complete a city centre journey to work. They can mind their house, receive deliveries, see more of their children and still do their job using on line facilities. They say there can be compromise between fighting the virus and getting the economy moving. They want new working practices which can pay the bills and keep people safe.

To some the idea that their every move may be tracked, and they may be subject to a tracing system requiring them to self isolate because of a chance encounter with someone who had the disease is an unacceptable intrusion into their lives. They are suspicious of how likely you are to catch it from casual contact. To others a proper track and trace system is essential to give them more chance of escaping the virus. They wish to be free from disease.

So where does freedom lie? Have the anti Covid 19 measures simply taken freedoms away, leaving us with arguments about how successful this is in controlling the virus? Or are there some compensating freedoms some have gained? What should the new world of work look like?