

Green Party condemns shift in Covid policy as negligent

7 July 2021

- **Peter Cranie: "With a 70% rise in cases last week, the government's decision to abandon social distancing measures is grossly irresponsible"**

The Green Party has strongly criticised the negligent and shortsighted policy shift this week resulting from the arrival of Sajid Javid at the Department of Health.

Green Party Public Health spokesperson Peter Cranie said:

"With a 70% rise in cases last week [1], the government's decision to abandon social distancing measures is grossly irresponsible. They are not being driven either by data or by dates but by their own ideology of self-destructive individualism.

"While it is true that the vaccination programme has loosened the link between infection and death, we are dealing with a new virus, which we have already seen has the capacity to mutate. We need to continue to take a cautious approach based on science, rather than libertarian ideology.

"Forty per cent of the population have received no vaccination at all [2] and are still highly vulnerable to this infection. Although in smaller numbers, some children do fall seriously ill and the incidence from Long Covid is still not clear. [3]

"This Darwinian policy is fundamentally discriminatory since we know that certain groups in the population have lower rates of vaccination and so we are condemning them to higher rates of Covid infection, hospitalisation and death. In a strong society we would show solidarity with the most vulnerable rather than throwing them to the wolves.

"The decision to allow individuals to decide for themselves will also put at risk those whose jobs bring them into contact with many other people. We support the call from unions for a legal framework governing safe working, and the need for greater ventilation and continued mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing in crowded places such as public transport."

Molly Scott Cato, the party's finance and economy spokesperson, said:

"This decision to ignore the science and be driven by the Conservative Party's libertarian wing could end up being totally counter-productive in economic terms. It has been clear throughout the pandemic that if people don't feel safe they'll be put off going shopping or to the pub. As cases rise we could see this natural caution kicking in more and more causing another serious blow to our economy."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/02/delta-variant-driving-sharp-rise-in-uk-covid-cases-ons-data-shows>

2

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55274833>

3

<https://inews.co.uk/news/long-covid-is-common-in-children-who-were-hospitalised-by-the-virus-study-finds-1084361>

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