

Freedom

We have lost a lot of freedoms during the battle against CV 19. Most have accepted the need to take tough measures to protect those at risk of serious illness and death. Now vaccines supply a way out of the public health imperative it is important we do not come to think some of these controls are acceptable or useful for the future. These were extreme measures which should be temporary.

I never thought I would be living in a country where you needed a reason to leave your house, where you were banned from making trips just for pleasure and where every social contact you wished to make had to be done electronically or under a special dispensation allowed by the regulations.

The government has promised us the way out of lockdown will be data driven. The slow indicative timetable to eventual freedom on June 21 is subject to revision. It is highly likely the data for serious cases admitted to hospital and deaths from CV 19 will continue to fall rapidly as the NHS completes vaccination of most people over 50 and anyone with another worrying medical condition. The government must understand the data is dynamic, and lagged. It needs to respond to the trend and to the vaccination figures, and get on with relaxing the controls.

I do not think it a good idea to make a vaccination certificate an official document that is used to enforce controls on people's conduct in the UK. Of course if foreign countries want proof of vaccination for people to travel there that is up to them and the potential traveller. We might wish to require vaccination for people coming to the UK, particularly from countries that still have bad attacks of the pandemic or to require quarantine. A more difficult question which the government as employer does need to resolve is should NHS employees have to have the vaccine in order to work in NHS establishments? I am happy with the current policy of advising them to but not enforcing it. It would be quite wrong to make the rest of us have the vaccine in order to go to a shop or theatre if the government isn't even willing to require vaccination as a condition of employment in exposed state employment.