

# How to tackle the virus

The government waited until the virus had fallen to very low levels. It then began a gradual relaxation of controls, essential to economic recovery and allowing freedoms back.

Its policy to control the virus switched to testing people to seek to ensure that all those with it or in contact with carriers self isolated, so the rest of us could lead a more normal life. It added to the measures by still not allowing some sectors to go back to work, and insisting on varying measures of social distancing for everyone.

With more testing today more cases of the virus are being identified, and the graph is going up again, as it has already done in places like Spain and France. So far it seems to be spreading more amongst the younger and fitter, so there are still not so many severe cases and deaths. Some say this pattern will continue. Others think it is only a matter of time before more vulnerable people get it and the serious cases rises.

The government and Councils turned to local lockdowns as a supplement to testing and isolating more people. In places where there was a surge in cases normal life was further interrupted to seek to control the spread. Now the government is moving back to national restrictions again as the cases still increase.

Yesterday the PM said he now wanted the NHS to develop a much faster test so people could get the result shortly after taking it. He would want to see a massive increase in the number of tests, perhaps a fifty fold increase on current levels. The idea is we could go to an event but be tested on the way in. Meanwhile current levels in excess of 200,000 tests a day are not backed up by sufficient laboratory capacity to give quick results, and some people are being told to wait several days or travel very long distances to get a test.

It leaves people asking some questions. Why can't the NHS test more people locally? When will the current testing system be fixed? Who is now working on a rapid test and how many would it be possible to make when there is one? How will the public react to a prolonged period of restrictions on freedoms? How much more economic damage will be incurred if the virus does continue to flare up?