

# NHS Ministers/planners do not trust the scientific forecasts of more Omicron cases to plan capacity

## **Question:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of hospital beds that will be needed for cases of the Omicron variant of covid-19 in January based on the latest forecasts. (91819)

Tabled on: 13 December 2021

## **Answer:**

### **Maggie Throup:**

In the absence of any data on disease severity or the likely transmission rates in the community, it is not possible to make any reliable estimates of predicted future hospitalisation rates or the number of hospital beds required for cases of the Omicron COVID-19 variant. As data on transmission rates becomes clearer over time and the initial hospitalisations allow assessment of severity and care needs, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will be able to generate projections of predicted future hospitalisation rates. The UKHSA and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working together to collate this data as quickly as possible.