Test and trace

I could see the point of Test and trace when few people were vaccinated and when rising caseloads could lead to a surge in people with serious illness needing hospital help. Today now the vaccines seem to have broken most of the link between case numbers, hospital patient numbers and deaths it is less clear that the current Test and Trace system is sensible.

Test and Trace always had weaknesses, largely based on individual reactions to it. Some people did not download the app and never liked the system. It could not be mandatory as not everyone has a mobile phone and there was no way people could be made to keep a charged phone by their side every day 24 hours a day. Some who downloaded the app then declined to take any incoming call which might have been a warning call from the system to get them to self isolate. Others took the call, promised to co-operate but found compliance too difficult.

Most people with jobs and family duties are not in an easy position to go home and stay home for 14 days. Few have a fortnight's supply of good food ready. Many need the income from working and not all can do everything from their home. Many have to do things outside the home to look after other family members. The ask of Test and Trace was simply too high for some who were not ill, did not feel they had it or were going to get it, and were unsure why they had been told to self isolate in the first place. I hear details are scarce about where and how you were in contact for those who were approached. This is for understandable reasons as the app has to reassure on privacy about who went where and when.

Today there is the danger that the Test and Trace system generates far too many precautionary requirements to self isolate for many people who do not have the disease and are not about to have it. The rules need relaxing as we learn "to live with the disease" as the government says. No major country has succeeded in eliminating CV 19, even those who have had more severe and longer lockdowns than us. The best advice surely is to ask people who feel ill with likely symptoms to get tested, and to stay isolated if they turn out to have it.