

The rule of 6

On Tuesday night Parliament will have the chance to debate and vote on the Rule of 6 and the related restrictions against larger gatherings.

The decision will be about the Coronavirus Restrictions (No 2) (England) Statutory Instrument.

As someone who wishes to see more moves to relax controls that damage business and prevent large sectors that need social contact from working, there is a good case for not supporting this measure. As someone who wishes to see the death rate down and agrees that too much social contact can spread the virus too far too fast I need to listen to those who say there is a case for trying these controls for a bit longer.

The rule of 6 is the government's latest attempt to create a simple universal rule that might provide some brake on the spread of the disease. It has not been going for long, so the government says it should be tried for longer. You can also argue that we have had controls in place for many months, but they have not proved able to keep the disease down in the way a near total lock down for most did in April. Some think the virus has a life of its own regardless of controls and see the fall from April as a coincidence. Others seek to find patterns in the numbers to prove controls do reduce the spread.

The Conservative party membership is shifting its view from a substantial majority behind lock downs and strong government action, to the largest group now favouring the more relaxed Swedish approach to create a better balance for business and normal life. Polls of the wider public still favour tough action to limit social contacts. There is a lack of specific scientific data to show which of the various measures tried in the areas visited with extra controls have a beneficial impact. There is also a worrying delay in getting results in those special areas and in some cases no evidence that the controls are working. The 10pm curfew is the most dubious and contentious ban, but that is not up for a vote on Tuesday.

I am interested in your views as I make up my mind concerning Tuesday's vote, particularly if you are a constituent.