

Time for the government to move on from managing Covid

The latest case numbers for Covid suggest this latest wave is peaking. The figures also suggest thanks to vaccines serious cases and hospital stays will be lower proportionately than previous waves. On 26 January the government review should be able to decide the remaining restrictions can be lifted. The pandemic disease can move to being endemic, something we will live with. Everyone can make their own decisions about vaccines and how much risk to run of catching it.

The government needs to refocus. At the high Prime Ministerial level we know what this government is about – getting Brexit done, levelling up, improving public services. At departmental level there is often a lack of clarity or a failure to work away at contributing to the main aims. Particularly disappointing is the fact so many departments have gone out of their way to avoid using Brexit freedoms. So many advisers and civil servants seem to want to keep us closely aligned to the EU.

There is also a slow start to levelling up. This should be primarily about helping people on their journeys to ownership, self employment, better training and qualifications. So where are the Freeports as centres of investment and new jobs? Why aren't they up and running, with low taxes and friendlier conditions for setting up and expanding business? Where are the plans to help us grow more and make more of what we want?

Cabinet Ministers need to set out how their departments will shape the post pandemic world and how this contributes to growth and levelling up.