

13th July 2020

Dear Chris,

I am writing to you today, at what I believe is a critical moment in the crisis, to outline the concerns of Independent SAGE. I hope you will accept these comments in the constructive spirit in which they are intended.

We are a diverse group of independent experts from the full range of disciplines. After detailed studies, we have seen no evidence that the Government has a considered strategy for the next stages of handling the pandemic in the UK. From what we do know of the Government's intention at the present time, it is firmly focused on lifting social restriction and getting economic activity back to normal as soon as possible. But, crucially, there is no discernible plan to tackle and defeat the virus beyond carrying on with the current 'drift' approach.

Examination of the current position, projections of what may happen and the continually emerging evidence base on what constitute effective approaches, we are firmly of the view that it is necessary for the whole of the UK urgently to adopt policies together to get us collectively to the position where we have a ZERO COVID UK.

Scotland and Northern Ireland are within grasp of a Zero Covid position as is, importantly, the Republic of Ireland. But the level of new cases being identified in England and, more worryingly, the number of cases that are estimated to be occurring and are not being found, are matters of grave concern.

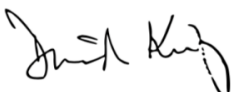
We believe that an elimination strategy for England would bring us into line with our neighbours in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Achieving elimination would allow all social distancing measures to be lifted, schools to be fully open, the hospitality and entertainment industries to reopen fully, revitalisation of the economy and a sense of much needed normality for the population.

Our fear is that if the UK government does not revise its approach, we could see thousands of unnecessary and avoidable deaths and continued economic stasis. We believe an elimination strategy is necessary both ethically, to minimise deaths, but also to hasten the UK's economic recovery.

We would urge you to read our document which lays out our position in more detail. We are also keen to better understand the Government's strategy and would welcome an explanation of what that is.

Yours sincerely



Sir David King
Chairman, The Independent SAGE