Twitter Thread by Lewis Goodall

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Hancock: "It's your actions now which can make a difference."

Plays down prospect of immediate introduction of new restrictions.

Few doubt the public must play its part. But legitimate questions about whether the govt has made/is making public's task harder in two key respects:

1) For some there's still a major economic disincentive apropos self isolation. Sick pay still poor. Savings for many exhausted.

Imminent prospect of Universal Credit cut would make this worse. Some people have fallen through the gaps of government support throughout. Though government support for (effectively) laid off people, a full economic bargain to universally support self isolation still...

...does not exist. Rishi Sunak just made a statement to the House which offered nothing new on any of these fronts.

And 2) The job for individuals is now made harder as a result of prevalence as a result of the delay in full lockdown in most of the country between the...

...point ministers were informed that the new variant had greater transmissibility (December 18th) and full lockdown (early January). We can't interrogate the micro decisions of the public alone, we must look at the macro decisions of ministers too.

And many argue that the pattern we've seen on three occasions is one of delay in introducing measures til nearly or at the last possible moment, which adds to prevalence, means test and trace is yielded useless and makes the task of the public all the more difficult.

The focus on compliance then, though important, is a bit of a futile (and potentially counterproductive) one when it's divorced from the overall context (economic and virological) that individuals are making those decisions in.

In other words, though Matt Hancock is right when he says 'It's your actions now which can make a difference', it applies just as much (if not more) to ministers in the decisions they're making now and in the past too.

Hancock hints to this idea, saying "the new variant makes everything so much harder"

This is presumably why SAGE recommended national lockdown on 22nd December- but that wasn't enacted by ministers (in England) until last week.