Twitter Thread by Jeremy Hunt



Jeremy Hunt
@Jeremy_Hunt

Time to act: thread on why we need to close schools, borders, and ban all household mixing RIGHT AWAY.

To those arguing winter is always like this in the NHS: you are wrong. I faced four serious winter crises as Health Sec and the situation now is off-the-scale worse than any of those.

It's true that we often had to cancel elective care in Jan to protect emergency care but that too is under severe pressure with record trolley waits for the very sickest patients https://t.co/phEd47ztne

> Exclusive: Leaks reveal record waits for emergency care due to covid pressures https://t.co/CrxYPUJG7v
>
> — Health Service Journal (@HSJnews) January 4, 2021

Even more worryingly fewer heart attack patients appear to be presenting in ICUs, perhaps because they are not dialling 999 when they need to
https://t.co/CM1548589N

Full credit to NHS for keeping cancer services open but in Wave 1 there was still a 2/3 drop in cancer appts: people didn't come forward to GPs or want to go to hospitals, with many potentially avoidable cancer deaths. We hoped to avoid that this time but now looking unlikely.

Excellent analysis by @NeilDotObrien shows the reason for all this pressure: 1/3 more hospital beds now taken up nationally by covid patients than in Wave 1 (50% in SE). Having a new strain in the middle of winter is clearly having a massive impact https://t.co/d3L3suUlxh

> There are now just under 50% more Covid patients in hospitals in the greater south east than there were in the spring peak. pic.twitter.com/05lkAmkKjK
>
> — Neil O'Brien MP (@NeilDotObrien) January 3, 2021

No 1 lesson is countries that act early & decisively save lives & get their economies back to normal faster. Wuhan is now free of any restrictions - but Uni of Southampton show if they'd locked down 1 week earlier they would've reduced infections

by 2/3. https://t.co/1uWplUpIJA.

We therefore cannot afford to wait: all schools should be closed, international travel stopped, household mixing limited and the tier system reviewed so that the highest tier really does bring down infection levels (as with the first lockdown).

Also with vacancy levels at 2-3 times normal because of self-isolation & covid, NHS staff who are risking their lives for us MUST be put at the front of the queue for vaccines. This will stop our hospitals falling over and help keep their patients safe. It is also our moral duty.

The good news is that unlike before these restrictions will be time limited to the 12 weeks or so it will take to get the vaccine out to those most vulnerable to covid - so there is light at the end of the tunnel.

I know all these things will be under consideration with decisions potentially imminent. My point is in the face of exponential growth even waiting an extra day causes many avoidable deaths so these plans must now be urgently accelerated.