

Keep Our NHS Public's response to the ONS report of rising Covid infections - for IMMEDIATE use:

"Standing on the side-lines and talking about personal responsibility is the antithesis of leadership and condemns many more to infection and its sometime devastating consequences."

Dr John Puntis is the Co-Chair of campaigning organisation Keep Our NHS Public [1] and the starter of a viral petition now signed by over 425,000 people to reinstate free Covid testing [2]. Last month this petition was presented to Downing Street by NHS staff with the hope that the government would again look at ways to curb the spread of infection.

With the latest ONS report now showing an increase in infection rates from 1.7m to 2.3m in a week with 1 in 30 people having the virus, campaigners and NHS staff believe the time to act on this is now in order to avert further pressure on the NHS, and avoid further death and suffering.

Dr John Puntis, Co-Chair of Keep Our NHS Public and a retired Consultant Paediatrician, said:

"The current new wave of Covid-19 once again emphasises that we cannot simply rely on vaccination to prevent infection. Standing on the side-lines and talking about personal responsibility is the antithesis of leadership and condemns many more to infection and its sometime devastating consequences. It is disappointing that health leaders report they are not wearing masks for protection, and that individuals should make their own risk assessment. We agree with Independent SAGE that in addition to widespread use of free lateral flow tests there needs to be contact tracing, public health infrastructure development, clear and coherent messaging to the public (disseminated by Chief Medical Officers) so that they know what to do, mandatory criteria for air quality in indoor spaces, normalised wearing of FFP2 masks in high risk environments. We also urge employers and organisations to sign the Covid-19 safety pledge." [3]

[ends]

Spokespeople are available for interview. Contact Samantha Wathen, Press Officer for Keep Our NHS Public press@keepournhspublic.com or Call/WhatsApp: 0777 6047472

Notes to editors

[1] Keep Our NHS Public is a national independent organisation campaigning for a well-funded, publicly owned and provided NHS www.keepournhspublic.com

[2] <https://www.change.org/p/boris-johnson-don-t-scrap-free-covid-testing-and-isolation>

[3] <https://www.independentsage.org/sign-up-to-the-covid-19-safety-pledge/>