

316. As stated in paragraph 289 above, the Prime Minister indicated his support for a voucher scheme EOTHO at an early stage of the scheme's development.

317. Throughout the period at which EOTHO was in operation, and immediately prior to its implementation, I do not recall any concerns about the scheme being expressed during ministerial discussions, including those attended by the CMO and CSA².

318. At a Covid(S) meeting on 16 July 2020 the upcoming "*two significant risk moments*" were identified by the CMO as being the "*return of schools*" in September and "*the winter*" [RS/255/INQ000088249].

319. At Covid(S) on 6 August it was noted that "*returning to schools was the single riskiest element of the Government's plan*", and during which there was no mention of EOTHO or hospitality in general [RS/256/INQ000088257].

320. Similarly, a Covid(S) meeting on 22 July 2020 had "*August Planning*" as a specific agenda item which included discussion and consideration of managing the virus through test and trace, data and outbreak management; preparing for winter; contingency planning including the development of smarter NPIs; and work to prepare for schools to reopen. This meeting was attended by the CMO and CSA. There was no mention of EOTHO as a cause for concern or risk at all, as part of the specific August planning [RS/257/INQ000088251].

Any suggestion that EOTHO caused the second wave of infections is not borne out with reference to the discussions at the time, which reflected the view informed by science and health experts that a second wave was always anticipated, even at the outset of the Pandemic, and well before any mention or conception of EOTHO

321. At a Cabinet Meeting on 14 February 2020 the CMO said that "*the virus might take between six weeks and two and a half months to reach its peak, then run at that peak for a few weeks. There was a chance there could be two peaks*" [RS/142/INQ000056138].

322. On 8 March 2020, during a call I had with the CMO and CSA, even before the UK had been through its first peak of infections, I was advised that the second peak

² The CMO attended Covid(S) meetings throughout July and August, the CSA attended the majority