

highly effective at reducing deaths in COVID-19 patients who are sick enough to require oxygen treatment.

The Government is committed to global health leadership. The Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June was a success with \$8.8bn secured and \$600m raised for a COVID Advanced Market Commitment securing ongoing political support for global health.

As we continue to suppress the virus at home, we must remain vigilant to the risk of new infections imported from abroad, through the public health measures we introduced at the border. The Government is committed to the UK being as open as possible to international visitors from abroad, both for trade and leisure, where it is safe to do so. That is why we have introduced travel corridors, so people arriving from certain countries or territories do not need to self-isolate for 14 days. Where progress is made against the virus around the world, we hope to continue to establish travel corridors with new partners. The list of travel corridors will be kept under constant review to ensure that, if necessary, countries and territories can be immediately removed from the list and protective health measures reintroduced to help stop the spread of the virus in the UK.

5. Preparing for Winter

Despite the success in reducing the burden of the virus significantly from its peak in the spring, the coming winter will present further challenges^{[\[footnote 6\]](#)}. Coinfections between seasonal coronaviruses and other respiratory viruses are common. While interactions between COVID-19 and other viruses are not fully understood, they have the potential to be negative and are likely to be more common in winter. There are unknown factors in how colder weather may impact the virus; there is some evidence that UV light means surfaces exposed to sunlight are less hospitable to the virus in the summer^{[\[footnote 7\]](#)}, and some outbreaks have occurred in cold, damp settings, such as meat-packing factories. As the weather becomes colder and days become shorter, we would also expect people to spend more time indoors, where the risk of transmission is higher.

There are also secondary risks. The pressure on the NHS and other health infrastructure is already higher in winter due to other seasonal illnesses, such as flu. This risk could be exacerbated by the postponement of non-urgent care, which was necessary to cope with the initial wave of infections in March and April. This will also present challenges for the capacity of the NHS Test and Trace programme, given the potential for a rise in other respiratory viruses with similar symptoms. These risks are not exclusive to the UK; we will need to consider the impact of any further outbreaks in neighbouring countries, including the impact on supply chains.

The Government is undertaking preparations to make sure that we are as ready as possible for the risk of a resurgence in the virus between November and March. Our collective understanding of the virus, and how it spreads through the population, is vastly improved since the initial wave of infections at the beginning of the year. In the coming months, we will continue to assess what the UK can learn

from other nations, and carry out a series of exercises to test the Government's winter plans.

As part of these preparations, the Government has provided an additional £3bn to the NHS. This includes additional funding to the NHS to allow them to continue to use additional hospital capacity from the independent sector, and to maintain the Nightingale hospitals, in their current state, until the end of March. We will also fund a new enhanced discharge policy to ensure that patients can be quickly and safely discharged from NHS hospitals, freeing up beds for other patients. We will continue to test all patients being discharged into a care home before admission. This comes on top of the over £30bn of additional health and social care spending announced already this year, and the Government remains committed to ensuring that the NHS gets the support it needs through this period.

In addition, we are auditing critical winter stockpiles of equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure we have the stock we need. We will also keep working with care homes to make sure they are prepared to keep residents and staff safe through the winter months. This winter we will be rolling out the biggest flu vaccination programme in the UK's history, providing additional supplies of the vaccine to improve uptake among the population, especially at-risk groups.

6. Lifting restrictions step by step

We are at a stage of the epidemic where the number of infections has come down considerably from its peak and the virus is broadly under control in the majority of the UK. As we continue to open up the economy and increasingly allow more social interaction, the risk of transmitting the virus remains. We all need to continue to minimise close contact with people we don't live with, only meet small groups at any one time (just the members of two households, or six people from multiple households if outdoors) and limit how frequently we meet different people socially over a short period of time to avoid spreading the virus to multiple groups of people. It is vital that people continue to follow the social distancing guidelines to help keep everyone safe as the risk of a wide outbreak remains.

There is a careful balance to strike; safely reopening society and the economy is only possible because the restrictions on social contact remain in place. We will keep these guidelines under review and look to allow ever more contact between family and friends when we can.

We will always assess the state of the epidemic when considering whether to proceed with further steps to allow remaining sectors to reopen, as described below. The stages we have set out represent our ambition for how the next few months might unfold, but this ambition can only be realised if we continue on our current trajectory, where the number of cases is stable or in decline, and local outbreaks are quickly identified and quashed. As previously, these changes will apply in England.

However, it is possible that resurgence of the virus means the below plan cannot be followed safely, so we will prepare for different scenarios over the coming