

Why I am worrying

Published: January 13, 2026, 3:55 am

I am as bored by coronavirus speculation as anyone else.

I am also well aware that I am not an epidemiologist.

And I also readily admit that having, I am sure, had it, and being equally sure that all in my household have done so as well, makes me maybe a little more relaxed about coronavirus than I might otherwise be because our personal risk may be a little lower than average.

And all that being said, I want to put it on record that I am desperately worried about what is happening now with regard to the release of lockdown.

Government scientists are now openly saying that the current state of our containment of coronavirus is 'fragile'.

There is some clear evidence that the number of hospital and ICU admissions now appear to be going up in England.

There is little evidence that R has been contained and may already be well over one in some places.

And yet lockdown appears, for all practical purposes, to be over as far as many people are concerned.

Back in March I remember being sure that herd immunity was the government's policy and that it was only the government's fear that people would not accept 500,000 or so deaths that made that pull back from letting the virus rip through the population then.

Since then people who have lost no-one have got used to thousands of deaths, almost daily.

And now it seems that as people's economic fears rise, and as their frustration with Cummings is uncontrollable, that the policy for herd immunity is to now be that of the

government again, as it always intended.

Certainly, it seems that medics fear that will be the case.

And even the epidemiologists who thought that this was a single bell curve event and that it would all be over by June are now showing signs of thinking a second wave is much more likely.

I fear it is.

And this time I fear three things.

The first is people won't lockdown again.

The second is that the NHS is now deeply fatigued, even if it knows much more than it did in March.

And third, I fear that the rate of infection will be very high and that the NHS could be overwhelmed, as last looked possible in late March before it was known that lockdown would really work.

Put those together and the fear is of a fourth thing, and that is what might be called a discontinuity. We have had a horrible number of excess deaths so far. But if the NHS is overwhelmed that gets much worse because the system of care breaks down. Reopening the Nightingales won't solve that. We'd just see the death toll rise. That's what the discontinuity of a breakdown does.

That's my big fear.

Or to put it another way, the eugenicists in the Cabinet and around it will have achieved their goal.

And there will be a price. If, as seems likely, we are the only country in Europe where this risk is real then we might suffer another and very real lockdown: other countries will close their borders with us, and quite reasonably so.

And before you say that does not matter, it does because just over half our food is imported. And we cannot do without it. But we might have to if things like the Channel Tunnel are shut to prevent contagion to the continent. I see this as a real possibility. I am sure the French are considering it. If they aren't, they're negligent and I doubt they are that.

I hope we will contain our anger sufficiently to direct it to the change we need if that happens. Because that is what we will need to do. But that is going to be a challenge if things get really bad.

I very, very much hope my fears are wrong about what is about to happen. I'll be very happy if people come back and say I worried unnecessarily. But the art of preparation is to worry about what is at least possible. And what I am suggesting looks possible, at the very least.

That's why I am worrying.