

We may be living in a moment of misplaced optimism

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The [FT has reported this morning](#) that:

The planned reopening of the economy, the Budget's renewed support for workers and businesses, and the rapid vaccine rollout have boosted UK consumer confidence to the highest level since before the first lockdown last March, fuelling hopes of a spending rebound.

It is said that the fool and their money are easily parted, and I cannot help but think that there is a great deal of foolishness in the mood of the nation at present. The only comfort in that is that the so-called Covid bounce for the government may be as misplaced.

To be blunt, I very much doubt that we are going to see the summer that so many (me included, if I am completely honest) would like to look forward to.

Europe is already heading into third wave Covid lockdowns. The NHS is actively preparing for the same to happen here, before the summer.

The widespread assumption that the Covid pandemic is over as far as the UK is concerned could well be wrong. For a start, we now face a different pandemic from that which we faced last year : the virus has mutated.

And in the face of that England (but not Wales and Scotland, where vaccination has been considerably better managed) faces the nightmare scenario of having a half vaccinated, and so still intensely vulnerable, population in which the opportunity for the rampant spread of vaccine immune variants is high.

We know such spread is possible. Healthcare is collapsing in Brazil right now.

We also know that the AZ vaccine offers little protection against variants; Pfizer maybe a bit more, and Moderna has yet to appear on the scene.

And it is now apparent that in the politically motivated rush for single jabs which do not

provide vaccination, whatever politicians might claim, but which are simply the first dose of a course that might do so, there has already been gross mismanagement because it is now becoming apparent that sufficient vaccine to guarantee the delivery of the absolutely essential second doses may not have been held back.

In the meantime cases are rising, most especially amongst the young. There are arguments to be had about the testing: lateral flow tests are notoriously unreliable. But the problem is that this was also the pattern last September.

In fact, the apparent euphoria of this moment feels rather like last August, which was very obviously a false period of hope when seen in retrospect. So too might this moment be just that. If cases rise, vaccines are denied, second doses do not happen on time, and the progression that the NHS fears towards another outbreak occurs rather than the virus following the government's roadmap, then we are in deep trouble. And this moment of optimism will be shown to have been deeply misplaced.

I could be wrong about this, of course. I would like to be. But my instincts tell me that this mood of optimism in the country is misplaced.

This also suggests something else. That is that the sense of disappointment that might follow the crushing of hope that the government has unwisely created will be intense. It might even turn to anger. We may not be in for the summer we hoped for, but that does not mean it may not be eventful, in all the wrong ways.