

The country waits on the government's gamble

Published: January 13, 2026, 9:10 am

According [to Politico](#) these are this morning's London newspaper headlines:

TODAY'S FRONT PAGES

[Daily Express](#): Boris holding his nerve as NHS feels strain.

[Daily Mail](#): Pressure piles on PM over energy bill crisis.

[Daily Mirror](#): NHS crisis as staff hit by illness.

[Daily Star](#): Back in the freezer.

[i](#): PM to delay decision on new Covid restrictions.

[The Daily Telegraph](#): Backlash at masks in schools as cases ease.

[The Guardian](#): Merge classes to cope with Covid staffing crisis, headteachers told.

[The Times](#): Ministers confident new curbs not needed.

So, every major newspaper leads with the same issue. That is the government's gamble on Omicron.

The claims over the weekend have been that cases are falling. That ignores the data collection issues of a bank holiday period: on 29/12 we now know that more than 200,000 cases were recorded. Experts suggest the real numbers may be close to 500,000.

What we are now gathering is that it also takes around 15 days from a PCR test to getting into hospital with Omicron - the progression is slower than before.

And data now shows that, as expected, cases are creeping up the age range as Christmas has its inevitable impact of spreading this from school-age children to older people.

The government has taken a massive gamble with Omicron. It may pay off. As I noted yesterday, [even the Telegraph](#) has its doubts that it will.

There remains all the chatter that it is 'just mild'. The data does not say that as yet. The papers are right to be worried. They know that instead of protecting the country this government is taking the most massive gamble with public health. That's not what responsible governments do.