

《新冠疫情：英国何时能够解封?》

What we have done will, I believe, stand as one of the most significant economic interventions at any point in the history of the British state

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and by any government anywhere in the world.

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All this is costing the Treasury a lot of money.

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As a right-wing Conservative, implementing these huge, state-backed measures was a wrench for Mr Sunak,

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but he had no other option.

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Otherwise, you would have seen mass unemployment and huge economic woes across the country.

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But the Treasury is very keen to try and bring these measures to a close as soon as it possibly can.

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According to the FT's estimates,

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the three packages are going to add about ?60bn to the UK's public finances

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and could widen the deficit by up to ?200bn by the end of the year.

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Mr Sunak has been the voice arguing most clearly for an exit strategy for the lockdown

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to know when the Treasury can begin to wind down these measures.

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But this will be politically very difficult for the chancellor,

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because every measure he takes will be fraught with grave political risk.

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But on the other side of this argument is Matt Hancock, the health secretary.

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He's been at the frontline of the UK's fight against coronavirus since January.

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The more people follow the rules, then the faster we will all be through it.

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He's been responsible for hospitals, nurses, doctors, and most troublingly for this government, equipment.

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The UK has struggled to provide enough PPE equipment for those on the front line.

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It had a shortage of ventilators, and of course, testing has been a big problem,

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as the country has consistently fallen behind America, Germany, and other countries

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in making sure it can test frontline NHS staff and patients who are suspected of having coronavirus.

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It's Mr Hancock's job to make sure the health service can survive the coronavirus crisis,

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but he has been concerned that a rapid rise in cases could overwhelm the health service

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and put patients and doctors in very difficult situations.

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He's therefore been arguing that the lockdown may need to go on longer

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and those social distancing measures may need to stay in place to avoid that critical second curve,

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which has bitten other countries, and could, in itself, overwhelm the health crisis.

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So in these cabinet meetings you've seen these two sides going head to head.

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Now, Mr Sunak and Mr Hancock argue there haven't been any arguments,

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just both sides trying to speak up for the needs of their department.

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But when you look at the very different aims of both departments,

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you can see why there has been a big split and why there are some very difficult decisions ahead for Downing Street.

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But the person who's going to make the key decision on lockdown is going to be Boris Johnson himself.

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Mr Johnson was admitted to hospital on the weekend to undergo further tests as he is suffering from coronavirus himself.

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In his absence, the de facto deputy prime minister is Dominic Raab.

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He's the man who will be making the decisions in the prime minister's absence.

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Some people are going to start wondering, is it time to ease up on the rules?

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So I have to say, thank you for your sacrifice, but also, we're not done yet.

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We must keep going.

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But the decision on when and how to end lockdown and the social distancing measures can only really be made by one person.

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It will be one of the momentous decisions taken by this government.

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It can't be Mr Hancock, or Mr Sunak, or Mr Raab.

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Really, Mr Johnson is the prime minister

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and he will have to make the call on when it's the crucial moment to start putting Britain back to normal again.

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