

COVID-19

Government must not act too hastily and risk safety



Now isn't the time to throw caution to the wind over mask wearing

The government appears to be about to scrap rules requiring face coverings to be worn in enclosed public spaces

In response, UNISON assistant general secretary Jon Richards said:

"Now isn't the time to throw caution to the wind, especially with infections on the rise. The economy is important, but so is public confidence.

"People want clarity from the government as restrictions are eased. They don't need a confusing free-for-all, with ministers absolving themselves of any responsibility for public health.

"Ditching masks prematurely in schools has caused classroom chaos with hundreds of thousands of pupils currently isolating at home. Let's not repeat the same mistakes elsewhere.

"Face coverings and well-ventilated workspaces provide a level of reassurance and security to staff who deal with the public. Safety laws also require their employers to keep these workers safe.

"While protective safety kit is likely to remain compulsory in

Contacting Derbyshire UNISON

01629 582266

branch@unisondc.co.uk

derbyshireunison.com

hospitals and care homes, healthcare workers need assurances that this will be so.

"Many other employees, who've spent the past 16 months working from home, will be more reluctant to step on to crowded buses, trains, trams and tubes if masks are no longer compulsory.

"Having two vaccine jabs protects individuals and the wider community. Wearing masks is all about protecting others too. The Prime Minister should be wary about being too hasty with their scrapping."