The BMJ

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2021;374:n1833<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n1833>

Published: 20 July 2021

THE BIG PICTURE

Danse macabre on “freedom day”

Alison Shepherd

Clubbers at London's Piano Works mark the lifting of all remaining covid restrictions in England on 19 July. The nightclub was one of many venues across the country that opened for the first time since March 2020.

The UK is forecast to soon have more new SARS-CoV-2 infections a day than it did at the height of the second wave. As clubs opened on Sunday night 48 161 new cases were recorded. Because 68% of UK adults are fully vaccinated the case rates have not led to the numbers of deaths seen in January, but less than 25% of under-30s have had both doses of vaccine.

The devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have taken a more cautious approach. All have retained mandatory public mask wearing and distancing rules, and Wales and Northern Ireland still restrict how many people can meet indoors and out.

The day after clubs opened the prime minister announced that, by the end of September, in England full vaccination would be a condition of entry to nightclubs and other venues where large crowds gather.