

Serious times require serious leadership, but that's not what we're getting with this Prime Minister and his colleagues.

Last week we had the revelations about the Christmas parties that government staff and in some cases Ministers held in Downing Street and elsewhere, against the rules they themselves imposed on the rest of the country.

While children, families, nurseries and schools across St Helens cancelled Christmas events, missed day after day of education and faced huge uncertainty, the then Education Secretary Gavin Williamson was having a knees up at the Department for Education.

While thousands of working families and older people in St Helens were worrying about putting food on the table and whether they'd be able to see loved ones, the Work and Pensions Secretary was hosting a party in her office. She's still in post.

And the Prime Minister himself was hosting a Christmas quiz for Downing Street staff gathered illegally. A fish rots from the head down, as the saying goes.

Given all this, it would be easy to decide to ignore the latest advice announced this week and to tell Boris Johnson where to go.

But we need to put public health first, not party politics. The time will come when we'll get the chance to show Johnson and his equally appalling colleagues the door but right now we need to listen to the scientists and public health officials whose main concern is protecting us and our health service.

As a council we have responsibility for public health and here in St Helens we're lucky to work closely and successfully with the local NHS. We had no warning of the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday and the target for boosters is challenging but I have every confidence our staff will do their best – and we each need to do ours.

If you haven't already done so, please book your first or second vaccination, and if you've had both please do book in for your booster. You can book by calling 119, or find links to book online and read all the latest information at www.sthelens.gov.uk/coronavirus or the NHS website.

These are challenging times for us all, but throughout the pandemic we've shown tremendous strength, kindness and care. I know we'll continue to show the best of St Helens, together.

Best wishes to all Star readers.