



Sarah Owen MP
Member of Parliament for Luton North

Rt Hon Matt Hancock
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
By email mb-sofs@dhsc.gov.uk

23rd July 2020

Dear Matt

Recent rise in cases of covid-19 in Luton

I am deeply concerned about the developing situation in Luton where we have seen a rise in the number of cases of coronavirus over the last few days. We are also seeing an increased R rate. I also understand that Luton is likely to enter the 'top ten watch list' for local lockdowns.

While I hope that a local lockdown can be avoided in the town, it is pressing that people in Luton can be assured that the situation can be controlled. As a matter of urgency, please can you offer information to me and my constituents on how your Department is ensuring the following?:

- That powers are devolved to Luton Council's Director of Public Health to manage the spike, in coordination with Luton Council's leadership
- Granular testing data is available with patients identifiable by demographic and workplace, including positive and negative results on a daily basis
- Availability of sophisticated testing, including random testing and mass testing across the area
- Door to door home testing
- A clear local say where testing sites should go across an area and an agreement that testing sites stay in place for duration of the outbreak.
- Local tracing data is available
- Public health information is available in multiple languages
- Resources for the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive to inspect and close workplaces, if necessary, to keep workers safe
- Timely and clear support for Luton businesses that recognises local covid-19 circumstances might be different to the rest of the country
- More testing in Luton's care homes for staff and residents
- If imposed, what will the threshold be for release from local lockdown? If we look to Leicester, there is still no criteria available publicly that will be used to ease lock down.

Further to this information and following on from my question to you at your briefing on Tuesday (21st) with Baroness Harding, please can you and government colleagues also assure Lutonians that the local council will receive the funding it needs to fight a local outbreak and sustain itself through a potential local lock down? Luton Council receives nearly half of its revenue from our local airport where passenger numbers fell to near zero, and still remain low due to the pandemic. This has meant that the Council has already had to pass an emergency budget, cutting nearly £50m from services. I fear what another lock down might mean for council revenues if government does not provide the resources the council needs to fight this outbreak.



People in Luton have given so much to help beat this virus over the last few months and are worried about what a local outbreak might bring. I do think people are asking for a more substantive plan than slogans like “whack-a-mole”.

Whilst I still hope we can avoid a local lockdown, amid this local outbreak, I am willing to work constructively with government and whoever it takes to protect as many people’s health and livelihoods as possible.

I look forward to your response on this very urgent matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Owen'.

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