



# Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Monday 1 June 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

## Responsibility for contact tracking and tracing

During your appearance before the Liaison Committee on Wednesday 27 May, I asked you about aspects of the Government's approach to contact tracking and tracing. The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee wishes to have a clearer picture of where responsibility will lie in the implementing of contact tracking and tracing, especially the role of local organisations.

There are several organisations involved in contact tracking and tracing. These include NHS England, Public Health England, private companies running phone banks, the directors of Public Health, and local authorities. We would like the Government to set out the respective roles of all the different organisations involved and publish this online. It is important this includes how the Government expects various organisations to work together.

In addition, it is important to know how local organisations will fit within this structure. The Government has [stated that](#) "Each local authority will be given funding to develop tailored outbreak control plans, working with local NHS and other stakeholders." You told the Liaison Committee that it is "the local resilience forums, which are leading on this" ([Q.56](#)). Therefore, it remains unclear whether the local committees will be constituted from existing bodies, such as local resilience forums, or a different group of local stakeholders. Can you therefore please clarify who will make up the local committees that are responsible for devising local outbreak plans? Can you explain the relative roles to be played by local councillors, by local resilience forums and by the directors of public health? Furthermore, will the local plans be entirely devised by the committees, or will the plans need the approval of the Joint Biosecurity Council, or of Government ministers?

We understand that the Joint Biosecurity Council will provide analysis about infection outbreaks, collect data and advise the Government how to respond to spikes in infections. You stated that there would be strong directional control by the council towards local committees ([Q.56](#)). Does this mean that local committees will receive orders from the Biosecurity Council? Will there be areas of responsibility that solely rest with the local committees? How would any disagreements be resolved?

Where a local lockdown is required, will the decision to impose and to subsequently lift the lockdown rest with the local committee? Where such a local lockdown has been declared, will the directors of public health have the power to shut down businesses, schools, and other organisations situated in the area?

Can you give an assurance that data will be shared fully with all partners? In particular, that directors of public health and local authorities will have all necessary access to NHS data?

I would be grateful if you could supply this information by Monday 8 June 2020.

I am copying this letter to Sir Bernard Jenkin as the Chair of the Liaison Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a period at the end.

**Clive Betts**  
**Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee**