



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Chief Medical Officer & Chief Scientific Adviser
Professor Chris Whitty CB FMedSci*

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Chair of the Science and
Technology Houses of
Parliament,
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39 Victoria Street
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9 November 2020

Dear Mr Clark

Thank you for inviting the GCSA Sir Patrick Vallance and me to speak to the Science and Technology Committee last Tuesday at short notice. Three follow up points, two at your request.

- 1) I wrote to you the day after the hearing because I was concerned that some commentators had misinterpreted me to say that rates were not going down in Liverpool (which I did not say) because they interpreted a general point as a Liverpool-specific point. I did this in advance of the full transcript because I was keen to inform the Debate that afternoon. I find on reading the transcript that actually I did much later in the (long) session spontaneously comment on Liverpool's rate at Q1517 and said the following "...things are coming down, although not quite fast enough, in Liverpool and Merseyside." That was correct then (and I am glad to say remains correct) thanks to the remarkable work of the people and leaders of Merseyside. I slightly regret that my previous clarification was interpreted in the press as a correction as it was not; my evidence to the Committee was correct. I prefer however to be over-scrupulous and the hearing was an important part of informing the Debate.
- 2) You wanted more data and asked me to write to you about this. I committed to encouraging the publication of the data that informed the introduction of restrictions on November 5th. I am happy to say that detailed epidemiological data and projection models were published last Wednesday ahead of the parliamentary debate. These can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-cases-in-england-4-november-2020>.

I think the UK Government coronavirus dashboard, which is updated daily with testing, case, hospital admissions and deaths data, and PHE's weekly Covid-19 surveillance reports are also good and data-rich reports, which are constantly improving. These can be found at <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>.

- 3) Finally, I promised that I would point Mr Clarkson to the ONS report which explains how they deal with the important issues of false positive and false negatives he raised, which can be accessed here
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/methodologies/covid19infectionsurveyspilotmethodsandfurtherinformation>.

I hope this covers the additional points you wanted covered.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Whitty', written in a cursive style.

PROFESSOR CHRIS WHITTY
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER AND DHSC CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER.