



# Health and Social Care Committee and Science and Technology Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Baroness Dido Harding  
Executive Chair  
NHS Test and Trace  
(By e-mail)

13 November 2020

Dear Dido,

Thank you again for taking the time to appear before the Health and Social Care and Science and Technology Committees this week—we appreciate your engagement with our work at a hugely pressured time.

We are writing to ask for clarification over some statistics you referred to in your evidence. As you know, in an earlier panel Professor Dominic Harrison quoted a figure of 89% of cases reached by teams locally in Blackburn with Darwen, as a proportion of cases who failed to be contacted by the national system within 24 hours.<sup>1</sup>

In your own evidence you later repeatedly stated that this 89% figure represented a "combination" of national and local performance for contact tracing, rather than case tracing, and that the majority of those would be contacted by the national team. However, Professor Harrison was clear in his evidence that this 89% success rate was for cases where the centralised system had failed to establish contact within 24 hours, and had therefore passed the case on to local health protection teams.

NHS Test and Trace data for the period 28 May to 28 October shows that 4,774 out of 5,519 cases (87%) referred to the national system from the Blackburn and Darwen area were contacted.<sup>2</sup> However what is unclear from this data and your evidence is the proportion contacted by the national system, and the proportion contacted by the local health protection team. We are therefore writing to ask you to clarify what evidence and data you have to support your claim that this 89% success rate in Blackburn with Darwen was a "combined" figure for contact tracing performance, when in fact it appears to represent the success rate for local case tracing alone.

Further, we would be grateful if you would set out, for the cases which are referred to the contact tracing system nationally:

- what proportion were successfully contacted by centralised case tracers; and
- what proportion were successfully contacted by local teams.

As well as this, we would be grateful for your clarification over the evidence you gave when asked about remarks made to the CBI in September regarding the potential of rapid coronavirus testing as a "business and consumer product." In your evidence you stated that "it was not a confusion in September because the lateral flow tests did not exist at that stage." In fact, there was widespread contemporary reporting of you making these remarks

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<sup>1</sup> [Q333](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-england-and-coronavirus-testing-uk-statistics-22-october-to-28-october>

to a CBI webinar on 21 September, and on 9 September the Prime Minister stated that lateral flow tests were part of the Operation Moonshot project.

We also look forward to receiving the further correspondence you offered during the session, in addition to further details on a number of our questions, particularly:<sup>3</sup>

1. the monthly expenditure of NHS Test and Trace, since it started until the last month for which figures are available;
2. how much of the expenditure in answer to question 1 is spent monthly on:
  - testing;
  - contact tracing; and
  - other functions (please specify what these are);
3. to confirm how much has been spent overall on contact tracing across:
  - centralised contact tracing; and
  - local contact tracing;
4. to confirm who is in control of allocating expenditure across centralised and local contact tracing;
5. to provide a breakdown of how the excess £2bn of funding, outlined in the [Winter Economy Plan](#) (over the £10bn announced in the July [Plan for Jobs](#)) will be allocated;
6. to provide the data for what proportion of positive cases adhere to self-isolation and the proportion of contacts who adhere to self-isolation; and
7. to provide data on the proportion of tests booked which are then carried out.

We will be publishing this letter on our Committees' websites shortly. We would be grateful for a response no later than 5pm on Thursday 19 November.

With best wishes,



**Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP**

*Chair, Health and Social Care Committee*



**Rt Hon Greg Clark MP**

*Chair, Science and Technology Committee*

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<sup>3</sup> Please see [Qq368-70](#), [Q373](#), [Q376](#), [Q406](#) and [Q431](#)