



Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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From the Chair

Dr Phil James
Chief Executive Officer
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

1 February 2021

Dear Phil,

I am writing to you following recent reports that, despite Government advice that people should only leave their home for work where they cannot reasonably work from home, some employees have reported being pressured by their employers to return to their workplace. Others have reported being told to return to work in businesses that have remained open despite being “non-essential”.

Despite some employees reporting that their workplaces are still not Covid secure, the Committee has seen reports that the Health and Safety Executive has not taken any enforcement action against employers during the current lockdown. It would be helpful to have answers to the following questions:

- 1. In October 2020, CIEH called for Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) in England to be given greater powers to tackle non-Covid secure workplaces. Since then, have EHPs been given any additional powers?**
 - a. In your view, what further powers do EHPs need to tackle non-Covid secure workplaces effectively?**
- 2. Do EHPs have powers to inspect and, if necessary, close hospitality venues such as pubs? If not, where does responsibility sit?**
- 3. How are EHPs working with local authorities and other bodies during the current lockdown? Is there more that the Government and local authorities should be doing to make use of EHPs’ expertise?**
- 4. How many qualified EHPs are currently working across the UK? In your view, are there a sufficient number of EHPs, and do they have the resources they need, to ensure that workplaces are Covid secure?**

It would be helpful to have a response by Friday 12 February.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee