



Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA



ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL
COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT
ISLE OF WIGHT PO30 1UD

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP and Nadine Dorries MP
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

14th May 2020

Dear Matt and Nadine

Coronavirus Test and Trace Programme

A week ago, the Isle of Wight became the first place in the country to use NHSX's new contact tracing app. As you know, the take up has been strong: with over 65,000 downloads (so far) of the app, the overwhelming majority of which were from the Island (out of an estimated 80-90,000 compatible smartphones locally).

We are pleased – as an island community – to “do our bit” to help the rest of the country, whilst also making ourselves safer. We hope that our use of the app has – to use your words – “led the way”, and that Britain will now follow.

Most importantly, it is working. As Dr Geraint Lewis – NHSX's lead on the app – said last weekend, an average of 25 people per day were being tested for coronavirus after reporting it through the app. These people receive a notification, with clear instructions on what to do next. This is not only helping to keep them safe but everyone else on the Island as well.

Dr Lewis – whose leadership and clarity of vision is evident – has interfaced with the Island in relation to two key aspects. First, by being able to answer technical questions; and second, by observing real world practicalities of using this app in a multitude of differing circumstances.

On our part, we believe that the Isle of Wight is supporting the development of the trace and test programme in three ways. First, our daily use of the app informs NHSX's technical understanding. Second, many of us are actively providing feedback. And third, we collectively plan to make our experiences available to the rest of the UK.

On this latter point, we are now compiling – with local partners, including the local NHS Trust – a detailed portfolio of learning from our experience of engaging our local community in using the app as well as the wider test and trace programme. This is being done so that our experiences can inform the forthcoming national rollout of the app.

Both of us are willing to encourage our parliamentary and local government colleagues, respectively, to play their part. Our experience of the past week is that local elected representatives, alongside local authority, NHS and public health professionals, know best how to engage with and lead their communities to secure their support and confidence in a programme of this sort. We are ready and able to engage with our colleagues when it is needed.

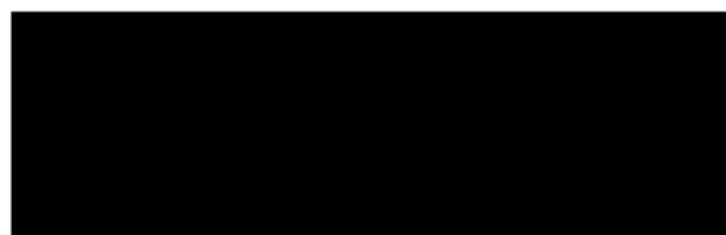
Finally, we welcome this week's announcement regarding the expansion of the expert team leading the nationwide rollout of the test and trace programme. We will, of course, ensure our experiences and recommendations are shared with them too. As has been pointed by NHSX, we now are at least a fortnight ahead of the rest of country in terms of the trace and testing programme. We are therefore well placed to continue supporting initial phases ahead of national rollouts, and in doing so not just make our community even safer but also continue to help the rest of the country.

We are copying this note to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government (The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP) and the Chairman of the Local Government Association (Cllr James Jamieson).

With best wishes



Bob Seely MBE MP
Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight



Cllr Dave Stewart
Leader of the Isle of Wight Council