



## CATHERINE WEST MP

*Member of Parliament for Hornsey and Wood Green*

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
Department of Health and Social Care  
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

24 March 2020  
Our Ref: ZA7758

Dear Matt,

Re: Covid-19 Testing,

I am writing to you to seek urgent and detailed clarification regarding the government's strategy to carry out testing for Covid-19.

As I understand it the government are pursuing two strands of testing, one for the active virus and one for antibodies. I will ask for further details on these separately:

### **Active testing -**

As I am sure you can appreciate the overwhelming majority of my constituents are concerned about the lack of testing for the active virus. As such, I would be grateful for answers to the following questions:

- For the past 10 days or so the level of testing has been limited to around 5500 a day. When will this increase to the publicly announced goal of 25,000 a day?
- It has come to my attention that Universities and research facilities have only just been contacted by the government for their invaluable research equipment. Why has this only just taken place, and when does the government envisage that the use of this equipment will start?
- Many suitably qualified professionals are able and willing to help with the testing regime, perhaps with a day's refresher course. Have the government proposed asking those with suitable qualifications to come forward, and if so when will this take place?
- Many NHS staff are requesting the test to enable them to go back to the front line. When will the government ensure that all NHS staff can have the test if required, and what steps are being taken to decrease the turnaround time for test results?

### **Antibody testing:**

In public media appearances you have spoken highly of the potential for a antibody test, and I share your optimism that this may have a significant impact on the fight against Covid-19, but I would be

grateful for further clarity on the below:

- It has been widely reported than “hundreds of thousands” of these tests will be bought. Have the Department finalised the sale, and if so how many units have been bought?
- Upon roll out of the test, what will be the initial target for testing and will NHS workers be the priority?
- The test has the potential to enable large amounts of workers to return to work and repair some of the economic damage of the virus. Will the test be available to the general public, and if so how will people be certified as being immune?

I appreciate that you and your officials are undertaking invaluable work at this stressful time but I would be grateful for your response as a matter of priority.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine West

**Member of Parliament for Hornsey & Wood Green**