

Letter to Matt Hancock

Dear Matt

I sympathise with the government's need to balance the aim of getting deaths and serious illness from CV 19 down, and to allow recovery of the business activity from the economic disaster of lock down.

Now that we see cases of CV 19 rising again, with the danger that it will get back into the vulnerable community and cause more suffering and death, can we learn some of the lessons of the first time round?

I take away from the experience of March and April that it is particularly important to protect the elderly vulnerable to keep the death rate down. Shouldn't we now stop all visits to Care Homes, and ask people to contact friends and relative by phone, or on line video calls which the staff can help the residents set up?

Shouldn't there be a strong regime to test staff in care homes in case they catch the virus without symptoms, to further safeguard residents? I am glad you are helping the sector with proper protective clothing and stressing the need for strict hygiene regimes.

We also saw hospitals as centres of spreading the virus. Can we this time identify isolation hospitals or sections of hospitals that can be fenced off against the virus to handle all CV 19 cases, allowing the bulk of the NHS to proceed with the many other life threatening conditions that need treatment without the threat of cross infection?

The vulnerable in the community should be reminded that their voluntary protection from the virus requires them to be very careful about social contacts. Friends, neighbours, relatives and local Social Services should be encouraged to offer safe distance social contact and support with on line orders to see them through a further need to observe distance from others who may carry the virus.

The main emphasis of policy should be on protecting those most at risk, as we now know the pattern of risk factors making it more likely someone will get a dangerous version of this disease.

It would also be good to have an up date from your medical advisers on best and preferred courses of treatment, now that much more is known about the nature of the disease and the efficacy of various drugs and treatments.

Yours

John