

# Test and track

I am writing today to Matt Hancock, Health Secretary, to clarify how the Test and track system will work. It is in all our interests that it is used to keep us safe whilst allowing many more people to work and go about their daily lives more normally.

The idea of the system is people self isolate and get themselves tested if they develop new Covid 19 like symptoms. We are told that the testing may take 48 hours during which time no-one else has to self isolate. If the test confirms the presence of the virus then "recent close contacts" of the infected person should also self isolate and will be contacted by the system.

The government document does seek to define recent close contact. It says it includes spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of the infected person, and face to face contact of under 1 metre. The document tells us this could result from travelling even a short distance with someone in a car, or on a plane. It could also include people in the same school or workplace.

So I would like to have more guidance on

1. Travelling in a train or tube carriage with someone who is infected. How could contacts be discovered, and can this represent a threat to a traveller? What is government advice on train travel? If someone travels by train and another passenger notifies as having the virus do the other passengers have to self isolate?
2. How many people in a workplace or school would need to self isolate if one of their number is discovered with the disease? Would there be an assessment of who had come closer than 1 metre? Presumably it will not require all people at that location to self isolate?
3. Can we assume that after someone has self isolated for 7 days who has the virus, and for 14 days who might get it, they are no longer able to infect anyone else?
4. Why has the government decided to use the WHO guideline of 1 metre separation rather than the U.K. 2 metre? Have government advisers reconsidered the 2 m requirement given WHO advice of 1 metre and Germany's use of 1.5 metres?

The more knowledge of the transmission of the virus that can be shared with the public the more effective social distancing will be and the more co-operation there will be with the policy of Test and Trace.