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Dear Matt

After the UQ today we spoke briefly about Hackney Council's willingness and capability in being able to deliver Covid-19 testing and contact tracing.

We confirm that Hackney would be willing to be a pilot area for this important work, which will be essential as we move to the next phase of the crisis. Our population is very different to the Isle of Wight – young, ethnically diverse and with a clear digital divide. We also have high levels of poverty, overcrowded housing, low paid workers in essential jobs and these are likely to have contributed to the higher death rate in Hackney (127.4 per 100,000) reported as the third highest in London in the ONS figures released on Friday.

We will be very happy to work with officials or to draw up a proposal ourselves, working with public health colleagues in London and PHE. There is in house capability and credibility in the Council's public health team, as well as resources in environmental health, sexual health and the local health system, the latter being already critical in supporting social care services.

We have also been overwhelmed with local volunteers who could be trained as additional contact tracers.

The political and professional leadership of the Council is dynamic and practical and has done a good job delivering services during Covid-19. It has a solid track record of delivery and sound financial management.

As a former member of the Public Accounts Committee I'm sure you will appreciate what I mean when I say that maybe a bit more Shoreditch and a bit less Whitehall

Labour Member of Parliament for Hackney South and Shoreditch

could be a benefit when it comes to local testing and swift delivery during this national emergency.

Yours sincerely

Meg Hillier MP, Hackney South and Shoreditch  
Diane Abbott MP, Hackney North and Stoke Newington  
Philip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney