

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2020

Dear *ConArdnet*.

Thank you for your email.

The test and trace programme is vital to the national effort to combat the Covid pandemic. The Covid 'Test and Trace Taskforce' will ensure that if someone develops Covid symptoms than they will be able to quickly access a test. The taskforce will further be able to reach out to people who have been in recent close contact with the infected individual to alert them and provide advice. I understand that the Government does not have any plans to make the downloading of an app compulsory, however, the more people that use it, the better informed the NHS' response will be. The app will enable tracers to understand the spread of the virus, as well as to get in touch with people that may be at risk.

If you or your partner have been in close contact with an individual with a confirmed case of Covid, the NHS will contact you if the infected individual provides your details. This may be by phone, text or email. Text messages will come from the NHS. Calls will come from 0300 0135000. They will advise you on what steps you need to take to reduce further transmission. I am pleased that NHSX, the organisation developing the app, have worked with the National Cyber Security Centre to ensure adequate security levels are in place to protect personal information.

Mass testing and contact tracing are not, by themselves, solutions to the pandemic. However, it may allow social restrictions to be relaxed faster by working to suppress transmission in the community. I fully support steps being taken by the Government to establish the Test and Trace taskforce, and I welcome the additional £300 million funding for local authorities to implement the programme and control local outbreaks.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson".

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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