

Date: 4th March, 2021
Your reference:
Our reference: MB/JED



Via email:
Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock MP.

The Leader of the Council
Town Hall
Lancaster Road
Preston PR1 2RL

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Dear Secretary of State,

**Re: JCVI Priority Vaccination Strategy
Accelerating JCVI Priority Group Vaccinations in High Transmission Local
Authority Areas**

I am writing to ask you to urgently consider accelerating the roll out of COVID19 vaccinations to higher risk COVID19 transmission local authority areas in order to assure equal life chances and pandemic exit dates across the country, in support of the similar request sent to you by colleagues at Blackburn with Darwen Council.

Preston became an area of intervention on the 7 August 2020, additional restrictions which have never been removed or decreased, and continues to have one of the highest infection rates in England, despite the extensive effort of ourselves, Lancashire County Council and other partner organisations through the Lancashire Resilience Forum. We have hosted multiple community testing sites; worked extensively alongside community and faith leaders to target and support at risk community groups; led a high performing local authority track and trace programme; engaged with national campaigns and invested in local campaigns; provided comprehensive Environmental Health support to businesses in the local area; and now are providing administrative resource to enable the mass vaccination site in the city centre. We have taken every opportunity made available to us, supported every collaboration, and adapted to the changing landscape in every necessary way.

I would like to draw your attention to the recent analysis undertaken by the NHS Test and Trace System, the National Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) and PHE which focuses on 16 potential hypotheses to explain 'enduring transmission.'

As I am sure you are aware, the summary conclusions suggest that areas of enduring high transmission have permanently higher risks of COVID19 rates for the following reasons:

- Higher than average deprivation levels.
- Higher percentages of multi-generational households with a higher number of household members.
- Higher percentages of frontline employees who have been unable to follow the “stay at home” directive.
- Higher percentages of residents unable to self-isolate due to financial reasons.
- Significantly below national average performance in case and contact tracing through the National system.
- Higher risk demographic characteristics, including ethnicity.

A number of these factors are highly relevant to Preston and are largely beyond the capacity and control of the City or County Council to determine or influence.

I strongly urge you to take immediate action to ensure that areas are prioritised in the roll out of the vaccination programme to effectively suppress the transmission of COVID19 where there is demonstrable evidence of continued higher infection rates for residents. This would ensure a key NHS principle of services provided according to need is met and would help address the disproportionate effect on vulnerable sections of our community including our BAME residents.

I believe that this action in high-risk transmission areas is necessary in order to facilitate the reduction in mortality rates that we are all looking for.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Brown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Matthew Brown
Leader of the Council