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RE: NHS Staff Covid Testing.

Dear Constituent,

A few people have asked about this following a vote in the House of Commons on an Opposition Day Motion earlier this week.

This was a political motion that deliberately differed from the trusted advice given to the Government by our Chief Medical Officer. To be completely clear - I am in favour of NHS staff testing policy as advised by the Chief Medical Officer and the Government has been and will continue to follow this advice.

The Opposition Motion was almost certainly crafted to try and generate a campaign – one which some of you have responded to – but I believe you have been misled and fallen for a straightforward (and well executed) political stunt.

The Shadow Health Secretary in his opening remarks at the debate said Labour are calling for weekly testing of NHS staff, “*if necessary*”; however “*if necessary*” was not in the wording of their motion when it came before us to vote upon, instead it called for blanket weekly testing without any qualification.

The approach on the testing of NHS staff has been determined by clinical experts, including the Chief Medical Officer, and the NHS has now set out plans for how it will work. This includes continuing to *prioritise* testing of all NHS staff with symptoms, *regular testing* of asymptomatic staff in situations where there is an incident or outbreak, and *regular surveillance* testing across all staff. The Government is continually reviewing clinical evidence to ensure regular testing of staff without symptoms is undertaken where appropriate.

As I’m sure you can understand, we are taking a targeted approach to this testing, so that it is focused on the most high-risk areas. Clinical advice is to focus intensive asymptomatic testing in those areas or settings identified to have high prevalence. Staff working with patients on wards, for example, will benefit from regular testing far more than NHS staff working in offices or administrative roles where they do not come into regular contact with patients. This approach is crucial as, when prevalence of the virus is very low, the risk of misleading results is higher. This can undermine the value of testing.

So, testing continues across our NHS, as it should.

Misleading political votes are, to be fair, part of the bread and butter of Opposition Parties through the years; however I hope you can sense my disappointment that Labour felt they could play political games which could spread fear and confusion on such an important issue at this time.

I trust this will help to clarify the matter and reassure you of this Government’s commitment to our NHS staff.

Yours,

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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

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