



DR ROSENA ALLIN-KHAN MP
HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON, SW1A 0AA

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health
By email

Paul Martin, Chief Executive of Wandsworth Council
By email

Shannon Katiyo, Director of Public Health at Wandsworth Council
By email

2nd February 2021

Dear Matt, Paul and Shannon,

New variant: Expanding testing beyond postcodes

I have deep concerns about the new Covid-19 (501Y.V2) variant that has been located in the neighbouring postcode of CR4. I have also been contacted by a number of residents on this matter.

The new South African variant is in our neighbouring postcode (CR4), which is only separated from Tooting (SW16 and SW17) by a railway line. Both postcodes use the same shops, the same hospital, the same parks, and the same train station (Tooting Station), which is located on the boundary. If the variant is there, it could easily be here in Tooting too. This will be the same across all affected areas.

The Government were warned by SAGE about the new variant weeks ago, but have failed to act quickly and decisively. While I welcome the announcement yesterday that people in affected postcodes will be widely tested, this new testing policy must go further. For communities such as mine that share so many resources with affected areas, including a large teaching hospital and vaccine hub, it is vital that testing is broadened in order to find any new cases of the variant and contain them quickly.

Are there any plans to launch testing in neighbouring postcodes? This would be the only way to quickly assess how widespread the new variants are. What resources would local public health teams require in order to carry out door-to-door testing?

We have seen repeatedly that the virus does not abide by borders, be they ward, borough or national boundaries. If the Government fails to act now, we risk the new variant getting out of control and jeopardising the progress made through the vaccines. The consequences would be fatal.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP
Shadow Cabinet Member for Mental Health
Labour MP for Tooting



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