**Draft letter to send to councillors**

Dear ,

We're many months into the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK still doesn’t have an adequately functioning testing and tracing programme.

So-called ‘NHS Test and Trace' has used public money to benefit a string of private companies contracted despite their lack of expertise, and in some cases poor past records. The numbers of tests have gradually increased, but turnaround times, levels of contact tracing, and communication and support around self-isolation often fall far short of what is required.

A functioning Test and Trace system is still absolutely vital to stopping this virus spreading over the coming months and year, as [Independent SAGE](https://twitter.com/Zubhaque/status/1346382843556089859?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1346382843556089859%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fuk.news.yahoo.com%2Fboris-johnson-lockdown-announcement-extraordinary-omission-134455973.html) [members](https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/01/27/covid-19-how-to-break-the-cycle-of-lockdowns/), the [WHO](https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n292) and public health experts like [Prof. Devi Sridhar](https://www.newstatesman.com/science-tech/coronavirus/2021/01/devi-sridhar-uk-needs-zero-covid-strategy-prevent-endless-lockdowns?utm_source=Economic%20Change%20Unit&utm_campaign=542bacd6f0-Biden_COPY_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6101fe9ecd-542bacd6f0-180123229&mc_cid=542bacd6f0&mc_eid=edec7302db) have asserted time and time again.

The only way to finally get control over the virus is with publicly funded testing and tracing led by local public health teams, with national coordination and support. Lockdowns, circuit breakers, and tiers of restrictions won’t alone achieve control. Without fixing testing and tracing, such measures are only holding off further spread of the virus while causing much economic and social harm, particularly to those already worse off.

We Own It and others have been campaigning for months for the Government to direct funding to local and regional public health teams to carry out testing and tracing in their areas. These are the people with the expertise and years of experience who can do the job properly. And we’ve been calling on the Government to stop renewing contracts to Serco, Sitel, Deloitte, etc.

I would like to ask for your help to pass a motion, as attached, calling on central government to fund local public health teams to lead on test and trace, starting with contact tracing. I understand this may not be possible immediately as schedules are busy, however I think this is going to continue to be really important to our community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,