



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Professor Hugh Pennington
Emeritus Professor
University of Aberdeen

Via email only

Health and Sport Committee
T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5210

Calls via RNID Typetalk: 18001 0131 348 5224
Email: healthandsport@parliament.scot

30 April 2020

Dear Professor Pennington,

COVID 19

Many thanks for giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee on Tuesday 28 April. The Committee found your evidence comprehensive and useful and are extremely grateful to you for your time.

We had a few areas we wished to explore further with you following the session and a couple which we would be grateful for any further information you can provide.

You placed great emphasis on the need for testing during the meeting and on the capacity of laboratories in Scotland to accommodate this work. Are you in a position to provide the Committee with any indication of what the testing capacity in Scotland could be were all available sources being utilised? On testing you also mentioned the availability of the test. The Committee would appreciate clarification as to whether this test can detect the virus in those displaying no symptoms and if not, what is its role in preventing the spread of the virus into areas such as care homes.

On the issue of easing the lock down and social distancing, you had suggested an approach based on geography may be appropriate and the Committee would appreciate further explanation of how you believe that would work.

In response to questions from the Committee, you indicated we were perhaps some way off easing the lock down and moving back to a testing, tracing and isolating strategy, stating for this to happen there would need to be considerably fewer cases. At what level of cases do you believe this would be a suitable point to initiate such a strategy, assuming testing capacity?

You spoke of the care home environment as an ideal setting for a determined virus to spread. What in your view is the best way to protect care home residents and to prevent the infection from reaching them, and what measures would have to be in place to achieve this.

On personal protective equipment (PPE), you emphasised the importance of training in use of this correctly, citing the experience in Canada during the SARS outbreak. Are you able to comment further on whether you think this is taking place in Scotland and whether staff expected to use PPE have both access to the physical equipment and training they require?

Finally, you touched on the topic of the likelihood of a second wave of the virus and the Committee would appreciate more detail on your view of the circumstances which would affect this. You mentioned a second wave was avoided with SARS and we are interested on your views on what actions were taken to achieve this and how far these actions may be relevant in this case.

Thank you once again for giving evidence. It would be extremely helpful if you were able to respond by 8 May.

Yours sincerely



Lewis Macdonald
Convener, Health and Sport Committee