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City Hall
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The Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP
Houses of Parliament
London SW1A 0AA
(Sent via email)

4 February 2021

Dear Minister,

Community Champions and coordinating the national and local vaccination programmes

Thank you very much for joining the London Assembly on Thursday 4 February for our Plenary meeting to discuss COVID-19 vaccination delivery in London.

In response to my questions, you said you are happy to give me more information regarding the selection process for London boroughs who received additional support from the Community Champions programme funding announced on 25 January 2021.

Looking at the list of Local Authorities that received funding I noted that some of London's most economically deprived boroughs – Newham, Lambeth, Redbridge, Hounslow and Ealing – were not included.¹

These boroughs also have some of the highest number residents from minority ethnic groups, as well as the highest number of weekly coronavirus cases across the city, according to the latest weekly PHE data.

Could you please let me know more about the selection process, and in addition what steps you are taking to provide additional financial support to these local authorities to expand coronavirus communications with at risk groups?

¹ Community Champions to give COVID-19 vaccine advice and boost take up. Joint press release from ministers. Jan 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-champions-to-give-covid-19-vaccine-advice-and-boost-take-up>



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Additionally, I would like to raise two issues arising from my questions to the NHS representatives on our panel, concerning the roll-out of the vaccination programme as we reach the larger populations in the priority groups that will be targeted after 15 February.

Our guests Martin Machray, Joint Regional Chief Nurse and Covid-19 Incident Director for London and Dr Farah Jameel from the Camden Clinical Commissioning Group highlighted the following concerns:

- Duplication of resources over inviting patients to be vaccinated.
Confusion appears to be arising from duplicate invitations being received from the National Booking Service and residents' GPs. It was suggested that some patients are now being led to think they are being invited for their second vaccination when in fact they are receiving duplicate communications from different sources.

How will the national and local programmes be coordinated to prevent this doubling up of effort?

- Scaling up the vaccination programme to support the next priority groups.
The NHS and councils are currently preparing detailed plans for rolling out vaccinations on a week-by-week basis for the next phase. The scale of this programme is significant, because London has a younger than average population with far higher numbers in the middle band. At the same time as these groups are being vaccinated, group 1-4 patients are coming back for their second dose, which will cause challenges in planning. Between 70 – 75 per cent of this activity will happen through GPs, yet we heard at the London Assembly Plenary meeting that GPs are currently often given notice of just two or three days before thousands of vaccinations are supplied to them.

What steps are the Government taking to ensure that local authorities and GPs in London will be supported to manage the scale and complexity of this next phase of vaccinations?

I look forward to hearing from you on these matters and thank you again for attending the Assembly to answer our questions.

Yours sincerely,



Sian Berry
Green Party Member of the London Assembly



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