

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4362

Dr Fiona Twycross
Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience
[By Email]

6th May 2020

Dear Fiona,

Re: Concerns for Nursing Staff in London

I am writing to raise concerns for nursing staff in London during the COVID-19 crisis. Our brave nursing staff in London are making huge sacrifices in dealing with this pandemic and I believe it is important that nursing staff and all medical professionals, care staff and other frontline key workers in London have the equipment and support that they need.

Based on a survey by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), over half of their members in London said they have felt pressure to carry out work without the appropriate levels of protection. You will also have seen the widely reported protest by nurses on Westminster Bridge in the last week over lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), with many healthcare professionals being told that due to shortages they will have to re-use PPE.

I have several key questions on the current situation and challenges facing nursing staff in London that I would be grateful if you could answer:

- How are you and the Mayoral team working with and lobbying the Government to ensure that nursing staff in our capital feel safe and have the equipment they need to carry out their jobs safely?
- How are you working with the Government to increase access to testing for nursing and care staff in London, especially temporary staff and those who do not drive and are unable to use the *drive-through* testing facilities?
- Are you urging the Government to monitor and record the number of healthcare workers contracting and dying from COVID-19 and making them commit to regularly publish these figures?
- Will you support Liberal Democrat calls for a public enquiry into the handling of this crisis, which would include looking into the provision and dissemination of PPE to healthcare workers, as well as death rates amongst healthcare workers and those healthcare workers (and others) in BAME communities, which are alarmingly high?

I am aware of the unprecedented challenges dealing with such a virus present for both local government and national government and I thank you for the work you and your team are doing to try and help and support Londoners at this difficult time.

I understand that the Mayor has limited powers over healthcare, but it is clear that there have been huge failings when it comes to protecting our frontline workers, particularly those caring for the sick and vulnerable, and I believe it is vital both you and the Mayor are either working with, or challenging, the Government on some of these fundamental challenges facing our healthcare professionals in London on behalf of all Londoners.

I look forward to receiving a response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon AM
Liberal Democrat Assembly Member