

People Directorate, Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria , CA1 1RD

28 July 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

### **Importance of collecting contact details from customers**

I'm sure you will have seen the publicity in the last week about the rise in the number of cases of Covid-19 in Cumbria, particularly in the Carlisle and Eden areas, and our advice to members of the public who had attended a number of specific pubs and bars at particular times to get tested for coronavirus. I know that this has been challenging for a number of venues and I'd like to thank them for their co-operation in helping us to tackle the outbreak. Their support and understanding has been crucial and we are very grateful for it.

The call for people to get tested was prompted by us identifying a number of positive cases among several interconnected groups of people who had been socialising together both in pubs in the Carlisle area and at a house party. It was challenging to get good details from the cases of who they might have been in close contact with over the course of their evening.

We therefore took a blanket approach to publically identifying pubs and venues which had been visited by people who were likely to have been infectious, in order to encourage people who may have been exposed to get tested. Around 1250 people have been tested and contact tracing is now being done with them so we can try to prevent the infection from spreading further through the community.

### **What's been clear is how important it is that public venues such as pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes have really robust arrangements in place to collect and store contact details for customers.**

While we took a consistent approach to all venues involved last week, in fact from some of them we were able to get excellent information about who was there, at what times, and their contact details. Because of this we have now changed our approach and from now on we *do not* intend to publically name venues where people have been, if we have confidence in the contact tracing information being provided – as we can then contact people directly where necessary. When we are confident that good social distancing measures are in place it may not even be necessary for us to contact customers at all.

I'm committed to supporting our hospitality sector to get back on its feet after the experience of lockdown. The test and trace system is in fact a crucial part of this: it, together with good social distancing, is what will prevent us from seeing a second wave of infection and a second lockdown. I hope that working together we can continue to avoid that situation. Thank you again for your support.

Yours,



Colin Cox - Director of Public Health