

Green Party calls for better data sharing to tackle Covid-19 pandemic



Green Party

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The Green Party is supporting calls made by the public health directors for NHS England to immediately release data collected through NHS England's 111 service to enable local health and social care systems to identify coronavirus hotspots. [1]

While current confirmed cases are collated only through test results at hospital, earlier data of those with symptoms is collected through the use of NHS 111 phone and online services.

Larry Sanders, the Green Party's health spokesperson, said this would enable local health and social care systems to be able to prepare better.

He said: "In the absence of population testing, the next best measure of where centres of infection may be forming could be shown by the rates of calls to NHS England by people experiencing symptoms.

"Data sharing between the key national Covid-19 response organisations and local health and social care systems is essential for adequate planning. And we are calling for the government to ensure that NHS England releases this geo-mapped data of symptomatic people to those working at the local level.

"The time gap between being infected and being tested could be at least two to three weeks, therefore symptomatic data at a local level would give an insight into likely health care and social care system demand."

People in hospital due to coronavirus will have had a period of virus incubation between two and ten days before symptoms start and then a further week of symptoms, having been told to remain at home and self-isolate for seven days to see how symptoms progress.

Sanders said:

"Hospital testing of Covid-19 is giving us 'out of date' data on the actual infection rates present in local communities. Directors of public health working at a local level would be better armed to know what is coming down the line with earlier symptomatic data collected by the phone and online

services.”

On a different data sharing issue for those working in two tier authorities – specifically the shires – Public Health England is providing the totals of reported coronavirus cases at a first tier local authority level only.

Gina Dowding, Lancashire County Councillor and former NHS Health promotion officer, said:

“It would be useful to have this data at district council level. It is essential that those people working flat out to plan the local response to the epidemic are given as much information as possible. This government has big data, it is now time to release it for the common good.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.hsj.co.uk/public-health/public-health-directors-plea-for-111-data-to-track-coronavirus/7027261.article>

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