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The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street,  
London,  
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Sent by email to [pm.post.int@no10.gov.uk](mailto:pm.post.int@no10.gov.uk)

19 October 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

### **Six Minimum Standards for Lockdown Support Packages**

We are increasingly concerned by Government's approach to Tiered Lockdowns, the profound damage it is causing to our economies and the rising levels of frustration across our communities.

This is not a moment for centralised command and control, but instead to work with us, to empower those who know their places best to act. We need dialogue and tailored solutions, not one size fits all.

Our aim is to work with Government to combat the pandemic, but the tools offered are inadequate, and support is not being made available equally and transparently to each place.

Our recent Five Point Plan has clearly not been adopted by Government, and as we move into Tiered Lockdowns, it is critical that minimum standards for support are urgently met.

Cities in Tier Two are experiencing immediate economic hardship as a result of Lockdown and also need support packages to prevent further harm to business and jobs.

Support must include: locally flexible funds to support business and livelihoods in Tier Two and Three; resourced, local Test and Trace; furlough support that does not fall below the minimum wage; and further local powers to enforce compliance.

Whatever level of Lockdown is agreed – and as we have made clear this must be a matter for local decision – every place must also be able to see a clear way forward and exit route, to inspire confidence and hope.

Movement up or down Tiers must be based on an assessment of broader local indicators than absolute infection rates, and more accurate local data including: local epidemiology indicators (e.g. relative infection rates in different sections of the population); local NHS capacity; impacts on jobs and business; and effects on poverty and deprivation.

Big cities have been hit hardest by COVID-19, in terms of health, business and jobs. This is due to high levels of deprivation, and the fact that they are regional economic hubs. But they also offer the best chance we have for recovery and a return to growth.

We propose Six Minimum Standards for Tiered Lockdown support packages.

Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool,  
Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield

1. **An improved and locally flexible Business Compensation Package for Tier Two and Three:** to support hardest hit sectors, and allowing for local discretion to top up furlough payments. Without this, we will lose tens of thousands of jobs and Government's Levelling Up agenda will be simply undeliverable.
2. **Commitment to funded, locally controlled Test and Trace:** creating a system that is sensitive to local knowledge and needs of communities. This should include a joint planning response with local universities to provide effective support to students, alongside wider community engagement as part of containment plans.
3. **Minimum levels for furlough payments:** furlough payments must not fall below the Minimum Wage, which will otherwise push increasing numbers of people into poverty and destitution, damaging our society and increasing future public service costs.
4. **A clear entrance and exit strategy to Tiered Lockdowns based on local indicators:** Movement up or down Tiers based on an assessment of broader local indicators than absolute infection rates and more accurate local data, including: local epidemiology indicators (e.g. relative infection rates in different sections of the population); local NHS capacity; impacts on jobs and business; and effects on poverty and deprivation. This should include support to reopen and reactivate local economies as they move out of Lockdowns.
5. **Enhanced and resourced local enforcement powers to ensure compliance:** with additional powers to take immediate action on non-compliance, for example closing premises without moving through a staged process.
6. **Consistency and transparency of support packages.** A measure agreed for any place must be available to all places in a given Tier. This should include: levels of financial support; enforcement powers; and any other measures to address the impact of Tiered Lockdowns.

Our aim is to deliver an effective response to the pandemic and its economic effects, working with Government, at a challenging and crucial moment and we would welcome an online discussion to take matters forward.

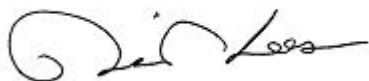
Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Judith Blake CBE**  
Leader, Leeds City Council



**Mayor Joe Anderson OBE**  
Mayor, Liverpool City Council



**Councillor Sir Richard Leese CBE**  
Leader, Manchester City Council



**Councillor Nick Forbes CBE**  
Leader, Newcastle City Council



**Councillor David Mellen**  
Leader, Nottingham City Council



**Councillor Julie Dore**  
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