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Central Suffolk and North Ipswich



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA**

Friday 19th June 2020

Dear Local Resident,

I hope my letter finds you and your families safe and well.

Infection rates and deaths from COVID-19 in Suffolk have fallen and continue to fall. This is good news, but there is still a long way to go in our fight against the virus. We are likely to be living with COVID-19 for many more months, if not years. We must continue to adapt accordingly.

Some of the early restrictions have now been lifted but many of us continue to work from home. Some shops and businesses that were temporarily closed have reopened. Children have started to return to school, although a full reopening of schools will take some time. We are now starting to be able to see our loved ones and friends, albeit in a safe and controlled way.

The restrictions on our daily lives have been critical in slowing the spread of the pandemic and must continue, but our attention must now also turn to protecting jobs and enabling our economy to slowly recover. Non-essential shops have been allowed to open again from 15th June, along with a number of other outdoor businesses. From 4th July, assuming that infection rates continue to fall, it is likely that pubs and other parts of our hospitality industry will be able to start to welcome back customers. **This is welcome news, but it is vital that the social distancing and hand hygiene measures must continue to be followed in order to prevent a second wave of the virus.**

Whilst I continue to work part-time as a doctor in our NHS, on the frontline of the fight against COVID-19, my work as your Member of Parliament continues and I shall continue to regularly update you on the latest health advice, and the other forms of support available to you, your families and local businesses during these unprecedented times.

Advice on business support, individual/household financial help and wider COVID-19 advice remains available on my website at www.drdanielpoulter.com/coronavirus-covid-19-advice

Detailed COVID-19 advice can be found on the Government website at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. This advice is updated regularly and I would also like to take this opportunity to remind of you of some health advice and information which I hope you may find helpful:

Health Advice:

As some aspects of our lives return to being closer to how they were before the pandemic started, it remains vitally important for all of us to play our part to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus:

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- Social distancing (keeping at least 2 metres apart from people who are not from your own household) helps to protect each other and reduces the spread of the virus;
- Good hand hygiene (for example, thorough washing your hands and wrists for about 20 seconds before eating and when returning home after leaving the house) is particularly important to protect yourself from catching the virus;
- To protect others, it is important **NOT** to leave home if you or anyone in your household has Coronavirus symptoms (and also to seek further medical advice)

Support for Your Household Finances and Businesses:

Our local councils are administering the Government's business support scheme and businesses in need of support should contact their local council:

- East Suffolk:** <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/covid-19-business-grant-funding>
Ipswich: <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/coronavirus/business>
Mid Suffolk: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/features/support-available-for-businesses-in-babergh-and-mid-suffolk>

Helping Vulnerable People in Our Communities:

There has been an impressive community effort everywhere in Suffolk to look after older and more vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Suffolk County Council is overseeing the "**Home But Not Alone**" service. If you are in need of help, or know someone who is, please contact the service via **0800 876 6926** and further information can also be found by visiting:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/home-but-not-alone/>

Important Local News:

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, my office and I have continued to work hard on behalf of everyone in Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, helping people to access personal and business financial support, and also helping a great many people who were stranded overseas as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to return home. I continue to ask probing Parliamentary questions of our Government about its response to the Coronavirus pandemic and continue to raise the issues that matter to us here in Suffolk in Parliament and directly with Government ministers.

There has been much interest in the matter of food safety and animal welfare standards and a number of you may have already been in touch with me directly. Contrary to some media speculation that UK food standards will be lowered as part of future trade deals with the USA or other countries, I want to reassure you that this is not the case. In Suffolk, we are very proud of our high standards of locally produced food and drink, as well as of our high animal welfare standards. It is important in any potential future trade deal that UK farmers are treated fairly by sharing a level playing field with farmers from overseas, and that everyone must adopt the same high standards of food quality as UK farmers.

I have been reassured that the Government is actively engaging with farmers and the agricultural sector to ensure that we fully support our food producers as part of any future trade discussions. Locally, I meet regularly with farmers and the National Farmers Union and will always act in their best interests. I shall continue to do all that I can to support them and to ensure the highest standards for food consumers.

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All correspondence should be addressed to the House of Commons

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Some people have also been in touch with me regarding the continuation of free school meals during the school summer holidays to support the most vulnerable in our communities. I too share these concerns which is why, together with a number of other MPs I successfully lobbied the Government to continue providing funding throughout the summer holiday period to enable the poorest and most vulnerable children in our area to receive the food and support they need during this difficult time

So, I am pleased that our Prime Minister has listened and is setting up a COVID Summer Food Fund. There will now be a food voucher scheme to cover the entire six-week summer holiday period for pupils who already qualify for free school meals.

Summary:

In closing, I would like to thank you for your continued patience and commitment during these challenging times but ask that you continue to follow the Government advice so that we do not risk a second wave of infection. A second wave would have devastating consequences for our NHS and for our economy. In my view, it is essential that we continue to be led by the scientific evidence, which dictates which restrictions can start to be lifted and when.

As your MP, I shall always work hard for the people of Central Suffolk and North Ipswich and my role as your Member of Parliament is as vital now as ever it was. If there is anything with which I can help, please get in touch with me via email at daniel.poulter.mp@parliament.uk

I wish you and your families well. Please continue to stay safe and look after each other.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Dr Daniel Poulter MP
Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich

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