

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir,

We write to you in our official capacity as members of the Stockport Economic Alliance and of Stockport Town Centre Business Improvement District. We are respected business leaders representing significant employers within the business community in Stockport and want to vent our continued frustration at the apparent inconsistencies and disregard of local opinion in the re-assigning of the restricted Tier system from 2nd December.

Greater Manchester's infection rate is reducing faster than any other part of the country and in Stockport in particular the infection rates have declined by 36% to 204.5 over the seven-day period to 22nd November, now standing at 174.8 and continues a downward trend. Yet, from December 2nd, Stockport will align with all the other boroughs of Greater Manchester and be returned to an even more severe Tier 3 rating.

This will deliver yet another severe blow to the already decimated hospitality sector in Stockport, have a significant, negative impact on the local supply chain and cause major hardship for many people whose jobs will be affected. Continued restrictive measures will risk the further loss of business, many of whom have already made substantial investment to adapt their businesses to survive and work towards retaining a sustainable model. Every day of lost trading in this seasonal peak is now seriously compromising their ability to ever return.

Collectively we respect the need to protect the NHS but we must also be emphatically clear that protecting jobs, businesses and livelihoods cannot and must not be compromised.

We also appreciate the factors taken into account when assigning Tiers, but we are increasingly frustrated by the inconsistencies applied across England. There are currently 23 areas with a higher infection rate than Stockport that will be moving into Tier 2; cases in Stockport have been falling consistently over the past 4 weeks to 174.8 and current latest data records an R rate 0.629; hospital admissions have continued to fall while infection rates among the over 60s is 104.1 per 100,000.

As of 27th November, the North West has the lowest growth rate and regional R value:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk> - updated 27th November

Region	R	Growth rate % per day
England	0.9-1.0	-2 to +1
East of England	0.9-1.1	-1 to +2
London	1.0-1.1	0 to +2
Midlands	0.9-1.1	-2 to +1
North East and Yorkshire	0.8-1.0	-3 to 0
North West	0.7-0.9	-5 to -2
South East	1.0-1.2	0 to +3
South West	0.9-1.1	-2 to +2

We feel frustration at the inconsistency of having one Stockport border next to East Cheshire so Tier 2 on one boundary but seemingly it being too difficult to have the Greater Manchester Boroughs distinguished so that Stockport could be separated just as easily and judged on its own merits. If places like Stratford were bumped up a tier because of high risk in surrounding areas, why was inner London not bumped up to tier 3 where parts of outer London appear to belong? The effect of these blanket policy decisions will be to level down the economies across our critical business community and we are calling upon Ministers to review the regional approach and assign a more local borough-led approach with immediate effect given the pressing nature of peak season trading.

[Taken from the Manchester Evening News - 30th November 2020:](#)

[Tier 3 will devastate this man's business. But 13 London boroughs have a higher infection rate - are Greater Manchester-wide rules fair?](#)

Dave Ramwell, who runs a restaurant in Chaedle, will downgrade to a takeaway operation at what he says will be a 75 per cent loss, added: *"It would be better if they looked at boroughs separately because Trafford and Stockport are doing really well with infection rates. If we were four miles up the road in Cheshire we wouldn't be in this situation. We'd be in Tier 2."*

As a group, we respectfully ask you to urgently consider the data evidenced above and the collective views of the Stockport business community before agreeing to a blanket regional approach in assessing the allocation of the revised Tier system when the current lockdown period ends at midnight tomorrow, 1st December.

Yours faithfully,

We the undersigned:

Steve Oliver, Chairman of Stockport Economic Alliance, Group CEO, musicMagpie

Mike Lamont, Chairman of Stockport Business Improvement District

Paul Taylor, BID Manager of Stockport Business Improvement District



Helen White, Director of Marketing Stockport, member of Stockport Economic Alliance

Richard Higginson, Director of Marketing Stockport

And supported by Stockport's business community including:

MAN Energy Solutions, member of Stockport Economic Alliance
Stockport College, member of Stockport Economic Alliance
William Robinson, Joint Managing Director of Robinsons Brewery
Tony Jones, Director of Stockport BID and Managing Director of Orbit Developments
Andy Booth, Managing Partner at SAS Daniels Solicitors
Christian Mancier, Partner at Gorvins Solicitors, former Chairman of Stockport Economic Alliance
Managing Director of Fairhurst Buckley Commercial Property Agents
Nigel Bennett, Chairman of Hallidays Accountants
Paul Whitney, Managing Director of Hallidays Accountants
Philip Eagle, Tax Director at Hallidays, member of Stockport Economic Alliance
Trevor Taylor, Chairman of Amshire Solutions Limited
Jonathan Bourne, Managing Director of Damar Training
Sarah Harkness, Managing Director of IN Accountancy
Jo Shippen, Managing Director of Hatters Promotional Merchandise
Martin Benton, Managing Director of Fusion Signs & Graphics
Louise Parrott-Bates, CEO of Pure Innovations Group
Anthony Francis, Managing Director, Mayfield Floors Group
Brian Bradley, Partner at Clarke Nicklin Accountants
Caroline Patten, Director at Grassroots Recruitment
Donald Moore, Managing Director at Rowlinson Knitwear, member of Stockport Economic Alliance
Nick Wroe, Managing Director of Platform81
Helen Provat, Managing Director of Peak Translations
Stephen Dootson, Director of Kast Energy Group
Kes Scott, Director of Kast Energy Group

To also be emailed to: alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk

cc:

The Rt Hon Andrew Gwynne MP – gwynnea@parliament.uk
The Rt Hon Mary Robinson MP – mary.robinson.mp@parliament.uk
The Rt Hon Navendu Mishra MP – navendu.mishra.mp@parliament.uk
The RT Hon William Wragg MP – william@williamwragg.org.uk