



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**LONDON SW1A 0AA**

**Mr Jonathan Lewis  
CEO Capita  
30 Berners Street  
London W1T 3LR**

**30 March 2020**

**Dear Mr Lewis**

Thank you for your email sent on Sunday evening, in response to my letter last week. I followed this email up during today in discussion with your senior corporate director, Will Hall. I am grateful for his time and the further information he sent after our conversation.

I have to tell you, as I told Mr Hall, the reassurance and points in your email are flatly contradicted by reports I continued to get over the weekend – by email and telephone – from staff in our local Dearne call centre, which have continued today. Your staff are telling me they are ‘desperate and worried’, ‘breaking down and crying at their stations’, ‘scared of losing our jobs’ and fearful ‘I’ll be forced back to work and have to put my life at risk, as well as my family’s’. Many have said how they’re afraid to complain or contact me because they fear Capita will discipline or dismiss them. When workers feel they must remain anonymous and have nowhere else to turn, it’s my duty as their MP to try to speak for them – this is why I cannot let this rest with your reply to me last night.

You have committed workers and managers; many value their jobs and some have told me they loved their work and colleagues, but many dozens are telling me they now feel unsafe and Capita simply ‘don’t care about their staff and we are just a number’.

The main points in your email that I must challenge and press you for proper action to protect your staff are as follows.

First, not all those working from your Capita call centre are 'key workers providing essential services'. Some are still doing outbound sales, upgrades or disconnection calls.

Be honest with your staff. Unlike other countries, the UK Government has not stopped all non-essential work but where such business continues employers must fully follow the public health guidance to protect the health of their workers and their families, as part of the national effort to counter the spread of Coronavirus.

Second, you tell me Capita 'are committed to providing a safe working environment' but still not enough is being done to safeguard your staff and this is not what your employees see in the call centre. I had this report on Sunday – the same day as your email: '... we have to go into work but we have no hand wash or antibacterial wipes so nothing has been wiped, they are trying to keep us apart but it's not working as if you need help the person helping has no gloves and they touch your key pad and mouse and stand next to you. It's a joke.' Despite your assertion, I am still consistently being told the 2m social distancing is not being implemented, equipment is being shared, there are no cleaning wipes, the canteen has been closed and there's no provision for hot meals on a site for 1000 staff.

Require your Dearne centre manager to implement all public health protection guidance in full, for all teams; insist on a full honest management report, then openly invite your staff and the trade union to verify this.

Third, you assert that Capita 'are fulfilling all of our statutory and contractual entitlements with regard to pay' and Will Hall was able to provide some important follow up details after our discussion today, confirming that on SSP you are 'currently paying this for a 14-day period for those people who are self-isolating, and our policy on this issue is under a 14-day rolling review. The next review is coming up'.

Clearly SSP is a big hit on many people's income and a disincentive to do the right thing and self-isolate. I had reports over the weekend of one of your staff who'd been told by their manager 'not to worry as it's best to be safe and self-isolate ... it wouldn't affect the sickness policy, it would be on full pay', others

who've been told that if they self-isolate they 'will only be entitled to statutory sick pay, with no option to work from home which I know is possible' and another telling me 'some team leaders are telling all people to return after 7 days and others are saying 14' after self-isolation.

I recognise that you have many workers on different contractual terms, some of which are the result of TUPE rights and the SPP system can be confusing but there is clearly still a lack of consistent, well understood internal communications on where your staff stand.

Make the SSP review that Will Hall confirmed today is 'coming up' the point at which you ensure all staff and managers are clear about the guidance on becoming ill or self-isolating and the Capita terms on which they can do this.

Fourth, you are making some good progress with provision for working from home, which Mr Hall helpfully told me is your current 'operational priority', so acceleration of home-working arrangements, confirmation on the terms for self-isolation and a guarantee on full health protection for those who must still come to work at the call centre will go a long way to helping reassure your workforce.

Finally, you mention only in passing the UK Government scheme for 'furloughing' staff – keeping them in jobs and on the books, rather than laying them off during the Coronavirus crisis. I discussed this in some detail with Mr Hall as a much clearer, stronger commitment to retaining your staff to help them and the company recover more rapidly when the pandemic passes is very important. This is what the Government job retention scheme is designed to help companies do and I hope you will now make a clear Capita pledge to using this scheme the centrepiece of your commitment to staff during this crisis.

I look forward to your response to my letter but, most importantly, I look forward to the response you make to your workforce on these points.

Yours sincerely



John Healey MP

