

Chair
Science and Technology Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

21st November 2019

RE: Letter from Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP

Dear Chair,

Following Sir Norman Lamb's letter dated 31 October 2019, I am writing to provide additional information subsequent to my oral evidence to the Science and Technology Committee on 'Commercial Genomics' on 28 October 2019. I would also like to take this opportunity thank the Committee for inviting me to contribute evidence to the inquiry. I hope the information I provided was valuable and will be of use both to the Committee and the Government.

Please find below & enclosed the specific information requested:

1. Reference for the meta-analysis of 32,000 publications

The review referenced was published in 2018 in the journal *Lifestyle Genomics* and titled '[A Systematic Review of Genetic Testing and Lifestyle Behaviour Change: Are We Using High-Quality Genetic Interventions and Considering Behaviour Change Theory?](#)'^[1]. The paper is a systematic review of the highest quality evidence available investigating the effect of genetic information on behaviour change.

Reflecting on my oral evidence, I would like to clarify one point. I commented that there was a '*meta-analysis* of 32,000 papers' looking at behaviour change, I meant in fact to use the terminology that a '*systematic review* of 32,000 papers' took place as per the specific reference in my formal evidence originally submitted. While the two phrases are closely linked, I hope this difference in syntax can be changed on the public record.

The authors of the systematic review conclude that genetic testing can be an effective catalyst for behaviour change if recommendations are actionable, especially relating to nutrition. I have enclosed a copy of the paper for your reference.

2. How DNAfit tests consumer understanding, the number of consumers involved in such testing, and whether the testing was conducted by DNAfit or and independent organisation.

DNAfit endeavours to make complex genetic information understandable for the layperson. All customers are offered a free consultation call with our team of dieticians and sports scientists to ensure comprehension of the recommendations. Our customers range from corporate customers, to personal trainers and dieticians, to general consumers. The process of comprehension varies depending on the customer, as illustrated below.

An illustrative example prior to the launch of a new DNA testing product, we engaged 'ABN Impact', an independent market research company, to organise focus groups to provide insights on consumer

understanding of our DNA testing. All respondents in focus groups were given time to read their own genetic report before answering specific questions and providing feedback on the experience. These focus groups looked at consumers' understanding of reporting concepts, content in their genetic report and understanding of the service provided by the company. Before rollout of this product, we used the insights from this consumer research to improve our reports and ensure the information provided to consumers to make sure it is easy for them to understand. I have enclosed for the committee an anonymised version of ABN Impact's focus group report to assist the committee with its ongoing review and recommendations ^[2]. I would appreciate the Committee keeping this report confidential as it is commercially sensitive.

Since launching our product, all our direct customers receive a consultation call with a qualified sports scientist or dietician to ensure they understand the genetic information provided from their test. The consultant makes a qualitative assessment to understand which areas of the results may need clarifying and how to apply the results into the context of the users' daily lives.

DNAfit also routinely uses surveys and customer reviews to test consumer understanding. Customers opt-in to surveys via email communications and submit reviews independently on the review platform Trustpilot. These results are used to inform and enhance the overall product and ensure consumers understand information they receive from our tests.

For example, in a survey performed in October 2015 ^[3] we asked respondents to answer a number of questions about their experience and understanding of the DNAfit product, including the following question and responses:

Q: "What did you think of the DNAfit test kit?"

A: The top response, with 88.32% of respondents answering was 'Directions were clear; easy to understand'

Q: "What did you think of the DNAfit website?"

A: The top response, with 56.2% of respondents answering was 'Easy to navigate'

Q: "What did you think of the descriptions of each SNP/Gene?"

A: The top response, with 35.29% of respondents answering, was 'It was very clear and easy to understand'

Q: "What did you think of the DNAfit Fitness & Diet Reports?"

A: For both fitness and diet, the top responses with 27.74% and 29.2% of respondents answering was "It was easy to understand"

Furthermore, in a survey to a selection of DNAfit users in October 2018 [4], when asked "On a scale of 1-5, how easy to understand did you find your DNAfit reports? (1= not at all, 5 = very easy)", the largest responses were 44% of users choosing a score of 4 out of 5, and 36% of users answering 5 out of 5.

As a further testament to our user's experience and comprehension, I would also invite the committee to explore the comments left in verified, independent reviews by our users on website **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** where we have over 2200 reviews with an average score of 4.6 out of 5.

For instances where our DNA testing is provided via third party, such as an independent personal trainer using our product to enhance their own service, we have developed a digital training programme to ensure they properly understand the results before they can pass on results to their own customers. This aims to ensure that information can be effectively conveyed to and understood by consumers in such circumstances. Delivery of this training is a combination of face-to-face and digital execution and adds

to a professional's CPD accreditation by different bodies example BANT (British Association of Nutritional Therapists) or REPS (Registered Exercise Professionals). At the end of the training, the pupil is required to submit an assignment for evaluation by a qualified member of our wellness team that then assesses the user's knowledge and competence. In instances where corporate clients employ GPs or nurses, we also provide three-day training workshops for the third parties and test the knowledge accordingly that undergoes evaluation and stringent competency assessment. To date as a company we have trained greater than 1000 individuals mostly face to face but also through an online education platform.

3. Clarification of the work DNAfit carries out with insurance companies

DNAfit works with several insurance companies solely for our product to be offered as an incentive for new customers to take up a policy with the insurer or to encourage existing customers to practice healthy lifestyle behaviours. We do not share any of our consumers' genetic information with any insurance companies – these products are not used as an underwriting tool. We have such partnerships with companies including Bupa's Clinics & Health Assessment business, AIA, Prudential, Investec Life Insurance and HSBC. Information flows only from DNAfit to the end-user. All genetic information is stored by DNAfit in an anonymised form and genetic reports are hosted on the DNAfit platform or parent company platform.

I hope this information has been helpful and provided the necessary clarification. Once again, thank you for inviting me to contribute to the select committee and please let me know if you require any further assistance with this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Avi Lasarow
Chief Executive Officer, DNAfit

CC: Danielle Nash, Clerk, House of Commons Science and Technology Committee

Encl. 1: Horne, J., et al., 'A Systematic Review of Genetic Testing and Lifestyle Behaviour Change: Are We Using High-Quality Genetic Interventions and Considering Behaviour Change Theory?', *Lifestyle Genomics*, 11/1 (2018).

Encl. 2: ABN Impact, company product focus report

Encl. 3: DNAfit Consumer Survey; Data_All_151020

Encl. 4: DNAfit Consumer Survey; Community Customer Survey Oct 2018