



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Will Quince MP
Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

Lord Jay of Ewelme
Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland
Sub-Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

24 March 2023

Dear Lord Jay,

FOLLOW UP SCRUTINY OF THE PROVISION OF MEDICINES TO NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER THE PROTOCOL

Thank you for your further letter of 24 February regarding the provision of medicines to Northern Ireland. The Foreign Secretary has asked me to respond on his behalf due to my responsibilities for this area.

Since your letter, you will be aware that we have now agreed in principle to replace the arrangements under the old Protocol with those in the new Windsor Framework.

As part of this, we have protected the supply of medicines in Northern Ireland for the long-term, ensuring licensing will always happen on a UK wide basis and removing the role of the European Medicines Agency. This means the same medicines, in the same packs, with the same labels, can be made available in the United Kingdom. At the same time, we've protected leading NI pharmaceutical and medical technology firms' access to the EU market for drugs and products produced in Northern Ireland.

The Windsor Framework therefore addresses long-term solutions to the issues raised in your Committee hearings relating to the continued application of the EU Falsified Medicines Directive and the EU Centralised Procedure in Northern Ireland, as both of these will cease to apply in Northern Ireland. This announcement has been welcomed by the industry, including from many of the organisations who appeared as witnesses to the Committee.

The Windsor Framework also delivers a green lane for goods going to Northern Ireland. Medical goods, including medicines and medical devices, being sent from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will take advantage of this green lane for internal UK trade.

In addition, the Windsor Framework includes agreement with the EU that there should be ongoing dialogue through UK-EU structures, including a new Special Goods Body, to discuss any further issues which may arise in the future.

I hope this letter reassures the Committee and industry stakeholders that the supply of medicines has been a priority during negotiations with the EU, and that long-lasting, stable solutions have been incorporated into the Windsor Framework.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Will Quince', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**WILL QUINCE MP
MINISTER OF STATE**