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Meg Hillier MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
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8 December 2020
Our reference: PAC 23/11/2020

Dear Chair,

I write to you further to the Public Accounts Committee's evidence session on the NAO's report, *UK Border 2020: Preparedness* on 23 November.

Firstly, you asked for an update on the RAG ratings that I highlighted in my letter of 13 November, as these have not changed I will write to you again this month if this changes.

Secondly, you asked for confirmation of the number of importers who have been contacted for further readiness support. Follow-up support was provided to those High Value Traders (HVTs) who were not ready and who consented to follow-up calls. This included 1349 importers.

Thirdly, you asked for a written update to the Committee on whether the Falsified Medicines Directive will continue to apply in Northern Ireland after 1 January and whether a derogation should or shouldn't apply. DHSC, along with the Cabinet Office, has been working hard with the EU to find a mutually acceptable approach to full implementation of the Protocol for medicines. On 5 November 2020 parties continued intensive discussions on how to safeguard the crucial flows of medicines and medical products into Northern Ireland from other parts of the United Kingdom from the end of the transition period. Recognising the challenges, not least in the ongoing Covid-19 response, in adapting to the requirements of the Protocol, the parties recognised the need to provide further time for the industry to be ready to comply in full. The parties therefore agreed a pragmatic approach to implementation, including a one-year time-limited approach to the application of the regulatory requirements for imports and the 'safety feature' elements of the Falsified Medicines Directive, until 31 December 2021. In the meantime we will continue to work with our stakeholders to support their readiness for the end of the transition period and beyond.

Following on from the session, and subsequently in your letter of 1 December, you asked for further information about Kent Access Permits and how the process worked for companies engaged in domestic haulage operations.

There is no requirement to use the C-HGV service or to gain a Kent Access Permit if a haulier is making a domestic journey to or within Kent. The requirement for a KAP only applies for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes hauliers making international trips for export across the Short Straits. As a result, HMG guidance is that domestic hauliers planning to deliver or collect goods within Kent (not cross-Channel) should carry a delivery note as proof of exemption. DVSA examiners will also be instructed to use their local knowledge of hauliers that operate domestically to target only those that are likely to be crossing the Channel. They will also have access to a number of existing databases and will not be targeting operators who do not hold International Operator licences. This will assist with them avoiding targeting domestic hauliers.

I hope this letter is helpful to your Committee.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chisholm', is centered on the page.

Alex Chisholm

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