



Science and Technology Committee

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From Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Chair

Dr Clive Dix
Interim Chair
UK Vaccine Taskforce
(By e-mail)

23 December 2020

Dear Dr Dix,

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee was told today that, although it is “highly unlikely” that the currently developed vaccines would be ineffective against the recently discovered variant of coronavirus, it is possible that they could have reduced efficacy and that future variants of coronavirus could conceivably be able to evade the current vaccines. The effectiveness of vaccines is clearly of vital importance to the management of the pandemic, and evidence on this will have to be gathered as quickly as possible. We heard that early access to sera from vaccine clinical trials was critical to determining answers to these questions. With this in mind, I would be grateful if you could set out:

- if all of the companies who developed the vaccines have released the sera from trial participants that are needed to assess the efficacy of the vaccines against the new variant;
- if those sera are not being released, what is being done to secure their release and ensure that evidence on efficacy can be gathered as quickly as possible; and
- what measures are being put in place to ensure that for any significant future variants of the virus:
 - evidence on vaccine efficacy can be gathered quickly; and
 - where required, new vaccines can be developed, manufactured and disseminated as quickly as possible.

I would be grateful for a response by Monday 4 January. I will be publishing this letter on the Committee’s website shortly, and will publish your response in due course. I am copying this letter to Professor Peter Horby as Chair of NERVTAG, Sir Patrick Vallance and Professor Chris Whitty as co-chairs of SAGE and Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi MP.

With best wishes,

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Chair