



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
By email

5th February 2021

Dear Michael and Matt,

As you are aware, the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee took evidence from the Paymaster General and the Minister for Care yesterday, with the hope of finalising our inquiry into Transparency and Accountability of Data in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. When making arrangements for the meeting, the clerks had conveyed the Committee's request to see the Cabinet Ministers, but you each delegated to a junior minister within your department.

Unfortunately, the ministers who attended were not able to answer the Committee's questions in a number of areas. In this inquiry, we have heard evidence about the behaviour of decision-makers, and in calling the Government ministers, we had hoped to have definitive answers to the evidence heard. However, because the ministers we saw were not involved, they could not respond. The Paymaster General noted that she had "seen decisions taken" and Helen Whately responded on a couple of occasions that our questions were outside her remit.

It is disappointing that you were unable to make yourselves available initially. The Committee has some important questions on accountability for the data underpinning the response to Covid-19 and the way that the Government has presented this data. I'd be grateful, therefore, if you were both able to appear on Thursday 25th February in the afternoon – I realise that you both attend Cabinet during the Committee's usual meeting slot.

I will be placing this letter, and your response, into the public domain.

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee