

From the Interim Permanent Secretary  
Professor Chris Whitty KCB FRS FMedSci



Department  
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Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP  
Chair of Public Accounts Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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Sent via email to: [pubaccom@parliament.uk](mailto:pubaccom@parliament.uk)

21 January 2025

Dear Chair,

**Re: Public Accounts Committee, Thirty-First Report of Session 2023-24, Department of Health and Social Care 2022–23 Annual Report and Accounts (Recommendation 5c).**

*PAC recommendation: The Department must, within the next six months, develop, and implement, a clear and cost-effective plan, including adequate controls, for stockpiling items required to plan for a future pandemic. This should not be delayed until after the end of the COVID-19 inquiry.*

In the Treasury Minute response to the above recommendation, the Department committed to provide an update on progress by the end of 2024. I apologise for the delay in sending this update.

The Department has replenished pandemic preparedness PPE stockpiles using excess stock originally procured for the COVID-19 pandemic where possible and appropriate.

As set out by the Chancellor in the Autumn 2024 Budget, £460 million of investment has been allocated to strengthen the UK's pandemic preparedness, including replenishing personal protective equipment (PPE), vaccine and medicines stockpiles. Target volumes for England's PPE stockpiles are informed by expert advice on PPE ensemble requirements and the volume of PPE that we would expect the health and adult social care sector to use in the number of weeks it takes for further stock to arrive during a pandemic. These targets and stock levels are reviewed on a regular basis, with future procurements being planned to reach (and maintain) target volumes, to help ensure we are sufficiently prepared for a future pandemic or other health emergency.

One of the ways that the Department will manage stock at target levels in the future is through rotating stock into NHS business-as-usual (BAU), where this is possible. This can reduce the need to dispose of expired stock and replace it with new stock, consequently reducing costs and representing better value-for-money, as well as

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reducing waste. For a portion of the existing PPE stockpile, this is already being implemented, and the department will look to implement dynamic stockpiling for any newly procured pandemic preparedness PPE, where BAU usage rates enable this.

All stockpiled PPE is maintained and managed by Supply Chain Coordination Limited (SCCL), underpinned by an active Service Level Agreement between SCCL and DHSC, signed in April 2023, which is regularly reviewed and updated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Whitty'.

**PROFESSOR CHRIS WHITTY  
INTERIM PERMANENT SECRETARY**