



Science and Technology Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Rt Hon Greg Clark MP

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street,
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30 March 2020

Dear Matt,

I and my Committee wish you well in your recovery from COVID-19 and appreciate the very hard work that you and your colleagues are contributing to addressing the COVID-19 emergency.

I am writing following my Committee's evidence session on 25 March, in which we heard from Sir Patrick Vallance as well as other witnesses, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 'stay at home' measures introduced by the Government aim to suppress the peak of COVID-19 infections and limit the demand on the NHS. However, the desired reduction in case numbers will only last as long as these measures remain in place. A long-term strategy that allows social distancing measures to be relaxed without risking further outbreaks appears dependent upon a vaccine. The importance of developing and rolling out a vaccine as quickly as possible is therefore clear.

Giving evidence to my Committee on 25 March, Professor Andrew Pollard, of the Oxford Vaccine Group, indicated that a vaccine could be tested and manufactured within a minimum of six months. However, he made clear that this would require upscaling of manufacturing to start as soon as possible, *before* human clinical trial data is available.

The Government's latest announcement of £210m investment in vaccine development is welcome. It will be important that this is available for *all* of the different stages of vaccine development as soon as it is required. In light of this, I would be grateful if you could set out:

- How will the Government ensure that the different stages of vaccine development and manufacturing will be conducted not sequentially, but wherever possible in parallel, and as soon as possible?
- What is the UK's current vaccine manufacturing capacity, what steps are being taken to increase this, and over what time horizon might these steps be completed?
- If these vaccines are to be manufactured overseas, what arrangements will be in place to ensure that UK has access to them at the earliest possible opportunity?

I would be grateful if you could provide an answer by Friday 10 April. I will be publishing this letter on the Committee's website in due course.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg'.