



Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG  
Minister of State  
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The Lord Jay of Ewelme  
Chair of Protocol on Ireland/Northern  
Ireland Sub-Committee  
House of Lords  
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Our reference: MC2021/14891

28 July 2021

Dear Michael,

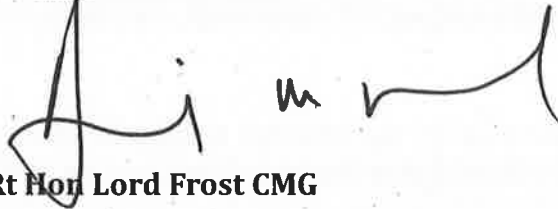
**PROTOCOL ON IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND SUB-COMMITTEE: EVIDENCE SESSION  
14 JULY**

1. I am writing to follow up on my evidence session of 14 July, and in particular, to provide more details on the Joint Consultative Working Group and on medicines in Northern Ireland.
2. Under the Protocol, the UK and the EU agreed to establish the Joint Consultative Working Group to serve as a forum for mutual consultation and the exchange of information. This group meets on a monthly basis and the Northern Ireland Executive is represented.
3. The Annexes to the Protocol list all the EU measures that will apply to Northern Ireland under the Protocol. The EU is required to inform us (under Article 15 of the Protocol) of any planned EU measures which amend or replace any of the measures listed in the Annexes.
4. On 8 July we received two spreadsheets from the EU covering the period 1 April-5 July; one spreadsheet listed 666 adopted measures, and the other 241 draft measures. On 15 July we received a further set, covering the period 5 July-14 July, which detailed 77 adopted acts, and 21 draft measures. Most recently, on 23 July we received two further spreadsheets covering 15 July-22 July, which listed 70 adopted measures and 13 draft measures. The EU has now notified us of 1,088 measures in total.
5. The measures cover a range of issues, spanning across the Protocol Annexes and a mix of Departments. 813 of these measures have been adopted, including on issues such as pesticides, medicines and plastics regulation. 275 of these are draft measures, including on issues such as food hygiene and carbon emissions. Consideration of these measures by UK Government departments and the Northern Ireland Executive is ongoing. As Rebecca Ellis made clear at the evidence session, it is clear that there is more work to be done to ensure that this process of information exchange between the UK and the EU runs effectively and in a way that ensures that the impact of union acts on Northern Ireland is clear and subject to scrutiny.
6. With respect to your question regarding the discontinuation of medicines, you will understand that for reasons of commercial sensitivity, I cannot give specific details or breakdowns of the individual products concerned or their alternatives, or their therapeutic uses. To date, DHSC has

received formal notifications of between 280 and 290 confirmed medicine discontinuations of supply to Northern Ireland. We have also been alerted by suppliers to a number of additional potential discontinuations from 1 January 2022 which are yet to be confirmed, and DHSC are currently in discussion with those suppliers. Risk assessments are underway to determine the criticality of the confirmed discontinuations and management plans will be put in place, as per usual procedures, which include a thorough risk assessment to determine the potential impact on patients and what type of management options should be considered.

7. We will continue to work closely with counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive with a focus on ensuring that patients in NI will always have access to the kind of medicine they need. Officials are in close contact with suppliers as they make planning decisions and to ensure we are kept up to date with information concerning potential discontinuations, so that we are able to monitor potential impacts and take action accordingly. UK Government and NI Executive officials have been engaging regularly with suppliers and industry trade associations to understand the challenges involved.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'F' followed by a smaller 'i' and a flourish.

**Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG**