



FOR INFORMATION

PRIVATE OFFICE NOTES

Subject: ACCORD – new wave of trials

Date: 19 June 2020

Timing: You are discussing this with Mark Walport, Jeremy Farrar, John Bell and Jonathan Van Tam on Monday 22 June.

Summary: UKRI have put forward proposals for the coordination of the new wave of Covid-19 therapeutic trials. They propose to establish a new, single delivery framework. This would report to you and consist of:

- a Target and Drug Prioritisation Group, responsible for rapidly defining a set of 3-5 pressing therapeutic questions and working with experts to develop a study and delivery plan for each of those. This would also include programme manager-led implementation teams for each study/therapeutic question;
- a Drug Selection Group of experts to conduct due diligence on the drugs and inform the decisions of the Target and Drug Prioritisation Group; and
- a UKRI Delivery Platform responsible for overseeing the allocation and activation of trial sites, operating under a single protocol.

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They are proposing to implement this from June. They have also provided a summary of how they are proposing to run ACCORD until then – de-prioritising all but 9 live studies and aiming to recruit 30 patients in each study before the end of the month. The advice also includes a lessons learnt document, highlighting the lack of central coordination and competition between studies as the key issues that have prevented progress on the existing wave of trials.

DECISION REQUIRED

To note.

PRIVATE OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS

No decision is required at this stage. These proposals have been developed with input from John Bell and Jeremy Farrar and are largely in line with their own views – they include a single programme under a clear leadership and management structure. The named individual to lead the Target and Drug Prioritisation Group is Professor Duncan Richards, whom John recommended. They also propose to keep responsibility entirely within this new structure, rather than contract anything out to outsiders (such as the Southampton NHS Trust or IQVIA). There seem to be some difference between the proposals:

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- the governance framework is unclear – John and Jeremy have suggested establishing a Board of Directors to oversee the whole programme, which isn't included in UKRI's proposals;
- John and Jeremy have previously talked about this being a new entity outside UKRI, whereas UKRI are proposing to continue overseeing site allocation and activation (though the Target and Drug Prioritisation Group and Drug Selection Group are new and based on a pharma R&D sector team).

There is a significant decision to make on Ministerial responsibility. At the moment, you are responsible for overseeing the work of a single trial platform (ACCORD), whereas the remit of this new structure would be much broader and naturally sits in DHSC. However, there are clear links with our plans for vaccines trials, which need to be thought through.

SPAD ADVICE

James Phillips is reviewing in parallel.

JUNIOR MINISTER'S COMMENTS

N/A

SECRETARY OF STATE'S COMMENTS

→ NOISE WITH ACCORD V. UNHELPFUL

→ RECENT: SINGLE PROGRAMME.

→ FUNDING FUND

→ NITEL CAN FUND

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