



Department for
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Sir Patrick Vallance, Government Chief Scientific Adviser
Sir Mark Walport, Chief Executive, UKRI

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By email only.

Dear Sir Patrick and Sir Mark,

Thank you for the conversation earlier today regarding the pursuit of a vaccine for Covid-19. You know better than anyone this is the greatest public health threat that has faced this nation for many decades and I and my Ministerial colleagues remain hugely grateful for your leadership on the overall response.

The Government has made clear we will do whatever it takes to beat this virus and the importance of prioritising funding towards the fight against it. UKRI is already investing in Covid-19 research and I would urge you to continue to prioritise this.

As we discussed, I am also keen that UKRI does all it can to remove unnecessary bureaucracy to make sure funding reaches the right projects as quickly as possible so that those projects have the freedom to progress rapidly. I was pleased to hear about the streamlined approach you are taking to Covid-19 funding calls. I would be grateful if your team could continue to ensure you are minimising bureaucracy in Covid-19 work in particular. Please do not hesitate to contact my team if there is anything we can do to support this.

Patrick, you outlined your plans to set up a Vaccines Taskforce and a Therapeutics Taskforce to look further into what we can do in the pursuit of a successful vaccine. I welcome this approach and will task my officials here to provide whatever support you need and are supported in working with the multiple departments currently taking forward the country's response to the pandemic.

I would be grateful for regular updates on your investment in Covid-19 research, bureaucracy reduction, and the vaccine taskforce. I will ask my officials to agree with yours the best way for the three of us to stay assured that everything is being done to prioritise this vital work.

THE RT HON ALOK SHARMA MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy