



Date: 2 April 2020

Director General: Jo Shanmugalingam (DG ISSI)

Lead Official: Ben Pledger

Lead Official Telephone: Irrelevant & Sensitive

Recipient	To Note / Comment	To Approve / Decide
Secretary of State		To Approve
Minister Solloway	To Note	
Minister Zahawi		To Approve
Permanent Secretary	To Note	
Special Advisers	To Note	

Establishment of a Vaccines Taskforce

Summary

You asked Sir Patrick Vallance to establish a cross-government Vaccines Taskforce to coordinate government action to accelerate the development and manufacture of a Covid-19 vaccine. This note provides you with an update on the taskforce, asks how you wish to oversee this, and flags three immediate issues of which you should be aware.

Timing

1. Routine

Recommendations

2. That you agree that the taskforce should report jointly to you and to the DHSC Secretary of State, as well as to Sir Patrick Vallance and Jonathan Van Tam
3. That you note formation of the taskforce and the three immediate issues relating to it. A separate submission will come to you alongside this one about DFID's work on the international efforts to find a vaccine.

Advice

4. You agreed last week to Sir Patrick Vallance's recommendation to establish a cross-government Vaccines Taskforce, to coordinate government action to accelerate the development and manufacture of a Covid-19 vaccine.
5. We have agreed a specification for the taskforce with Sir Patrick, with the overarching objective:



“The UK must be in a position to vaccinate the right proportion of the population as soon as possible after a vaccine is available. To the extent it is complementary to that primary objective, we must ensure longer-term UK vaccine capability and capacity for clinical and industrial benefit.”

6. We are pursuing five strands of work to deliver on that objective:
 - Support discovery of potential vaccines and scale up;
 - Prepare the UK to offer itself as an expert clinical testing site and possible manufacturing site, proactively approaching companies which are at the forefront of vaccine development;
 - Review regulations to facilitate rapid and safe trials;
 - Develop funding and an operational plan for procurement and delivery of vaccines; and
 - Build on the UK’s R&D expertise to support the international effort.
7. The full specification signed off by Sir Patrick is at Annex A.
8. Our recommendation is that the taskforce should report to two scientific leads – Sir Patrick Vallance and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van Tam – and two Secretaries of State, yourself and the Secretary of State for DHSC. This would take the form of twice-weekly updates (more frequent if required) or submissions for decision, with a line of accountability into the health MIG. **Are you content with this approach?**
9. The first meeting of the Taskforce Programme Board took place on 1 April. This brought officials together from multiple government departments and agencies to review key issues, immediate actions and the interdependencies with other government priorities in the response to Covid-19. The first meeting of the external advisory board is scheduled to take place on Friday 3 April. Membership of both boards is at Annex B.
10. We will provide you with regular updates on progress in the weeks and months ahead. There are three immediate issues to make you aware of:
 - The world’s furthest advanced Covid-19 vaccine development is currently taking place in Massachusetts, USA, by a company called Moderna. It is seeking to establish a European base at which