



T: **Irrelevant & Sensitive**  
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Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

By email

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9 January 2021

Dear Matt,

Thank you for the opportunity to consider and review the draft UK Vaccine Strategy. As I made clear to you yesterday, the absence of any reasonable advance notice that this strategy was being considered and the exceptionally short timeline offered means that regrettably, I cannot clear the content today.

Given this, this cannot at this point be considered or presented as a UK wide strategy. We need also of course to remember that the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine programme rests with each of the 4 nations and governments of the UK. Consequently the detail on governance and delivery is for each devolved government to set out and should not be assumed, presented or implied as determined at UK level but rather a shared approach where we seek to align as far as we can - as indeed we have to date with respect to, for example, start dates for delivery.

I would be reluctant to lose the cooperation we have secured and maintained so far. Consequently I believe we should reach a shared view on the overall strategy if we can but that requires each of the 4 nations contributing to that. We are agreed on following JCVI advice, on the overall purpose here is to save lives, on delivery as fast as we can alongside actions to suppress the virus and on active promotion of access and importance of being vaccinated. But we should also, I believe, capture more on legacy and a recognition that this may well not be a single event but rather there is potential for this to be a recurring activity even if it's not for the whole population overtime. The ultimate driver here is to save lives which means we need to ensure that people are at the heart of the strategy. There is a passing reference to diversity with some narrative about a diverse workforce but the document is silent on how the strategy aims to reach those hardest to reach groups and there appears to be no overarching communications strategy referenced as a branch off of this strategy. It would be helpful to understand how these could be woven into the narrative.

I hope you find my response helpful. If we are to agree and present a 4 nations strategy then there must be more time to develop that together. This need not be a slow process at all and I recognise the value in moving in this way but it does need to be genuinely collaborative.

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