



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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PERSONAL

Eddie Gray

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Email: **Personal Data**

27 May 2021

Dear Eddie,

APPOINTMENT AS CHAIR OF THE ANTIVIRALS TASKFORCE

I am delighted to invite you to be the Chair of the Antivirals Taskforce, an important contribution to our response to Covid-19.

Your considerable global leadership experience in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors, combined with your involvement throughout your career in the development of antiviral medications, makes you ideally placed to lead the Taskforce to success. Your appointment provides an extraordinary opportunity to play a real part in further supporting the UK's response to COVID-19 and to shape decisions that may affect thousands of lives for the better.

The vaccination programme has been a huge success, allowing us to ease restrictions on work and leisure activities as the spring and summer of this year advance. Despite this, expert modelling leads us to expect significant levels of Covid-19 infection and transmission during the winter of 2021/22, particularly in younger citizens, amongst certain groups where presentation for vaccine has been lower and considering the potential emergence of new strains of the virus where efficacy of the vaccine may not match that currently being achieved. In such an environment combining vaccination with effective post infection treatments is key.

The intention of Government is to repeat its success in identification, acceleration to regulatory approval and advance procurement of vaccines with a similar set of goals for potential Covid-19 antiviral medicines. The role of the Chair of the Antivirals Taskforce will be to lead the work and communication of the Taskforce in ensuring that it meets its core objectives, namely to:

- a. have two effective antiviral treatments which are deployable by Autumn/Winter 2021;
- b. identify the most promising treatments to meet this ambitious timescale;
- c. work with the developers / licence holders to accelerate the development path and provide the data package needed to support regulatory approval;
- d. help manufacturers to scale up so that higher volumes of drugs are available earlier;
- e. drive UK commercial discussions and provide sound advice to ministers where decisions are required; and
- f. create a pipeline of additional promising novel antivirals for potential deployment in 2022 and beyond, including ensuring that there are strong manufacturing and supply chain plans in place.

You will report to me and Lord Bethell but be expected to work independently alongside Clara Swinson as SRO, and will be expected to establish strong relations and work closely with the Chief Scientific Advisor, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, the health and social care system and other government departments.

An initial budget of £6million to mobilise the Antivirals Taskforce has been established and the financial and business approvals process will mirror the Vaccines Taskforce via a Ministerial Panel which I chair, to minimise any delay to approvals.

You will be granted access to official papers and be supported by a team of civil servants. Clear, accurate external communication will be important, and you will be responsible for clearing communications alongside normal ministerial clearance. We recognise that you will want to appoint additional expertise in key areas. You will have the authority to lead and direct your team and you will be responsible for leading in a manner that develops a strong internal capability to ensure short- and long-term goals are achieved. This includes proposing and initiating viable longer-term commitments, including the UK hosting of supply chain activities.

I look forward to working with you as Chair of the Antivirals Taskforce. I would like to offer my congratulations and assure you of my personal support in the role. I look forward to speaking to you further on the strategic priorities.

Yours ever,

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MATT HANCOCK