

**From:** Scott Stevenson [scott.stevenson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]  
**on behalf of** Scott Stevenson <scott.stevenson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> [scott.stevenson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 17/02/2022 08:59:52  
**To:** Simon Ridley [simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]  
**CC:** [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Anti virals and PANORAMIC

- CSA's is about plan b type measures which we'd hope to include drafting on when the policy is pinned down.
- CMOs point is on plan c. We did have a para on this but Henry asked for it to be removed. Shall we work up a few different options for new text and get some time in to discuss.

On Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 08:44, Simon Ridley <[simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)> wrote:

Please see below. Don't worry about testing stuff which **NR** and team are working through. However, the comments on contingency are important. I am not sure which version of the document Chris is reading, but we need to challenge ourselves on this today. I know its hard when we haven't yet got the policy nailed down, but his comments and concerns remain strategic framing.

Happy to have a word  
Best wishes  
Simon

**Private Office**

NR	Head of Office)	I&S
NR	Assistant Private Secretary)	I&S
NR	Diary Manager)	

From: **Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science)** <[P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk](mailto:P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk)>  
Date: Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 06:53  
Subject: RE: Anti virals and PANORAMIC

To: Whitty, Chris <[chris.whitty@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.whitty@dhsc.gov.uk)>, Simon Ridley <[simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>  
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Simon

To add one thing to this. These points are linked – we need a clear PH based testing plan for now (which as Chris says will determine the place, usefulness and design of panoramic), and a plan for testing ramp up and utilisation in the event of a variant that changes the picture. We would probably need to be able to move from a standing start to significant scale in a matter of a couple of weeks

Patrick

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**From:** Whitty, Chris <[Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 16 February 2022 22:00  
**To:** Simon Ridley <[simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>; Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science) <[P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk](mailto:P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk)>  
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**Subject:** RE: Anti virals and PANORAMIC

Dear Simon

1. On the trial/testing Patrick and I have discussed, and I have subsequently discussed with Jenny.

We all agree trials of antivirals are important, and support PANORAMIC. That does not mean thinking this trial is worth £450m unless there is another reason for that expenditure.

Patrick and I therefore think that UKHSA should give their opinion on what is the correct testing strategy for public health, irrespective of PANORAMIC. We should then work out how best to deliver the trial. Otherwise it is cart before horse.

2. Separately I am however concerned the current CO 'living with COVID' doc is still very light on what to do if there is a more severe variant.

This is summarised in para 120: "In the event of significant resurgences or future variants, the Government's priority will be to protect public health and prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS. The Government hopes never to return to the use of costly economic and social restrictions or the Plan B measures set out in the Autumn and Winter plan. The Government's aim is to manage and respond to these risks through more routine public health interventions and by building health resilience to cope with pressure points such as seasonal pressure on the NHS during winter. In future, pharmaceutical capabilities will be the first line of defence in responding to COVID-19 if risk threatens to place unsustainable pressure on the NHS."

We all **hope** never to have to have to do many things from supporting banks to deploying armed forces. Government however has to plan for reasonable scenarios we hope will not happen. A variant which is more severe than omicron, and able to evade immunity to some degree is a reasonably significant possibility, as laid out by SAGE. We are currently silent on what we do about this is it does overtop our current medical defences (other than hope). We need at least to acknowledge that possibility and that more stringent actions might be needed under some circumstances. This seems to me the glaring hole in the document.

Chris

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**From:** Simon Ridley <[simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:simon.ridley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 16 February 2022 18:58  
**To:** Vallance, Patrick (GO-Science) <[P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk](mailto:P.Vallance1@go-science.gov.uk)>; Whitty, Chris <[Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** oliver munn <[oliver.munn@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.munn@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>, NR  
NR <[NR@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:NR@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Anti virals and PANORAMIC

Dear Chris and Patrick,

There have been lots of discussions throughout the day on spending over the next year and the contingent capability and insurance it buys. A couple of key strategic issues are emerging of which a key one is PANORAMIC and the level of testing spend needed. I'm keen to get your thoughts given, as you know, this issue draws particularly strong reactions from some Ministers.

Our understanding is that for the trial to continue usefully - and therefore for us to know about the efficacy and value of AVs - we need to spend £430m next year on testing for >50s to get people into and through the trial.

I know HMT will balk at this given their (right or wrong) scepticism of AVs at present. I think the PM will see this as a very expensive way of finding out how useful AVs are and both may well question whether we need to do this solely in the UK given a number of comparable countries are considering or procured AVs

I'd therefore be very grateful for your advice on whether (i) our trial is really the only way to get further info on the benefits of the drugs (ii) whether there is sensible scope to focus on a smaller cohort for PANORAMIC and therefore less testing in the coming year to use the drugs and understand benefits.

In essence I only want to present this as an all or nothing to Ministers if that is really the case.

best wishes

Simon



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